



Texas Rice

Texas A&M University System
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Expanding the Farmers' Toolbox

The Texas A&M Agriculture Program is constantly striving to help farmers get the most out of their farming operations, whether that be through production guidelines, economic education or forecasting tools. As farm equipment has become more and more sophisticated, so has the farmer's toolbox. Today's producers have more opportunities for continuing education than ever before, both via the web and through personalized workshops.

Rice Development Advisory

The Texas A&M Research and Extension Center at Beaumont/Eagle Lake recently released a rice forecasting tool called the *Rice Development Advisory* (RiceDevA). *RiceDevA* is a complete rewrite of the DOS-based DD50 program that was designed by Dr. Jim Stansel and written by Jack Vawter in 1986, and has since been modified and updated by various authors.

RiceDevA is an interactive, web-based program that predicts rice growth stages and gives advice on weeds, fertilizer, insect and water management. It provides users with advanced options for creating, running, and displaying multiple field growth forecasts for different

rice varieties and planting/emergence dates for all the counties in the Texas Rice belt. Farmers will benefit from the program by creating profiles of their own rice fields, forecasting rice growth stages, and applying appropriate management measures as recommended by the *RiceDevA* program.

The program was developed by Ted Wilson, Yubin Yang, Peter Lu, Jenny Wang, Jack Vawter and Jim Stansel, with numerous advisors and reviewers identifying corrections and changes to the program. The program is available on the web at <http://beaumont.tamu.edu/RiceDevA>.

Financial And Risk Management Assistance

The *Texas Risk Management Education Program* (TRMEP) includes many focused efforts from the Agricultural Economics Department. These programs are designed



to assist Texas farmers and ranchers in better identifying sources of risk in their operations, inform producers of how to use the tools and/or strategies available for managing risk and help producers quantify the financial impacts of alternative risk management strategies.

A key component of TRMEP is the *Financial and Risk Management Assistance* (FARM Assistance) program, a whole farm and ranch computerized decision support system for long-term strategic planning. *FARM Assistance* was built on a foundation of 20 plus years of research. Agricultural economists at Texas A&M University have perfected methods in risk analysis which simulate the financial future of an agricultural production enterprise. These capabilities are now being extended to provide a greater number of Texas farmers and ranchers with sound decision-making information.

The *FARM Assistance* program enables farming operations statewide, using information specific to their business, to effectively assess the expected financial impact and risks of proposed changes. For example, producers can compare their

From the Editor...



The Texas A&M University System is noted for the quality of education received by its students, and, during good years, by the quality of its football program. Over 40,000 students study at the College Station campus each year, where they gain valuable training that helps them achieve their goals of becoming independent and productive members of our society. If you add to this the students at our five sister campuses, from Texas A&M University at Kingsville to West Texas A&M at Canyon, The Texas A&M University System is one of the largest University systems in the U.S.

The diverse nature of Texas and the size of its population requires that we provide training in a broad range of areas, with undergraduate and graduate opportunities spanning the spectrum from agriculture to engineering and from veterinary medicine to law. It is this aspect of our university system that the large majority of Texan's think of when the topic of Texas A&M comes up. Instructional training is undoubtedly one of the most important missions of Texas A&M; however, when you look a little deeper, it soon becomes very apparent that education and training at Texas A&M goes much further than this.

In addition to Texas A&M's six campus, 13 Research and Extension Centers spread throughout the state, and extension offices are located in almost every county in Texas. Scientists at the Centers conduct cutting-edge research focused on insuring the economic and environmental well being of Texans. Many of these scientists work closely with our clientele to modify the tools that are developed to further increase their value and applicability. Most of the scientists are also actively involved in graduate education, and a significant number are involved in formal graduate course instruction. Extension agents work hand-in-hand with our producers, and increasingly with urban clientele, playing a valuable role in extending research.

As the population of Texas has changed, so have the tools that have been developed and the methods that are use to delivery information about these tools.

One of the most visible aspects of this change has been the increasing role that computers now play in all aspects of business, research, and education. Less than 20 years ago, computers were largely restricted to banks, the military, and universities. Not only have computers become commonplace in our society, but so has the means to exchange information between computers. The internet now allows near instantaneous exchange between computers across the state, country, and world.

Less than a decade ago, 37 million people in the U.S. over the age of 16 were reported to have access to the internet (The Commerce Net/Nielson Internet Demographic Survey, 1996). Today, that figure is reported to exceed 120 million and all indications are that computers will soon be as common in businesses, schools, and households, as the ever-present phone. A recent survey conducted in Denver, Colorado, reported that even for those who do not own computer, 59 % have access to the internet (Making Connections-Denver, <http://www.makingconnectionsdenver.org/Common/Neighborhoods/Articles/index.asp?id=190>). One way or another, almost every person in the U.S. has the ability to access computers and the information they can provide. The near ubiquitous availability of computers and high speed internet access have obviously had a tremendous impact on how information is now delivered.

