Field Notes

July 19, 2013

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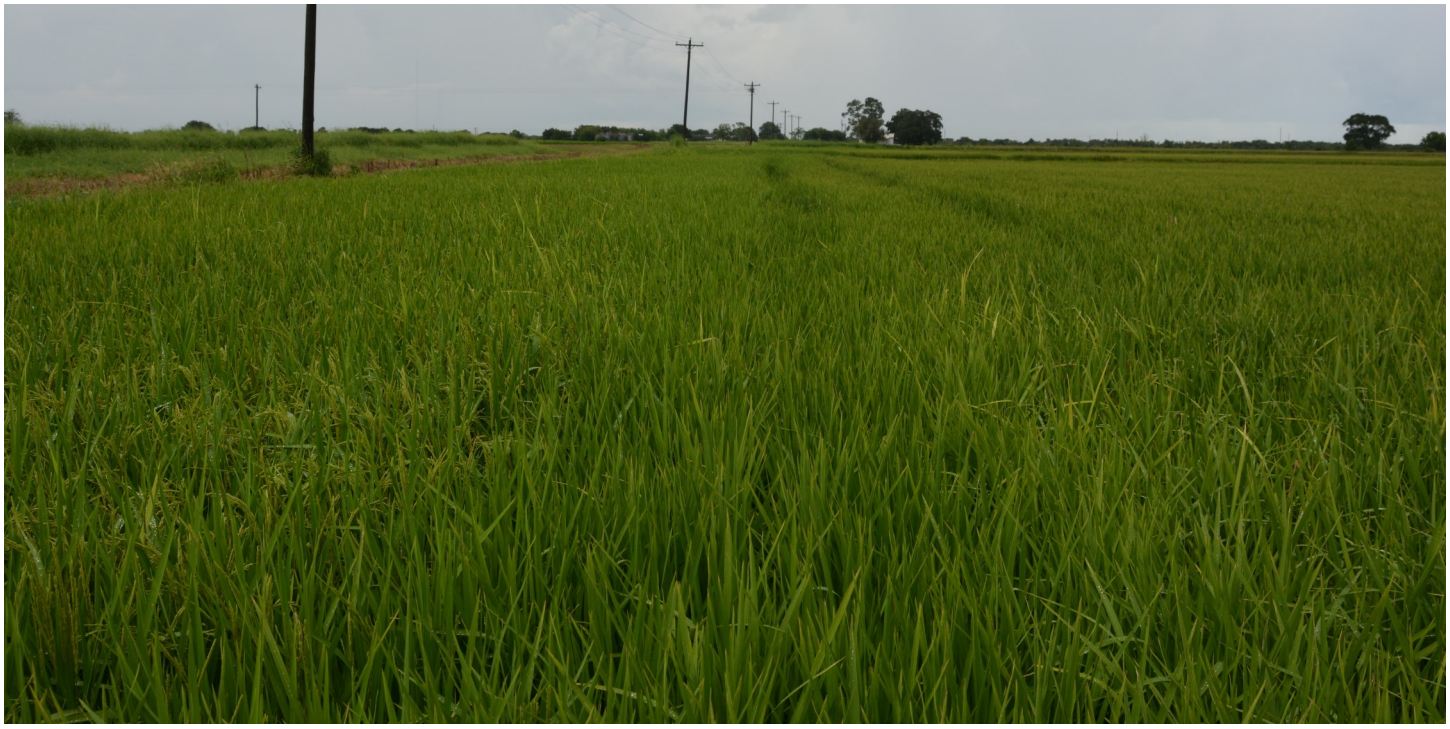
Every year something happens in the field that leads me in the wrong direction and last week's Field Notes is full of an example of another case of mistaken identity.

The photographs and discussion of Crown Rot last week exemplified how much different causes may have similar effects or symptoms. This is why research often seems so slow in determining the cause of a malady. When panicle blight became a major issue several very vocal folks let us know of their impatience. Luck, perseverance, and skill combined to solve the mystery. Today we are dealing with a nutrient problem that has frustrated us and farmers. In time we will figure it out.

Back to today's subject. The persistence of a conscientious field man solved this mystery. The photos at right and below are of the fields from which the individual plants shown last week were collected. The dead and dying growing points and corresponding flag leaves are obvious at right and a little less obvious is the heading rice at lower left and no heads at right. This is what happens when a field is sprayed with 21 ounces of a mixture of glyphosate and metolachlor instead of Quilt XL. First crop is gone; don't know on second crop.




About 2mm
About 20mm
About 25mm

On the preceding page are a series of photographs of the sugarcane borer in rice. The famer and I spent nearly a half hour splitting stems and looking carefully at borers we found in his field because we wanted to be sure they were not the Mexican rice borer (MRB). County agent Jimmy Meaux told me he has seen a lot of infestation by the MRB this year in Calcasieu and Jeff Davis parishes. It continues to move eastward. At this point it has not caused the type of damage we feared when it was first discovered in Texas and caused significant yield losses in some fields.

When scouting for borers the lesions (very small) shown in the first photograph are the earliest signs of borer presence. When the leaf sheath was pulled back it revealed the very tiny first instar borer shown in the second photograph. If control is attempted with a foliar insecticide this is the only time at which it will be effective. Once the borer has entered the stem as shown in the third photograph, foliar insecticides will not control them. Eventually the borer will pupate as shown in the last photograph then emerge as a moth to begin the cycle again.

Dermacor seed treatment is labeled to provide some control of borers in rice and may be our best tool against the MRB at this point. If you are growing rice in areas of known MRB presence it might be a wise decision to use Dermacor treated seed.

At left is a cluster of first instar stink bugs we found in a rice field in West Carroll parish. Just because they are in a rice field does not mean they are rice stink bugs. I am not the best entomologist, but I knew immediately they were not rice stink bugs because the egg cases are in three rows and rice stink bugs will almost always lay their eggs in two rows. The second obvious difference is their color. First instar rice stink bugs are red and black then later take on a pinkish cream color.

I sent a similar photo to Sebe Brown, Extension entomologist in the northeastern part of the state. He identified them as brown stink bugs of either *Eushistus servus or E. tristigmas.*

I'll take his word for it. I will also assume they are not a major pest of rice. Some stink bugs are beneficial. I have seen some attacking and feeding on other stink bugs, soybean loopers, and velvetbean caterpillars.