**RICE**

**Automatic Pesticide Applications Need Evaluated**

An alarming number of producers are making automatic pesticide applications these days. We want to challenge you to evaluate every input used to make what we hope is a profitable crop that promotes sustainable production for generations to come.

Several rice and soybean fields were monitored in a pest survey conducted by the Greene County Extension Service last year. Some field received fungicide and/or insecticide applications when they were no where near treatment threshold, with some having no disease or insects present. A few comments from producers making questionable applications include: 1) It only costs an extra $2 to add it to the spray mix and I was going over the field anyway 2) I wanted to go ahead and spray because in a week or two I know I will need to any way 3) Industry reps tell me their product will enhance plant health.

The producer ultimately has to decide if a pesticide application is beneficial. Remember to check if University data is available on the need to treat a pest, along with threshold levels, effective products and rates. University officials are not trying to sell you a product, but rather, generate research findings to help you make sound decisions based on science. Much of their research is funded by your tax, and commodity check-off dollars.

We realize farms are growing in size and producers must depend on crop advisors to keep an eye on their crop for pest development. Make sure to use a crop advisor you are confident will tell you when you really need to spray for disease or insects. Some crop consultants have mentioned they often feel pressured to recommend spraying a crop when pest levels are low because if the farmer doesn’t make the crops he thinks he should, he will wonder why the consultant did not have him to spray earlier in the season. Hopefully you and your consultant have a good relationship, good communication, and trust in each other. If every field on your farm is being sprayed for a pest, or none of your fields are being sprayed, go out with your crop advisor on a field or two, to see what he is seeing.

Another thing that sometime seems over looked is variety resistance. If you planted a hybrid like RiceTec 753, with good disease resistance, do you really need a fungicide? Speaking of resistance, have you heard about strobie resistant Frogeye leaf spot? I wonder if automatic fungicide applications played a role? Carefully evaluate your pesticide use, and you will likely be able to reduce business expenses .***

**Stinkbugs Numbers Starting Out Low**

Rice stinkbug numbers have started out low in the few fields checked so far in the Greene County Extension pest survey. Last week we were only averaging one stinkbug per sample (10 sweeps with a 15” diameter sweepnet).

The threshold for treatment the first two weeks after heading is 5 stinkbugs for sample. It goes up to 10 stinkbugs per sample weeks 3 and 4 after heading as kernels move into the dough stage and begin to mature. Send us a text (870) 476-9891, if you wanted added to our weekly text update sent out about pest survey findings.
**Soybean**

**Frogeye Leaf Spot and Aerial Web Blight Considerations**

Most of our latest planted soybeans are blooming while the earliest plantings are beginning to form seed. According to Dr. Travis Faske, Arkansas Extension Plant Pathologist, this is the timing window (R1 to R5) to closely watch your crop to determine if a foliar fungicide would be beneficial. A fungicide application timed between beginning pod formation and early seed development, may help protect yield and seed quality on some fields.

Which fields should you treat? It depends. First of all, is disease present? With the exception of soybean rust, Aerial web blight and Frogeye leaf spot are the two major diseases to monitor. You should be checking your fields weekly to see if they are present. It is also good to become familiar with the life cycle of each disease organism to better determine if they are more of a threat on your farm. In our Greene County Extension Pest Survey conducted last year only one in five fields needed fungicide.

Frogeye is the disease most often sprayed for in Arkansas. It can be identified by its trademark angular lesions that are light colored in the center and surrounded by a reddish-purple margin. Faske notes that it is more likely to be seen on fields in a continuous soybean rotation. Initial infection of a crop generally occurs as soybeans close canopy, shift into reproductive growth, and weather conditions become favorable (damp, humid). The disease organism overwinters in infected soybean plant debris. When the new crop is growing and the weather is right, spores will be splashed up from ground level and from older infected leaves, to infect newly expanding leaves in the top of the canopy. If enough leaf area becomes infected, yield and seed quality can be reduced.

One of the most effective ways to combat Frogeye is to plant resistant varieties. They are not likely to develop Frogeye to a level that will hurt the crop. On the other hand, if you have varieties planted that are rated susceptible to Frogeye, they are more at risk to develop the disease. For fields with good yield potential, fungicide treatment is recommended soon after Frogeye begins to develop.