To insure that our growers are aware of these new, internet-age resources, this issue's cover story briefly describes several computer programs that are expanding our farmers' toolbox.

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Farming Rice

a monthly guide for Texas growers

Providing useful and timely information to Texas rice growers, so that they may increase productivity and profitability on their farms.

Farmers Get New Tool For Managing Red Rice

BASF has announced the approval of BEYOND™ herbicide for red rice control in CLEARFIELD® rice varieties CL161 and CLEARFIELD XL8. BEYOND can be applied post emerge to remove late-emerging or previously missed red rice. It is to be applied once a year, and only following two 4 oz./acre applications of NEWPATH® herbicide at labeled timings. The recommended rate is 5 oz. of product per acre (0.04 lb. ai per acre), which means one quart of BEYOND will treat 6.4 acres of CLEARFIELD rice.

BEYOND, which is in the same chemical family as NEWPATH, is effective in controlling red rice in drill seeded and water seeded rice production systems. The label specifies it should only be applied from tillering until the beginning of panicle initiation (green ring). If applied too late, during the reproductive growth stages, rice yields may be reduced.

If BEYOND is applied to 1-2 tiller rice before flood, then permanent flood should be established within 5-7 days. If permanent flood has been established, the water level should be lowered so that 2/3 of the red rice plant is exposed above the water surface at the time of BEYOND application to achieve red rice control.

The mode of weed killing activity involves uptake of BEYOND herbicide by foliage and/or weed roots and rapid translocation to the growing points. After application, susceptible weeds may show yellowing and growth will stop. Susceptible weeds either die or are not competitive with the crop. Naturally occurring



The red rice plant shown above has easy to spot black hulls with awns. Some specimens, though, with straw colored hulls are much more difficult to recognize. The CLEARFIELD technology is a boon to farmers plagued by red rice, but strict adherence to the program is required to prevent escapes. BEYOND was developed to serve as a ‘clean-up’ crew, for any red rice plants missed in the first two applications of NEWPATH.

biotypes of some weeds may not be effectively controlled with BEYOND.

Cool temperatures (50° F or lower) reduce photosynthesis and transpiration and thus reduce uptake, translocation, and efficacy of BEYOND. Delaying an application for 48 hours from the time the temperature increases to above 50° F, if air temperature has been below 50° F for 10 or more hours, will improve weed control and reduce crop injury.

Applications of BEYOND require the addition of a crop oil concentrate at the rate of 1 gallon per 100 gallons of spray solution. Do not tank mix

BEYOND with other herbicides. Producers are cautioned not to apply when wind speed is greater than 10 mph for ground application or 5 mph for aerial application, when temperature inversion conditions exist, or when spray may be carried to sensitive crops. Also, the product should not be applied through any type of irrigation system.

Sensitive crops include, but are not limited to, leafy vegetables, cotton, CL121, CL141, or any rice variety or hybrid that is not imidazolinone tolerant.

And finally, growers should understand that the purchase of BEYOND herbicide includes a sublicense to practice the resistance management program required as part of the CLEARFIELD rice production system.*

For more information contact Brian Vercellino at (713)724-9856 or John Chesson at (409)658-2557. BEYOND is a trademark of BASF, CLEARFIELD and NEWPATH are registered trademarks of BASF.



Many rice farmers include cattle in their rotations, but this brings in many more variables that must be considered. The *FARM Assistance* program can help a producer decide if their business would benefit from a cow/calf operation.

cash flow risk under various plans, and view estimates of their plan's impact on net worth 10 years down the road. In the past, management changes were evaluated based on gut instincts and average conditions. Texas producers now have, at their fingertips, the ability to evaluate their plans including the risks they face with technical financial expertise. By using the *FARM Assistance* system, a producer can gain valuable insights into the feasibility, profitability, and overall viability of his operation. A formal financial outlook can also ease or prompt valuable communication between the manager and family members, partners, or creditors.

Here's how the program works. Extension specialists work with producers one at a time, so the entire *FARM Assistance* analysis is an individualized process. Before the process begins, you'll be asked to do a little homework by gathering some paperwork. The required data is readily available from your crop insurance agent, FSA office, accountant, and loan officer. Often the information needed has already been compiled to obtain financing. The total cost of the *FARM Assistance* analysis includes the time you spend gathering data, the time you spend with the extension specialist, and a subscription fee of \$250.

