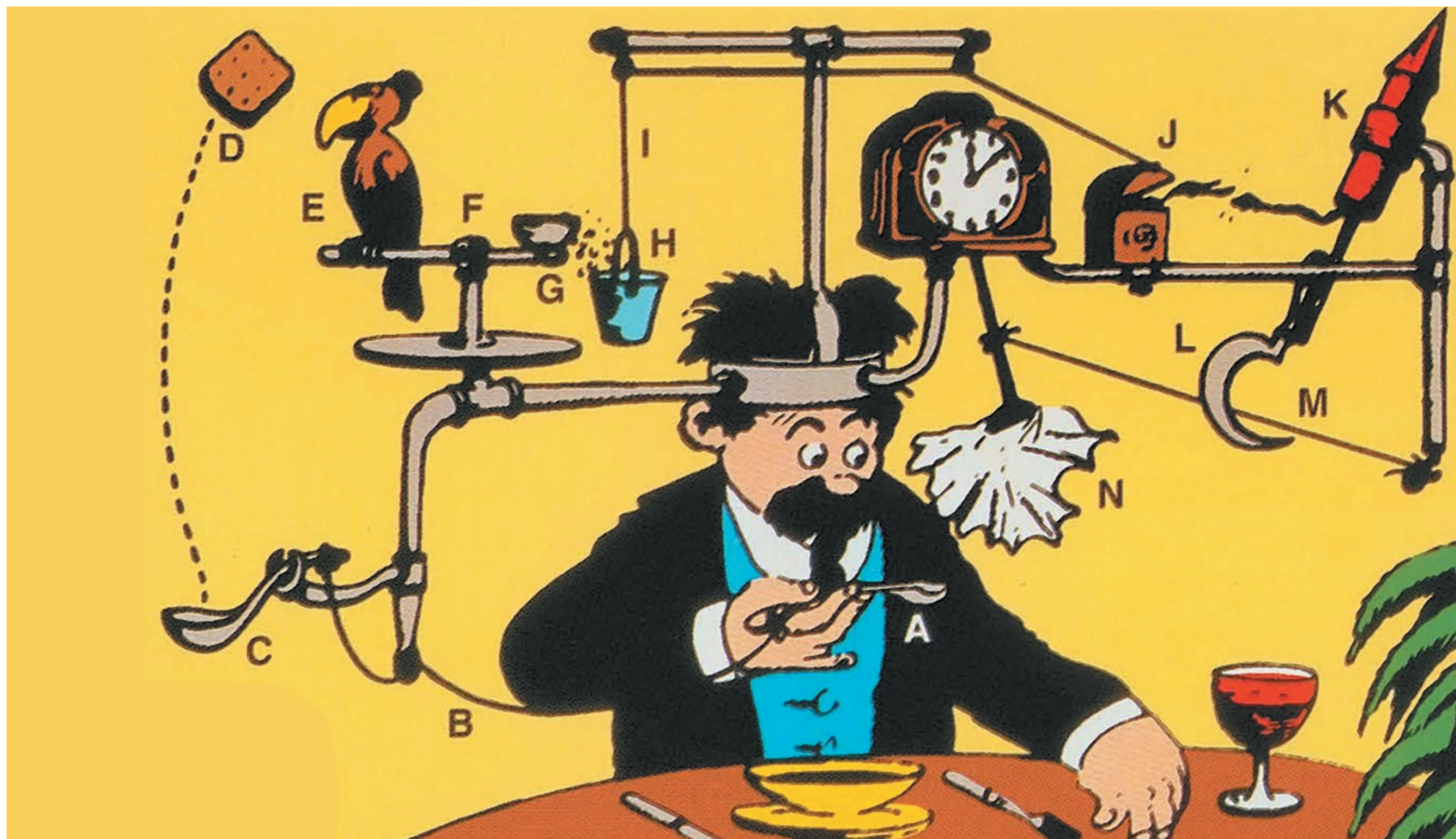


WHOLE GRAIN



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“Innovation Distinguishes Between a Leader and a Follower”

BY BRIAN KING

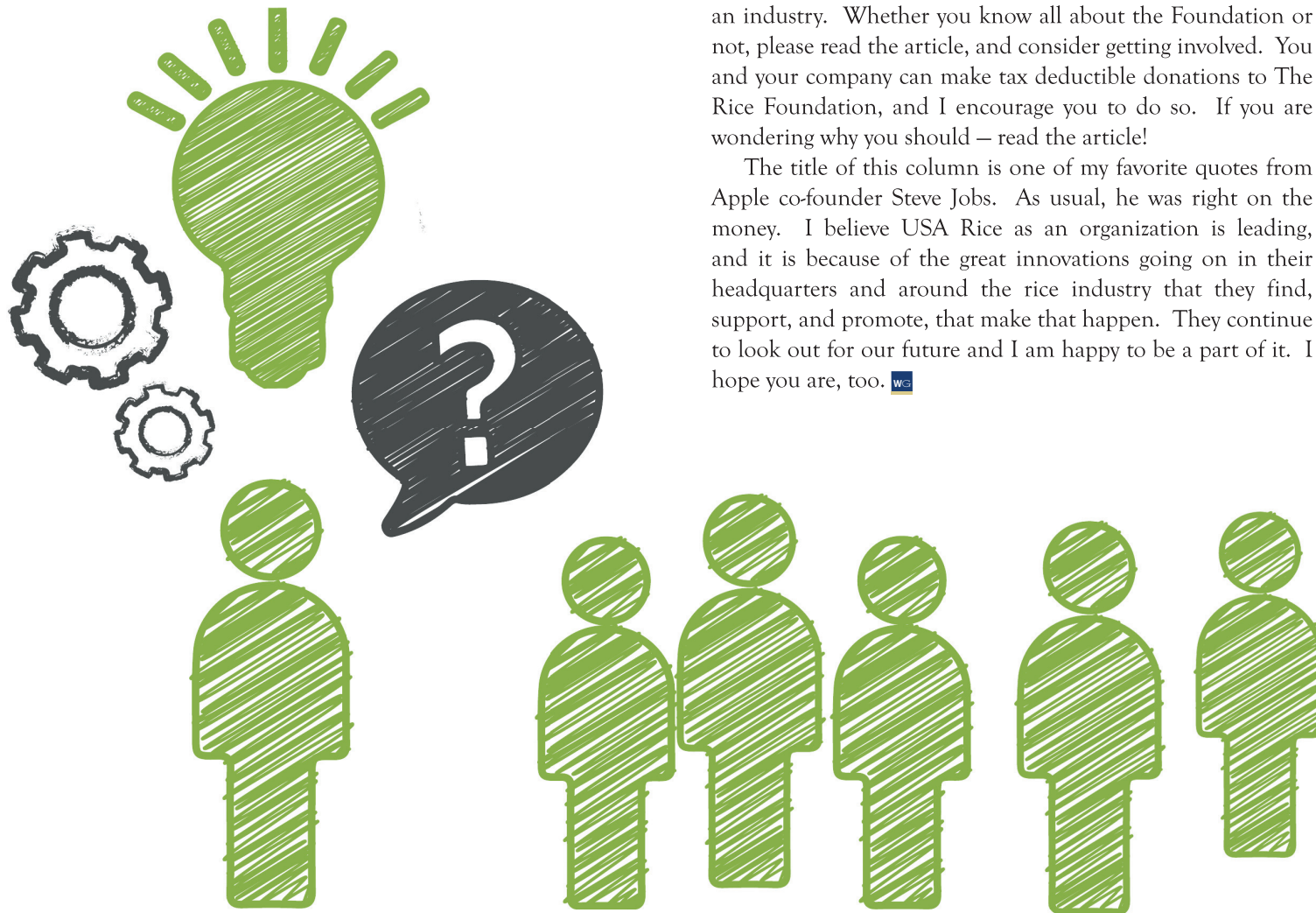
I'M PLEASD TO PRESENT TO YOU the Innovation Issue of the *Whole Grain*! In these pages we will both report to you some of the exciting things USA Rice is helping the rice industry achieve, and also highlight some of the great innovations going on that you might not be aware of.

You'll find out about some innovative uses for rice fields in Louisiana - as an eco-tourism destination and using rice and crawfish to improve soil health. You can read about entrepreneurs making saké here in the U.S. with home grown rice, and the innovative way USA Rice is teaching chefs and food writers all about our industry.

Be sure to check out how the National Rice Month Scholarship contest has grown into a burgeoning video contest and all the creative entries USA Rice received this year. You'll also read about innovations in rice fortification that not only helps the less fortunate and food insecure around the world, but also shows that the rice industry is at the cutting edge of food technology.

Along those lines, I want to be sure to call your attention to the article about The Rice Foundation. In addition to administering the Rice Leadership Development Program, of which I am a proud graduate, The Rice Foundation has been funding ground breaking and vital research that plain and simple, is designed to ensure our long-term survival as an industry. Whether you know all about the Foundation or not, please read the article, and consider getting involved. You and your company can make tax deductible donations to The Rice Foundation, and I encourage you to do so. If you are wondering why you should - read the article!

The title of this column is one of my favorite quotes from Apple co-founder Steve Jobs. As usual, he was right on the money. I believe USA Rice as an organization is leading, and it is because of the great innovations going on in their headquarters and around the rice industry that they find, support, and promote, that make that happen. They continue to look out for our future and I am happy to be a part of it. I hope you are, too. [we](#)



“I believe USA Rice as an organization is leading, and it is because of the great innovations going on in their headquarters and around the rice industry...”

— BRIAN KING, USA RICE CHAIRMAN

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USA Rice is the global advocate for all segments of the U.S. rice industry with a mission to promote and protect the interests of producers, millers, merchants, and allied businesses.

USA Rice is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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THE VALUE OF FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS

BY BETSY WARD

I'M WRITING THIS as my staff and I finalize preparations for the 2017 USA Rice Outlook Conference in San Antonio, Texas. We've been working on the meeting for more than a year—and yes, that means we are already working on the 2018 USA Rice Outlook Conference in San Diego, California!—and we believe this year's meeting will be better than ever.

