Rice Update

**Blast is in the county.** On some fields it has been very severe. Please make sure to scout your fields for this disease. Remember blast is caused by an airborne fungus that survives between crops on infected rice straw or on seeds. Late seeding dates and cooler temperatures with long dew periods can cause blast to worsen. Cheniere, CL 151, CL 152, are all rated very susceptible to blast. Jupiter, LaKast, Mermentau, and Roy J are rated as susceptible. In order to manage this disease it is highly recommended that resistant cultivars be planted in fields with a history of blast. Fields hard to irrigate should also be planted with resistant cultivars if at all possible. Make sure you use clean, fungicide treated seed.

Furthermore, plant early (April) if possible so that you avoid heavy blast pressure that comes late in the season. Be sure to use the recommended rate for nitrogen and (I know this is sometimes easier said than done) try to maintain a consistent deep flood \(\geq 4\) inches. Though fungicides are not 100 percent effective against blast, they can limit lesion spore production and infection if combined with proper flooding practices.

**Brown Spot**
Another disease that I have been seeing in several fields is brown spot. This fungus tends to perpetuate itself through rice seed that is infected and leftover crop debris. Rice that is short on N, K or P is especially susceptible to brown spot. Sometimes this disease can be confused with blast. We do not recommend a fungicide in order to treat brown spot. Instead, try to use resistant cultivars, clean fungicide-treated seed, soil test, and make sure to use the recommended rate and timing for N.

Soybean Update

**Pigweed**
I have looked at several bean fields recently with growth stages ranging from V-1 up to R-2. Unfortunately we still have a fight on our hands with the problematic pigweed. I have seen numerous fields that are about to be taken over with this nemesis. I want to caution those of you that have Liberty Link soybeans. Liberty does a good job when used timely and correctly, but you will be very disappointed when trying to kill a pigweed that has gotten too big. In the MP-44 the recommended size to control pigweed is 2-3 inches. As I said earlier, I know this is easier said than done. Wind, rain, and all kinds of things can prevent timely applications and as we all know too well, pigweeds are speed demons when it comes to growing. As mentioned in previous newsletters over the years, pigweeds are still not resistant to a hoe.

Someone asked me the other day about soybean rust. So far soybean rust has been confirmed in Florida, Louisiana, and Texas as of July 10. So not much to report at this time on this disease- thankfully!

**Corn and Grain Sorghum Update**

**Southern rust** has reared its ugly head in the state and was found last week in Lonoke, Jefferson, and Jackson counties. Southern rust is often confused with common rust. Southern rust tends to sporulate on the top of the corn leaf whereas common rust sporulates on the top and bottom of the leaf. When scouting for southern rust inspect plants at mid canopy about 4-5 feet from the ground. Though fungicides are effective in suppressing southern rust we currently do not have an economic threshold. It is generally accepted that a fungicide application at VT/R1 when southern rust has have been observed with good yield potential may be the most beneficial at suppressing rust development and protecting yield potential; however, additional application may be needed for season long crop protection. Field corn within two weeks (50% starch line) from physiological maturity (i.e. black layer) is very unlikely to benefit from a fungicide application. Please see the MP-154 Arkansas Plant Disease Control Products Guide for a list of fungicide recommendations.
Corn and Grain Sorghum Update

Look out for Midge

As much of grain sorghum is heading at this time, be sure to scout your fields for the sorghum midge. This tiny (less than 1/8th of inch) insect can really cause severe yield loss. The sorghum midge is potentially the most destructive pest of grain sorghum in Arkansas. The sorghum midge adult is a tiny, fragile looking orange fly. The female deposits 50 to 250 tiny, yellowish-white eggs in spikelets of flowering heads during her short lifetime of 24 to 48 hours. A pinkish orange maggot hatches from the egg and feeds on the developing seed. Larval feeding causes “blaster” heads resulting in undeveloped seeds. The entire life cycle is completed in 15 to 20 days.

Sorghum midge only infests flowering grain sorghum, thus scouting procedures for midge should begin when flowering begins and continue at two to three day intervals until flowering is completed. Check a minimum of 100 heads throughout the field. Adult midges may be seen crawling on or flying about flowering grain heads. However, detection is facilitated by quickly slipping a clear plastic bag over the head. This allows the number of adults per head to be more easily counted. We recommend that sorghum be scouted for midge in the early morning before the wind rises because the small flies are difficult to locate and check accurately under windy conditions. Large numbers of midge swarming around sorghum heads in the dough stage are no cause for alarm; these are the darker colored males. Midge cannot infest sorghum in the dough stage. The males stay around the heads from which they have emerged and mate with emerging females. Mating usually occurs within 15 minutes after female emergence. Fertile females then seek blooming sorghum for egg laying. Most of the midge seen in blooming sorghum is the orange colored female. Begin control procedures when 25 to 30 percent of the heads are flowering and you find an average of one midge per head. If adults are found in similar number in 3-5 days after treatment and sorghum is still blooming, treat again. For a list of recommended insecticides please see the MP-144.

Sugarcane Aphid

As you know last year we found the dreaded sugarcane aphid in the county. This year this pest so far has been found in several counties south of us with the closest being White County. Sugarcane aphids are usually easy to scout. Look on the undersides of leaves on the edge of the field for small clusters of the aphids. Once they get going look for the shiny spots on the edge of the field made from the honeydew they excrete on the leaves. Because of the tremendous reproductive potential mentioned earlier, if your consultant comes only once a week, it would be a good idea for you to ease around the field yourself between visits to make sure they don’t sneak in on you. Remember, treat for midge, headworms and aphids only if you hit established thresholds which are: Midge- one per head; Headworms- one per head; and, sugarcane aphid- 25% of the leaves infested with 50+ aphids per leaf. That may sound like a lot of aphids but it’s really not. Consult the MP-144 (http://www.uaex.edu/publications/mp-144.aspx) and our Factsheet on sugarcane aphid in grain sorghum (http://www.uaex.edu/publications/pdf/FSA-7087.pdf) for more information on thresholds, treatment options and insecticide choices. - See more at: http://www.arkansas-crops.com/2015/03/12/afraid-sugarcane-aphid/#sthash.htyAfcB1.dpuf

Sincerely,

Herb Ginn
CEA Staff Chair