The total time required for this process depends on the complexity of your operation, the completeness of your information,

your schedule, and the specialist's schedule. While everyone is different, the typical time you'll spend in session with the specialist is 3-5 hours for the initial meeting, 2-3 hours for the review, and 1-2 hours for the final report delivery.

Contacts: Steven Klose, Dean McCorkle, George Knappek, Greg Kaase, DeDe Jones, Dustin Gaskins, Jay Yates, Wade Polk, and Will Phinizy, all with the Department of Agricultural Economics, Texas A&M University System. For more information on the *FARM Assistance* program call toll free 1-877-TAMRISK or visit the website at <http://trnep.tamu.edu/>.

Master Marketer Program

The *Master Marketer Program* is the most intensive agricultural marketing training ever offered by Texas A&M. Sixty-four hours of hands-on training are held in four two-day sessions, each two weeks apart. *Master Marketer Program* instructors come from Texas Cooperative Extension, numerous universities and private industry. Graduates of the *Master Marketer Program* are expected to assist county Extension agents in establishing a marketing club in their home county.

The Texas A&M Agricultural Economics Department piloted the *Master Marketer Program* in Amarillo in 1996. The success of that effort led to the statewide expansion of the program. Ten programs have been held since then in Wharton (1997), Lub-

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Older equipment, like this steel-wheeled back hoe, offers the advantage of no monthly payment, but heightens the risk of work stoppage due to breakdowns. The financial assistance workshops can help a producer decide when buying new equipment is most cost effective.

Farmer Toolbox continued...

bock (1997 and 2000), Waco (1998), Vernon (1998 and 2001), Victoria (1999), Amarillo (1999), Uvalde (2000) and Abilene (2001). The intense demand for the program is evidenced by its return to Amarillo, Lubbock and Vernon in 2004. Whether it was due to the program's reputation and results, or current economic conditions, those sessions filled weeks prior to the application deadline. To date, more than 500 producers and agribusiness people have successfully completed the training.

The impact of the program has been staggering. Participants are surveyed 2 years after graduation to determine the educational effectiveness and the bottom line impacts of the *Master Marketer Program*. Results from the first five classes indicate a major impact on the knowledge/understanding and adoption of a wide array of risk management/marketing tools covered in the program. As a result of these improvements, graduates from those first five classes indicate that, in average, they have increased their receipts by \$25,603 annually. If similar results extend across the subsequent eight classes, the increase across all *Master Marketer Program* graduates would exceed \$15.3 million annually. This is still only a portion of the program's total impact. While no assessment has been conducted to determine the financial impact on producers participating in the marketing clubs started by these volunteers, plans are in place to do just that.

The *Master Marketer Program* is truly an Industry - University partnership. Without the initial grants received from the Texas Corn Producers Board and the Texas Wheat Producers Board, the *Master Marketer Program* would not exist. Their continued support and the addition of the Texas Farm Bureau, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo and the Cotton State Support Committee as sponsors has enabled the program to develop across Texas. These "alliances" and the overall success of the program have been in-

valuable in leveraging funds from other sources. Industry partnerships have been critical in widening the *Master Marketer* education concept to reach audiences in allied industries. Those partnerships and others will be critical in maintaining, enhancing and expanding this highly successful effort.

The *Master Marketer Program* has been recognized as the top Extension program in the country in

the area of economic training by the American Agricultural Economics Association (1998) and the USDA - Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (2000). Minnesota, Montana, South Dakota and North Dakota, among other states, have initiated similar programs patterned after the *Master Marketer Program*.

Currently, the program is offered once a year with a regional emphasis; however, applications are accepted from Texas residents

regardless of location. Registration fee for the *Master Marketer Program* is \$250 per participant. Subjects covered during the sessions include:

- Basic and advanced marketing strategies
- Developing and implementing a marketing plan
- Fundamental and technical analysis
- Value added and alternative markets/enterprises

Contacts: Mark Waller, Steve Amosson, Stanley Bevers, Jackie Smith and Rob Borchardt Agricultural Economics Department, Texas A&M University System. Go to <http://mastermarketer.tamu.edu/>.

Texas RAMM

(Risk Assessed Management/Marketing)

The *Risk Assessed Management/Marketing (Texas RAMM)* is an intermediate-to-advanced level, 6 to 10 hour workshop, in which participants use budgeting tools to make crop selection decisions, develop a marketing plan and utilize various crop insurance products and marketing tools to manage production and

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The Master Marketer program brings in top instructors who are experts in their field. Pictured here is Darrell Holaday, a private marketing consultant who previously served as Manager of the Kansas Agricultural Marketing Association.

Farmer Toolbox continued...

