Crop Outlook / Progress

Survey says we were at 55% planted on Monday. Probably a little further along than that, say 60%. The northern half of the state is ~75%, the southern half 35%.

Most of the rice planted through the first week of April is emerged now. Above normal temperatures and regular rainfall have this crop moving right along. However, crusting issues in the north are a big concern right now. Still plenty of rice to be planted but the extended forecast suggests after this weekend most will be waiting until May with several days of rain on the way this week.

As usual the questions are common and frequent about where we’ll end up on acreage. The early forecast of about 1.6 million acres total still seems reachable for now based on early planting efforts. There are now several factors working against it though including the improving soybean prices. I have a feeling that a good deal of our ‘flex’ ground has been planted though and what rice remains to be planted is on rice ground. Even with the soybean prices improving, the quick pencil math still favors rice (not including PLC payments).

Planting Cutoff Dates

Last week we talked replants and it looks like conditions improved enough to avoid much of it but some are still battling crusting. Now with weather pointing us toward May we have to decide when to stop planting what. The answer seems easier than most might expect or will want to agree with.

Figure 1 shows the average yield performance (percent of optimum) for planting date studies at Stuttgart over the past 12 years. It’s pretty plain to see that things start to get tricky around early May. When you dig deep into the data and start trying to pick out which cultivars should be falling away – guess what, they all do. There’s a reason that drop is so sharp, they all fade pretty heavily (and similarly) starting into the month of May.

![Effect of Planting Date on Rice Yield](Image)

It’s probably a good rule of thumb to say that the north part of the state begins that decline about May 1, central about May 7, and south about May 14. In good years almost anything does well even past that point but in average years few things hold up.

Hybrids hold onto a larger percentage of their optimum yield as we move later into May and early June. Of the varieties, medium grains (Jupiter) become the best choice. If selecting a long grain it would be best to pick a mid-maturity variety like Wells or LaKast. Roy J actually holds up as well or better into late May but there can be serious issues getting it to dry down (same can be said for Jupiter).

Perhaps the best advice is to ‘dance with the one that brung ya’. Grow what you grow best. The later the planting date the greater the emphasis should be on disease package, standability, and maturity (not super early, not super late).
Soil Crusting

Trying to decide if it’s worth it to flush or not? Picture 1 is just one example of seedlings having a tough time emerging. Once the growing point turns down it’s basically game over. If you dig up seed and find that they’re starting to stack and twist up and turn at the crust, FLUSH. You’re already toeing the line.

 Seed Treatments Wearing Thin?

Looking around at the early rice coming up, the seed treatments are earning their keep. Luckily the fungicide seed treatments haven’t been pushed too hard and the warm conditions should help the rice outgrow any seedling disease that might be lurking.

Insecticide seed treatments continue to show a great early season benefit in the helping the rice crop take off. One of the disadvantages of planting early and it taking a while for the rice to emerge is that the seed treatment is wearing off. We generally expect about 35-42 days of activity from the insecticide seed treatment. Once we get past that window we likely won’t be controlling much grape colaspis or rice water weevil. Keep that in mind as some fields go to flood in a few weeks. If water weevil scarring is heavy then an insecticide application may be needed at 7-10 days post flood.

Before you ask, yes, the insecticide seed treatment was still worth it. The improvement in early season vigor and growth provided by these treatments is substantial even in the absence of insect pressure. Like a record on repeat ‘treat the seed’.

Pic. 1. Seedling difficulty emerging.

Pic. 2. Dead seedling failed to emerge due to crusting.

The DD50 program is back and better than ever and can be found at http://DD50.uaex.edu. Major changes have been made to make the overall process simpler and easier to use. Changes to midseason N recommendations have also been incorporated. As always, all feedback is welcome so we can continue to improve the program for you. It also now works great in the browser window of your mobile device!
Rice Farming for Profit in 2016

Article posted last week if you missed it: http://www.arkansas-crops.com/2016/04/15/rice-farming-profit/.

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 rice@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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