

Field Notes

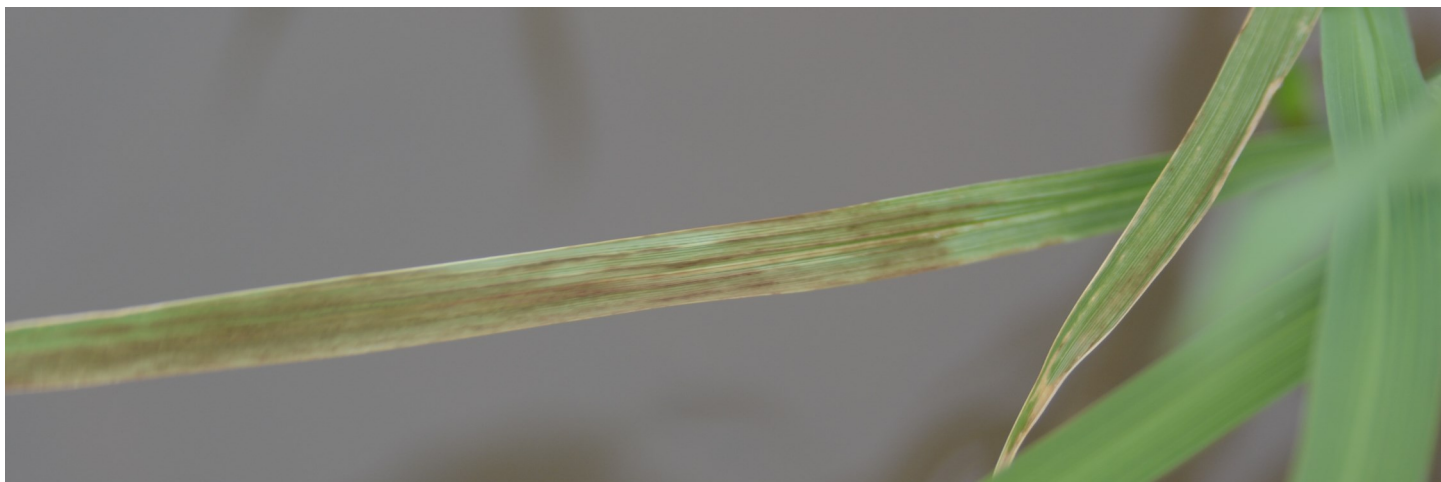
April 26, 2013

Johnny Saichuk



Same song, new verse is the best way to describe this issue of Field Notes when compared to last week. I keep hoping it is going to warm up so this crop will take off. The majority of callers this week started out the same way, “My rice is yellow and not growing.” The situation is compounded by cold and persistent cloud cover. Sunshine is the ultimate source of energy to plants and everything else for that matter. Without sunlight plants cannot convert water and carbon dioxide into sugars and sugars fuel the chemical processes of the plant. Sunlight intensity and duration affect plants many ways. Even the wavelength has a major influence on some processes. Cloudy conditions translate to poorer quality and quantity of light.

I have had calls expressing concern about the effect of herbicides on rice this year as evidenced by healthier appearing rice in skips in application. All selective herbicides are taken up by rice then must be broken down via some metabolic pathway. Under these weather conditions the uptake part is exceeding the ability of the plant to metabolize the herbicide. In most instances warm weather and sunshine will correct the problem. In our verification fields we have delayed herbicide application until the plants were deemed healthy enough to tolerate them. In most cases we are not concerned because weeds were not growing either. Where herbicides have already been applied and there is concern just keep the water low and wait for it to warm up. If you need help call your county agent and we will try to help.



Above is a photograph of a leaf I took in our verification field in Vermilion parish even though I could have taken it in a lot of fields this week. It is difficult to be sure, but I think most of this is bronzing due to cold weather induced zinc deficiency. It is difficult to be sure it is zinc because I have seen very similar symptoms where Command has been applied and it is cold. In Vermilion I am leaning toward bronzing because this is on a lower leaf and the upper ones look good and we applied zinc to the field. As well translocated as Command is I would expect symptoms to be present on new as well as old leaves.

The Texas rice weekly survey showed only 2% of the crop was flooded. When I checked their data from 2012 it was not much different at 3%. That does not seem right, but those are the numbers.

In Jarrod Hardke’s Arkansas rice report he said there were only 595 heat units accumulated between March 15 and April 21 this year while in the same period last year there were 1181 heat units.

I checked on the heat units at Crowley for the period of March 1 to April 25. The 30 year average is 859, in 2012 there were 1129 and this year 622. As I mentioned in an earlier edition of Field Notes this indicates last year was warmer than normal and this year is cooler which sort of magnifies our sensation of the contrast between last year than this year.

I looked at DD50 threshold values for Cheniere, CL 111, and CL 151. Based on the above heat units Cheniere and CL 151 should be at or just beyond first tiller, but last year would have been at green ring (internode elongation). CL 111 should be approaching 2 tillers this year and would have been beyond green ring by a couple of days in 2012.



With the strong winds last week I expected we would get a lot of calls this week about drift so was not surprised when we looked at a field that showed these symptoms. I could not figure it out so suggested they contact Dr. Webster. He took a look yesterday then called me. He said he did not think it was glyphosate and based some of that conclusion on the ALS injury symptoms on the volunteer soybean plant shown at right.

The rice variety is a Clearfield hybrid so should have tolerated the Newpath application made to an adjacent field. Dr. Webster felt it was a combination of factors with no single one offering a good explanation. All I could advise the farmer to do was watch it. I said if the new leaves came out appearing healthy then it was likely it would be OK. I'm not saying it did the crop any good, but it should survive. A day or so later he reported new leaves were coming out looking healthy. It looked pretty tough for a while.

The birds shown at right are Dowitchers. I took this photograph in our verification field in Vermilion parish for two reasons; first, to show the value of rice fields to wading birds and second, to compare their appearance to previous years. I looked at past photographs and found similar photographs of them from the middle of March until late April. I had hoped they might indicate what Mother Nature might have in store for the next few weeks, but I do not think they can tell any more than we can.

Even Dr. Linscombe is complaining about poor growth of rice and dealing with unusual problems this year. He said he has 6 week old rice that looks 2 to 3 weeks old. To add insult to injury, turtles got into his F₁ plots and destroyed many one-of-a-kind plants.