Side by side fields of rice and sorghum on the Stoesser farm in Dayton. Deciding what crops to grow, and how much acreage to dedicate to each, can be made easier if all the variables are worked out first on paper.



price risk. In a simulated, game-type environment, participants decide what crop to produce, calculate break-even prices over a range of possible yields, make crop insurance decisions, and then market their crop using various tools as the simulated year progresses from a pre-plant to post-harvest time frame. Given their marketing, crop insurance decisions, and their resulting yields, participants compare their levels of profitability. This workshop allows participants to see how various tools such as budgeting, futures and options, crop insurance, and marketing plans can be pulled together to accomplish risk management. The simulation/game approach maintains interest, and gives participants a better grasp of the actual use of these tools. A similar program has been led successfully by Kansas State University.

Quicken® Short Courses

Sound financial management is essential to farm and ranch businesses. Rising production costs and volatile agricultural commodity prices create a set of circumstances that reward correct decisions and penalize poor decisions. Through the use of computerized record keeping, a farmer or rancher can organize up-to-date financial information necessary to successfully manage their operation.

Quicken is an inexpensive, easy-to-use record keeping program that is widely utilized by agricultural producers. Extension Economists in Texas have taught over 1,000 Quicken seminars to help Texas farmers and ranchers become better record keepers and decision makers.

Three courses based on Quicken have been offered: *Beginning Quicken*, *Advanced Quicken*, and *Financial Management with Quicken*. In the Beginning and

Advanced courses, producers are taught in a hands-on setting, allowing them to gain an understanding of how to categorize expenses and income, enter transactions and develop meaningful reports. The *Beginning Quicken* does not require any prior computer experience. The other two courses are designed for users of Quicken with a good working knowledge of the program. The course in *Financial Management with Quicken* concentrates on the development and analysis of financial statements. While the *Beginning Quicken* is offered at numerous locations around the state, the more advanced courses and QuickBooks, for agribusiness applications, are usually taught in regional centers.

Credit Alternatives and Management

Adverse economic conditions frequently result in financial problems for farm and ranch businesses. The *Credit Alternatives and Management Program* can be adapted to either a one day or half day format. The following topics are included: 1) *Being Prepared to Borrow* focuses on lender expectations and the documentation needed to support a debt restructuring proposal, 2) *Determining Debt Repayment Capacity* evaluates the feasibility of a borrower's plan and the business's viability, 3) *Evaluating Business Restructuring Alternatives* recognizes that successful debt restructuring will often also require restructuring the business and the way it is managed, and 4) *Legal Alternatives and Consequences* discusses the tax, management, and financial issues that a borrower should consider before pursuing a bankruptcy alternative.

Price Risk Management Workshop

One day introductory workshops on the application and use of futures and options contracts in pricing cattle, cotton, feedgrains, and rice are available as part of the *Price Risk Management Workshop*. The forward pricing discussions include examples of hedging, determining local cash prices from futures (basis), introduction to options, comparison of pricing alternatives, the importance of price charts, and interpreting market information and outlook.

Pricing alternatives are directly or indirectly related to the futures markets. A producer may not be able to control price, but can control how and when to

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Farmer Toolbox continued...

price. The workshop is a good preparation for starting a marketing club in an area.

Rice Land Tenure Evaluation Program

A new decision support aid program from Texas A&M University Department of Economics and Texas Cooperative Extension, called the *Rice Land Tenure Evaluation Program*, is in its final stages of development, and should be available to producers and landowners by late summer.

The program will enable users to compare options for cash and/or share lease rates that are economically feasible for all parties. These projections will be based on farm level data related to expected government payments, yields, world prices and costs of production - including fertilizer, crop protectants, equipment and manpower expenses. The program is designed to be flexible, so that many different scenarios can be evaluated, giving users the information they need to make the best decisions for their particular business.

The original concept for the program came from inquiries made to Wharton County Extension Agent Rick Jahn back in the fall of 2002. He was approached by farmers and landowners who needed a way to evaluate different scenarios, in order to decide about rice planting acreage for the coming season. Jahn called the District 11 Economist, Dr. Larry Falconer, for assistance in answering his client's questions. Falconer in turn contacted the District 9 Economist, David Anderson, as his area of responsibility includes the rice belt east of Houston. From these initial conversations, the concept developed for a user friendly, versatile program that would address the lease/rent issue under variable circumstances, so the program would be applicable to many different farming situations.

From the beginning, Falconer and Jahn realized that, to be successful, development of the program would require the input of farmers, landowners and representatives from the rice industry. These industry 'volunteers' have spent a tremendous amount of time and energy in assisting the Extension personnel in refining the application. After months of development and trial runs, Falconer feels confident the program will be available to clients before decisions need to be made for the 2005 growing season.

