

Precision Rice Production

*With Latest Technology,
Farmer Raises Rice Yields In
Louisiana*

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Known as one of the most progressive young rice farmers in Vermillion Parish, Christian Richard of Kaplan, La., uses the most up-to-date research-based information and technology in his operation.

He took over the farming operation in 2001 after graduating from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette with a degree in agribusiness. Beginning with a meager 40 acres, he built his operation to include 1,300 acres of rice and 1,700 acres of soybeans, as well as crawfish production.

When he first started farming, Richard used water leveling to prepare his ground for planting rice as a means of controlling red rice. He soon learned that way of leveling the land was not profitable. So, as Clearfield rice seed became available to curb red rice, he laser leveled the field and drill planted the rice. His rice yields went from 33 green barrels to the acre with water leveling to 47.5 barrels after precision leveling.

Once his ground was precision leveled and he began using Clearfield technology, he began no-till drilling 80 percent of his rice on the farm. Labor was no longer an issue with no-till; yet he soon realized the environmental benefits as there was a huge reduction in erosion. The system change helped him save on equipment, diesel and labor.

His participation and graduation from the USA Rice Leadership Development Class and the LSU AgCenter Ag Leadership Program greatly improved his leadership skills.

After meeting Dr. Tim Walker, Mississippi State Research Professor, on the 2005 USA Rice Federation's Leadership Tour, Richard changed his fertility practices. He discussed the particular problems he faces in the southwest Louisiana area, particularly a high pH, with Walker, who then made suggestions. The urea he had been using really didn't address the high pH.

Richard adapted some of the practices from



Mississippi in southwest Louisiana, using more sulfate, more zinc and less urea. He credits Walker with giving him this valuable information to improve his production.

Richard is a civic-minded individual who serves his community in many capacities. He is involved in many organizations including; Kaplan Farmers Co-op Board of Directors; Vice-President of Vermillion Parish Rice Growers; Vice-President of the Louisiana Rice Growers; Member of the Louisiana Rice Promotion Board; Board Member of the Vermillion Parish Soil and Water Conservation District; Executive Committee, Secretary, Vermillion Farm Bureau Federation; Louisiana Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee District 8 Representative Alternate; Indian Bayou Volunteer Fire Department, Past Treasurer/Past Assistant Chief; Vermillion Parish Rice Advisory Committee, 4 years; and others.

He was named the Vermillion Parish Farmer of the Year in 2009, and in 2010 he was named an Outstanding Louisiana Master Farmer. This year, he was reappointed to the Louisiana Rice Promotion Board, and in November 2012, he was re-elected chairman of the Rice Growers Association Board of Directors.

He also was a state winner in the Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation Young Farmers and Ranchers Discussion Meet; Co-host of the John Deere Product Engineering Center Louisiana Test Site from 2001-2006; and he provided host sites for the 2006 and 2007 Parish Rice Field Tour. △

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