

Dr. Donald Groth Presents Enhanced Breakout Session

Rice Blast- World's Most Important Rice Disease

REGINA LAROSE

MidAmerica Farmer Grower

Dr. Donald Groth, Research Coordinator, Rice Research Station, LSU AgCenter, will be presenting an enhanced breakout session on rice blast at the upcoming 14th Annual National Conservation Systems Cotton & Rice Conference in Baton Rouge, Louisiana on Feb. 1-2, 2011.

According to John LaRose, Steering Committee Chairman, rice blast is the most important rice disease in the world and warrants grower's attention. "Dr. Groth attended the Fifth International Rice Blast Conference hosted by the University of Arkansas, Division of Agriculture and the USDA's Dale Bumpers Rice Research Center recently in Little Rock, Arkansas. The world's top rice scientists gathered to share their research. Dr. Groth will bring the information back to growers."

The International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) reports; in India, more than 266,000 tons of rice were lost, 0.8 percent of their total yield. In Japan, rice blast can infect over two million acres. In the Philippines many rice fields suffer more than 50 percent yield losses.

The University of Arkansas reported during last year's rainy summer in Arkansas, some fields suffered yields losses up to 80 percent.

"It is the second year in a row for a blast disease epidemic in the region, which produces about half of the rice grown in the United States. Yield losses were minimal in 2009 due to effective management by farmers," said Professor Rick Cartwright, a Division of Agriculture plant pathologist based in Little Rock.

"After the widespread damage in so many fields last year, and with our increasing tendency to plant rice after rice and use no-till systems, it's not surprising that we are having a lot of leaf blast already this year," said Cartwright.

"During the 1980's through 2000's, blast and

seedling diseases were among the most important diseases in Texas," stated The Texas A&M University System. "A shift from long-term to short-term rotations of rice production tends to increase inoculums of pathogens, resulting in more severe rice diseases and more yield losses."

Groth explained rice blast management is based on a combination of host resistance, cultural management and fungicide application. "These management practices are not effective unless the grower knows the basic pathogen biological information and have an understanding of how the disease develops."

Factors favoring the disease include: presence of the blast spores in the air throughout the year, upland rice environment, cloudy skies, frequent rain, and drizzles, high nitrogen levels, high relative humidity, wet leaves and growing rice in aerobic soil in wetlands where drought stress is prevalent according to IRRI.

Groth's presentation at the 14th Annual National Conservation Systems Cotton & Rice Conference in Baton Rouge, Louisiana on Feb. 1-2, 2011 will feature biological, epidemiological, environmental and cultural information. "Water management, field selection, fertilization and fungicide time are critical for control," said Groth.

For conference registration or more details visit; www.mafg.net. △



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