Contacts: Dr. Larry Falconer, (361)265-9203, or Rick Jahn, (979)532-3310. *

Agricultural Dust More Accurately Measured

Agricultural dust isn't as serious a potential health problem as previously thought, according to a USDA Agricultural Research Service scientist who has found a more accurate way to measure dust pollution from agricultural operations.

Agricultural engineer Michael Buser and colleagues at the ARS Cropping Systems Research Laboratory in Lubbock, Texas, have found that it is more accurate to use total suspended particulate (TSP) samplers to obtain a total concentration of dust, followed by a lab analysis of the sampling filter. The analysis determines particle-size distributions, as well as the percentage of the dust sample's total mass that is made up of smaller dust particles.

Buser evaluated U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) air samplers and found they tend to overestimate the amount of fine particles in agricultural dust. EPA has a network of ambient air samplers in place across the United States. To measure dust from an individual operation, a region's air quality agency may require the use of "stack" samplers.

Buser found that both types of samplers are very accurate for urban dust, which has a high proportion of fine dust particles. But they fall short when measuring agricultural dust, in which larger, less harmful particles tend to predominate.

As awareness grows regarding the human health dangers posed by fine dust particles, so does air quality regulations by federal and state governments. Farmers face the prospect of having to get air pollution permits before plowing a field to plant. Already, agribusinesses such as cotton gins are required to have air quality permits.

The key is the accuracy of the samplers. Buser is one of a very few ARS researchers dealing with air quality compliance research. His goal is to provide scientific information that will allow agricultural producers and processors to obtain and keep operating permits without harm to air quality.

Read more about this dust-sampling research in the May issue of Agricultural Research magazine, available online at: <http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/AR/archive/may04/dust0504.htm> *

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LSU Ag Center Opens New Administration Building

In 1909 the first rice research station in the United States was established in Crowley, La. and presently encompasses 1040 acres. The focus of the station includes all aspects of rice research, including variety development and foundation seed program, management systems, biotechnology and genetic engineering. The station also conducts research on biotechnology development of coastal marsh plants and forage crops as well as soybean management systems.

The first administration building was constructed in 1953 and has housed the staff of eight station directors. Three former station directors, H. Rouse Caffey (1962-1970), Macon D. Faulkner (1970-1984) and Joe A. Musick (1985-2003), joined current station director Steve Linscombe to introduce the Louisiana rice industry to the new facility. "Research conducted here is possible only because of the effective partnership that exists between the rice growers and researchers," Linscombe said in his opening remarks. Louisiana Rice Research Board Chairman, Ernest Girouard, echoed Linscombe's comments saying, "Rice growers in Louisiana have supported research more than growers of any other commodity in the state through their check-off dollars." *

From USA Rice Federation Daily, May 7, 2004

Winnie Rice Farmer Dies at Age 65

Samuel "Sammy" Devillier, 65, of Winnie died May 2, 2004 at Christus St. Elizabeth hospital in Beaumont. A life long resident, Sammy was a rice farmer and owner of Devillier Seed. He is survived by, wife, Beverly Devillier of Winnie; mother-in-law, Maggie Bice of Winnie; sons, Kyle Devillier of Shiro, TX; Yale Devillier and wife Kay of Winnie; daughter, Jill Devillier of Cypress, TX; brother, Jerry Devillier and wife Mary of Winnie; sister Ann Austin and husband Doug of Winnie; grandchildren, Kade Devillier, Kassie Devillier, Erin Devillier Rhame, Erica Devillier, Jett Deviller and great grandchild, Kaelyn Rhame. In Lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the American Heart Association, American Cancer Society Kidney Foundation or the charity of your choice. *

From the Beaumont Enterprise, May 3, 2004

Leader in the Field of Weed Science Passes Away

Dr. Roy J. Smith, Jr, retired ARS plant physiologist at Stuttgart, AR, passed away April 24, 2004, after an illness. He was with the USDA-ARS for almost 38 years before retiring in 1992.

Immediately after graduating from the University of Illinois in 1955, where he majored in Agronomy and Weed Science, Dr. Smith was employed by the Agricultural Research Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture as a Research Agronomist to lead the weed science research program located at the University of Arkansas Rice Research and Extension Center in Stuttgart.

His pioneering research in weed control in rice has played a major role in the development of weed control technology for rice in the United States. His research developed integrated weed control programs for dry and water-seeded rice.

Dr. Smith was nationally and internationally recognized for his research in integrated weed management for rice. He received more than 25 major awards for his research contributions from professional societies, the USDA, and the agricultural community. *

EU Considering Dropping Subsidies

The European Union is ready to eliminate its subsidies on farm exports to strengthen world trade talks provided its main partners do the same, said EU trade chief Pascal Lamy. Details of the proposed move, long demanded by critics of its generous farm subsidies, have been sent to members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) just days before ministers from several WTO states hold a crucial meeting in Paris.

