Field Notes
May 18, 2012
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The two photographs above are of our rice verification field in Vermilion parish. They are presented here to illustrate two points. The first one shows a lot of clear water as a consequence of ducks and was used in the April 27th edition of Field Notes. At that time we noted that seed treated with Avipel had been flown in and we had amazing seedling establishment along with excellent repellant action from Avipel. I am not very confident that the additional rice will provide more than cosmetic advantage. It will depend on how close the re-planted rice and the original plants are at harvest.

The second photograph shows how much the field has filled in and reveals another problem. The yellow areas of the field are the high spots (no more than 2 inches difference in elevation). These are areas where the soil was exposed when water levels fell. The little bit of oxygen that entered the soil at that time set the field up for nitrogen loss when the flood was increased. I thought the field would be at green ring this week, but the unusually cool temperatures this week slowed it down. We are not waiting for green ring. The field should be topdressed by the time you read this.

We have long said that 2 inches of difference in elevation could make or break rice production. This is just one example of what can happen under certain circumstances. If ducks had not been a problem the flood depth would have been easier to maintain. Things just fell into place to cause the problem. We will not try to apply additional nitrogen to the affected areas because every time I have seen that attempted it ended up worse than before.

It has been a while since I have used photographs of localized decline in Field Notes. The affected field is in Evangeline parish. I do not have any soil test data, but the field representative said he suspected a zinc deficiency in the soil. Dr. Dustin Harrell's studies have shown that high levels of zinc can prevent the problem in areas of known problems or correct it in situations like this one. The field has been fertilized and flooded and draining will compromise fertility and weed control. Ten pounds of actual zinc as zinc sulfate or two pounds as a foliar chelate were recommended. The symptoms here are thinning of the stand and bronzing of the lower leaves. You do not have the advantage of a view of the remainder of the field; however the affected areas were very obvious.

If it was hunting season this would be an exciting image. Well, it isn't and it is the middle of May and we still have Teal and other ducks hanging around our south Louisiana fields. I hope they know something we do not and that maybe this summer will not be as hot as the last two. This was in our verification field in Cameron parish.

The images above and at right are of CLXL745 sprayed with two applications of 4 ounces of Newpath. It was sprayed with a ground rig with a sophisticated control system that is supposed to prevent overlapping and skipping. The problem was not noticed until the second application. Clearly there was a serious overlap problem. The accurate guidance system probably contributed if the malfunction occurred on both the first and second applications. If it did, then these areas got 16 ounces of Newpath. If it only malfunctioned on the second spraying then the affected area received 12 ounces of Newpath. If this had not been a hybrid the injury might not have been as serious, but it still would have had an effect. With only one copy of the resistance gene the plant is overwhelmed. The only thing to do here is call a priest and fix the spray rig.

We have addressed this subject before, but I could not pass up the opportunity to review it again. The field in which this was taken is in an area where scum (algae) has been a problem before. Often soils where algae grow well will produce an algal bloom every time they are flooded. This is especially if crawfishing is part of the rotation because longer periods of flooding create more opportunity for algae to grow. If this had happened when this rice was younger we would have had a serious problem. This would have been especially true if it was windy because often wind will push the scum over young plants. In this case the algae will simply shade out any weeds that might try to emerge and in a few weeks will disappear as the rice plants get larger and produce more shade. So scum or algae can be either a problem or a solution depending on when it happens.

I have been posting much of the Field Notes on the Louisiana Crops blog breaking the postings up into sections.