RiceTec

People Dedicated to the Field of Rice

Heading 2009

Published for the customers of RiceTec, Inc.

Environment Favorable for Increased Disease Pressure

Jeff Branson

Typical weather patterns across most of the rice growing region is conducive to rice disease development. This year is no exception. Sheath blight, blast and kernel smut are the more common diseases that have the potential to cause significant economic loss in rice production. RiceTec Hybrids offer the best overall disease resistance package in commercial rice production. However, this does not mean that hybrid fields should not be scouted periodically for diseases.

Below average temperatures in July and early August have provided sheath blight with ample moisture to move quickly up rice plants in many of the later planted fields. Scouting begins at panicle initiation and should continue through 50% heading. RiceTec hybrids normally do not require fungicide treatments; however, the current weather pattern in many areas is very favorable for rapid development of the disease. Fields should be scouted closely for disease and treated with fungicides when necessary.

Kernel smut can also cause significant yield losses. The only factors to base the treatment decision on are variety/hybrid selection and field history. RiceTec hybrids are rated moderately susceptible to kernel smut and treatment for the disease is usually not required. However, fields with a history of high pressure and yield loss from the disease should be considered for treatment.

Blast is another disease that can cause significant yield loss, but unlike sheath blight, there are varieties/hybrids that are resistant to the disease. RiceTec Hybrids are resistant to the most common races of blast. Blast is an airborne disease that has the potential to devastate rice fields if left untreated. The disease usually starts on the outside levee or high spots where it is hard to maintain a flood. If leaf blast is observed it is recommended to treat with a fungicide at 50% heading and again at 100% heading to stop the disease from moving to the panicle.

One other disease that has gained attention over the past few years is *Cercospora*. Also known as Narrow Brown Leaf spot, this disease usually appears during heading, and will cause incomplete grain fill, premature ripening, and necrosis of leaves and stems. It will also hinder the growth of a second crop, and may even overwinter in crawfish rotation systems. At present there are no guidelines for scouting or treatment thresholds, so as with kernel smut fungicides must be applied preventatively.

SHEATH BLIGHT

LEAF BLAST

KERNEL SMUT

- All paperwork needed for delivery of RiceTec Hybrids to mills has been mailed. If you have any questions regarding this process, please contact your area representative.

Ratoon Management Begins with the Main Crop

Mark Spilman

With the ever increasing costs of production, it is never too early to consider what fields to second crop and which ones would be best to shoot for a good quality first crop. Some things to consider for making a ratoon crop decision are:

- **Varietal / Hybrid selection**: Many folks that grow RiceTec hybrids in the coastal area do so with the ratoon crop in mind. The strong disease package and tremendous yield potential that our hybrids offer make them a strong ratoon candidate right out of the gate.

- **Disease presence**: Is there a strong disease presence such as Sheath Blight, Blast, or Cercospora present in the main crop? If so it is probably best to forget about ratoon production in those particular fields. The effects of fungicides applied on the main and on the ratoon crop are currently being evaluated by Texas Agrilife Research at Beaumont and Eagle Lake.

- **Main Crop Harvest Date**: RiceTec Hybrids second crop matures faster than that of varietals. Therefore you can expand the main crop harvest window to September 1 in the Gulf Coast, and still realize a very high yielding RiceTec second crop.

- **Rutting after main crop harvest**: A wet harvest season makes for poor ratoon crop yields. Excessive rutting by combines and auger carts cut down on harvested ratoon crop acres, and make yield enhancements such as flail mowing virtually impossible.

Once the decision has been made to ratoon fields, consider the following practices to enhance the grain yield and quality of your second crop rice.

- **Stubble Management**: Flail mowing rice stubble immediately after main crop harvest to a height of 8 to 10 inches has consistently increased ratoon yields in RiceTec Hybrid rice fields by 500 to 1000lbs/acre. A second option would be to slow your combine down and cut your main crop rice to a height of 8 – 10 inches. Rolling the main crop stubble doesn't seem to have any advantage.
- **Nitrogen Management**: RiceTec Hybrids respond best to 100 units of nitrogen applied to dry ground, at ratoon crop flood up. University tests show that you lose yield each day you delay in flooding up your ratoon crop. Chase the combine out of the field with the flood water. University tests are currently under way to determine if a second nitrogen application at boot in the ratoon crop has any additional benefit to grain yield and milling.

** Expect about a two week delay in maturity when flail mowing or adding a booting application of nitrogen to the ratoon crop.*

Initial Green-up is Faster with the RiceTec Hybrids

RiceTec Hybrids Allow Earlier Harvest of Second Crop

When is the best time to drain RiceTec Hybrid Rice?

Brian Ottis

When thinking about draining rice, RiceTec hybrids are really no different than other varieties. The more important considerations are soil and field type, and field size. In areas, zero-grade rice production is becoming more popular. In this type of system, typically growers can drain much earlier than on graded, or sloped fields, mostly because of poor or very slow drainage. In this case, the ground will stay moist for a much longer period of time, not causing a stressful situation for the rice and hopefully allowing the ground to dry enough so that harvest is not too messy.