We added a great deal of programming—so much so that we are featuring concurrent sessions to be sure you can experience the full scope of the conference. Our goal was to give attendees something concrete to take back to the operation. We appreciate that for many of you, yours is a family operation, and if you're away from the farm, the operation feels it. That's why we are featuring practical sessions like the organization and planning session with Lori Firsdon, a professional organizer; the risk management seminar for organic and specialty rice farmers; the very important grain bin safety session; and a session on compliance with the Food Safety and Modernization Act that saw sweeping changes recently and will impact mills and rice end users.

We are also bringing in experts from China and Mexico and Canada to talk about those important markets, and we have an exciting session on telling the rice story featuring two gifted photo essayists and the creative minds behind Rice Farming TV and Rice Radio.


But one of the most important aspects of the USA Rice Outlook Conference is the opportunity for face-to-face interactions with old and new friends, and people who share an industry and passion with you, but maybe live on the other side of the country.

The Outlook Conference, like all our meetings, brings growers, millers, merchants, representatives of allied businesses, end users, researchers, and government officials together from all six major rice producing states, plus New York, Florida, Washington, DC, and beyond. We sit with each other in the sessions, explore the Exhibit Hall together, attend receptions and PAC events, and venture out into our host city that is so happy to have us.



Betsy Ward and Josh Sheppard last summer at the California Rice Field Day.

The Outlook Conference is a place to learn, but also a place to make connections. It is one of the most important functions a national trade association can fulfill for members, and we are thankful you let us do it.

If you are joining us in San Antonio—thank you! If you couldn't come but wish you had been able to, please consider joining us next year in San Diego. You won't regret it. 



RITE OF PASSAGE

BY DEBORAH WILLENBORG

ARLINGTON, VA — USA Rice staff isn't big on hazing for new hires. They don't have to eat three cups of cooked U.S.-grown long-grain in 100 seconds, or one cup raw. They don't have to write the Federation's mission statement on a grain of Calrose or recite all the counties and parishes where rice is grown in reverse alphabetical order. But one ritual visited on all USA Rice rookies for the last decade and a half has been the introduction to our field staff, Chuck Wilson and Randy Jemison.

Typically the first time new staffers encounter field staff is at a big meeting – the Government Affairs Conference in February, July business meetings, or the annual Outlook Conference in December. Early in the proceedings, the unsuspecting greenhorn would be met by Randy Jemison, a clean-shaven, six-foot tall Arkansan, and Chuck Wilson, a dapper, mustachioed guy, with a Cajun accent. Both men wearing Think Rice shirts, smiling, laughing, and just as personable as can be.

These two would keep up the ruse as long as possible, telling the neophyte to "go ask Chuck about the ratoon crop in southwest Louisiana" or "Randy can explain how working ricelands made Stuttgart the Rice & Duck Capital of the World." Eventually, someone would set the newcomer straight, explaining what all the giggling was about, and clarify that Chuck was the big guy with the enormous UofA ring, and Randy was the one lucky enough to be married to another coworker, Mary Jemison.


... it really is hard to tell Randy and Chuck apart as both are consummate professionals dedicated to the U.S. rice industry.

Once the rookie figured out which one was which, they realized what we all know – although they don't look anything alike, it really is hard to tell Randy and Chuck apart as both are consummate professionals dedicated to the U.S. rice industry.

Randy Jemison farmed rice many years ago, and came to work for USA Rice in 2001. He has been the face of the U.S. rice industry in Louisiana, in neighboring Texas, in Washington, DC, and the annual Mid-South Farm and Gin Show in Memphis. He's always ready with wise advice, a kind word, a smile, and a joke – sometimes all at once.

Chuck Wilson has been with USA Rice for 40 years! Along with his Arkansas field work, he also staffed The Rice Foundation (see story on page 8) and the Rice Leadership Development Program, and through those efforts has had an impact on just about everyone and every aspect of the U.S. rice industry.

When they both announced they were retiring this year, we had to wonder if them leaving at the same time was still part of the ruse. Was the co-departure because Chuck really was Randy and vice versa? Had they pulled off the longest running gag in Federation history?

So good-bye to our favorite impersonators, Randy and Chuck. Or is it Chuck and Randy? Whichever, we will miss them both. 

Deborah Willenborg knows the difference between an Arkansan and a Cajun when she sees them.



Randy Jemison (left) and Chuck Wilson (right) – we think!

NINTH ANNUAL YELLOW RAILS & RICE FESTIVAL CELEBRATES LOUISIANA'S WORKING WETLANDS

BY LESLEY DIXON

THORNWELL, LA — In early November, birders, researchers, and wildlife conservationists from around the world converge on rice fields near here to witness the annual migration of a very special bird: the yellow rail.

A small, inconspicuous marsh bird, the yellow rail is at the top of bird-watching lists due to its shy nature. It lives in the underbrush of marshy fields, feeding on insects, snails, and vegetation. It is so elusive that even scientists at the Louisiana State University Museum of Natural Science, who know the species better than anyone, aren't sure where it winters. Ornithologists believe the yellow rail spends the cold months somewhere further south, in the brackish salt marshes of coastal Texas.

Rice farmer Kevin Berken can tell you where they spend Halloween, though: his rice fields.

Thornwell is known as the Yellow Rail Capital of the World for good reason. Rice fields like Berken's are an essential pit stop for migratory birds, and yellow rails in particular seem to love the straw leftover between the first and second harvests.

Louisiana shares many of its bird species with the other Gulf States, which means it's not always considered a must-see destination by birders. Yellow rails are fairly widespread across North America, but according to Steve Cardiff, ornithologist and co-founder of the festival, "What IS unique is that the yellow rail's fall arrival in southern Louisiana overlaps with the late fall harvest of second-crop rice." Louisiana rice fields therefore offer not only a unique habitat for this bird, but also an unparalleled opportunity for spotting one.

That's why Shirley and Kevin Berken, Steve Cardiff, and Donna Dittman, both ornithologists at the Louisiana State University Museum of Natural Science, founded the Yellow Rails and Rice Festival nine years ago. The goal was to inform bird enthusiasts how rice fields provide invaluable habitat to many coastal animals while they check this rare species off their lists, bringing rice farmers and wildlife conservationists together on common ground.

"The festival allows farmers to publicize working wetlands in a way similar to how rainforest 'eco-lodges' highlight the benefits of tropical forests," says Dittman. For species threatened by coastal erosion and urban development, southwest Louisiana rice fields are a sanctuary.

"For things like the yellow rail, they're critical," says Michael Seymour, avian biologist for the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. "The brushy borders of rice fields and all those fence rows are very important for migratory birds."

According to Seymour, wildlife conservationists are especially worried about rice fields being replaced with other crops. "I think the rice fields do a whole lot for these birds."



ABOVE: Attendees come from 30 states and four countries to check the yellow rail off their birdwatching lists.

LEFT: A male yellow rail. (photo by Erik Johnson, Audubon Louisiana)

The festival kicks off with Kevin conducting an orientation session ~ he calls it "Rice Farming 101" ~ for the birders. Kevin explains not just what they'll directly see in the fields, but things they might not see ~ like his conservation practices. He also explains the rice industry itself ~the varieties grown in the six major rice-producing states, as well as the challenges the industry faces, specifically from imported rice. Kevin highlights how many specialty rice varieties domestic farmers now produce, such as a Louisiana jasmine called Jazzman. There's also a Q&A session so participants can learn why U.S. rice farms are so important to birds and humans alike.

But the real action starts when Kevin takes birdwatchers out into the fields on his combine. The rails either take flight or scurry into a net, where wildlife experts give a hands-on demonstration of how to band the rail's leg. Being as rare and elusive as it is, the yellow rail is a perfect candidate for cutting-edge research initiatives. The Motus wildlife tracking system, implemented in Louisiana by Michael Seymour, attaches a tiny radio transmitter to birds like the yellow rail, which then pings off of radio towers across the country and gives researchers a clearer idea of avian migration patterns. The Yellow Rails and Rice Festival is an opportunity for researchers not only to educate the public about these techniques, but also to implement them.

This year 120 participants, representing 30 U.S. states and four countries, attended the festival. "No one has left one of our festivals without seeing a yellow rail, but this year was a challenge," said Kevin. That's because it rained intermittently all day on the festival's first day, and according to Kevin, these birds "don't like wet feet." Yellow rails are almost impossible to spot in the rain because farmers need better conditions to run the equipment that flushes the birds out.

Festival attendees didn't seem worried, however. During the worst of the weather, they toured nearby Falcon Rice Mill, getting a behind-the-scenes glimpse of the sorting, hulling, and packaging process, and a better overall idea of how rice gets from farm to table.


The sun was out on day two, and by that afternoon, everyone had seen a yellow rail taking flight from the Berken's rice field. Festival attendees then moved on to Myers Landing for a jambalaya supper, and a chance to experience some true Louisiana culture.

Festival co-founder Shirley Berken says, "Visitors leave with memories not only of their lifer yellow rail, but how much they enjoyed a broader Louisiana experience ~ visiting local museums, feasting on regional delicacies, even being serenaded by a Cajun band."

The weekend weather continued to improve, and the festival wrapped up with tours of various bird habitat regions, including Kisatchie National Forest and the Cameron Coast, and more yellow rail sightings from the combines in Thornwell.

Kevin is widely praised for his efforts with the festival, which shows another side of farming and creates allies and advocates in the naturalist community.

"A lot of people have a negative view of production agriculture, but the beauty of this kind of event is that when they come out here and see farmers taking care of the land, producing high quality food in a sustainable fashion, conserving water and reducing inputs, and then they get to see wildlife, like yellow rails, actually utilizing the fields, it provides a better connection to how production agriculture is contributing to the overall health of the environment," said Kevin Norton, state conservationist for the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA NRCS) in Louisiana.

Or as Kevin said to the throngs of birders gathered at his farm: "Rice farms provide more wildlife habitat than any other crop. Save a bird — buy rice." 

Lesley Dixon started working at USA Rice in January and next month joins the Communications Department as a staff writer.



LEFT: Festival co-founder Kevin Berken meets the press before flushing birds with his combine.