"We feel that a breakthrough is possible and the EU is ready to do its part," said EU Agriculture Commissioner Franz Fischler. "All our export subsidies are effectively on the table."

The EU spends about 43 billion euros a year on its farm policy, nearly half of its entire annual budget. By far the largest proportion of this goes to France. The EU has faced mounting pressure to abolish its export subsidies. Lamy said the offer depended on the EU's WTO partners matching the move, which the United States has indicated it is willing to do. *

From www.cnn.com

Plant Disease Under The Homeland Security Microscope

Since the 9/11 terrorist attacks, questions on intentional introduction of plant diseases has risen to the forefront.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture set up the National Plant Disease Diagnostic Network and designated five regional university coordinators: Cornell University for the northeast, Michigan State University for the north central, Kansas State University for the Great Plains, University of California at Davis for the west, and the University of Florida for the southern region. The National Agricultural Pest Information System operated by Purdue University serves as the data collection archive.

The Texas A&M University System Agriculture Program connects with the NPDN via the Great Plains and Southern networks. Texas is the only state with two regions.

On the rice front, plant pathologist Dr. Joe Krausz, Associate Department Head for Extension Plant Pathology with Texas A&M University, is working on a 'pathway analysis' report for APHIS covering bacterial leaf blight and bacterial leaf streak. In the report, Krausz must address several issues including: the likelihood that these diseases will be introduced accidentally or through agroterrorism, the most appropriate response should introduction occur, the chances of disease survival given our climate and crop rotations, and how the disease could be contained. "We are gathering information from research institutions all over the world," said Krausz, "especially in countries where the disease is endemic." Krausz said similar analyses are going on at the cooperating universities in different commodities, and that Texas was charged with rice and citrus.

In an attempt to prevent the entry of foreign plant pests and diseases, federal and state agencies monitor national borders for plant pest introductions. Still, on occasion, new ones will slip through. Growers often spot these anomalies and professionals at land-grant universities handle the identification and verification.

Successful management and possible elimination of newly introduced plant pests and diseases often depends on rapid and accurate detection and identification. A national "first detector" network has been expanded. Front-line monitors include: growers, extension personnel, crop consultants, pesticide appli-

cators, commercial chemical and seed representatives, and others involved in plant growth or management, including Master Gardeners.

According to GPDN director Dr. Jim Stack at KSU, the web-based Plant Disease Information System is designed to help land-grant personnel submit plant samples, digital images and other details for crop pest diagnosis. The advantages include rapid evaluation and reporting of potential threats, and shorter response time for diagnoses.

The Office of Homeland Security, USDA-APHIS and TDA are underwriting the surveys. For more information about GPDN, go to <http://www.gpdn.org>.*

Excerpted from an article by Pam Dillard, Texas A&M Research & Extension Center at Amarillo.

Homeland Security Center Grant to Come through TAES

Texas A&M University has been selected as the lead institution for the National Center for Foreign Animal and Zoonotic Disease Defense, a crucial component of the Department of Homeland Security.

Four institutions will be primary partners in the new center, two each located in Texas and California. They are Texas A&M (lead institution), the University of Texas Medical Branch, the University of California at Davis and the University of Southern California. The consortium will also include Texas Tech University and the University of Maryland.

The consortium is expected to share an \$18 million allocation from the Department of Homeland Security over the next three years. "We are very pleased and honored with this designation from the Department of Homeland Security," said Texas A&M University President Bob Gates.

"Texas A&M and its partners will make a significant contribution towards the defense of our nation through this center of excellence. We thank Congressmen Kevin Brady, Joe Barton, John Carter and Tom DeLay for the legislation creating these centers of excellence," Gates said.

Majority Leader Tom DeLay stated, "Universities around the country competed for the right to host these homeland security centers, and I was proud to work with the team from Texas A&M to develop a vigorous plan to protect American agriculture from terrorist attack."*

Article by Tiffany Inbody, TAMU, (979)847-9364

Missouri Farmer Taking Wetlands To The Bank

DEXTER, Mo. - Davis Minton has his own bank, and it's full of green stuff, but none of it paper. Minton's bank is a rich vista of wildlife converted from agricultural use. And rest assured, he and his family's contributions to the environment of Dexter, Mo., will have a positive impact for generations to come.

Minton is a mitigation banker, the first one ever in the United States, and hopefully, the first of more to come. His goal is to help fellow farmers who need to drain wetlands. It's a profitable venture, but the Minton family isn't in it completely for the money.

Rather, they have a passion to recreate the cypress-tupelo swamps and hardwood bottomlands of their childhood, when on stress-free afternoons, they would cast hopeful hooks into lively waters or draw a bead on a fast-moving duck.