There are more fungicide and fungicide mix products on the market now days adding to the confusion on what to spray. Faske suggests using a newer generation triazole mixed with a strobilurin (strobie) if Frogeye is found early (R3-R4 or pod formation). This mix will help in disease resistance management. Priaxor is also a good option bringing another fungicide chemistry into your pesticide rotation. If Frogeye shows up at R5 (beginning seed), Faske says a triazole product alone may be all that is needed to get the crop through seed fill. This approach minimizes pressure on the strobies, helping to delay Frogeye resistance to them.

Aerial web blight can also significantly damage a crop. It is more likely to be seen in a rice - soybean rotation. It is called sheath blight in rice and develops on soybeans in a similar fashion. Since it overwinters in the soil in BB sized bodies called sclerotia, infection will generally begin near ground level. In dense, closed soybean canopies, with damp, cloudy weather, moisture generally persists long enough for spores, released from the sclerotia, to germinate and grow. With continued damp, warm weather, the web-like mass of mycelia (vegetative part of the fungi) will continue to grow up the plant engulfing leaves, pods, and stems. In severe infections, the disease can blow out of the top of the canopy like shealth blight does in rice.

University studies show the strobie products to be more effective on control of aerial web blight than the triazoles. Quilt Xcel and Priaxor both have an excellent rating for control in the U of A Extension Plant Disease Guide. Fields should be treated with a fungicide as soon as aerial web blight starts to develop.

A couple of final thoughts. Faske reminds us that if your soybeans make it to R6 (full seed) and disease has not yet developed, the crop should reach maturity without being impacted by disease that comes along later. Also keep spray coverage in mind. It does not matter how effective a fungicide is if you don't do a good job getting it down into the plant canopy to protect the remaining healthy green plant tissue. Use a high spray volume and make sure to include the adjuvant listed on the fungicide label.

On a final note, remember if frogeye or web blight are not present in your soybeans, a yield response is unlikely from a fungicide application.***
Foliar Feeding Soybeans: Benefit or Loss?

When I began Extension work several years ago, you would hear the old timers talking about “snake oils”. These foliar applied nutrients were promoted to enhance plant health in some form or fashion. Some were evaluated in University trials with results showing the bulk did not provide a yield response.

In 2014, the U of A still does not recommend the use of foliar feeding for soybeans. On the other hand, research does show that you will get an economic response to lime if needed, along with soil applied potassium and phosphorus fertilizer if soil test levels are low for those nutrients.

We do realize many products are on the market and it is impossible to check them all in University tests. If you are foliar feeding your soybeans, hopefully you left an untreated check to see if they really are helping increase yields.

Corn

Weed Control Not Over after Harvest

Several folks recently attended the Pigposium Field Day conducted by University and Industry leaders at the Keiser research center. One discussion topic was keeping pigweed from going to seed that are still in the field after corn harvest. The goal being “zero tolerance” to keep the soil weed seed bank low, or even better, empty! Cold steel was mentioned as one option for control. Herbicides with burndown/residual activity, like Gramoxone, Dual, Sharpen, and Valer, were also discussed as effective chemical options. Check Arkansas Extension’s MP44 weed control guide for more details.

Integrated Pest Management Luncheons Set for August

A variety of speakers are scheduled to jumpstart our August IPM lunch discussions by giving updates about what pests they are seeing, getting called about, selling chemicals for, new products, and doing research on. Comments will be provided by AG Industry reps, AG retailers, consultants, producers, and University experts. An informal discussion format is planned with input from the crowd welcomed. Sessions will begin at 12 noon and conclude by 1 pm. They are Dutch treat.

August 14—Couch’s BBQ, Hwy 49 South in Paragould

Cache River Valley Seed (Armor)-Danny Graham,
Greenpoint AG-Scott Watson, Consultant –TBD, Producer-TBD, Ext Specialist –Chris Grimes

August 28—Delta Cotton Coop, Hwy 34 East in Marmaduke

Dow-Blake McClellend, Delta Cotton Coop-Cary Clayton, Consultant-TBD, Producer - TBD, Extension Specialist - Dr. Bill Robertson
COTTON

Watch the white flower move in your cotton. When there are 5 nodes above the first position white flower, cotton has reached cutout. Start counting heat units accumulated from this point on, to help time termination of insecticide applications and to time when to begin defoliant applications.

Upcoming meetings & field days.

August 14 - Greene County Extension IPM luncheon (noon till 1 pm) - Couch’s BBQ, Paragould
August 18 - Australian Herbicide Resistance Initiative - Keiser, AR
August 28 - Greene County Extension IPM luncheon (noon till 1 pm) - Delta Cotton Coop, Marmaduke

Hoping for a good harvest,

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