Arkansas Rice Update

Dr. Jarrod Hardke & Scott Stiles

April 26, 2019 No. 2019-09 www.uaex.edu/rice

DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System

Bang Head Here

"I wanna bang my head against the wall…" This weather pattern couldn't be more frustrating. At least in 2018 it was so cold and wet that you just had to sit back. This spring we're getting teased each week.

A good word of advice right now is to not look at the long-term forecast. You don't need that additional negativity. After last year's record hot May, this one is looking cool and wet.

So, last Monday's report had us 25% planted and with surprisingly quick weekend drying we had drills rolling Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday this week in most areas. With that, we should be well over 30% planted by the next report on Monday. We need to hit 37% planted to tie 2015 and 2008 for slowest progress of the years in **Fig. 1**.

Planted rice that has emerged doesn't look that great in many places. The mild conditions with heavy rains have caused some seedling disease issues (**Fig. 2**). While it may be struggling to put on much growth at this point, be aware that it may take off quickly so continue to run updated DD50 reports online. Anything already emerged will need to be fertilized and flooded within the next 3 to 4 weeks.

In addition, with a drought never far away, some fields have gone from standing water to dry crusting conditions in just days, leading to stand establishment issues (**Fig. 3, 4**). Flush if you can, and if you can't, hopefully the next rain is a timely one. Rice will live off the seed for a while to buy you time, but drying out in the soil will finish it off, which can and will happen especially on clay soils.

Keep overlapping those residual herbicides with the free activating rainfalls. If the wind allows that is. We'll get this crop in, slowly but surely. Let us know if we can help.

Fig. 1. AR Rice Planting Progress 2008-2019.

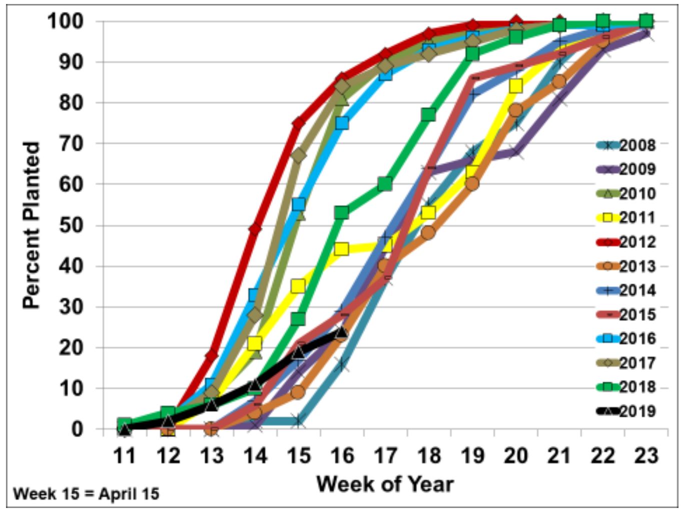


Fig. 2. Seedling disease complex causing rice stand reductions in some fields.

Fig. 3. Soil crusting preventing seedling emergence under dry conditions.

Fig. 4. Rice seedling struggling to penetrate a dry soil crust.

Rice Market Update:

July rice futures were hit with heavy losses this week. As of mid-morning Friday, the contract had lost almost 34 cents in this week's trading – most of which occurred with Tuesday's 27 cent crash. If the July contract does more than simply "refill" the February 21st chart gap (see chart below), the next key layer of support is the February 20 low at $10.10 ½.

CME July 2019 Rice Futures, Daily Chart.

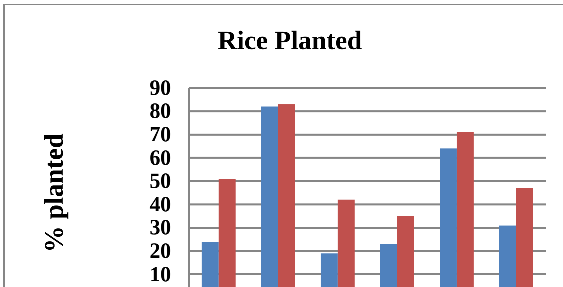
The rice market completely ignored the Mid-South planting delays this week. Whether it continues to do so depends on the accuracy of forecasts for more rainfall next week. In the background, U.S. and World rice supplies are ample going into the 2019 croop year and some acreage reduction is needed. Another bearish factor for rice this week was the U.S. Dollar index. Nearby futures are trading at the highest level since May 2017. With plenty of grain around the globe, the Dollar surge is not helpful in regard to export competitiveness.

