

More Seed Available

Growers Can Expect Even Better Performance From RiceTec Seed

BETTY VALLE GEGG

MidAmerica Farmer Grower

HARRISBURG, ARK.

Results of tests along the Gulf Coast on Clearfield hybrids were looking very good in early August, according to Van McNeely, RiceTec's Technical services manager.

"They look better than what we saw last year," he said. "The Clearfield XP746, our newest Clearfield hybrid, is really standing out, and the Clearfield XL745, the one we released this year, is right there where we expect it to be as far as performance. What we've seen so far on yields has been excellent."

Excellent means the results are above what was experienced previously.

"With the newest releases, yes," McNeely said. "If you look at Clearfield XP746, we only have a few data points in for this year. However, if you look at historical numbers we're 3 percent higher than what we've seen with the other RiceTec Clearfield hybrids. There's a bump there, the yield increase is one of the benefits of it. The other benefit is the milling. It should be the best milling Clearfield hybrid we have. Where Clearfield XL730 was the current best in milling, this one is going to have even better milling."

Historically, milling was a problem, but current RiceTec hybrids have not drawn the dockage that was seen with the first hybrid released.

"We're actually in the premium range on the current hybrids, and if you look at Clearfield XL730 it's not quite as good as some of the premium variety millers, but it's better than a lot of the varieties on milling," he said.

However, today, milling is not a factor with our hybrids for the producer.

All the new releases are holding on the disease package. They have excellent blast tolerance, straight head should not be an issue, and moderate resistance to sheath blight.

"We've actually got some tests here and in Texas where we're looking at inoculating the plots with sheath blight and then applying a fungicide at different rates or not at all, to see how it affects the yield," McNeely explained. "Historically the last couple of years that data has shown no significant benefit on the hybrids when treated with a fungicide. This year we don't have the data in yet, but just looking at the plots we don't expect a yield response either."

RiceTec's breeders are always making selections for new releases. They're always looking for improved products.

"We have some XP750 and that one is even showing benefits over what we currently offer," he said. "We have it out on some strip trials now in a non-Clearfield version, but the way our system is set up they can have it in a Clearfield hybrid the following year."

Release on that hybrid will depend on the data that it produces. Once the data is in, if RiceTec decides it shows benefits over current products they will move forward on it.

"We could have a limited supply of it in 2010, if we decide to move with it," McNeely added.

RiceTec's market share is continually increasing.

"If you look at the five state area in the United States where we market, it's going to run in the 25 percent to 35 percent range. The range is going to be anywhere from about 15 percent up to about 35 percent, depending on the state," he said.

More and more farmers are wanting to use RiceTec hybrids 100 percent. It is a supply issue, more than anything else, as far as the market share.

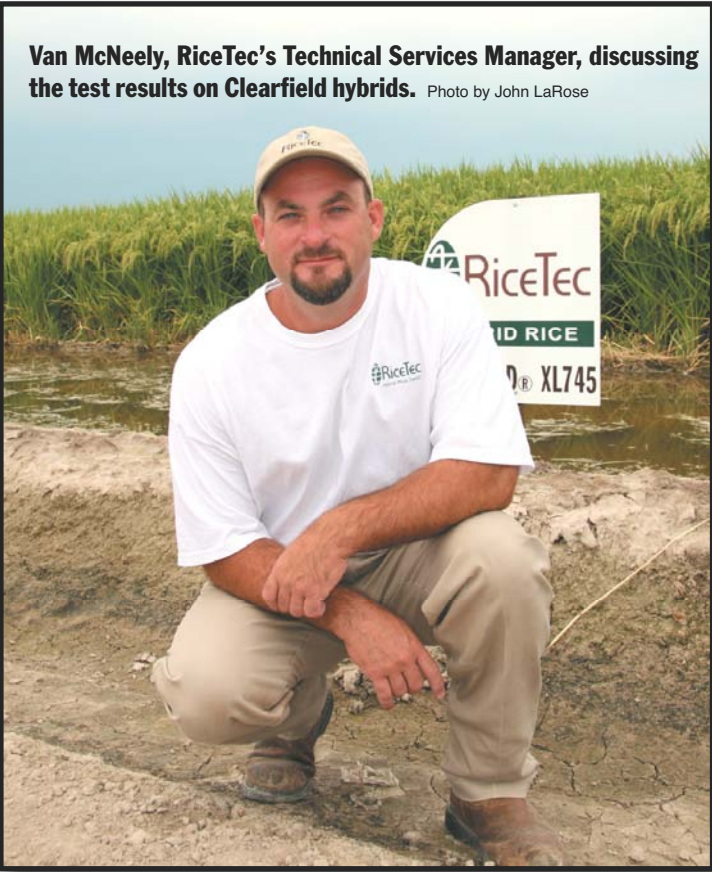
"This year of course and the last several years it was," McNeely agreed. "We basically sold out

everything we had in supply. Now we make plans to increase in production every year. They're just now starting to harvest production down south and it looks like we're in a lot better shape than we were last year."

Last year, there was a problem with production in Texas because of a 100 year rain and cool weather event. RiceTec was using the coastal Texas, for 100 percent of its rice seed production. This year, there's a small amount of seed production in Arkansas just to see if the seed can be produced there. The crop also looked much better along the coast this year, just before the combines got moving.

The climate in Texas is more beneficial for

Van McNeely, RiceTec's Technical Services Manager, discussing the test results on Clearfield hybrids. Photo by John LaRose



seed production than it is north of there, but along the coast there's always worry about hurricanes.

"Correct, and with the current parent lines that are used to make these hybrids, they just produce so much better and are more reliable along the Gulf Coast than in the mid-south," McNeely said. "We talk about the breeders making selections for yield, for milling and all that, but also one of the key things they look at is seed production. How well does it make seed?"

Chad Duckworth, RiceTec marketing and sales support manager located at Jonesboro, Ark., commented further on the new lines from RiceTec. Clearfield XP746, he said, is very similar to the conventional XL723.

"It is supposed to have a 3 percent to 4 percent better yield than our best Clearfield hybrid so far," Duckworth said. "It has probably the best milling that we've seen out of a Clearfield hybrid and also it will be about 3 to 4 days earlier than the Clearfield varieties that are out there."

Duckworth was not sure of the total numbers that would be available, but production was expected to increase by 25 percent to 30 percent. He listed the hybrids that would be available.

"We're going to have XL723, a conventional line; possibly we will have XP750, another conventional in testing," he said. "It won't be released for sale but it will be out for farmers to view. Then, as far as Clearfield options, we'll have Clearfield XL730, Clearfield XL729, Clearfield XL745, and some of Clearfield XP746."

The Clearfield XL730 will be the oldest one this year.

"From there, we never know at this point in the game how many blended products we'll have, the diamond blend, the silver blends, there's a possibility we'll see those again but as of right now, we're not sure," he explained. Δ