

Protect Your Technology Practice Good Stewardship

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Brian Ottis, RiceTec technical services representative for Southeast Missouri is also the industry support manager. Ottis helps manage RiceTec's university testing and coordinates with rice mills and end users. "We are trying to learn what the consumer and mill partner are looking for in their rice product, and tailoring our hybrids to meet not only the needs of the growers, but also the end user," said Ottis. Ottis said, "at RiceTec we are a technology based company. We are always raising the bar. Our sights are extremely high. We have got some things in testing, in future years that are going to continue to blow people away."

Ottis spends 90 percent of his time on the turn rows with the growers on in his office; his pickup; on the phone talking with growers in Southeast Missouri. From his in-the-field perspective, one issue that is gaining importance is good stewardship of Clearfield technology. RiceTec strongly advocates their growers follow the rules and suggestions established in the Clearfield Stewardship Agreement.

Ottis said, "As long as people maintain good stewardship of this technology it will last them forever. The technology that we are putting into the Clearfield system with the hybrids, that we are bringing to the marketplace are just going to continue to raise the bar. We are just going to keep seeing yields improve."

"Growers especially in our area, where we have a dominance of continuous rice production, zero grade rice production where we are in Clearfield after Clearfield after Clearfield, we are starting to see where these farms are getting so large that managing red rice escapes is becoming a problem," stated Ottis.

"If red rice escapes pollinate at the same time as the Clearfield rice there is a good chance that they will outcross. Now the chance of rice outcrossing is a very low percentage, less than one percent, but if you have got several dozen rice plants, red rice plants that survive or are missed by the Newpath and Beyond, that shed pollen to the Clearfield crop, you are going to get herbicide-resistant red rice."

According to Ottis, "if the red rice matures earlier, lodges and shatters, and gets into that soil profile, red rice has been shown to remain dor-

mant in the soil for over 50 years. So once you have got it you have got it. Now you go back to Clearfield rice the following year and then that seed germinates and it is resistant to Newpath, you cannot control it."

"Those areas get bigger and bigger and bigger and every year you are in rice so at some point it is just like before we had Clearfield rice and could not control red rice. No chemical means of controlling that plant anymore. You start getting docked at the mill and it is no longer economically feasible to grow rice on those acres. The problem you have then is that you have got



RiceTec Technical Services Representative for Southeast Missouri, Brian Ottis is also the Industry Support Manager.

Photo by John LaRose

zero grade ground that is not conducive for growing any other crop."

Ottis had this message to growers, "you have got to maintain this technology on your farm, so by rotating to soybeans, and following the suggestions in the stewardship guidelines, that is one way to do it. The thing is, the first time you let this stuff out-cross, you have got it and it will always be there, because it can lay dormant in the soil. Farmers will say, 'I'll rotate to beans two or three years and I'll get rid of the problem.' No! You will not get rid of the problem, you will manage the problem, but it will be there the next time you go to rice."

Growers must pay attention said Ottis, "if you need to send rouging crews out there, if you need to get out there with mule teams, with backpack sprayers, we have got to control these escapes. It is imperative." △

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