FORREST LAWS LEAVES A LEGACY OF PROFESSIONALISM IN HIS RETIREMENT

BY RON SMITH

FOR NEARLY 40 YEARS it was my privilege to work with Forrest Laws.

Forrest signed on with *Delta Farm Press* back in 1980, and spent the next 38 years chronicling the evolution of Sunbelt agriculture that included some of the most ground-breaking changes ever witnessed in food and fiber production – transgenic agriculture, boll weevil eradication, GPS technology, and a significant change in the way farmers, consultants, and agribusiness looked at protecting crops, from scheduled spray to integrated pest management.

I was constantly amazed at how quickly Forrest grasped the ins and outs of new technology, and how well he translated that knowledge to readers across our coverage area – the Virginia Coast to the San Joaquin Valley.

He wrote about the complex realm of farm policy and the ever-changing mystery of commodity markets. He mastered the intricacies of a half-dozen or more farm bills and wrote comprehensive, yet understandable, articles on how each differed from the last and how those changes would affect farmers and ranchers.

He could listen to an Extension marketing specialist and then explain the vagaries of commodity markets to *Farm Press* readers so they understood it, too.

He wrote like a demon, two fingers at a time, but at a pace that kept copy flowing and readers informed.

He revered deadlines, a habit he picked up working for daily newspapers. He also brought with him a commitment to excellent writing – precise, grammatically correct, and adhering to the AP Stylebook. He chided me often about comma placement. If I needed a refresher on how to manage any of AP’s sometimes confusing requirements, he knew the answer.

For most of the past 18 years Forrest was my direct supervisor. He approved my expense reports and time off requests and edited my stories. He suggested meetings I should attend, stories I might want to write, and those I might want to avoid. His management style was to avoid micromanagement and let capable people do their jobs.

Forrest Laws was presented the Reuben Brigham Award in June during the national meeting of the Association for Communication Excellence (ACE) in New Orleans. A news item announcing that award cited Forrest for his “uncompromising attitude toward editorial integrity and a history of commitment to being on the cutting-edge of breaking agribusiness news.” ACE is an association of land-grant university communicators.

The award is presented to someone who has made a major contribution in the field of agriculture, natural resources, or life and human sciences at the regional, national, or international level.

They could not have picked a more deserving recipient.

He wrote like a demon, two fingers at a time, but at a pace that kept copy flowing and readers informed.



Forrest (left) knows and goes where the action is for a timely ag story.



Forrest’s wife, Kathy, congratulates him on receiving the Reuben Brigham Award from the Association for Communication Excellence.

Frankie Gould, director of public relations and communications at the Louisiana State University Agriculture Center, said, “Laws is always on the cutting-edge of technology while still maintaining hard-core journalism standards and ethics. He was one of the first at field days to use a digital camera, then cell phones and selfie sticks, digital video via phone and a small video camera, GoPro camera, tablets, and transcending into social media,” Gould said.

Some of us who knew him best gathered at the Clarksdale, Mississippi, Country Club in early October to bid our colleague and good friend a sad farewell and offer our sincere hopes that retirement will bring him respite from hard deadlines, annual reviews, and travel schedules that meant more nights in hotel beds than his own.

Forrest sat stoically through good-natured ribbing and heartfelt sentiments about what his work, his devotion to *Farm Press*, and, maybe most important, his friendship, has meant to each of us over the years he’s been our co-worker and our boss.

He acknowledged our praise with the humility that defines him, and thanked us for our efforts over the years. That’s Forrest.

Since his retirement, I don’t think I’ve gone more than a few days without calling or emailing him to ask how he used to do something, who to call for information about one farm issue or another, or to vent. As has always been the case, he offers advice, contacts and phone numbers, and, if not a solution at least the knowledge that he understands the frustration.

Forrest Laws is a gentleman, a talented writer and editor, and someone who is respected and admired across the agricultural community.

It is now my honor and a huge challenge to take over the positions he filled so professionally for most of those nearly four decades. I am humbled to follow in his footsteps, knowing that I will not come close to matching his talent, his integrity, or his ability to churn out huge numbers of articles, videos, and commentaries every week. Forrest Laws set a high bar. [WG](#)

Ron Smith is Senior Content Director for Farm Progress | Farm Press.

U.S. RICE FINDS A HOME IN LOCALLY MADE SAKÉ

BY JENNIFER L. BLANCK

With the growing demand for premium saké combined with the current taste for craft beverages, the U.S. market is seeing an increase in locally-produced saké.

SAKÉ RICE

Mistakenly called “rice wine,” saké’s brewing process is similar to beer and uses four ingredients: rice, water, koji, and yeast. Rice varieties most suitable for saké production have a starch structure that is well centered, concentrated, and more easily hydrolyzed, making it easier to mill away much of the protein and fat and offering a more efficient fermentation process.

Jeff James, owner and brewer of Cedar River Brewing Company in Seattle, uses Calrose rice. He purchases the California rice already milled or “polished” to 60 percent by a wholesaler. A medium-grain rice, Calrose has been the predominant rice in U.S. saké production because of availability and price.

Recently, James started experimenting with Yamada Nishiki rice from Arkansas. He purchased the polished rice from Minnesota Rice & Milling (MN Rice) in Minneapolis. MN Rice sells and polishes four different varieties for saké breweries, home brewers, and wholesalers worldwide: Calrose, Koshihikari, Sasanishiki, and Yamada Nishiki.

A short-grain rice, Yamada Nishiki is considered the king of saké rice. It absorbs water faster and easier—in less than half the time and at a more predictable rate—than Calrose. Predictability is critical, given the precise nature of the saké production process. The starch also breaks down into sugar differently in the two varieties, with Yamada Nishiki measuring and tasting sweeter. It is also structurally more round and plump, making it easier to mill. MN Rice owner Blake Richardson likens the difference to milling a baseball compared to straw.

HOW SAKÉ IS MADE

When making saké, the first step is to polish the rice, exposing its starchy core. The milling rate determines the saké’s category. The more the rice is polished, the higher the classification level and more expensive the resulting saké will be. However, that doesn’t guarantee the quality is always higher.

The rice is washed to remove any impurities, soaked to add moisture, and steamed to bring out the starch. Water can be up to 80 percent of the finished product, so the water source is considered to be just as important as the rice.

Koji, rice with a fungus growing in it, is sprinkled on the rice, changing the starch into sugar. Yeast is used to convert the sugar into alcohol. A “yeast starter” comprising yeast, rice, koji, and water is created and ingredients are added incrementally to the fermentation tank. Once a full batch is reached, it is called the main mash and left to ferment. Then the mash is pressed to separate the saké from the rice solids.

Afterwards, different steps may be completed—such as pasteurizing, filtering, diluting, adding additional spirits or flavors, or aging in cedar—depending on the type of saké produced. It is then stored and bottled. Saké is best enjoyed fresh—within a year. Premium saké is most often served chilled, but it can also be consumed hot or at room temperature, depending on the style and an individual’s preference.


SAKÉ PRODUCERS

The four major Japanese companies in the United States—Gekkeikan, Ozeki, Takara, and Yaegaki—started by importing saké. In the late 1970s and 80s, they established California-based operations that also brew domestic saké using locally-sourced ingredients. James estimates “the Big 4” produce about 90 percent of the saké in the United States. He describes SakéOne, based in Forest Grove, Oregon, as middle tier in terms of production amounts and the remaining 14 as “little guys,” with more small producers on the way.

As one of the smallest producers, it takes James a year to go through a ton of rice. Texas Saké Company in Austin is one of the larger small-scale producers and goes through 24,000 pounds of Calrose annually. Richardson uses more than 33,000 pounds a year at his saké brewpub Moto-i, comprising 80 percent Yamada Nishiki.

While most use Calrose or Yamada Nishiki, there are some producers brewing different varieties, such as Koshihikari used by Blue Current in Kittery, Maine. Many brewers express a desire to experiment with one of the other 100+ saké rice varieties not currently available, with Omachi on the top of Richardson’s list.

The majority of U.S. saké stays inside the country, but not all. For example, SakéOne and Texas Saké Company export to multiple countries, with Texas Saké even shipping to Japan.

Japan’s saké-making tradition is more than 2,000 years old. In the United States, the tradition is just getting started, and U.S. rice is leading the way. 

Jennifer L. Blanck is a writer with an MSc in wine business and while she loves Barbaresco above all else, she has a newfound appreciation for saké.

Saké, pronounced “sah-kay,” is known as *nihonshu* or *seishu* in Japan. In Japanese, *saké* refers to an alcoholic drink in general.

U.S. SAKÉ BREWERIES

ARIZONA SAKÉ, Holbrook, AZ

BEN’S TUNE UP/BEN’S AMERICAN SAKÉ, Asheville, NC

BLUE CURRENT, Kittery, ME

BROOKLYN KURA, New York, NY

CEDAR RIVER BREWING COMPANY, Seattle, WA

DOVETAIL SAKÉ, Waltham, MA

GAIJIN 24886, Denver, CO

KURACALI SAKÉ & BEER BREWERY, San Marcos, CA

MOTO-I, Minneapolis, MN

REBEL SAKÉ, Lake Elsinore, CA

SAKÉONE, Forest Grove, OR

SEQUOIA SAKÉ, San Francisco, CA

SETTING SUN SAKÉ, San Diego, CA

TEXAS SAKÉ COMPANY, Austin, TX

Cedar River Brewing Company,
Seattle, WA
Photo by Katherine Gooding
Seattle Photographer



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THE MOST INNOVATIVE RICE ORGANIZATION YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF (PROBABLY)

BY JENNIFER L. BLANCK

There are as many quotes about innovation as there are types of rice grown in the world. But if you read 40,000 pithy quotes about innovation, they would all boil down to the same idea expressed by business consultant and author Jamie Notter: "Innovation is change that unlocks new value." And that is what The Rice Foundation is all about.

The Rice Foundation is a 501c(3) organization that represents all segments of the U.S. rice industry with a mission to further the well-being of its members and ensure the long-term sustainability and future competitiveness of U.S. rice. To achieve this mission, the Foundation identifies issues important to the rice industry, funds research projects to address these issues, and supports leadership and education programs, including the Rice Leadership Development Program. California rice farmer and current Foundation Chair Charley Mathews says, "The Rice Foundation has great flexibility and impact in what it does. The scope is broad, and the sky's the limit."