The Mintons - Davis, his father, Keith, mother, Betty, and brother, Bradley - began their quest to create a mitigation bank when former president George H.W. Bush announced a no-net-loss wetlands policy for the United States. For agriculture, the policy meant that if a landowner drained a wetlands on one part of his land, he had to mitigate the loss by creating another wetlands somewhere else on the property. Our current president, George W. Bush, has recently announced a new wetlands initiative that includes an ambitious shift in policy from "no net loss" to a policy of "overall increase" of wetlands in America each year. To help achieve this goal, the president committed to restore, improve, and protect 3 million acres of wetlands over the next 5 years.

Minton, an environmentalist with capitalist bent, figured he could use this policy to create a natural wetlands and make some money doing it. "We thought that if a farmer wanted to drain one of his wetlands, he could buy some of our property, mitigate his wetland to my property, then I could buy it back at a reduced value.

In a nutshell, the mitigation bank for agriculture works like this, according to Minton. "If you have a piece of wetlands in a field (that you want to drain or convert to cropland), the first step would be to con-



Wetland areas are an important environmental resource, providing habitat for migratory water fowl and other wildlife, in addition to improving soil structure and nutrient content.

tact the NRCS in your district, who will come out and do a determination on how many wetlands you have. You'll have to have a 404 and a 401 certification from the Corps of Engineers.

"The Corps of Engineers will determine the ratio - how many acres of wetlands you have and how many credits you have to buy from the mitigation bank to offset the process of destroying the wetlands on your farm."

When mitigated acres from all sources reach the number of acres in the bank, the bank is considered full, and it cannot offer further mitigation. It's also important that anyone considering building a mitigation bank first determine that mitigation opportunities exist, according to Minton.

The Minton's wetlands complex still has a way to go before it matures into the setting that Minton remembers, although shovelers, blue-wing teal, a few pairs of nesting mallards, Canada geese and bald eagles inhabit the area already. "What you see is the first step in the reclamation of the landscape back to what it originally was - a cypress and hardwood timber system," Minton said.

"The whole concept of the mitigation bank is a passion," said Minton, "a belief that something better could be done with the land, that there were alternative land uses that could make a viable economic impact on our farming operation." *

Excerpted from an article by Elton Robinson, *Southeast Farm Press* erobinson@primediabusiness.com

State, National and International News...

W.T.O. Rules Against U.S. On Cotton Subsidies

Brazil won a preliminary ruling from the World Trade Organization, one that could force the United States to lower the subsidies it pays farmers to grow cotton and, eventually, most subsidized crops, including rice. The decision supports Brazil's contention that the subsidies paid to American cotton farmers violate international trade rules. A final ruling against the United States could lead to stiff penalties if it fails to change its practices. In another recent case involving steel, President Bush chose to remove subsidies and therefore did not have to face the penalties.

House Ag Committee Reacts to WTO Decision

Statement of house agriculture committee chairman Bob Goodlatte and ranking member Charlie Stenholm regarding WTO ruling against U.S. farm programs: "We are aware from press reports that the WTO dispute settlement panel on cotton has reached an interim decision. I expect that Secretary Veneman and Ambassador Zoellick will, to the extent they can, discuss this matter in our hearing tomorrow. Reports indicate that the Administration intends to appeal this WTO decision. We support that action. However, there are certain principles that we believe are important to state. Under the WTO rules, countries are permitted to support their farmers in ways that are the least trade distorting. WTO rules govern the amounts countries may provide their farmers. The United States abides by the WTO rules and is, and has been, in accord with its

rules on agriculture. World trade in agriculture is highly competitive and barriers, such as high tariffs, are rampant. Countries regularly deny access for U.S. agricultural products for many reasons, including non-scientific barriers for U.S. beef, grains, and fruits and vegetables. We have said repeatedly that gaining access for U.S. agricultural products is the most important objective of the ongoing WTO negotiations. Our agricultural tariffs are low; the average is 12%, while worldwide agricultural tariffs average 62%. Changes to countries' agricultural policies should come through the give and take of negotiations, not through decisions that do not appear based on WTO rules."

Bran New Road Surface

Japanese scientists have used rice waste to make roads that absorb noise better, drain more quickly and are less susceptible to extremes of temperature than conventional road surfaces. The new surface contains rice bran, the brown by-product left after polishing rice grains, which is usually used as cattle feed or simply thrown away. Mixing bran with resins results in a material that is hard and resilient but also light and porous when added to asphalt or aggregate.

