

Harvest Moisture Is Critical In Maximizing Profits, Preparing For Ratoon Crop

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A recent five-year study by scientists at the University of Arkansas has determined that the optimum harvest moisture for maximizing head rice yields is 21 percent. Many of you are saying, "What? I can't afford to harvest rice that green?" As well,

many commercial dryers don't want rice that green. Most commercial rice drying facilities have an escalating fee schedule for rough rice. A critical break point in this schedule is the difference between bringing in rice at 18.9 percent and below and 19.0 percent and above. There is a small difference in drying charges at this level. Above 21.9 percent, the fee goes up \$0.20/bushel. Based on this fee schedule and the characteristics of rice during the milling process, the U of A scientists determined that the best economic harvest moisture content is 18.7 percent, which falls directly in line with RiceTec's recommended harvest window of 18 to 20 percent moisture for RiceTec Hybrids.

For many varieties and hybrids of rice grown in the Midsouth, once the kernel moisture reaches levels below 16 percent, they can ab-

sorb and desorb moisture from the atmosphere. If a cool front with rain comes in during this period, rice moisture can briefly increase. Then, the wind will shift out of the north lowering the humidity, causing the kernel to dry rapidly, causing fissuring. When fissuring occurs, it is very likely that the kernel will break during the milling process, ultimately reducing head rice yields and possibly resulting in a discount.

So, plan ahead this year and try to get into the field when moisture is at or near 18 to 20 percent. I think you'll find that your milling yields will improve and you'll be happier with the premium, rather than a discount. Additionally, ratoon cropping is top on the minds of many who planted early this year. Harvesting at the right moisture and rapidly re-establishing the flood is a major key to successful ratoon yields.

Interested in ratooning rice? RiceTec is hosting a Hybrid Rice Ratoon Yield Contest for any hybrid rice grower wishing to participate. Details are available at RiceTec.com, so check it out. We have some great prizes for all the winners.

If you have any questions about proper harvest moisture content for RiceTec hybrids, please contact your RiceTec representative. Δ

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