

# Agriculture Newsletter

COLORADO COUNTY

JUNE 2024

## Welcoming Our New Extension Rice Specialist

Howdy Texans, my name is Sam Rustom and I am your new Extension Rice Specialist. For me, this is a dream job scenario and I couldn't be more excited or honored to be here. I wanted to take the opportunity in this first newsletter to introduce myself and provide a little background information so y'all can get to know me a little better. I also want to update y'all on what is going on in the Texas rice world as of today and provide a couple of management tips for where we currently sit in the season.

I was born in Greenwood, MS and spent nearly every day of my early years on my grandfather's cotton, soybean, and wheat farm near Money, MS. My grandfather always told me he was just a hobby farmer enjoying retirement; however, he always emphasized that even though his acres were small, his favorite thing to do was "experiment" with different crop management strategies on his farm, see what worked, and share that with neighboring farmers. I guess I took that to heart, because since childhood I've known what I want to do with my life, and I am finally here to do it.

Unfortunately, our family farm was sold when I was around 10 years old, but by the time I was 13, I got my first job at Ridgecrest Plantation in Morgan City, MS and continued working on various farms until 2014 when I landed an internship with Monsanto in Leland, MS. It took about an hour of my first day at Monsanto before I figured out if I want to do agronomic research for a career, I better stay in school and get an advanced degree.

When I finished at Delta State in late 2014, I decided to go to LSU and work under Dr. Eric Webster in his rice weed management program. It was easily one of the best decisions and best experiences of my life. Not only did we get work done, we also had a blast doing it and I hope to establish something very similar here in Texas. While at LSU, I worked with quizalofop tank-mixing in Provisia rice for my master's project and Loyant positioning in Louisiana rice and crawfish production for my PhD project. I will be speaking about Provisia rice management at the indoor programs for both the Eagle Lake and Beaumont Field Days and would love to see y'all there.

After LSU, my wife Leigh and I moved to Katy in late 2020 and I began working for a chemical company as a Technical Service Manager covering Texas and New Mexico. I guess you can say this is where my career transition from rice weed scientist to general agronomist began since I was working with nearly every crop in Texas in all of the major agronomic disciplines. Although it was a decent job, I ultimately learned my heart lies with academia, not corporate America, and upon seeing this position advertisement I just couldn't say no.

I started with AgriLife on April 1, 2024 and have been absolutely loving it ever since. My plans are to run a heavily grower-focused research and extension program out of Eagle Lake. Starting a program literally from scratch during the prime of planting season has been challenging for trial work, but we will get as much work done as possible on the station this year. Like my master's and PhD projects, I have trials this year focused on agronomically positioning future herbicides for our producers and would love to show that off at the Eagle Lake Field Day. I will be evaluating a brand new herbicide from Gowan USA that I am hoping will address our postemergence barnyardgrass needs, as well as take a little pressure off the Regiment, Facet, Newpath, and propanil that are already struggling in places.

As of May 23 and generally speaking, the rice fields I have seen look fantastic, minus a few fields where herbicide performance was lackluster, but I will get into more detail about that at a later date. On the west side of Houston, we've had perfectly timed rains at the station, so much so that I was ready to plant towards the middle-end of April and just now have ground dry enough to plant at the end of May. What does that mean for producers? If you were in the ground at or around my start date, there's a good chance you're in great shape from a moisture perspective. I know there are several exceptions, but overall we are in much better shape than we have been in recent years. We avoided the F word (flushing) for the most part, our pre and postemergence herbicides were activated where we had residual products, and if the rice was big enough, we were able to take advantage of those rains in some places going to permanent flood.

The only real overall negative I can think of thus far in this part of the world (besides water availability) is we have had a couple of cooler spells and no shortage of clouds that slowed the rice down a little bit, but it has recovered with a vengeance with recent sunshine and increased heat units. Remember, cool, cloudy weather can greatly influence herbicide performance. This is especially true for those choosing to use Provisia or Max-Ace/Highcard technology. That herbicide family (Group 1), which also includes Clincher and Ricestar, is notorious for rice injury in cool, cloudy weather. But don't worry, injury is typically transient and the rice comes right out of it. At LSU we rarely saw yield differences following Provisia injury, and those yield losses were in situations that are highly unlikely in a commercial setting.