From April 2004 Rice Today, IIRRI

President Bush's Commitment to Wetlands

Officials from Ducks Unlimited are calling President George W. Bush's proposed new wetlands initiatives "good news" for North America's waterfowl, other wildlife, and people. The president outlined new

strategies and policies for conserving wetlands in a speech during Earth Day celebrations in Wells, Maine.

Bush's new wetlands initiative includes an ambitious shift in policy from "no net loss" to a policy of "overall increase" of wetlands in America each year. To help achieve this goal, the president committed to restore, improve, and protect 3 million acres of wetlands over the next 5 years. He also plans to improve tracking and data gathering on wetlands and conservation programs, and to enhance collaborative efforts with landowners to conserve wetlands.

The president's remarks also included the announcement of a streamlined process that will make it much easier for landowners to protect wetlands in the Prairie Pothole Region of the U.S. The prairie potholes represent some of the most critically important habitats in the world for breeding waterfowl and other wildlife.

"Today, President Bush outlined some very positive steps for our wetlands, which have suffered from continuing loss and degradation for centuries," said Don Young, Executive Vice President of Ducks Unlimited. "Wetlands were the central theme of the president's remarks. Clearly, he understands the critical benefits wetlands provide as habitat for hundreds of wildlife species as well as their environmental benefits for people. We're very pleased with his plans to commit more federal funding toward wetlands conservation and improved wetlands monitoring."

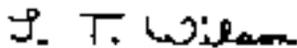
From Eric Keszler, Ducks Unlimited, ekeszler@ducks.org

Editorial continued...

The upcoming issue of *Texas Rice* will provide a more in depth article about the *Rice Development Advisory Program*, an easily accessed web-based forecasting program that predicts rice crop development and the timing of different fertilizer and pest management options. We will also provide an overview of how the internet is increasingly being used by the Beaumont Center to deliver a wide-range of information to growers, scientists, and students alike.

I hope you find this issue of *Texas Rice* informative and helpful. Please continue to help us improve the quality of information by sending suggestions to lt-wilson@aesrg.tamu.edu.

Sincerely,



L.T. Wilson

Professor and Center Director
Jack B. Wendt Endowed Chair
in Rice Research

World Rice Research Conference 4-7 November 2004 Tokyo and Tsukuba, Japan

The World Rice Research Conference will bring together the world's leading rice researchers and scientists to exchange information on the latest breakthroughs and ideas that could benefit the world's millions of rice farmers and consumers.

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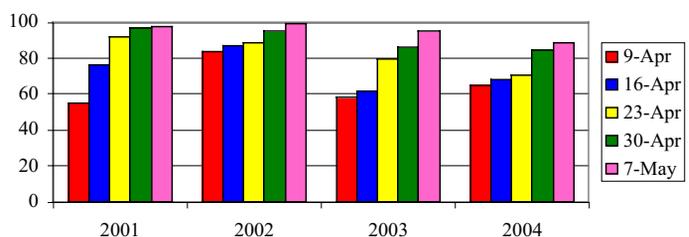
Access back issues of *Texas Rice* at
<http://beaumont.tamu.edu>

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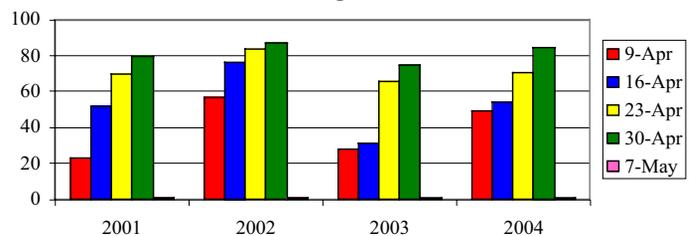
Rice Crop Update

As of May 7th, 91% of the Texas rice crop was planted, as compared to 86% in 2003. The total acreage estimate for this year is 189,500, a 6% increase over last year's 178,028 acres; however, the acreage estimate may change depending on the amount rainfall that occurs during the remainder of the planting season. Most counties will have at least as much, or more, acreage in rice as compared to 2003, with the exception of Harris, Bowie and Hopkins counties. By May 7th this year, 11% of the crop was flooded, compared to a 17 - 93% range for the previous 3 years.

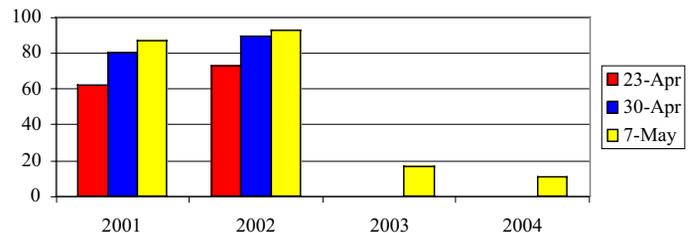
Planted



Emerged



Flooded



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