

# Growers Finding Germinating Rice, Slowed Cotton

**PINE BLUFF, ARK.**

**T**he return of sunshine has farmers harvesting as fast as they can, trying to beat the rain that's expected on Thursday.

After weeks of rain and watching as crops became swamped, producers were readjusting to the brightness that reappeared last Friday.

"We're cutting rice as fast as we can," said Glynn Guenther, a Jefferson County rice and corn producer, in a phone interview from his combine on Monday. "You've got to make use of the good weather while it's here."

As a door opened at the end of a meeting last Friday in Pine Bluff, a young farmer exclaimed: "Hey, look out the door, I think that's sunshine!" said Don Plunkett, Jefferson County extension staff chair for the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture. Farmers "will be getting very excited about harvesting, so sunshine and a little wind is welcome."

Some growers were still finding surprises in the field, such as rice kernels beginning to sprout, said Mitch Crow, St. Francis County extension staff chair for the U of A Division of Agriculture.

"I talked to a consultant who said the rice was starting to germinate in the heads," he said, adding that it's a very unusual occurrence, but due to the prolonged exposure to water. Crow said only about a quarter of the county's rice crop had been harvested as of Friday.

Germinating rice grains were also occurring at low levels in Prairie and Jefferson County.

"It can sometimes happen with downed, or lodged, rice," Plunkett said. "Lodging has been somewhat limited here even with all the rain events of a week ago, but I was surprised a week ago to get a report of kernels sprouting on the heads of standing rice."

Brent Griffin, Prairie County extension staff chair with the U of A Division of Agriculture, said sprouting on standing rice will affect the milling quality.

The occurrence ranges from "3 percent to 10 percent on a single panicle and roughly one percent to 3 percent of panicles in a square foot," he said. "The sprouting isn't variety specific, but is mainly occurring in plants that

were mature two weeks ago and have harvest moisture of 19 percent to 23 percent."

While producers welcomed the sun, cotton farmers still had weather worries. Cotton needs highs in the upper 80s to lower 90s during the day and upper 60s to lower 70s for lows to keep its metabolism from slowing.

"We're concerned about the lower temperatures. We don't need any lows in the 50s for sure," Crow said. "The crop just shuts down. The cotton top crop doesn't ever fill out and mature."



University of Arkansas  
Division of Agriculture  
photo by  
Robert Goodson

**This photos shows three ways excess rain can make a cotton boll can go bad, from left to right: sprouted seed in a boll, dirty lint and rotten lint inside a cracked boll.**

In Phillips County, Robert Goodson, extension agent for the U of A Division of Agriculture, said Monday that "the soybean harvest has started back today in earnest," with some growers getting into the field on Sunday.

"There will be yield loss due to the rain," he said, but added "Yields are still relatively strong - 40 to 70 bushels an acre and higher." Cotton in his county wasn't looking good.

"A rough estimate on yield loss is around 20 percent to 25 percent at present," Goodson said, adding that it might go higher.

Rain was expected Thursday along with a strong cold front. However, the sun was expected to return Friday, the National Weather Service said. Δ



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