The Rice Foundation was created as a linkage to industry by Arley Bowling, who served as its first director. Bowling came from the cotton industry and modeled the Foundation after the Cotton Foundation, but on a smaller scale. The Rice Foundation received its tax exempt status in 1986 and began the Rice Leadership Development Program in 1989.

Funding comes from dues, sponsorships, and other sources. Initially, the Foundation was funded by EU Tariff Rated Quota (TRQ) monies, but with those all but gone, it is now mainly supported by industry contributions.

The Foundation's 25-member board comprises a cross section of millers, suppliers, users, and producers, which includes representatives from state research boards. Current Foundation leadership includes Mathews, Vice Chair Frank Carey, from a major crop protection company in Mississippi, and Secretary Robert Trahan, a Louisiana miller. There is a selection committee for the Rice Leadership Development Program and a Budget Committee, as well as a Funding Task Force. Current Executive Director Dr. Steve Linscombe says, "The Foundation's board is entirely voluntary. These individuals put a huge amount of time and dedicated effort to facilitate the success of this organization."

The board spends much of its time focusing on big picture issues facing the U.S. rice industry, and asks the question, "how do we see the rice industry evolving down the road?" Board member Paul Crutchfield says, "The Foundation offers the industry an opportunity to have a group that can step back and take off their respective hats and say, 'Now, for the good of the industry, what is the direction—given what I've learned from other groups in the industry—we should be going?' It performs a function that no one else is performing. And it's essential that it's done."

A key part of the Foundation's mission is supporting research that benefits the entire U.S. rice industry. Currently, projects focus on conservation, sustainability, and nutrition. Chuck Wilson, who retired from the Foundation in September after serving as its executive director for 9 years and working in the rice industry for 40 years, says, "Foundation-supported projects have not had high visibility, but the research is so important. We're trying to make people aware of the value the Foundation brings to the industry."

Carey describes the Foundation's research as "one of the best kept secrets." Here's a look at some of the projects the Foundation has funded over the years.

Association between Rice Consumption and Selected Indicators of Dietary and Nutritional Status

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Dietary Guidelines for Americans emphasizes grains, in particular whole grains, as part of a healthy diet. However, specific grains are not mentioned. This study examined rice consumption and nutrient intake, diet quality, and body mass index. Rice consumers, both children and adults, were found to have a significantly higher intake of nutrients, such as iron, B vitamins, vitamins A and D, phosphorous, magnesium, copper, zinc, and folate, compared to non-rice eaters. Rice consumption was also found to result in a smaller waist line and decreased risk of being overweight or obese. The research determined that rice consumption results in significant positive diet, health, and nutrition impacts, and helps ensure rice maintains a place in government feeding programs.

Colonic Health Improvement Through Rice Bran

According to the American Cancer Society (ACS), colorectal cancer is the third most commonly diagnosed cancer in both men and women. This research evaluated rice bran's potential to reduce colon cancer markers in rats. It also aimed to develop and evaluate different manufacturing processes that increase the health benefits of rice bran. The rice industry has long been aware of the numerous health benefits provided by rice bran, and this study further pinpointed specific benefits in a very important area of human health.

Effect of Water Management on Rice Grain Yield, Milling Yield, and Grain Arsenic Concentration: A Multi-State Effort

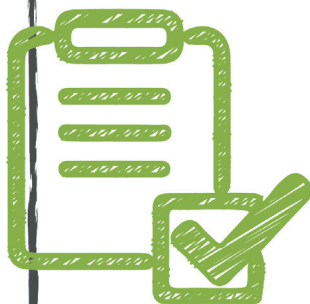
Arsenic is a naturally-occurring element found all around us. It is present in the water we drink, the air we breathe, and the soil where we grow our food. This two year study was conducted in each of the six states where rice is grown to test arsenic levels in rice. The study provided timely proof that inorganic arsenic levels in rice grown in the United States are significantly below the CODEX standards, which are the global food standards supported by the World Health Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

Enhancement of Breeding for Jasmine-Type Aromatic Rice Varieties for the United States

A significant amount of Jasmine rice is imported from Thailand each year. This specialty rice can only be grown in a specific area in Thailand and is popular due to its aromatic qualities. It is also more expensive than regular rice. This project developed a Jasmine-type rice variety for the U.S. rice industry, with similar aromatic and other specialty properties, which is now on the market and allows the U.S. industry to compete with Thai imports. Researchers also developed a simple and reliable aroma detection method that can handle a large number of small samples efficiently.

Estimating the Biological and Economic Contributions that Rice Habitats Make in Support of North American Waterfowl Populations

This study examined how rice habitats support North American waterfowl populations. The research determined that without rice habitats, the North American Waterfowl Management Plan's population goals were unlikely to be met. The total cost of replacing all flooded rice habitats in the United States would approach \$3.5 billion, which doesn't include annual operation and management costs ranging from a \$73,000,000 to \$128,000,000. This research quantified and reinforced the overall value of flooded rice habitats in support of North American waterfowl populations. This led to the creation of the USA Rice-Ducks Unlimited Stewardship Partnership that in turn has netted tens of millions of dollars for U.S. rice farmers to continue their upkeep of critical wildlife habitat through the USDA's Regional Conservation Partnership Program.



Evaluation of New Technologies for Red Rice Control

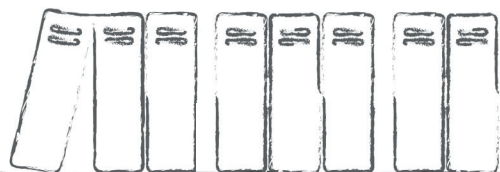
Red rice is a destructive weed that costs rice producers millions of dollars annually. In fact, in many U.S. rice producing areas, red rice has historically been one of the biggest constraints to profitable rice production. Since rice and red rice belong to the same species, it has been virtually impossible to develop a conventional herbicide without harming the commercial crop. This project studied the Clearfield/Newpath and Liberty Link systems for controlling red rice and other rice weeds and provided a better understanding of the systems and their limitations. The Clearfield/Newpath system has been one of the most significant breakthroughs in southern U.S. rice production history, and this research was key to the development of the sequential-post emergence method, now accepted as the system's best approach for weed control. The impact on industry profitability has been enormous.

Investigation of Rice Starch Molecular Structure to Slow Starch Digestion Rate and Lower Glycemic Response

This project examined current U.S. rice varieties to identify any that provide a low glycemic index (GI) and understand if rice can be altered to moderate the rate of starch digestion and achieve a lower rice GI. This could lead to health benefits for consumers as low GI and slowly digestible food moderate blood glucose levels, important benefits for diabetics and pre-diabetics, and can help with cardiovascular disease and obesity. A slower glucose release is also associated with sustained energy levels, increased mental acuteness, and feeling full and satisfied longer. Researchers found a molecular basis for slowly digestible starch and low GI properties in U.S. rice varieties that can be used in the development of a breeding strategy to produce these rice types. Rice varieties with these characteristics could provide significant dietary benefits for U.S. rice consumers who eat them, as well as positive impacts to the U.S. rice producers who grow them, and further adds to rice's "health halo" with dietary experts.

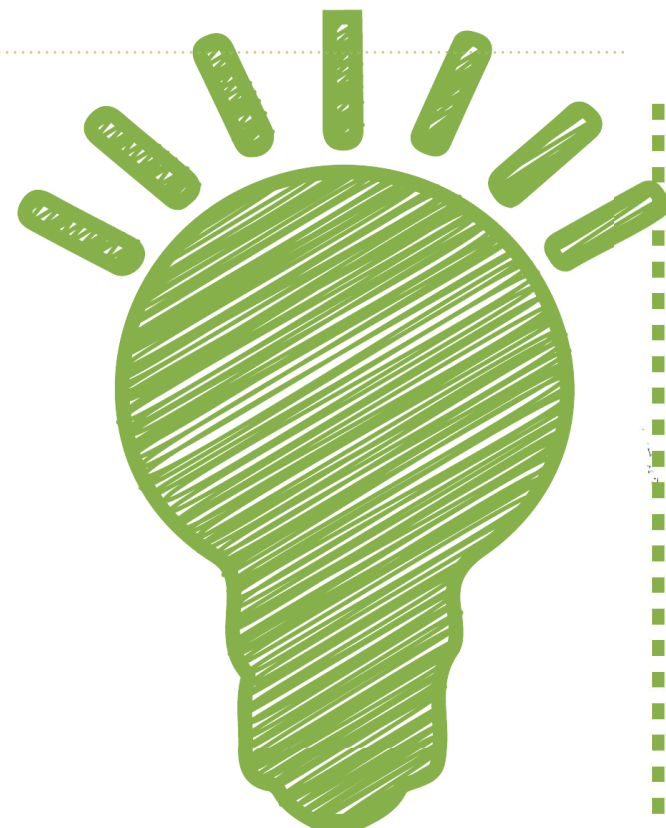
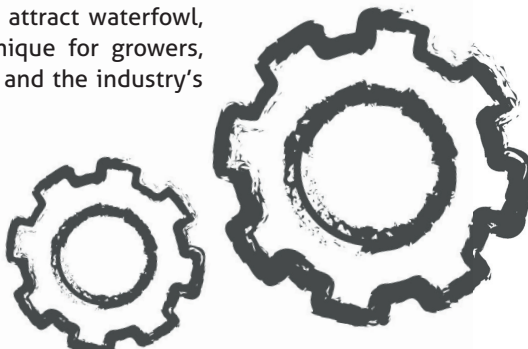
New Knowledge and Improved Methods to Increase Breeders' Ability to Develop Rice Varieties with Enhanced Fissure Resistance

Rice kernels can develop cracks due to weather issues. These cracks are inside the hull and cannot be seen. During milling, these weakened kernels often break. Broken kernels have $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ the market value of whole kernels, resulting in profit losses for millers and producers. Traditional methods for evaluating field fissure resistance involve monitoring samples over multiple, sequential harvests. This study developed a new laboratory test for fissure resistance in the first breeding generation with only 50 rice kernels. As a result, breeders will be able to develop new and improved fissure resistant rice varieties faster and more successfully, directly improving the bottom line for producers and mills and adding value for consumers.



