Crop Progress

“You are not alone.” That’s probably my most repeated phrase lately. Meaning you’re not alone in your yields being lower than expected. It’s been a common theme lately and a lot of calls are to confirm that people didn’t do something wrong and mess up a crop. The answer is that you didn’t, Mother Nature did.

Most of the “off” yields seem to be on rice planted before April 20. We’ve harvested planting date tests that were planted on March 26, April 18, and May 2. Despite being planted that far apart, we harvested them on consecutive days at the same relative moisture across planting dates. Looking at preliminary yield numbers, overall yields were higher in the April 18 planting than in the March 26 planting. Then we actually see a pretty good drop in yields on the May 2 planting. Explaining the “why” takes some speculation.

Many entries in the March 26 planting headed during the mid-July cool snap and it looks like they didn’t take it well. The April 18 planting saw most entries head during the warmer week that followed and yields largely increased. The exception in the April planting date was Roy J – it headed a few days later during the end-July/early-August cool down and saw a yield drop – which was the opposite of almost all other entries. That drop stood out and was how I started looking at yield compared to heading dates. There was a big drop for all entries in the May 2 planting where they headed during the late July / early August cool down just as Roy J did in the previous planting date.

Since that was probably difficult to wade through, I’ll try to summarize:

Many cultivars planted in late March headed during the cool spell in mid-July and seemed to have slightly depressed yields. In the mid-April planting, most cultivars headed during more “normal” temperatures and yields improved. In the early May planting, nearly all cultivars headed during the end of July cool spell and overall yields dropped off considerably.

All that is a very drawn out way of saying that it looks as though your yield potential this year may be heavily dependent on a combination of when you planted and when the crop reached heading. We just drained the May 21 planting date where most entries headed during warmer conditions in mid-August. We’ll see how that affects overall yields and whether they rebound or remain down with the May 2 planting.

Over the last week, consistently improved yield numbers have been reported (not drastically improved, but improved compared to early reports). Milling yields appear to be very good with the mild summer temperatures and the overall average seems to be north of 55/70 (head rice/total rice).

Figure 1. 2014 average yields by planting date, RREC, Stuttgart, AR.
Rice Stink Bug

For late-planted rice just starting to head, keep scouting! Stopping in a field of green rice we spotted along the side of the highway this week we were picking up 40-80 stink bugs per 10 sweeps. Some were adults but a lot were small nymphs that can be hard to see and pick out so dig through the net carefully. Remember the threshold is 5 stink bugs per 10 sweeps the first 2 weeks of heading and 10 stink bugs per 10 sweeps the 2 weeks after that.

Market Report

The September USDA supply/demand numbers were positive for the rice market and November futures closed 19 cents higher following Thursday’s report to settle at $12.52/cwt. As of Friday morning, prices continue higher, trading in a range of $12.55 to $12.88. The November futures charts seem to indicate prices have reached temporary lows. A close above the $12.65 area on the daily Nov. chart would provide a breakout from the down-trending channel that extends back to June of this year. And, after nine (9) consecutive weeks of lowers closes on the Nov. weekly chart, this week’s trading activity indicates a key reversal higher or a trend change to the upside.

In the Sept. supply/demand report, U.S. long-grain supplies for the 2014/15 marketing year were reduced by 14.1 million hundredweight (mcwt.). Beginning stocks were lowered by 3.1 mcwt from 19.3 last month to 16.2. Long-grain production was reduced by 11 mcwt to a total of 158.3 mcwt.

The biggest factor behind this month’s lower production estimate was Arkansas acreage. The USDA reduced Arkansas’ harvested acreage estimate this month by 95,000 acres. The total harvested acreage estimate for the state now stands at 1.47 million. This significant cut in Arkansas acreage reduced total production by 7.125 mcwt. The USDA held the average yield for Arkansas steady this month at 7,500 pounds (167 bu/acre).

Table 1. USDA-NASS projected harvested rice acreage for Arkansas, Sept. 11, 2014.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Long-grain</td>
<td>950,000</td>
<td>1,255,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium-grain</td>
<td>119,000</td>
<td>214,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1,070,000</td>
<td>1,470,000</td>
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On the demand side of the long-grain balance sheet, the USDA reduced domestic use by 4 mcwt and exports by 5 mcwt, taking total demand from 178 mcwt last month to 169 mcwt in Sept. Ending stocks for the 2014/15 marketing year now stand at 24 mcwt, up from 16.2 at the end of the 2013/14 market year. The USDA estimates average producer prices for long-grain to be in the range of $12.50 to $13.50/cwt ($5.63 - $6.08/bu) for the 2014 crop.

On the world balance sheet, new crop ending stocks were reduced slightly this month from 105.39 million metric tons (mmt) to 105.13. World stocks are expected to decline by 4.8 mmt from last year. Global rice production was reduced a small amount this month, but is still projected to be record large in 2014/15 at 477 mmt. Global usage and exports for the new crop year were also reduced slightly this month.
Where do we go from here? With the USDA Sept. supply/demand report behind us, the commodity markets will focus again on the weather, harvest progress, private yield reports, and estimates of harvested acreage. The FSA will release updated acreage data next Tuesday, Sept. 16. Once this cold front moves through this weekend, it appears conditions will trend warmer and drier. If similar conditions hold throughout the remainder of the month, grain prices may remain under pressure. In the meanwhile, the futures charts indicate a trend change in rice. Near term chart resistance for the Nov. contract is at $12.79 and then $13.00 will be the next heavy layer of price resistance.

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/

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