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ASSESSMENT OF PADDY DAMAGE DUE TO FEEDING BY *OEBALUS* SPP. – A COMPARISON OF TWO METHODS

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ABSTRACT

In Guyana, rice (Oryza sativa) is grown on more than 92,000 hectares twice per year, ideally from mid-May to September and mid-November to March. Each season, paddy bugs (Oebalus spp.) plague the rice crop and due to feeding, they cause severe damage to the grains. It was assumed that paddy graded at rice mills, using the Quality Control paddy bug damage grading method, do not reflect the true damage caused by paddy bugs in rice fields because grains with reduced weight are blown away by the combine harvester. This grading method was compared with exposing the grains to a heat treatment with Sodium Hydroxide (NaOH), which captures those damaged grains with reduced weight. The results showed that the two methods of analyzing paddy bug damage were significantly different from each other at T-Table (0.05) level of significance. It proved that paddy bug damage at field level is much higher than what is usually recorded at the rice mills. The comparison revealed that rice farmers need to do a lot more in managing paddy bugs during the susceptible growth stages of the crop to limit the paddy bugs from feeding on the grains, especially since the damage was evident at the onset of grain development.

KEYWORDS: *Paddy, Rice, Oebalus Spp., Paddy Bug Damage, Stinkbug.*