

Research Note

FALSE SMUT, A NEW DISEASE RECORD FROM PUERTO RICO'S RICE FIELDS¹

The cause of false smut disease is the fungus *Ustilagoideae oryzae* (Pat.) Fre-feld, previously known as *Ustilago virens* (Cke.) Trak. This fungus has been reported from most of the major rice growing areas in the Old and New Worlds.² In America it is known to occur in Bolivia, Colombia, Guyana, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Surinam, Trinidad, Venezuela, and the United States.³

Grains on affected panicles are transformed into a greenish mass on the outside, yellow-orange inside.^{2,3,4} Only a few spikelets in a panicle are affected. Ou² indicated that high moisture conditions are favorable for the development of this disease. It is unlikely that the false smut will

cause an economic impact on the Puerto Rican rice industry since the disease is considered of little economic importance even in rice producing countries with climatic conditions right for its development.

The disease was observed on a rice farm in Manatí March 2 and 7, 1986. Only two panicles, both from the same field, were collected with disease symptoms. The determination was done by A. Rodríguez, Associate Phytopathologist of the Agricultural Experiment Station, Río Piedras, P. R. To our knowledge, this is the first report of this disease on rice in Puerto Rico.

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²Ou S. H., 1972. Rice diseases. Commonw. Mycol. Inst. Kew, Surrey, England. p. 289-95.

³Field problems of tropical rice, 1983. Int. Rice Res. Inst., Los Baños, Laguna, Philippines, p. 76-8.

⁴Badwick, G. W., 1950. Manual of rice diseases. Commonw. Mycol. Inst. Kew, Surrey, England, p. 88-92.