With the rains we have gotten this year, especially on the east side of Houston, I would expect alligatorweed to be an issue for those who have stayed wet. I have several recommendations for it depending on size. For the smaller stuff, I like Gambit at 1.5-2 ounces per acre with a high quality crop oil concentrate at 1% volume/volume. In addition to alligatorweed control, Gambit has excellent activity on sedges and other broadleaves like sesbania and jointvetch, as well as provides some of the best residual activity we have in rice on those weeds. Unfortunately, residual activity isn't the case for alligatorweed, as it needs to be emerged before Gambit can take it out. On the bigger alligatorweed, I prefer Loyant at 16 ounces per acre with a half pint per acre rate methylated seed oil. I did late season salvage work with Loyant at LSU and took out alligatorweed with ease that was eight inches taller than the panicle initiation staged rice in the plots. I know we have had our issues with Loyant in Texas in the past, but it does have a great fit in our rice production systems. I will get into more detail about my thoughts on Loyant in Texas in the near future.

There is plenty of rice in Texas going to flood over the next few of weeks. With all the wet weather, don't forget about urease inhibitors like Agrotain coated on your preflood urea. Urease is the enzyme responsible for the breakdown of the  $\text{NH}_4^+$  our rice loves to  $\text{NH}_3$ , which is lost as a gas and ultimately unavailable to the rice. Damp or muddy ground speeds up the denitrification process. Agrotain helps mitigate the breakdown of  $\text{NH}_4^+$  by slowing down urease enzyme activity and protecting your nitrogen investment.

In addition, urease inhibitors are even more beneficial when we get our urea out on dry ground. In fact, research has suggested that up to 23% of the nitrogen you paid for can be lost due to ammonia volatilization, compared with a 5-6% loss when treated with Agrotain. Where Agrotain really shines is on dry ground is in those fields that are just too big to flood up quickly. According to LSU, if you can't get the water to it on dry ground it in three to five days after the urea is applied, use a urease inhibitor.

To wrap this first newsletter up, I want to reemphasize my excitement to be here in this position. I cannot wait to get to rolling at full capacity in the near future. My main goal with this position is to improve the Texas rice industry as a whole and that starts with the growers. I am looking forward to meeting, working with, and working for you all. Please don't hesitate to reach out if there is anything I can do to help your operation. Wishing you all the best!

Sam Rustom



TEXAS A&M  
**AGRI**LIFE  
EXTENSION

## Colorado County Row Crop Tour

Tour includes two stops:

- Corn variety trial
- Cotton hybrid trial
  - BBQ meal
- Evening Program:  
Endangered  
Species Act

Sponsored by:  
Area Agri-businesses

Colorado County  
Row Crop Committee

Texas A&M AgriLife  
Extension Service

Laramie Kettler  
County Extension Agent  
316 Spring St.  
Columbus, TX 78934  
979-732-2082  
laramie.kettler@ag.tamu.edu  
<http://colorado.agrilife.org>

**Thursday, June 20,  
2024**

**Nada Community Center**

**Registration: 4:30 - 5:00 PM**

**Tour Departs @ 5:00 PM**

**3 CEUs  
will be offered\*\***

**\*\* In order to receive CEU Credits  
you MUST sign in at the Nada Com-  
munity Center and stay through the  
duration of the program**



*Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information or veteran status.*

*The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating*

**TEXAS A&M**  
**AGRI LIFE**  
**RESEARCH | EXTENSION**  
**50<sup>th</sup> Annual Eagle Lake**  
**Field Day**

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**Tuesday, June 25, 2024**

**FIELD TOURS BEGIN AT 4:00 P.M.**

**Meal and Evening Program following at the  
Eagle Lake Community Center**

**Keynote Speakers:**

**Dr. Sam Rustom**

**Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist**

**Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension, Eagle Lake**

***ACCase Resistant Cropping Systems and their Applications in  
Rice Production***

**Dr. George Knapek**

**Program Manager**

**Texas A&M University Agricultural and Food Policy Center**

***Farm Bill and Ag Policy Update***

For Tickets and Information contact:

Texas AgriLife Research and Extension Center at Beaumont / Eagle Lake

Wintermann Rice Research Station

2963 FM 102

Eagle Lake, Texas 77434

(979) 234-3578

## **2024 COLORADO COUNTY ROW CROP TOUR**

The Colorado County Row Crop Committee and the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office of Colorado County would like to invite you to the 2024 Colorado County Row Crop Tour on Thursday, June 20th. The annual row crop tour will start with registration at the Nada Community Center at 4:30pm. We will leave for the tours promptly at 5pm. The tour will include stops at the cotton demonstration plot and corn demonstration plot to hear from AgriLife Specialists (please note– field tour locations are new in 2024 for both cotton and corn). Following the field tours, we will return to the hall for a BBQ dinner and an evening program. Three TDA CEUs will be offered to private pesticide applicators. You must sign in at the hall and stay through the duration of the program to receive CEU credits. A special thanks to our local agribusinesses for sponsoring this event each year! For more information, please contact the Colorado County Extension Office at 979-732-2082.

