



Most of the time when we find borers in rice we find them behind the leaf sheath or in the stems. In this case the mid-rib of the leaf showed the typical tissue damage and texture associated with borer damage. When the leaf was split the borer shown at right, a rice stalk borer, was found. This one is about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch long. Note the two continuous lines and dark head capsule. If it had been a Mexican rice borer the lines would have been a series of dashes rather than continuous lines and the head capsule would be a lighter brown.

The larva here is very small, first or second instar, but had already bored into the plant tissue. Controlling them with an insecticide at this point would be difficult. They must be detected and sprayed before they bore into the stalk to achieve good control. We do not have a threshold value for borers so it is a judgment call as to whether the field should be treated or not. In the field where this borer was found we only found a few plants in one part of the field so no treatment was warranted.

If you find any borer you think might be a Mexican rice borer, collect it and put it in alcohol or get it to me or Dr. Hummel as a fresh specimen so we can provide a positive identification. We are keeping a careful eye out for the Mexican rice borer which is documented in Texas. In December of 2008 two adult (moths) Mexican rice borers were found in traps in the western part of the state. So far no larvae have been found here.



When algae develop in rice fields we refer to it as scum and usually do not want to see it. However, it is not always harmful. The photographs above show one of our verification fields where scum formed as soon as a permanent flood was established. We will actually benefit from scum in this instance because rice plants are large enough that scum will not cover them and the thick layer of algae will shade out weeds below it. When it forms early and rice is young it has the potential to cause serious problems. Another situation where it could be serious is when the field is flooded deeply by heavy rain raising the water level above rice plants. Then the algae can cling to plants and pull them down when the water level is dropped. When this happens it is better to hold some water in the field than to drain it completely because in draining it completely seedlings may be pressed to the soil and then stick. Once this happens it is very difficult to un-stick the seedlings.

On the next page are two photographs taken in a problem field last week. Rice had been planted and emerged well resulting in a good stand. After applying herbicide and flushing they started losing plants. When I took the photographs the field was dry. The key symptoms are the dying lower leaves and the inverted “V” on the leaf tip in the photograph at right. We checked their well and found 1200 ppm (parts per million) of total dissolved solids. It looks like a salt problem. We did take samples of water and soil for a more complete analysis to determine the source of salinity. When salt is a problem, flushing will aggravate it because as the water drains then evaporates salt will accumulate at the surface. Even though 1200 ppm water is well above the recommended 600 ppm in irrigation water flooding the field and holding water rather than flushing will minimize the injury. The real solution is ultimately fresh water.



In an earlier edition of Field Notes I included the bottom left photograph and explained the green vegetation was volunteer hybrid rice. The field was sprayed with glyphosate at planting then received two applications of Newpath. The volunteer hybrid was not a Clearfield variety. The right photograph was taken from almost the same position last week showing how well it is cleaned up.

