

Lessons Learned On Red Rice – What I’ll Do Next Seed Purchase

Red Rice Free Seed Offers Growers Unique Advantage

Red Rice is among the Mid-South’s Top Ten most troublesome weeds. Why? “It’s tough, prevalent and persistent,” said Dulaney Seed Company General Manager, Terry Dulaney. “Red Rice robs our Mid-South farmers of precious yield each year.” Dulaney adds, “Yield is an important part of any grower’s profitability. When you add up the fertilizer, water and crop protection input resources you lose along with the rice yield, you can easily see how important having Red Rice Free certified seed is to an operation.”

Red Rice or *Oryza Sativa* is an erect summer annual that closely resembles rice as a member of the same species. It is a vigorous competitor whose sprawling tillering makes it a better competitor for space and resources than cultivated rice varieties. In addition, Red Rice competes for soil nutrients and precious water resources which combined produce reduced rice crop yields.

Red Rice is also a dockage risk at the mill. Typically, there’s a maximum limit of 0.5 percent Red Rice and damaged kernels for Grade U.S. No. 1. Removing the Red Rice at the mill can be done but results in additional costs to the miller and dockage for producers.

Red Rice continues to spread. But you can prevent introducing any more when opening up new production. The solution comes from planting Red Rice Free certified seed. To date, Dulaney Seed Company, at Clarksdale, Mississippi is the only seed producer in the United States to offer growers Red Rice Free certified rice seed.

Crumrod, Arkansas rice producer, Phillip Gattas has farmed for more than thirty years. Through personal experience, Gattas has learned the value of planting Red Rice Free seed. “A few years back, we leveled some land to put it into rice production for the first time. The only way you get Red Rice in a brand new field is from rice seed.” Once emerged, Gattas reported his disappointment. “The field had Red Rice in it. And not just a little bit. I knew it had come from the seed. The next time we opened up a new field to rice production, we tried out Dulaney Seed. I talked to Terry and he’d said they offered Red Rice Free seed. It was everything he said. There was no Red Rice in that new field. We’ve planted those fields two years in a row to Dulaney Seed rice varieties and we do not have any Red Rice whatsoever.”

In another instance, Gattas opened up a new rice field and wanted to try a new variety that Dulaney’s did not yet have. “I went to another dealer, and what I got was a healthy stand of Red Rice. I now know better than to go back to another dealer. Dulaney Seed says it’s Red Rice Free and it is. It’s proven itself and Dulaney’s stand behind it.”

Gattas says planting seed NOT Free of Red Rice has a steep price tag and is not worth the

trouble, time and lost production. In efforts to eradicate Red Rice, growers typically take that ground out of rice production for up to a decade. Gattas adds that’s one problem he doesn’t want to buy. “As I open up any new field to rice production from now on, I’m going to plant Dulaney’s.”

The problem with the Red Rice is its nearly impossible to eradicate, which can take up to a decade. Gattas said there are very few options for dealing with the Red Rice problem. “You have to weed by hand or opt into another program which costs time and money. I’ve seen fields go into soybeans or corn for five years and when you plant back to rice, you still have the Red Rice problem. Those are problems you don’t want to introduce into your operation.”

Gattas said, “Investing in Red Rice Free certified seed is definitely worth the money. As we bring new fields into rice production, we’ll be using Dulaney’s Red Rice Free seed. Intensive management is required to avoid spreading Red Rice among fields. Gattas added, “We are very careful with the combine and harvest our Red Rice Free fields first. We take care to clean combines as well. I’ve found the Dulaney Red Rice Free seed so I’m done looking for anything else. It’s proven.”

Dulaney said, “The value of planting Red Rice Free seed speaks for itself. We’re proud to offer the industry’s only Guaranteed Red Rice Free rice seed.” Dulaney’s Red Rice Free rice is produced through careful and diligent seed production processes. “We have to have the highest standards on quality and production to achieve this distinctive certification. Our 20 years in the seed business has taught us what is necessary and we take that to the highest levels to assure top quality seed.”

The process is tedious. Producing Red Rice Free rice seed requires double field rouging and crystal clean production processes. Dulaney added, “We maintain total control of our seed production at all times. There are no contract growers so our seed is raised, handled, conditioned and distributed under our care and supervision.”

Quality control is paramount according to Dulaney. “From the seed, to the field inspections, to pre-harvest, storage and at the plant, the seed is monitored by experienced seed professionals, managed in modern facilities and with specialized equipment, and inspected throughout the process.”

Dulaney concluded, “We know how to produce Red Rice Free certified seed. Controlling Red Rice introduction into a field is one factor growers can manage for their overall profitability on their rice acres. We remain dedicated to providing growers with that unique advantage of quality in every bag of Red Rice Free seed. In the long-term, this is a smart grower’s best investment.” Δ



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