

Field Notes
April 27, 2012
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As I mentioned last week, ducks have been doing quite a bit of damage in water seeded rice in south Louisiana. Some farmers who have a lifetime of experience in lower Vermilion parish have told me they have never seen Teal down here this late and in these numbers. In our verification field pictured below it was a mixture of Teal and Black Bellied Whistling Ducks. After publishing last week's Field Notes I was contacted by personnel at the USDA/APHIS Animal Damage Control office in Crowley. They wanted to know about the Black Bellied Whistlers because they too have noted a huge increase in their numbers this year.

The left most photograph shows an overall view of the field. The areas that appear to be clear water are slightly deeper (very slightly) areas that the ducks found more attractive. There is some rice remaining as can be seen in the second photograph which can be compared the third photograph of the green areas. The grower applied Avipel treated seed after last week's visit and that seemed to run the ducks out. Others have told me it did not deter Teal. Reports are fairly constant that the product definitely works on blackbirds.

It was too late to start over. We will just have to live with the situation and hope some of the seed treated with Avipel add a little to the stand.





On the preceding page are three photographs taken in the same field where Command had been applied with a ground rig. The applicator made one pass on each end to provide a turn around area. Then he started making linear passes from the east side of the field working his way to the west. In the top photograph the clearly damaged area on the right is the first pass. The green area is the east half of the field. The bare area across the top of the picture is the west side of the field. We could not determine if there was some extremely odd mixing problem that caused a light to normal dose to be applied at the beginning then a heavy rate later as more product mixed or if there was some sort of mechanical malfunction in the spray rig. It does have electronic spray controllers so I suppose it is possible that caused the strange injury pattern. The severely damaged area will have to be replanted. This is the most severe Command injury I have ever seen.

The field in St. Landry parish shown in last week's edition was showing very good signs of a total recovery. The fact that in two separate cases we saw odd problems associated with application of this herbicide is curious.

At right is a picture of yellow nutsedge exhibiting two characteristics that contribute to its ability to be a serious pest. The "nut" part of its common name is derived from the structure shown at lower left. It is not a nut, but is actually a tuber, an enlarged part of the rhizome. The white, root-like structures are also rhizomes which are underground stems. If the stems were above ground they would be called stolons. These structures are underground and well protected from herbicide sprays. To really get to them requires a good translocated herbicide. If you plow and cut the tuber off from the main plant it just produces a new plant from the tuber. The plant can also produce lots of viable seed enabling it to survive by more than one method. One way to distinguish yellow nutsedge from purple nutsedge is to cut the tuber and smell it. If it has a petroleum odor it is purple nutsedge. Purple nutsedge also has a more blunt leaf tip than yellow nutsedge. The tubers of purple nutsedge are hairy compared to the fairly smooth yellow nutsedge tubers. Yellow nutsedge is actually sold as Chufa to be used in wildlife food plots. Apparently turkey will scratch up the tubers and eat them. One biologist said he found the crop of Teal killed in a rice field full of the tubers. If they would leave the rice seeds alone and selectively consume the tubers it sure would help.

