May 23, 2014
No. 2014-11

Crop Progress

I think we missed spring. It feels like we broke out of winter straight into summer anyway. I blame going from nights in the 40s a week ago to upper 80s and 90s now.

In the past week, the first fields have been observed going to permanent flood (Figure 1). If your field is ready – large enough, actively tillering, etc. – then maybe next week ahead of the rainy conditions is a good time to get fertilizer out and begin flood establishment. Don’t jump the gun on it though, maybe just what you need is some rain to boost plant growth and you can try to go to flood when it dries up again.

As we progress through the weekend the state should be at 95% planted. However, the long-range forecast indicates rain chances all through next week and next weekend. There’s a good chance that 95% magically becomes 100% as the remaining would-be rice acres get pushed into June and folks jump at the rising soybean prices.

Heading into Memorial Day weekend, many around will be making the choice between a much needed vacation and a pre-rain push. If forecasts for next week are anywhere close to accurate, we could be out of the field for 7-10 days starting with the middle of next week.

Figure 1 shows the updated planting progress for 2014 (black line) compared to previous years. The report for last week moved planted acreage to 88% which is above the 5-year average of 84%. Crop emergence is currently at 74%.

Figure 1. Arkansas planting progress by Week of Year, 2008-2014.

Source: USDA-NASS.

Picture 1. Fertilizer down and the flood coming through the gate.
Out Standing in Your Field

CSI: Arkansas was busy this week (Crop Scene Investigation – can I trademark that?). Kidding aside, crop injury was common this week and it wasn’t pretty. Most of what we’ve been coming across looks like what you see in Picture 2.

Most of the rice fields with these symptoms have a couple of things in common – planted in late April to early May, and plants are short or stunted. Height reduction seems due to PRE herbicides, cold temps, and heavy rain. All of these things together seem to have resulted in unhealthy rice plants that don’t seem to be capable of overcoming adverse conditions and seedling diseases when they normally should.

The sudden extreme flip in weather conditions seems to have made the situation worse rather than improving it. Basically we would think warm sunny days would help, but we needed a gradual warm-up to talk the plants into growing off again. Instead, we got a big shock to the system in the form of 90-degree days and crusted soil in fields with water still in the furrows.

Flush to save what you can with rain days away. Add AMS or DAP if you think it will help. Do not apply burner herbicides at this point for weed control. If you add more stress you may not have any rice left to worry about. Save the rice now, kill the weeds later.

There have also been a few complaints about glyphosate drift. More interesting though has been finding out just how much Sharpen burn we can handle. Timing is critical and more work/observation needed to fully understand tank mix partners.
Ever seen 3-leaf rice that could lay on a quarter? We hadn’t either. Have a look at Picture 3 to see what I’m referring to. We’re still trying to sort out the exact details, but initial thoughts are that a combination of pre-emergence herbicide before water-seeding followed by cold weather after planting is to blame. It appears to be coming out of it, but we’ll keep an eye on it for the next few weeks.

Picture 3. Quarter size rice.

What had been a lush green rice crop took a yellow turn this week. Suddenly most fields that had looked great got “crispy” real quick. The high winds over the past few weeks have certainly had everyone behind on herbicide applications and this was catchup week.

Heavy doses of herbicides with a natural tendency to burn rice have many fields like that in Picture 4. Hopefully winds were truly down when applications went out and there won’t be many drift complaints. Always keep the wind and surrounding fields in mind (yours and your neighbors) when making applications. Also, there are wind speed restrictions for herbicides, some more restrictive than others – see individual labels for details.

Picture 4. Time for clean-up shots.

Rice Markets

The rice market is no longer focused on the weather’s impact on planting but the impact on overall crop conditions and eventual production. Last Monday NASS gave the state’s rice crop an initial condition rating of 65% “good/excellent”. Warmer temperatures this week have advanced crop development and little change is expected in crop conditions in the next Crop Progress report due out Tuesday, May 27. As a reminder, the Memorial Day holiday is Monday (May 26) and commodity markets and government offices will be closed.

September rice futures continued to find support this week at $14.40. For the time being this is a key layer of price support to watch. The next level of price support below $14.40 is likely to be $14.25 – which held consistently during the month of April. The most recent high and key resistance for the September contract is $14.60. New crop basis improved slightly over the past week with most delivery points around eastern Arkansas offering in the range of 75 to
Arkansas Rice Update
Dr. Jarrod Hardke, Dr. Bob Scott, & Scott Stiles

85 cents per hundredweight under September futures. With Sept. futures currently trading at $14.50, new crop long grain offers are generally in the range of $6.15 to $6.19 per bushel.

Urea Market
At the Gulf, wholesale urea prices have now declined for the past eleven weeks. Global supplies are ample and imports from the Middle East origins have been steady. Gulf urea prices have been working lower since the start of March. China’s urea export window begins July 1st and runs through October. From July to October a 15 percent export duty is removed. The availability of this supply should pressure world market prices even more, with world urea prices expected to fall roughly 7.5 percent.

DD50 Enrollment
Some changes have been made to the online DD50 Program this year. Hopefully these and future changes will continue to make the program easier and more efficient to use. If you have any questions, or suggestions for improving the program, please let us know. You can access the online program here: http://DD50.uaex.edu/.

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 where additional information from Extension specialists can be found. Please visit the blog at http://www.arkansas-crops.com/

Acknowledgements
We sincerely appreciate the support provided by the Arkansas Rice Research and Promotion Board for this publication.

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