Crop Overview

The most recent production estimates have been released by USDA on Nov. 10, and the results are somewhat puzzling. Not surprising are the estimates of 1,296,000 acres of rice harvested for Arkansas. But the estimate of 164 bushels per acre, just 4 bu behind the 168 in 2013 and 2014, seems far too high.

Based on conversations with growers and consultants around the state, achieving an average yield close to 2014 doesn’t seem realistic. Think more to the tune of 155-160 bushels per acre – which is a 5 to 7.5% decline compared to 2014.

Now, to be fair, individuals scattered around different parts of the state will have drastically different responses to that estimate. Those in the southern half of the state will say that estimate is too high for them and a solid 10% decline is more appropriate; some in the north-central Delta may say that’s about right; and some in the far northeast will say their yields were up. It all depends on exactly where you are and when you planted. All acres taken into consideration, the 155-160 feels about right.

Do’s and Don’t’s of Saving and/or Selling Rice Seed

During this time of year many questions are received about what rice producers can and cannot do with their rice seed. Given current commodity and input prices leading into 2016, there seem to be more questions that usual about saving seed for the purposes of planting in 2016. Here are a few general tips to guide you.

Saving Seed:

Most commercial rice cultivars are protected by the Plant Variety Protection Act (PVPA) with the most commonly grown now covered by the 1994 Act. Most conventional varieties developed by the University of Arkansas (e.g. Roy J, LaKast, etc.) are eligible to be saved by a grower to be planted on his holdings (land owned, leased, or rented). However, all rice seed used for planting in Arkansas has to be tested for the presence of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), sampled by an Arkansas State Plant Board inspector and sent in to an approved lab for analysis.

RiceTec hybrids and Horizon Ag Clearfield varieties can’t be saved for planting – it’s illegal. RiceTec seed is only available directly from RiceTec or an authorized RiceTec retailer. Clearfield varieties are only available to be sold as certified seed from a Horizon Ag authorized retailer.

Selling Saved Seed:

In order to sell any saved seed of University of Arkansas protected varieties, it is required that the seed first be in the Seed Certification program and pass the standards for a certified class (Foundation, Registered, or Certified Bluetag). After it has made it through the certification process up to the point of bagging and tagging, it can be sold as non-certified seed.

Some rice varieties such as Jupiter and Cheniere, as well as Clearfield varieties, have

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PVPA Title V protection, meaning they must be sold only by variety name as a class of certified seed.

All rice in Arkansas must be sold by variety name – no ‘variety-not-stated’ sales are allowed.

If a seedsman or individual sells any seed for planting purposes, he must have an Arkansas seed dealer / labeler license.

Downed Rice Endorsement

In an effort to increase awareness and understanding of the program, a PowerPoint presentation has been developed to help explain the crop insurance Downed Rice Endorsement. It is available on the USDA RMA website here: http://www.rma.usda.gov/handbooks/20000/2016/downedriceendorsement.pdf.

Additional Information

Arkansas Rice Updates are published periodically to provide timely information and recommendations for rice production in Arkansas. If you would like to be added to this email list, please send your request to jhardke@uaex.edu.

This information will also be posted to the Arkansas Row Crops blog (http://www.arkansas-crops.com/) where additional information from Extension specialists can be found.

More information on rice production, including access to all publications and reports, can be found at http://www.uaex.edu/rice.

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