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INTRODUCTION – The Arkansas Rice Newsletter is published periodically to provide updates, alerts, and recommendations for rice production in Arkansas. If you know of someone who would like to be added to the e-mail list, please send an e-mail to: cwilson@uaex.edu.

I have set up a blog to distribute information in addition to the newsletter. If you are interested, you can visit the blog at <http://arkansasrice.blogspot.com>.

PRELIMINARY RICE YIELD TRIALS

Harvest of the 2010 Arkansas Rice Performance Trials has been completed and the yields have been compiled. Preliminary yield results can be downloaded from the Arkansas Variety Testing website (<http://www.arkansasvarietytesting.org>). I caution that these yields are preliminary and will not be final until complete review. The final report should be completed soon and will be available as a Rice Information Sheet either online at the above web site, at the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service website, or in printed form from your local county Extension office. The hard copies should be available in January, 2011.

RICE CROP PROGRESS AND CONDITION

The 2010 rice crop is near completion with over 90% of the rice harvested. Yields have been less many growers anticipated and in several cases, a failure. While yields for a few growers were actually better than ever, most struggled with yields typically ranging 20-40 bushels/acre less

than normal. The number of failures that I have been involved with (less than 120 bushels per acre is really a failure in today's economic environment) have exceeded what I have experienced in the past 20 years. The USDA has estimated Arkansas yields at 142 bushels/acre, which are the lowest statewide yields we have had since 2001.

As you look back and try to prevent these disasters from happening again, here are just a few observations. The heat was certain a factor but, in and of itself, was only partially responsible for lower yields.

Water management proved to be crucial. The heat and drought strained the irrigation abilities of many growers and ultimately caused significant yield losses. Hot spots or areas where water never reached were evident in many fields across the state.

Bacterial panicle blight was widespread and responsible for major losses among certain varieties. This disease was particularly more severe in fields of rice following rice and later planted.

Planting date had a significant effect, as it normally does. However, the date at which yields began to be negatively impacted was much earlier than normal. Because we experienced the heat so early in the growing season that "late planted rice" was most everything planted after April 20.

Low fertility, particularly potassium, was observed in an alarming number of fields. These fields with inadequate fertility often expressed their effects as stem rot, cercospera

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Dr. Chuck Wilson, Dr. Rick Cartwright, Dr. Gus Lorenz, and Scott Stiles

(narrow brown leaf spot), and to a limited extent bacterial panicle blight.

Excessive rainfall early in the growing season resulted in severe flooding in some areas. Rice was submerged in some areas for an extended period of time and the yields were affected.

Many of these problems will solve themselves if we can avoid record high night-time temperatures and season-long drought. (Much of the state is still in a mild drought). I am certainly ready to put 2010 down as one of the most difficult in the last 25 years and move on to 2011.

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