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In the case of sloped fields, the biggest consideration should be soil type and stage of growth. A good rule of thumb is as follows. On a silt loam soil, consider draining when the rice kernels in an average part of the field are straw-colored at least two-thirds to three-quarters down the panicle. On clay soils, consider draining slightly earlier. For example, on a sharkey clay on a 2% slope, consider draining when one-half of the kernels are straw colored on a given panicle in an average part of the field. Draining is certainly not a perfect science, at least not yet. In most cases, growers have become comfortable draining on a specific piece of ground. However, if you are in the camp that is accustomed to harvesting at low moisture levels, consider draining slightly earlier in order to get into the field when moisture is between 18 and 20%.

Harvest Aid Application on Hybrids

Bill Midkiff

Every year we are approached with questions of when and how to apply harvest aids on RiceTec hybrid rice. RiceTec hybrids are recommended to be harvested when grain moisture reaches approximately 18-20% in order to preserve milling quality and maximize grain retention. General recommendations for Sodium Chlorate use as a harvest aid are 3-6 pounds of active ingredient per acre, at or below 25% grain moisture, with harvest to begin in 3 to 5 days. Desiccation of green foliage along with a decrease in grain moisture will occur rapidly once applied so caution should be used when planning harvest timetables. Factors including varying maturity, weather conditions, and harvest efficiency should also be considered before any applications are made. For more information, feel free to contact the Technical Service Representative in your area.

Harvest Moisture is Critical in Maximizing Profits

Brian Ottis

A recent five-year study by scientists at the University of Arkansas has determined that the optimum harvest moisture for maximizing head rice yields is 21%. Many of you are saying, "What? I can't afford to harvest rice that green?" Most commercial rice drying facilities have an escalating fee schedule for rough rice. A critical break point in this schedule is the difference between bringing in rice at 18.9% and below and 19.0% and above. There is a nickel difference per bushel in drying charges at this level. Above 21.9%, the fee goes up $0.20/bushel. Based on this fee schedule and the characteristics of rice during the milling process, the U of A scientists determined that the best economic harvest moisture content is 18.7%, which falls directly in line with RiceTec's recommended harvest window of 18 to 20% moisture for RiceTec Hybrids.

For many hybrids and varieties of rice, once the kernel moisture reaches levels below 16%, they can absorb and desorb moisture from the atmosphere. If a cool front with rain comes in during the Fall, rice moisture can briefly increase. Then, the wind will shift out of the north lowering the humidity, causing the kernel to dry rapidly, causing fissuring. When fissuring occurs, it is very likely that the kernel will break during the milling process, ultimately reducing head rice yields and possibly resulting in a discount.

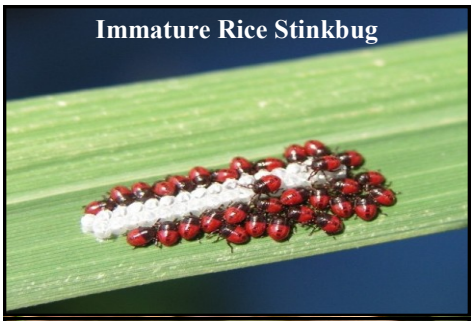
So, plan ahead this year and try to get into the field when moisture is at or near 18 to 20%. I think you'll find that your milling yields will improve and you'll be happier with the premium, rather than a discount. If you have any questions about proper harvest moisture content for RiceTec hybrids, please contact your RiceTec representative.

Be on the Lookout for Rice Stinkbugs Following Heading

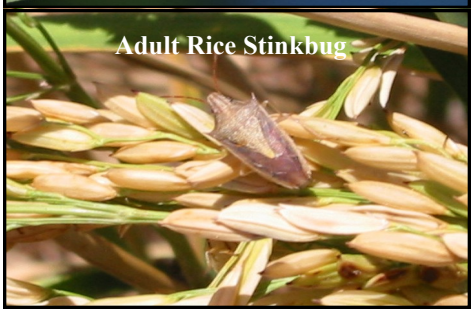
Brian Ottis

Rice stinkbugs are a perennial problem for rice producers in the Mid South and Gulf Coast. In my experience, stinkbug pressure is much worse in our southern rice areas, but can be an issue for any rice producer. Rice stinkbugs generally spend time on headed grasses such as johnsongrass or dallisgrass and move into rice fields upon heading. For the last couple of years it seemed like stinkbugs were at extremely high levels prior to heading, but then numbers diminished; however, don't let your guard down as every year brings new conditions and the possibility for problems.

Stinkbug damage can reduce head rice yields and increase the number of broken kernels if left unchecked. For the first two weeks of heading, the economic threshold is 5 stinkbugs per 10 sweeps of a stinkbug net. The second two weeks following 50% heading, it is 10 stinkbugs per 10 sweeps until rice reaches dough stage. According to Dr. Mo Way at Texas A&M University, these numbers vary based upon the expected crop yield, value and cost of an insecticide application. The best time to check for stinkbugs is in the early morning or late evening hours, as the pest tends to move up the plants during the cooler part of the day. If thresholds are reached, consider applying an insecticide such as a labeled pyrethroid, carbaryl, or methyl parathion. If you have any questions about treatment levels please contact your RiceTec representative.



Immature Rice Stinkbug



Adult Rice Stinkbug

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