Rice in Texas

Crop Brief on Production, Pests, & Pesticides

Rice Production

- Texas produces nearly 225,000 acres high quality long grain rice for domestic and export markets.
- Rice produces $145 million for farmers and generates $480 million for Texas.
- Pest control is essential in both first- and “ratoon” crop rice.

Insect Pests

- Insects are devastating and are a major concern for rice growers every year. 98% of acreage is scouted and economic thresholds are commonly followed.
- Stink bug causes pecky rice, which reduces quality and lowers revenues 10 to 12%. Rice water weevil reduces yields by 10 to 15% if unchecked.
- Other pests include fall armyworm, chinch bug and stem borers.
- Non-chemical practices to reduce water weevil damage include laser leveling and delayed flooding for water management, seeding rates for uniform stands, and selective planting dates.
- 100% of the Texas rice acreage is treated with an insecticide at least once.
- Key insecticides include lambda cyhalothrin (Karate), diflubenzeron (Dimilin) and fipronil (Icon). Carbofuran (Furadan) is no longer used.
- Methyl parathion and malathion (both OP’s) are targeted by the FQPA but are important in the rice industry.

Diseases

- Diseases reduce yields 12%, in the humid gulf coast climate. 47% of the acreage is treated with one or more fungicides each year.
- Sheath blight is most damaging, followed by stem rot, rice blast, kernel smut, narrow brown leaf spot, panicle blanking complex, black sheath rot, and straight head.
• Key fungicides include **propiconazole** (*Tilt*) and **azoxystrobin** (*Quadris*).

• **Benomyl** (*Benlate*) – a carbamate is important but used to a lesser extent.

• **Capton, macozeb** (*Dithane*), and other seed treatments are applied to planting seed but will be reviewed under FQPA.

**Weeds**

• **Halsulfuron** (*Permit*) for sedges and **triclopyr** (*Grandstand*) for broadleaves are important.

• Weeds cause economic losses in rice, even with widespread use of herbicides and non-chemical control measures.

• Integrated Weed Management includes cultural and mechanical practices, coupled with herbicide applications. Scouting determines infestations and herbicide timing.

• Annual grasses (barnyard grass and sprangletop) and broadleaf weeds (hemp sesbania - coffeebean and alligatorweed) reduce yields 12 to 22%. Dayflower seed and red rice seed contaminates market rice and reduces grades by 4 to 8% or more.

• 97% of acreage is treated with a herbicide. **Propanil** (*Stam*) is usually applied with a residual herbicide, such as **molinate** (*Ordram*), **thiobencarb** (*Bolero*), **quinclorac** (*Facet*), or **clomazone** (*Command*).

• **Molinate** (*Ordram*) is under EPA review for worker safety concerns. But occupational exposure is now reduced with closed system bulk loading and GPS equipment on aircraft has totally replaced field flaggers.

**Vertebrate Pests**

• Blackbirds are the most damaging avian pest, eating seed at planting and near harvest. Brush removal, early planting, scare tactics, and **avicide DRC-1339** help rescue losses.

• Feral hogs, alligators, turtles, and nutria damage ditch banks, and levees.

• For latest information regarding these issues and status of risk assessments visit ipmwww.ncsu.edu/opmppiap and www.epa.gov/pesticides.

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