

La. Rice Harvest Flirting With State Record

BATON ROUGE, LA.

South Louisiana rice farmers are reporting some of their best yields ever this year as the harvest season winds down.

Yields in excess of 50 barrels – or 8,100 pounds – per acre have been common.

Dr. Steve Linscombe, director of the LSU AgCenter Rice Research Station, said rice farmers are on their way to one of the best yields.

“Yields in general have been very good,” Linscombe said.

Some problems have developed with disease in isolated fields, and saltwater problems in canals have decreased yields, he said, but those are exceptions.

“Overall, the expectation is, unless north Louisiana yields fall, we’re looking at as good of a yield as we have ever had, possibly close to a record,” Linscombe said.

Most farmers have been able to harvest their crops without creating ruts in the fields, Linscombe said.

“It’s above-average for sure,” said Barrett Courville, LSU AgCenter county agent in Jefferson Davis and Acadia parishes. “Overall, it’s a good rice year.”

Courville estimated the yield average in the range of 45 to 47 barrels (7,300 to 7,600 pounds) per acre in Acadia Parish and slightly less than that in Jefferson Davis Parish.

He said yields have fallen off somewhat in the past few days, as expected.

Some farmers in Jefferson Davis Parish have been delayed because of heavy rains, Courville said, in contrast to some Acadia Parish farmers who need rain for their soybeans.

Courville estimated that a second – or ratoon – crop will be grown on roughly a third of the acreage.

“People have been really excited about the yields all the way from St. Martin Parish to Calcasieu Parish,” said Randy Jemison, Louisiana field representative of the USA Rice Federation. “In many cases, it’s exceeding expectations.”

Jemison said most producers have been staying on schedule.

But in Evangeline Parish, recent rains have slowed down harvest there. Keith Fontenot, LSU AgCenter county agent in Evangeline Parish, said farmers have been kept out of the fields the past few days because of wet conditions.

“The rice is ready, but they just can’t harvest it,” Fontenot said.

Fontenot said most farmers have had yields from 40 to 50 barrels (6,500 to 8,100 pounds) per acre with some in excess of 60 barrels (9,700 pounds).

Fontenot said the amount of acreage that was drill-seeded has increased considerably, and that contributed to the yield increase. He said farmers who plant in dry fields have more options to managing their irrigation.

Dr. Johnny Saichuk, LSU AgCenter rice spe-



Rice is harvested on the Vermilion Parish farm of Durel Romaine. According to Dr. Johnny Saichuk, LSU AgCenter Rice Specialist, Romaine’s field of the CL151 variety yielded 56.5 barrels per acre, which is 9,150 pounds or 203.4 bushels. Drying the rice to 12 percent moisture will decrease the total to 53.8 barrels, 8,700 pounds or 193.5 bushels

cialist, said this year’s harvest is exceptional.

“We’re starting off at a record pace,” Saichuk said. “I just don’t know if we can keep it up because we’ve got a lot of late rice.”

Stuart Gauthier, LSU AgCenter county agent in Vermilion Parish, said yields have been ranging from the upper 40s to more than 50 barrels per acre.

“I think the CL151 variety has made a huge difference,” Gauthier said.

Cheaper fuel and fertilizer costs have led to more farmers planning a second crop, he said.

Gauthier said salt water in canals remains high. “We’re still getting levels in excess of the safe limit,” he said.

In Concordia Parish, county agent Glen Daniels said harvest started on a good note.

“I think our rice crop is one of the better crops we’ve got going,” Daniels said. “Other crops such as soybeans and corn are doing poor to fair.”

The north Louisiana rice harvest is just getting under way.

“We’ve had a limited amount harvested,” said Keith Collins, LSU AgCenter county agent in Richland Parish. “I think we’re going to have a good rice crop.”

Donna Lee, LSU AgCenter county agent in East Carroll Parish, said only a few fields there have been harvested, with indications that yields will be good.

“The rice crop looks good, and we’re expecting a decent crop,” she said. △

APACHE by **ET**
The #1 mechanical drive sprayer.

Link Directly To: **APACHE**

 **PIONEER**
A DUPONT COMPANY

Link Directly To: **PIONEER**