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Rice Update
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The past couple of weeks has without a doubt been the most challenging so far in my career. I could see the glyphosate drift problem coming, but I would not have ever imagined it would be this widespread. I think we are pretty much over the initial hump of glyphosate drift complaints. It has certainly left its mark on Mississippi rice production. As of today, I am estimating that we will be replanting over 15,000 acres of ground that was initially planted to rice. This is based on the calls and the acres that I seen in the past couple of weeks along with estimated seed sales from dealers. I would also estimate that we have additional 15,000 acres affected by glyphosate drift that has not been replanted.

Most of the cases that I have been involved with have been the result of drift from an airplane that was spraying cotton and soybean. We are now beginning to pick up more ground rig cases. There are a lot complaints out there that so far are untraceable, which is going to be a difficult pill to swallow for the producer if they have to pay for what they have already invested in the crop and have to start over. We have been able to track drift from four miles off at some locations. Generally in these situations, glyphosate was applied to large acreages of cotton or soybean, which resulted in a lot glyphosate being pumped into the air. With the high winds in the first two weeks in May, it only pushed it further away from its target.

The easiest decision has been to replant where all of the rice in the field is dead or dying. The hardest decision has been whether or not to keep a stand where the rice still has some green leaves that appear to be alive. Several unknown factors come in to play on this decision. The biggest unknown factor is approximately when the drift event occurred to help predict whether the rice is going to survive from the glyphosate drift or is it going to get progressively worse. With it being the end of May, we have not had the time to see if it is going to get worse or better. We need to be replanting if the initial rice crop is not going to make acceptable yields. Helping the producer in making the decision to replant or not and where the rice seems to have some life left in it, has certainly been the hardest ones.

My research plots at Stoneville got hit with glyphosate drift as well. These plots are pretty much past the point of recovering. However, the bright side of it is that it has shown me some differential tolerances to glyphosate among some of the popular varieties. CL 131 seems to be the most sensitive to glyphosate drift (see Figure 1 below). This is also where the bulk of my drift complaint calls have come from. To clarify one item, I have not seen any tolerance issues with Newpath or Clearpath applied to CL 131. All of the complaints that I have been involved have been associated with glyphosate drift. Cocodrie seems to be slightly more tolerant to glyphosate drift than CL 131 and Cheniere seems to be the most tolerant (Figure 2). This is not to say Cheniere is tolerant to a drift rate of glyphosate, because I have gone on several Cheniere calls in the past weeks as well; however, it just seems to be a little more tolerant.

I know I have not discussed anything besides glyphosate drift in this update. If you have any other questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call. I am committed to helping you through the good, bad, and the ugly. So, do not ever hesitate to call if you think I can help. Also, I do want to mention the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation's Summer Rice Policy Development Meeting will be on July 13th starting at 9:00 AM at the Bolivar County Extension Office. I do encourage all producers to attend and glyphosate drift will be an item for discussion on the agenda.

If you want to be added to my direct emailing list, email me at nathanb@ext.msstate.edu. Also, feel free to contact me at 662-822-7359.