North American Waterbirds

Many researchers have examined rice management practices and the ecology of wildlife in rice fields separately. This interdisciplinary study investigated the integration of the two components, which is a relatively new research area. The goal was to develop an interdisciplinary approach in evaluating factors that limit rice production and waterbird sustainability in California, particularly in relation to alternative rice management (ARM) practices. The study determined that waterfowl can help reduce red rice and other weeds and increase straw decomposition in flooded, fallow rice fields. It also found that, at certain densities, waterfowl may minimize autumn tillage requirements. As a result, researchers recommend rice producers consider practices that attract waterfowl, offering a new sustainable technique for growers, while enhancing wildlife habitats and the industry's "conservation halo."



The Role of Rice Agriculture in the Winter Ecology of Northern Pintails

Northern pintails, formerly among the most abundant ducks in North America, have declined in numbers significantly since the 1950s due to drought and loss of habitat in the Prairie Pothole Region. This study found that the quality of food obtained from freshwater habitats throughout the Central Coast of Texas—primarily rice fields—is considerably better than food in coastal habitats and provides wintering pintails with ample energy reserves for spring migration. Those in saline, coastal habitats did not. Based on this and prior research, the study concluded that management strategies that provide or protect natural shallow freshwater habitats and current and fallow rice fields would benefit northern pintails, reinforcing rice's exceptionally important role in providing waterfowl habitats.

Satiety Response of White and Brown Rice Compared to Glucose Control

This research compared satiety—or a sense of satisfaction and fullness—in white rice, brown rice, and glucose beverage, a standard substance used for comparison in weight management and satiety studies. The research found no difference between brown and white rice. However, both were found to provide more satisfaction and sense of fullness compared to the glucose beverage, providing more proof that rice is an important part of a healthy diet.

Simpler Less Expensive Method of Analysis of Inorganic As (iAs) in Rice

Prior to this study, determining arsenic (As) content in harvested rice samples was extremely expensive and time consuming. This study developed a reliable, simple, timely, and less expensive method for the analysis of inorganic As (iAs) in rice grain, providing significant savings to the rice industry, and enabling the industry to demonstrate responsiveness to end users' concerns.

Soil Based Nitrogen Test for Fertilizer Management in Rice

Fertilizer-based nitrogen is one of the most important ingredients for optimizing rice yield and quality. This project studied native soil nitrogen release in rice production and developed a method for determining soil's potential for nitrogen mineralization. The new test allows for site-specific nitrogen fertilizer rate recommendations, which lowers any potential impact to the surrounding environment. It also facilitates maximum agronomic and economical rice yield with minimal disease. The research provided information to help rice producers more efficiently and effectively apply nitrogen to their crops, again improving the bottom line for growers. [wq](#)

Jennifer L. Blanck is a freelance writer who, after this assignment, plans to eat more rice.

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Go to www.usarice.com/foundation for more information.


ARKANSAS RICE GOES TO TOWN

BY EMILY WOODALL

LITTLE ROCK, AR – A new Arkansas Rice mural, painted by artist Matt McLeod, stands tall on the exterior wall of Besser Ace hardware on Main Street here. The mural's downtown location was chosen specifically to highlight the impact rice has on the state and give urban Arkansans a glimpse of life on the farm.

The mural project was coordinated by the Arkansas Rice Federation and Downtown Little Rock Partnership, and is one of multiple efforts by the two organizations working to bring the country and the city together.

Many Arkansans don't realize that their state produces almost 50 percent of the rice grown in the U.S. To attract onlookers and invite them to stop by, the mural states "I love AR rice" and passersby can stand in as the "I" in the word rice and share their photo on social media using the hashtag #iloveARice.

"The accessibility and prominence of the mural will allow us to share the story of Arkansas rice with folks in town who have never experienced a turnrow during rice harvest," said Lauren Waldrip Ward, executive director of the Arkansas Rice Federation. "Our hope is that the engagement component of the mural will increase our exposure by giving consumers a way to interact and help us educate Arkansans about this locally grown crop." 

Emily Woodall is a born and raised Arkansan who didn't realize how much she loved rice until she started working for USA Rice this summer as manager of conservation services.

State Secretary of Agriculture Wes Ward stands tall for Arkansas rice.



To complete the picture, some ambitious farmer needs to plant AR rice in front of this mural!



Artist Matt McLeod and his tools of the trade.

"Our hope is that the engagement component of the mural will increase our exposure by giving consumers a way to interact ..."

— LAUREN WALDRIP WARD
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE ARKANSAS RICE FEDERATION

MORE OPTIONS NOW AVAILABLE FOR RICE FORTIFICATION

BY REBECCA BRATTER

HOUSTON, TX — Key stakeholders and decision makers in U.S. food aid policy recently determined that rinse resistant coated fortified rice is similar in nutrient delivery to extruded fortified rice. While extruded fortified rice is already available for use in global food assistance programs, implementing agencies can expect to see a revised commodity requirements document for both kinds of fortified rice no later than January 2018.

USA Rice has worked closely with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the World Food Programme (WFP) to fully incorporate fortified rice into U.S. food assistance programs, and the addition of rinse resistant coating will ensure greater supply and economies of scale for rice in food aid.

As rice is the most consumed food in the world, all U.S. food assistance agencies and WFP have made it clear that their best option to reduce the impact of poverty is to invest in rice. This year, six of the eight McGovern Dole School feeding programs are using fortified rice in Asia, Latin America, and Africa.

“The tonnage of rice used in all U.S. global food assistance programs has grown over the past three years to more than 100,000 MT in 2017. The fortified rice tonnage has started to grow this past year with about 25,000 MT in call forwards on the books,” said USA Rice Food Aid Subcommittee Chairman Bobby Hanks. “We anticipate the policy changes agreed to will lead to increased tonnage of fortified rice in 2018 and beyond, and are grateful for the ongoing partnership with USDA and USAID. The addition of a new technology and thus additional suppliers, means more options to procure fortified rice kernels and continual improvement of nutrient bioavailability with the ultimate goal of saving more lives.” 

Rebecca Bratter is a food security consultant to the U.S. rice industry with 20 years of experience in global ag markets.



... The addition of a new technology and thus additional suppliers, means more options to procure fortified rice kernels and continual improvement of nutrient bioavailability with the ultimate goal of saving more lives.”

— BOBBY HANKS
USA RICE FOOD AID SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN



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CRAWFISH, RICE AND HEALTHY SOIL: A FARM FAMILY'S RECIPE FOR THE FUTURE

STORY AND PHOTOS BY **RON NICHOLS**

REPRINTED FROM NATIONAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE, PUBLISHED BY THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

RICE AND CRAWFISH are staples of Louisiana cuisine. But for the Durand family of St. Martin Parish, rice and crawfish are also important ingredients in their special recipe for improving soil health.

While rice and crawfish farming offer unique soil health management challenges, the Durand's are undaunted in their desire to improve the health of the resource they see as the future of their family's farming operation.

"Soil health gives us the ability to grow a good crop, to be sustainable for the future," says Jeff Durand. "We have to take care of the soil we're blessed with to grow food for our families, our neighbors, and the world—so it can be productive for generations to come."

Jeff, along with his brothers, Greg and C.J., began farming with their father in the early 1970s, raising exclusively crawfish, but by 1980, the Durand's began growing rice as part of their farming operation. From the beginning, the Durand's utilized no-till rice planting.

To ensure proper water depth and distribution across the fields, precision land-levelling is a necessary practice in both rice and crawfish production. Unfortunately, that requires excavating some higher areas of the fields, which removes soil organic matter and adversely affects soil health.

The Durand's initially began looking for ways to improve soil health in the excavated areas of their fields, but the more they learned about restoring soil health in low-yielding areas, the more they realized those principles could be applied to their higher-yielding areas, too.

Durand now hopes these soil health practices will translate into greater farm profitability overall.

"Through no-till practices alone, we know we're using less fuel. There's less wear-and-tear on the equipment, less labor, and we're more efficient overall," Durand says. "And the cover crops are scavenging nutrients that the rice crop doesn't get – making those nutrients available the following year for the rice crop."

Durand says that as the crawfish feed on the decaying rice stubble between the rice harvest and the next rice planting, another operational efficiency has been gained. "So after harvesting crawfish, we don't have to knock down the stubble before no-till planting another crop of rice," Durand says. "The crawfish are almost like a tillage tool for us."

Importantly, the Durand's have worked with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and other partners to implement practices and to determine the viability of those practices for other growers.

Through financial assistance provided by the Migratory Bird Habitat Initiative (MBHI), the family worked with NRCS, USA Rice Federation, and Ducks Unlimited to develop and maintain wildlife habitat because of the unique benefits offered by rice and crawfish production for migratory water fowl. That habitat has attracted more than 250 different bird species on the Durand's farm, according to experts who have visited the property.

And even though the Durand's MBHI contract has expired, they continue to manage their ponds to benefit the migratory birds.

"The Durand's are wonderful partners," says Keith Latiolais, conservation specialist with Ducks



TOP: Whether growing rice or crawfish, Jeff Durand says, "We have to take care of the soil we're blessed with to grow food for our families, our neighbors and the world." **ABOVE:** From left to right, C.J., Jeff, and Greg Durand agree that improving soil health is key to the long-term health of their south-central Louisiana farming operation. **LEFT:** Water begins to flood a field of rice plants which have emerged through the residue of cover crops on the Durand farm.



Unlimited. "If we want to try something new out here, they're ready, willing and able to try."

Randy Jemison, who recently retired as the director of Louisiana Field Service for USA Rice says a number of the practices started on the Durand farm ultimately became NRCS-recognized practices due to Jeff's proactive participation with the agency. "The Durands are always willing to explore new avenues of production—things that improve soil health and also improve their bottom line," Jemison says.

NRCS State Agronomist Chris Coreil says his agency is committed to helping other farmers on their soil health journey, too – and learning along with them. While he agrees that rice and crawfish farming offer unique challenges, Coreil believes soil health-improving principles are making a positive difference on the Durand's farm.