U.S. / China Trade Talks:

The U.S. Trade Team will be in Beijing next week with the Chinese returning to the U.S. in early May. Speculation today leans toward Chinese President Xi and Trump signing a trade deal in late June at the G20 meeting in Japan.

U.S. Crop Progress

The graph below includes rice planting progress for individual states as of April 21st. With the exception of Louisiana, most Mid-South states were less than 25% planted at the start of the week. NASS indicated that planting in Arkansas was 24% complete compared to the five-year average of 51% planted.



	AR	LA	MS	MO	TX	US
4/21/2019	24	82	19	23	64	31
5-Year Avg.	51	83	42	35	71	47

As part of the delayed planting story, Mississippi and Arkansas were projected to increase corn acres 25% this spring. For most counties in both states the crop insurance "Final Planting Date" for corn was April 25th. The number of "Prevented Planting" claims on corn is expected to be very high.

Whether growers take the full "Prevented Planting" payment on insured acres and leave ground fallow remains to be seen. An alternative to planting corn would likely be shifting acres to soybeans or cotton and collecting 35% of the "Prevented Planting" payment. The price outlook, production costs, and projected returns of alternative crops are all part of the "Prevented Planting" decision.

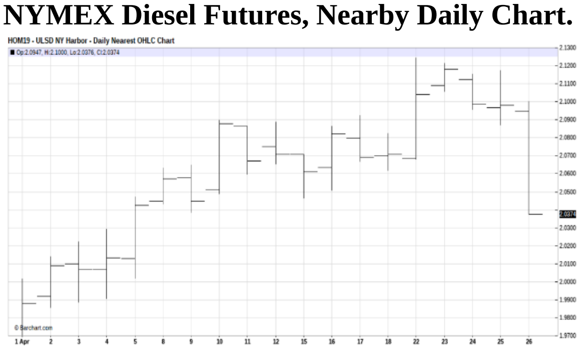
New crop soybean futures fell below $9 this week, which could make a full "Prevented Planting" payment on corn look very attractive. December cotton is trading near 77 cents, but for both cotton and soybeans, finding preferred seed varieties could be a challenge at this point.

As a reminder, the crop insurance "Final Planting Date" for rice in Arkansas is May 25th.

Diesel Erased Early Week Gains:

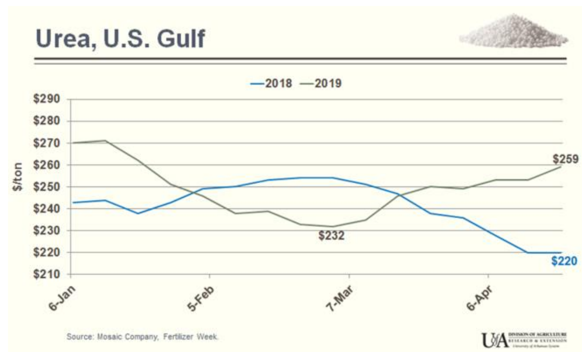
After a spike to $2.12 on Monday, NYMEX Diesel futures reversed lower at midweek. As of Friday morning the nearby May contract was trading just under $2.04; the lowest trade in the last two weeks.

NYMEX Diesel Futures, Nearby Daily Chart.



Gulf Urea Trending Higher:

Urea prices at the Gulf are showing strength over the last several weeks. The average price per ton has been around $260 over the past week; up $27/ton since the beginning of March. Gulf Urea is currently $40/ton higher than a year ago.



One factor driving the later-than-usual price increase is the limited amount of anhydrous application in the Cornbelt. The pressure is now on to get some nitrogen applied ahead of planters. Corn planting got underway last weekend in Iowa and Nebraska. These two states account for 25% of total U.S. corn acres.

Compounding the reduced fall/winter fertilizer application was the lack of river movement of fertilizer over the winter months due to flooding and navigation restrictions. Barge traffic is still restricted to daylight only through St. Louis Harbor and at bridges in Vicksburg, MS, and Baton Rouge, LA. There are also tow size restrictions.

Upcoming:

- **May 1** – Last day to certify production for Market Facilitation Program (MFP).
- **May 1** – crop insurance "Final Planting Date" for **corn** in northeast Arkansas counties.
- **May 10** – USDA Supply/Demand Report.
- **May 25** – crop insurance "Final Planting Date" for **rice** in Arkansas.

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.

Acknowledgements

We sincerely appreciate the support for this publication provided by the rice farmers of Arkansas and administered by the Arkansas Rice Research and Promotion Board.

The authors greatly appreciate the feedback and contributions of all growers, county agents, consultants, and rice industry stakeholders.