## **50<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL EAGLE LAKE RICE FIELD DAY SET FOR JUNE 25**

EAGLE LAKE – The 50<sup>th</sup> annual Eagle Lake Rice Field Day tour is scheduled for 4 p.m. June 25th at the David R. Wintermann Rice Research Station on Farm-to-Market Road 102 just north of Eagle Lake, followed by an evening program at the Eagle Lake Community Center located at 100 N Walnut Avenue in Eagle Lake, Texas.

The field day will offer an opportunity for producers to tour the research station, making stops along the way to hear from AgriLife Research and Extension scientists concerning specialty rice breeding, plant physiology, and plant nutrient, insect, weed, and disease management.

The evening program will be held at the Eagle Lake Community Center. Dr. Sam Rustom, Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist at Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension – Eagle Lake, will introduce himself, expand on his new role in the area rice industry and present a program on ACCase resistant cropping systems and their applications in rice production. Dr. George Knappek, Program Manager with Texas A&M University Agricultural and Food Policy Center in College Station, will provide a Farm Bill and Ag Policy Update.

The evening program is planned and coordinated by the Colorado County Rice Committee, which is comprised of local producers who meet throughout the year to identify topics for the event that are relevant and applicable to producers in the area. Area agribusiness continues to provide crucial sponsorship to support this event so that all who are interested in attending can do so free of charge.

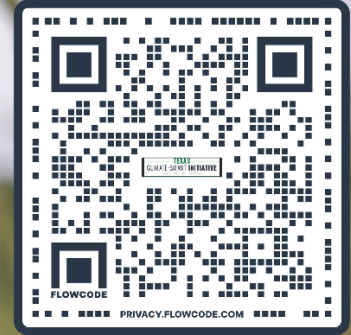
A catered meal will be provided at the evening program. Up to two continuing education units will be offered to all licensed pesticide applicators who attend the research updates and evening program.

For more information, contact the David R. Wintermann Rice Research Station at 979-234-3578 or the Extension office for Colorado County at 979-732-2082.



# TEXAS CLIMATE-SMART INITIATIVE

CROPS · FORESTRY · LIVESTOCK



TCSI Website

**CLIMATESMART.TAMU.EDU**

A five-year pilot project led by Texas A&M AgriLife Research and funded by USDA NRCS. This groundbreaking initiative aims to foster climate-smart agriculture for all major Texas agricultural commodities and create market opportunities across the commodities.

## PARTICIPATION BENEFITS

- Ability to choose from multiple climate-smart practices
- One-time application for 3+ years of enrollment
- Ability to participate in multiple projects as long as there is no other federal incentive for the same practice on the same land at the same time.
- Support from the TCSI team from start to finish
- Incentives priced at or above EQIP

## PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

- Working land must be located in the state of Texas
- Participants must have a Farm Service Agency (FSA) farm number
- Practices must not already be receiving federal incentives
- Participants must be willing to allow TCSI to collect soil and assess GHG emissions



# Texas Climate Smart Initiative - Rice

## Goals

- Incentivize rice producers to adopt NRCS-recommended climate-smart practice on rice lands (Alternate Wetting and Drying or AWD)
- Measure, monitor, report, and verify climate-smart benefits (MMRV)
- Develop markets and promote climate-smart rice commodities (ECON)

## Enrollment Requirements

- Land must be in Texas
- Farm Service Agency farm number
- Practices must not already be receiving federal incentives
- Facilitate soil sample collection by project staff
- Facilitate GHG (selected farms only) sample collection by project staff

## Producer's Responsibilities

**(4 Years: 2024-2027)**

- Implement AWD on a dedicated field (30~80 acres)
- Record management practices on the AWD field and a comparable conventional field
- Facilitate soil core (start of 2024 and end of 2027 rice season) and GHG sampling by project staff

## Incentive:

- Estimated \$150/acre/year for AWD field, USDA-NRCS fund

**Application:** <https://climatesmart.tamu.edu/>

- Phone: 979-314-8095
- Email: [climatesmart@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:climatesmart@ag.tamu.edu)

## Rice Team Contact

- Holly Petrowicz (409) 245-8613

**Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.**

Sincerely,



**Laramie Kettler**

**County Extension Agent—Ag/Natural Resources—Colorado County**

**[laramie.kettler@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:laramie.kettler@ag.tamu.edu)**

**979-732-2082**

**[colorado.agrilife.org](http://colorado.agrilife.org)**

*Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or veteran status. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating. Individuals with disabilities who require an auxiliary aid, service or accommodation in order to participate in this meeting are encouraged to contact the County Extension Office at (979) 732-2082 ten (10) days prior to the meeting to determine how reasonable accommodations can be made.*