

Options For Diversity: RiceTec Field Day

RiceTec Addressing Growers Concerns

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Chad Duckworth, marketing and sales support manager for RiceTec, was pleased farmers turned out at RiceTec's Research Station in Harrisburg for the "Options for Diversity" field day.

"We know rice farmers have a lot going on right now. Irrigating soybeans, 100-degree heat and harvesting rice kept some people away, but we were pleased to still have well over 300 people come see what RiceTec is doing," Duckworth said.

Dr. Jose Re, lead breeder for RiceTec gave an overview of RiceTec's future products. "Dr. Re spoke about our new pipeline products, showcasing our newest conventional hybrids in addition to some of our new Clearfield products," said Duckworth.

Mason Wallace, a RiceTec development representative, discussed his ongoing herbicide and weed competition studies. Duckworth explained Wallace used different rates and timings in his herbicide research, to help the RiceTec field staff make the best recommendations during the growing season in a commercial setting. In the hybrid competition study, Wallace examined zero plants per square foot of competition, one plant per square foot, five plants per square foot and 10 plants per square foot of competition, in order to display the increased competitiveness of hybrid rice with weeds.

RiceTec development representative, Greg Simpson shared his results with irrigation trials, including overhead-irrigation. "Up to this point in the year, overhead irrigation is showing about a 50 percent water savings in this trial compared to the flooded trial right across the turn row from it," said Duckworth. This is the third year of evaluations of hybrids with varietal comparisons using overhead irrigation.

"The intermittent flood portion of the trial is typically the most interesting. RiceTec hybrids always outperform varieties when water levels fluctuate from flooded to dry conditions. We see that hybrids maintain overall yields near levels of conventional flooded situations, while being able to save a good amount of money and water use."

Dr. Brian Ottis, RiceTec industry support manager, spoke about grain quality. "We are working with several universities, millers and third party individuals to develop the best way to manage the hybrid grain once it is sold from the producer to the miller in order to help them maximize throughput and increase potential earnings for growers and processors alike," stated Duckworth.

Duckworth explained RiceTec hybrids have a thinner bran layer which allows them to be milled in much less time as some conventional varieties. Faster milling time and reduced energy use are potential areas of savings when it comes to processing RiceTec hybrid rice, according to Duckworth.

"In times where discussions of sustainability and economics are becoming more important, our hybrids so far appear to offer higher ratings on both."

Ottis also discussed the disease resistance package all RiceTec hybrids feature. "In a year where heat stress can foster diseases such as blast and bacterial panicle blight, hybrids so far indicate that the disease package will prove more beneficial than many have recognized in previous years, said Ottis.

Duckworth spoke about RiceTec's new products. "XP753 data shows that we have good potential to see about a 10 percent yield increase with XP753 compared to XL723. Milling and disease package are going to be basically the same, with an increase in yield and also increased grain retention, almost what you see with the regular variety."

"We are looking at our first Clearfield semi-dwarf, and at this time it looks like we will be releasing it the fall of 2011 for 2012 plantings. In trials to date, it has a seven to 10 percent



Visiting at the "Options for Diversity" field day are from left to right: Philip Northcutt, RiceTec Logistics Manager; Chad Duckworth, RiceTec Marketing Manager; Al Salvo, Farm Plan Area Manager and Steven Gann, RiceTec Arkansas Station Manager. Photo by John LaRose, Jr.

possible yield advantage over Clearfield XL729. It is going to be about 32 to 34 inches tall, so lodging should not be an issue. Grain retention is improved as well. Good grain quality and hybrid disease package also make it very impressive."

Duckworth gave growers a look at another new experimental Clearfield hybrid. "We also have our first product ever that is going to be non pubescent. A 2012 release is anticipated for this new product as well. We have concerns from growers when they are harvesting their grain with the itchiness of hybrids and the wear and tear on machinery, stacking in the bins and skin irritation. This product should reduce these concerns and bring a slight yield advantage- about three to five percent yield advantage over Clearfield XL729. All other characteristics, disease package, grain quality, etc., is going to be very similar to our other products."

"Another product we are excited about is Clearfield XP756. Most of the rice in the mid south was planted in about a two-week window. The semi-dwarf experimental is going to be about three to five days earlier than any of our products so far while XP756 is going to be five to seven days later. Growers will be able to choose a variety of our products and plant it all in the two-week window. Their harvest should be spread out over a four to five week period. This will help the grower with the lines at the mills, machinery capabilities as far as harvesting it all when it needs to be harvested. In addition, conventional XP754 is going to be very similar to the Clearfield XP756 as far as grain quality, yields everything else, but it is also going to be about seven days later than the XL723. This will allow our conventional platform growers to spread out their harvest as well," Duckworth added.

Duckworth concluded. "At this time we are going to be expanding more in the traditional platform. We know that red rice and weed resistance is starting to be an issue in Clearfield rice. We want to give our growers a nudge, give them some additional outstanding options as far as non-Clearfield products to try to help them get back into rotation. We hope to help them be better stewards of the land, and hopefully lengthen out the lifetime of the Clearfield system as well as helping them to spread genetic diversity across their farms." Δ

REGINA LAROSE: Associate Editor, MidAmerica Farmer Grower



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