

Field Notes
August 26, 2010
Johnny Saichuk



This will probably be the last issue of Field Notes for the season. I will post other items to the blog as necessary. Despite the fact that it is the last week of August it has been hectic.

We were scheduled to harvest our verification field in St. Landry around 17th. Heavy rains delayed the harvest and knocked much of the St. Landry field down.

Two weeks ago in the Avoyelles field we could walk in street shoes. A week later 9.4" of rain fell within 24 hours and flooded the field almost to the panicles. About 10 acres of the 40 acre field had to be sent to the mill even though it was intended to be used for seed.



Everyone I have spoken to has reported disappointing yields overall. While some fields have performed well others have yielded poorly. Most folks I have visited with indicated their yields are going to be off 500 to 800 pounds per acre. Our yields from the verification fields (only three this year) are down too, but not disastrous.

In Jeff Davis the variety was CL745. It yielded 8738 pounds (53.9 bbls, 194.2 bu) per acre at 12% moisture. Cocodrie was grown in Avoyelles. It yielded 8057 pounds (49.7 bbls, 179.0 bu) per acre dry. The final totals for St. Landry are not in yet, but the grower told me he thought it would be around 7100 lbs (44 bbls, 158 bu) per acre dry. The variety was CL111.

I have had to visit several fields that were near or at harvest maturity because growers found the fields did not “look right” or because they had started harvesting and were disappointed with yields. Nearly every field I checked had both diseases shown at right.

The top photo has both on it but I want to emphasize the tan area with the yellowish border. This is leaf scald. Often the field as a whole will look burned when viewed at a distance looking toward the sun.

In the bottom photo I am trying to show leaf smut – the small black lesions. Dr. Groth said this has to be worst year for leaf smut he has ever seen.

All fields except one I checked had fungicides applied to them. If we visit the old “disease triangle” that is used in all plant pathology (disease) classes I think we can find an explanation. The three sides of the triangle are: the host (in this case rice), the pathogen (the organism that causes disease) and the environment. Well, we planted the host; the pathogens are always here; the third side is the environment.

Certainly this was one of the longest periods of excessively hot, humid weather I have ever experienced. It has been hotter, but not for so long. This was the crucial factor. None of our fungicides will hold disease back for 6 to 8 weeks and that is what was needed this year. It would have required two applications of fungicides to provide control this year. Of course if Bacterial Panicle Blight was the problem the fungicides would have been useless.

Lower yields and lower prices are a double insult. No hurricane so far.