"The residue produced by the rice crop is consumed by the crawfish and the flooded ecosystem—often leaving the fields bare when the fields are drained," Coreil says. "However, the Durand's see that as an opportunity to integrate cover crops to replenish the carbon and move food back into the system so the ecosystem can more fully recover."



TOP LEFT: At peak production, the Durand's Teche Valley Seafood in St. Martinville processes up to 10,000 pounds of crawfish per day. **TOP RIGHT:** To minimize soil disturbance during crawfish harvest, the Durand's have switched to air-cooled surface-drive engines on their boats. About half of the Durand's 1300-plus acres are used for rice/crawfish production, while the other half is split, about a quarter for double crop rice and the other quarter for soybean/cover crop production. **BOTTOM LEFT:** Pelicans are among the more than 250 bird species that take advantage of the habitat provided by the Durand's farming operation.



It's that soil health-minded approach that the Durand's see as the best way to ensure the long-term viability of their farming enterprise, which includes a crawfish processing facility (Teche Valley Seafood). That operation, which processes up to 10,000 pounds of crawfish per day, is managed and staffed by Durand's three sisters Margo, Connie, and Joanna. At peak processing times, and in addition to other employees, the sisters may be joined by their and their brothers' spouses, and children, making it a multi-generational, family venture.

"I'm proud to be working with my family—working together with my brothers on the farm – and working with my sisters who manage our crawfish operation," Durand says. "In the future I'm hoping some of our children, nephews, and/or grandchildren will come along and work on the farm with us and see what we're doing to constantly improve. Hopefully, they'll do the same when they take over the farm."

The best recipe for realizing that goal, says brother Greg, is to keep the soil healthy and the system in balance for the next generation.

"We want to keep learning, keep asking questions and be willing to make adjustments," he says. "Just because you're doing something today doesn't mean you can't change the way you do things tomorrow." [w.c.](#)

ARKANSAS RICE FARMER JENNIFER JAMES NAMED 2017 FARMER OF THE YEAR

BY DEBORAH WILLENBORG

KANSAS CITY, MO — When Field to Market: The Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture announced the recipients of its inaugural 2017 Sustainability Leadership Awards last month, Arkansas rice farmer Jennifer James was named 2017 Farmer of the Year.

James, a fourth-generation rice farmer from Newport, Arkansas, was recognized for her extraordinary commitment to advancing sustainable agriculture through outstanding conservation and stewardship efforts on her farm, and for sharing best practices with her peers.

"Jennifer manages her family's 6,000-acre farm with sustainability at the center of her decision making and an eye toward future generations," said Rod Snyder, president of Field to Market. "Her leadership and commitment to sustainable agriculture is marked by her steadfast dedication to conserving natural resources and instituting practices that provide wildlife habitat while benefiting soil, water, and air quality."

"It is well-known within the industry that farmers are good stewards of the land, but the recognition coming here to Jennifer—and by extension our industry—is exciting," said USA Rice President & CEO Betsy Ward. "As chair of the USA Rice Sustainability Committee, Jennifer has taken the lead for our industry in this area, and through her example and leadership, she is helping to tell our great story to consumers and end users who want



to know and need to know everything we are doing. We appreciate the recognition and congratulate Jennifer and her family on this high honor."

The Alliance also honored Kellogg Company, Syngenta, and The Nature Conservancy with the 2017 Collaboration of the Year Award for their collective efforts to deliver sustainable outcomes for agriculture in Michigan's Saginaw Bay.

Award winners were selected by Field to Market's Board of Directors and the Alliance's Awards and Recognition Committee. Field to Market is comprised of more than 130 members representing all facets of the U.S. agricultural supply chain, with members employing more than 5 million people and representing combined revenues totaling over \$1.5 trillion. [w.c.](#)

Q&A WITH U.S. SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE SONNY PERDUE

Whole Grain: *2017 has been a pretty bad year for farmers and ranchers given both prices and a series of natural disasters. Under these extreme circumstances is there anything the federal government can do for these Americans who clothe and feed us beyond a system of guaranteed loans, and what is your plan to offer relief?*

Secretary Purdue: “Well, I believe the 2014 Farm Bill went a long way in balancing the safety net for farmers. Obviously, the basis crop insurance, and we’ve got other programs of ARC and PLC programs that help support price and production deficiencies for when disasters come, like we had the flood in Arkansas where many acres of rice were affected and we’ve got replanting challenges. But you know the great news, is farmers always have faced those kind of things. They are the most resilient, the most adaptable people in the world.

They determine every year to put a huge amount of their equity in the ground hoping for the best crop they’ve ever had. And that’s what I love about this business, it’s what I love about the people we serve. I think the 2018 Farm Bill is going to fine tune some of those issues where things were not done as well as could be. We’re out listening to producers all over and I know for rice there was the issue of crop insurance and the replanting date – we hope to address those kind of things going forward.”

WG: *Do you think the disasters we’ve faced will change Congress’ approach to the 2018 Farm Bill?*

SP: “Congress took a fairly big step in 2014 in going away from direct payments. The goal was to get farmers to produce for the market, not for a program, and I think that’s healthy. I think good farmers look for market signals if they have an opportunity to change their crops around whether it be growing this crop or that crop, and market signals should be able to determine that, and I think we’re making continued progress in that way.

The other part of the issue is that they went away from direct disaster payments. You remember there were some

every year and they got to be very, very tough political votes for Congress, because everyone has sympathy for farmers that have a tragedy, but how do you quantify that and how do you appropriate for that? It became a real challenge for Congress, so they tried to develop a program that would cover everyone whether they had good years or not so good years or horrible years due to weather disasters.”

WG: *Given that nearly half of America’s rice crop is exported, we were excited to see the focus your Department is placing on trade with the creation of the new Undersecretary for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs. How does this new position change the focus of USDA?*

SP: “Aren’t we blessed in this nation to have such food security that we have to depend on trade for profitability and viability in the farming sector? That’s a real blessing to have a nation that has such food security that we don’t worry about our next meal, but we want to feed the world! If you look around my office you can see our motto is, “Do Right and Feed Everyone” and the challenge going forward is how can we sell worldwide? Rice is very dependent on international trade and we’ve got a lot of markets in the Indo-Pacific region that we want to enhance and go to. We’ve got the Koreans and the Japans and we need to do more, China obviously. China has not lived up to expectations and the commitments they’ve made.

We’re continually pursuing those fair trade areas in those parts of the world where rice is a huge consumption item. Our Undersecretary of Trade [Ted McKinney], that was called for in the 2014 Farm Bill, is going to be making sales calls continually.”

WG: *USDA’s Market Access Program and Foreign Market Development Program are very important and valuable, but funding from Congress remains stagnant, even going in the wrong direction in real dollar terms. How will you deal with this hostility in Congress towards promoting U.S. products overseas?*

SP: “I’ve not seen hostility in Congress. I think there’s some

anxiety about our trade policy and notably so, but when I was being confirmed, I heard from Congress, number one was trade, two was labor, and three were regulations, and obviously that gets into tax regulations, which is what the President is dealing with right now.

But most of Congress wants robust trading opportunities. They do want fair trade, reciprocity for other countries to be treated fairly that way. But I sense that there’s a wide-open field there to trade more and that’s what we hope to do. I’ve told the producers that if they grow it, we’re going to do our best to sell it.”

WG: *For more than 60 years we have had great success using our agricultural bounty to feed vulnerable populations around the world and to save lives. There are some exciting new developments in micronutrient fortified foods such as fortified rice that can save and improve more lives. How do you see the future role of U.S. agriculture in our food assistance programs?*

SP: “I just visited with former governor Dave Beasley, [Executive Director] of the World Food Programme, and talked about the impact they’ve been making globally with the McGovern-Dole program and the Food for Peace program. I think we’ve heard Secretary of Defense Mattis say if you don’t give us food, we’re going to need more bullets. Because we know that when people are hungry they go look for other opportunities and sometimes that’s conflict.”

WG: *Mexico is the top destination for U.S. rice both in volume and value and Canada is number four. This, as you know, is because of NAFTA, not in spite of it. The President and his negotiators have said some pretty alarming things about NAFTA, but they also say that this is just the way they negotiate. What is your sense of the status of NAFTA, and if it goes away – either because of our actions or our partners’ actions, then what for agriculture?*

SP: “First of all, I want to just say that it’s been refreshing to see up close and personal what an American patriot Donald Trump is. He believes in this country. He believes in the producers and he’s very serious when he talks about fair trade



“That’s a real blessing to have a nation that has such food security that we don’t worry about our next meal, but we want to feed the world!”

deals. He doesn’t believe the U.S. has been treated fairly. He doesn’t believe we’ve enforced the agreements we’ve had, so when he talks about NAFTA and the trade deficit, he’s very serious about that.

As you well know, that trade deficit is probably made up more of automobiles and auto parts than it is agriculture. NAFTA has been really good for U.S. agriculture, and frankly good for Mexican and Canadian agriculture. We’ve all benefited in the North American market.

I believe, at the end of the day, we will have a NAFTA deal. Frankly there’s going to be probably a lot of anxiety, and a lot of concern, and a lot of consternation in the meantime. But I’m convinced this president will get a good NAFTA deal, and if that means he has to go to the brink, then I think he’s prepared to do that.

Now you ask what happens if we’re not successful, I don’t like to think about that. But the fact is, we’ve got to find a lot of other markets if we don’t succeed here. If we don’t come away with a modernized NAFTA, it is certainly going to be traumatic to the American agricultural producers—not just rice but you know many other crops: pork and dairy and corn fructose, and corn and soybeans, and many of those commodities that we send down there that we grow in abundance.

Mexico and Canada have been great partners. They’re really in the top three of our trade partners along with China, so it makes a lot of sense that we should have a well-negotiated deal with NAFTA and I’m hopeful we will be successful.”


WG: *Our members were surprised recently to learn there is no U.S. Standard of Identity (SOI) for rice which makes it difficult for us to challenge products that call themselves rice but are not rice, such as “cauliflower rice.” We don’t want to criticize other growers who are taking the same risks we are, but at the end of the day, we believe rice is a grain, not a shape. We have encouraged the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to either establish an SOI for rice or to adopt the CODEX SOI that states rice is whole or broken kernels from the oryza sativa plant. What are your thoughts on this issue and can USDA weigh in to ensure consumers are not being misled?*

SP: “Well I think that’s a very respectful attitude regarding not denigrating other crops. I know when I think about rice I know what I’m talking about! It’s a grain, and I appreciate that. If CODEX has a standard, obviously we are science-based and I would have no issues with an SOI dealing with the CODEX standards over rice being a grain. I think from a marketing perspective we need to be very careful as we start putting fences around different issues, but I know rice growers are very proud, they think they grow a great product and they don’t want any hijackers.”

WG: *Election analysis shows rural, ag-dependent America gave President Trump his job. Do you feel your agency and your constituents are getting the attention you/we deserve?*

SP: “Well I sure hope so from USDA and I hope so from the President’s perspective. I think farmers are businessmen and businesswomen and I think the President is very focused on deregulation—taxes being a huge regulation! He wants to help the farmer with lower [tax] rates, with pass through rates that are better, and with simplification. He wants to have a growing economy that consumes more and is very robust. I’ve heard out of the President’s mouth how much he appreciates the things that the American farmers do for our economy generally, and for the world. So I hope they are feeling [good about it]. We are definitely trying to support and advocate for them at every meeting at the White House. And hopefully we’ll have good trade deals that demonstrate that.”

WG: *What is your favorite rice dish?*

SP: “Oh man, I can remember my mama’s chicken and rice right now. I wish I had a dish right now. She’s no longer with us, but I can still taste her wonderful, flavorful chicken and rice.” 

USA RICE ASKS FOR GOVERNMENT CRACKDOWN ON MISLABELED RICE PRODUCTS

BY MICHAEL KLEIN

WASHINGTON, DC — It’s only natural for manufacturers, competing for the ever-dwindling attention of consumers, to make product claims to set theirs apart. But a rise in these statements that range from the incredulous to the spurious has forced USA Rice to bring several of these claims to the attention of U.S. government agencies that monitor and regulate food.



“We are seeing a variety of statements on health benefits, organic certifications, and provenance that we think deserve a closer look,” said Betsy Ward, president & CEO of USA Rice. “Consumers care about where their food comes from and they don’t want to be lied to about the food they are putting in their bodies. If the statements are true, good for the companies, but they do need to be held to the same standard as our members. Phony organic imports, mislabeled imports, and erroneous health claims all impact the bottom line of the U.S. rice industry and need to be stopped.”


Ward and her team recently briefed officials at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to discuss the landscape of rice health and marketing claims.

Also, in October, a team from the USA Rice Millers’ Association met with Customs and Border Protection and FDA inspectors to review compliance with U.S. regulations regarding the marking of imported rice with country of origin and other labeling regulations governing enrichment.

“U.S. regulations are clear—imported products must be marked with the country of origin to the final consumer,” said USA Rice COO Bob Cummings. “Portraying imported rice as U.S.-grown is not fair to consumers and our members, and we are asking U.S. port officials to be vigilant.”

Cummings said the United States imported 528,000 metric tons of rice last year, mostly for direct sale to food service and consumer retail.

“Unless imported rice is ‘substantially transformed’ into another product, a marking of country of origin must accompany the product,” he said. “And if rice is marked as enriched but is not, the product is subject to regulatory action at the state and federal levels including removal from the market.”

Ward said her organization would continue to monitor the marketplace and work with manufacturers, regulators, and enforcement officials to ensure a level and honest playing field for her industry. 

Michael Klein has never pretended to be anything he is not.

“... Phony organic imports, mislabeled imports, and erroneous health claims all impact the bottom line of the U.S. rice industry and need to be stopped.”

— Betsy Ward, president & CEO of USA Rice

NESTLÉ PURINA JOINS PARTNERSHIP TO ENSURE FUTURE OF WORKING RICELANDS

BY ANDI COOPER

MEMPHIS, TN — Nestlé Purina PetCare Company, a global leader in pet care, is the newest corporate sponsor of the USA Rice/Ducks Unlimited (DU) Rice Stewardship Partnership. Through a \$2 million commitment over four years, Nestlé Purina's investment will help keep working ricelands healthy, preserve wetlands, and create habitat for waterfowl and other wildlife.

"Farmers, their dogs and waterfowl have long been part of our conservation heritage," said Dale Hall, Ducks Unlimited CEO. "Purina is already a great partner of Ducks Unlimited, and we're proud that they are joining us in our rice industry support and conservation mission."

This commitment is part of Purina's long-term sustainability strategy to add value to the agricultural supply chain and ensure food for people and high-quality ingredients for pets are available well into the future.

"Supporting rice stewardship is consistent with Nestlé Purina's purpose and values," said Joe Sivewright, Nestlé Purina CEO. "We exist as a company to create richer lives for pets and the people who love them, and this includes stewarding natural resources for future generations."

In addition to rice being a critical dietary staple upon which billions depend, working ricelands are also a critical habitat for waterfowl and other wildlife. Winter-flooded rice fields provide an average of 35 percent of the food available to dabbling ducks, like mallards, pintails and teal, in key wintering areas like the Gulf Coast, the Mississippi Alluvial Valley, and California's Central Valley.

Purina's investment will help fund strategies to protect working ricelands, including conservation planning, irrigation efficiencies, nutrient management, and education of decision-makers on water, agriculture, and wildlife and fisheries connections. The project will also help to improve air quality, conserve energy, and support the rice producer's bottom line.

Purina's contribution will also support the next generation of rice farmers. Currently, less than 10 percent of rice farm operators are under the age of 35.


Ready and waiting on the call.



California rice farmer Charley Mathews and his best friend, Finn - all in a day's work.

"We know training and empowering the next generation of rice farmers is critical. With support from Nestlé Purina, we can take Rice Stewardship to a new, more impactful level with these young farmers," said Scott Manley, DU's director of conservation programs.

Purina joins other committed financial sponsors in support of the Rice Stewardship Program, including the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Walmart Foundation, the Mosaic Company Foundation, Nestlé Purina PetCare, Chevron U.S.A., Freeport-McMoRan Foundation, Irene W. and C.B. Pennington Foundation, RiceTec, BASF, American Rice, Inc.—Riviana Foods, Inc., Delta Plastics, Anheuser-Busch InBev, Wells Fargo, Farmers Rice Milling Company, Horizon Ag, Turner's Creek & Bombay Hook Farms, MacDon Industries, Dow AgroSciences, Riceland Foods, and Ducks Unlimited major sponsors.

"At Purina we believe that a healthy environment grows healthy ingredients for healthy pets," said Jack Scott, head of sustainability, Nestlé Purina. "Rice is a natural grain that helps fuel energy and supports digestibility. It's one of the key ingredients in a variety of our pet food recipes, so how it's grown is important to us." 


Andi Cooper is a communications specialist for the Southern Region of Ducks Unlimited.

"Rice is a natural grain that helps fuel energy and supports digestibility. It's one of the key ingredients in a variety of our pet food recipes, so how it's grown is important to us."

— Jack Scott, head of sustainability, Nestlé Purina

TUNE IN TO TV CHEF SARA MOULTON'S *WEEKNIGHT MEALS*

HUMPHREY, AR — TV celebrity chef Sara Moulton visited rice country for a second time last spring to film an episode for the latest season of her series, *Sara's Weeknight Meals*. Titled "Arkansas Eats," the episode includes a visit to 5 Oaks Lodge where Moulton enlisted the help, and family recipes, of Hickory Ridge, Arkansas, rice farmer Eric Vaught, his wife Kelly, and their three children, Baxley, Sawyer, and Sam.

"For this series, we showcase quick, tasty home cooked meals, eaten with family and cooked with love," Moulton said. "Eric shared his recipe for fried catfish and something they call 'Rice Puppies,' his take on hushpuppies. They were delicious—but I am a sucker for fried food." 

Check local listings for air times in your area and read about the episode on Sara's website at www.saramoulton.com.



USA RICE BRINGS FOODSERVICE FARM & MILL TOURS TO CALIFORNIA

BY CAMERON JACOBS

ARBUCKLE, CA — In conjunction with National Rice Month this September, Sun Valley Rice Company and USA Rice hosted two full days of farm and mill tours for foodservice professionals including food writers, registered dietitians, collegiate and professional sports nutritionists, representatives from Aramark, and chefs from the Aperium Hotel Group.

The tours began with a brief introduction on California rice and Sun Valley by their Director of Communications Brett LaGrande and transitioned to a tour of the grounds and state of the art milling and sprouting facility led by Sun Valley's quality assurance manager and operations manager. From there attendees were shuttled to a field in harvest where they learned about harvesting rice firsthand and had the opportunity to ride (and take a few selfies) in an active combine with area farmer, Bert Manuel.

"It was great to have chefs, nutritionists, and the food service people out to California," said Manuel. "These tours give the farmer the chance to tell his story on how we raise the crop and how it gets to the end user, and the end users come away with a very personal experience they can use to communicate the farm to fork story. They asked great questions on planting, growing, harvest, and delivery of the rice, and they shared with me their thoughts on food trends and ways they recommend the use of rice in everyday diets for their clients and customers. It was truly a win-win."

Following the field tour, attendees were taken to the Foothill Warehouse where they sampled four varieties of rice, ate lunch, and concluded their day with a tour of the rice dryer.

"These farm and mill tours are a great opportunity to connect with people who work in the food industry and can directly promote the use and benefits of U.S.-grown rice," said LaGrande. "Additionally, the tours allow USA Rice to introduce itself as a resource for recipe and menu collaboration and



An unforgettable experience.




Sun Valley Rice Company Vice President of Operations José Duran is a master of the “hands on” tour.



foodservice sourcing, as well as marketing and promotions to help incorporate more U.S. rice on menus and tell the story of the ingredients.”

All attendees left the tour with a better understanding of the work that goes into producing rice and a unique outlook on U.S.-grown rice. “I will be thinking about this rice farm tour 15 years from now,” said tour attendee and registered dietician Patricia Bannan. “Actually being out in the field, riding the combine, and meeting the farmers is so much more powerful as a learning experience than sitting in a seminar watching a Power Point presentation on how rice is grown.”

Prior to the tours, USA Rice hosted dinners for tour attendees at prominent Sacramento restaurants that featured a U.S. rice focused menu.

USA Rice’s Foodservice Farm and Mill Tour program was relaunched last year with fruitful tours in Arkansas, and with last week’s successful California installment, plans are already underway for the next round of tours in another rice growing region. The program provides USA Rice an opportunity to showcase sustainably-grown U.S. rice and the hard-working men and women who make it all possible, and improves participants understanding of every aspect of U.S. rice, leading to increased use of the mighty grain. 

Cameron Jacobs manages USA Rice domestic promotion programs for the retail, foodservice, and nutrition sectors. Legend has it his first words were “#ThinkRice” followed by “no imports.”

RICE SCHOLARSHIP WINNER SHOWS VERSATILITY OF RICE

BY MEGHAN MAHONEY

CHICAGO, IL — Copious research. Tedious work. Contemporary thinking. It’s a winning combination both for rice production and for the USA Rice Federation’s National Rice Month Scholarship Contest grand prize entry.

Jared Fitton, winner of the 2017 Dow AgroSciences-sponsored scholarship, received a \$4,000 scholarship and a trip for two to the awards ceremony at the 2017 USA Rice Outlook Conference in San Antonio, Texas.

This year’s competition was fierce with 68 entries—more than three-fold over last year—from all six rice producing states. Fitton’s winning entry was a stop-motion video created to help promote, and increase awareness of, U.S.-grown rice.

Visual Storytelling

“I wanted to think outside the box and be interesting and entertaining,” says Fitton, a self-proclaimed computer science nerd, who attends Santa Barbara High School Computer Science Academy in Santa Barbara, California. “I decided that a stop-motion video would help show the versatility of rice by changing shapes created out of grains to tell the story.”

Stop-motion is an animation technique to make static objects, in this case rice, appear as though they are moving. To create the video, Fitton made a camera mount in his garage so he could shoot pictures directly over a table covered with a black paper backdrop. From there, he slowly moved the rice around the table into different images, capturing every small movement with a picture and repeating the process.

“It took around seven hours, but my little brother helped out and kept me entertained,” he says. “It was a good bonding experience.”

Celebrating Rice Production


The pictures then went into a program that greatly increases the speed at which the images are viewed to give the illusion of movement, and Fitton recorded voiceover that paired with the video.

“National Rice Month is a time to celebrate the hard work that rice farmers put into making one of American’s favorite grains,” Fitton says in the video introduction. And to truly appreciate rice, he helped viewers understand how rice is produced, harvested, and milled; the environmental benefits of rice; and, the positive economic impacts of rice.

Fitton’s personal takeaway from the project is the positive impact rice contributes to his home state.

“To put it into perspective for the average teenager, with the \$500 million rice contributes to California’s economy, you could buy 1,113,585,000 chicken nuggets,” Fitton says.

Go to thinkrice.com/scholarship for more information on the USA Rice Federation and the scholarship sponsored by Dow AgroSciences and to view Fitton’s video, titled *Rice in Motion*.

This year, Olivia Davis of Shreveport, Louisiana, was awarded second place and a \$3,000 scholarship for her video, *Celebrate Rice!* The third place award of \$1,500 went to Jessa Goodeaux of Lonsdale, Arkansas for her video, *Rice Unites Us!* 



Grand prize winner Jared Fitton.

Meghan Mahoney is a Senior PR Counselor for Bader Rutter and works with Dow AgroSciences to promote the annual National Rice Month Scholarship contest.

NATIONAL RICE MONTH CAMPAIGN MAKES AN IMPACT

BY CAMERON JACOBS

ARLINGTON, VA — The many National Rice Month (NRM) activities that occurred this September to increase awareness and consumption of U.S.-grown rice focused on retail, foodservice, and consumer outreach. U.S. rice got a boost from promotions with retail chains and their in-store dietitians, promotional partnerships with P.F. Chang's and Advanced Fresh Concepts, and the latest farm and mill tour in California attended by 10 foodservice professionals (see story on page 18).

USA Rice worked with registered dietitians (RD) at eight grocery store chains across the country: Big Y, Coborn's, Hy-Vee, Jewel-Osco, Martin's, Pyramid Foods, Redner's, and Weis. Through these partnerships NRM and U.S.-grown rice messaging reached 16 million shoppers via a variety of channels including print and online newsletters, blogs, store circulars, signage and displays, social media, in-store activities, and community events.

For the third year in a row, USA Rice worked with P.F. Chang's to promote NRM through their social media network of more than one million followers. This September the restaurant chain offered a two-day promotion for a free bowl of fried rice with the purchase of two entrees at all 210 locations. Advanced Fresh Concepts, the largest supermarket sushi distributor in the U.S., promoted NRM with U.S. rice signage at sushi counters and the addition of two new dishes featuring U.S.-grown rice.

“We have an incredible opportunity to engage and educate our customers and the general public about how we grow rice and the positive impact we make as an industry on the environment and local economy.”

— MICHAEL BOSWORTH
CALIFORNIA RICE FARMER

California rice farmer Michael Bosworth won the #ThinkRice photo contest for the second year in a row with his “Combine Harvest Rally at Sunset” photograph.



During the last week of September, USA Rice invited food writers, RDs, chefs, collegiate and professional sports nutritionists, and representatives from Aramark out to Arbuckle, California for a farm and mill tour at Sun Valley Rice Company. This was the second such tour – the first was last year at Windmill Rice Company in Jonesboro, Arkansas – to give foodservice professionals a glimpse of the many facets of the U.S. rice industry.

“These farm and mill tours are a great opportunity to have our U.S. rice messaging reach key decision makers,” said Paul Galvani, chairman of the USA Rice Domestic Promotion Committee. “Whether it be chefs looking to incorporate rice on a menu more or foodservice providers including U.S. rice in their offerings, our message gets heard.”

As always, September is a big social media month for USA Rice thanks to a NRM social media campaign that generated more than 1,494 likes, 270 shares/retweets, and 117 new followers. Posts for the NRM campaign included farmer features, cooking tips, recipe videos, nutritional information, and fun facts about U.S. rice.

“A year-over-year comparison of USA Rice’s NRM social media campaign shows trending in the right direction,” said Galvani. “We saw 3 percent growth in Facebook followers, 15 percent growth for Twitter, and 44 percent growth for Instagram.”



NRM promotions come in many forms including (top) a Facebook call out to “Rice and Shine!” and start your day with a breakfast of U.S. rice, followed by P.F. Chang’s free bowl of fried rice (below) to extend your rice intake through lunch, dinner, and take-out snack.

Often our most popular posts come from USA Rice members. Facebook followers “liked” University of Arkansas researcher Jarrod Hardke’s suggestion to promote rice for breakfast using the slogan “Rice and Shine!” Another fan favorite featured Todd Willis, a third and fourth grade teacher in Mississippi who was named the 2016 DeSoto County Teacher of the Year for his work on a school rice planting project that inspired the same project to take place at his former host school in Japan.

Michael Bosworth, a California grower and member of the 2015-2017 Rice Leadership Development Class, regularly posts engaging images and short videos of his rice farming operation on social media to directly communicate with consumers. His posts help tell the story of U.S. rice from farm to table, and educate the public about how their food is grown and the sustainable practices Bosworth and other U.S. rice farmers employ to produce a top quality crop.

For his efforts, Bosworth was chosen as the grand prize winner, for the second year in a row, of USA Rice’s photo contest featuring the hashtag #ThinkRice. For winning the contest, Bosworth received a complimentary registration to the 2017 USA Rice Outlook Conference.

“We have an incredible opportunity to engage and educate our customers and the general public about how we grow rice and the positive impact we make as an industry on the environment and local economy,” said Bosworth. “Ducks, swans, geese, herons, wild pheasants, turkeys come here to rest and feast, and I never tire of sharing the conservation practices on rice farms that create a habitat supporting all manner of wildlife.”

USA RICE EXHIBITS AT 100TH FOOD & NUTRITION CONFERENCE & EXPO

BY CAMERON JACOBS

CHICAGO, IL — More than 10,000 dietitians, nutrition science researchers, policy makers, healthcare providers, and food industry leaders from around the world gathered here to attend the 100th anniversary of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics’ annual Food & Nutrition Conference & Expo (FNCE) in mid-October. As an exhibitor, USA Rice promoted U.S. rice messaging, addressed nutrition and food safety questions, and distributed educational materials to conference attendees.

Visitors at the USA Rice booth were able to test their knowledge on the Think Rice trivia wheel, receive branded USBs containing recipes and nutrition information, interact with the domestic promotion team, and experience the difference in feel, smell, and look of various U.S.-grown rice varieties.

“FNCE is one of the most important trade shows we attend,” said Katie Maher, USA Rice director of strategic initiatives. “The show provides a great platform for USA Rice to present itself as the ultimate resource when it comes to all aspects of the U.S. rice industry from nutrition to sourcing and recipe production.”

In addition to the booth’s traditional offerings, surveys were conducted by USA Rice of more than 175 health professionals to gain insight on rice attitudes and usage. Takeaways from the survey include 98.2 percent of respondents recommending rice and rice products as part of a healthy diet with whole grain brown rice, whole grain brown aromatic rice, and wild rice among the top recommended types.

Respondents also expressed a positive perception of rice pinpointing the top appealing attributes of rice as versatility (77.4%), affordability (68.7%), and taste (63%). When

asked about health qualities associated with rice, whole grain (79%), complex carbohydrate (60%), gluten-free (59%), and a source of energy (53%) were identified as the top responses. Lastly, respondents were asked about barriers to acceptance and consumption of rice. Thirty percent identified the carbohydrate content of rice as the primary barrier, followed by misperception and confusion on rice cooking times and techniques at 19 percent.

“The conversations we’re able to have here at FNCE are crucial in gaining reliable feedback to better understand consumer interests and needs, while reiterating our message that U.S.-grown rice is a central component of a healthy well-balanced diet in both schools and homes,” said Maher.

FNCE’s 100th anniversary attracts a big crowd and a steady stream of visitors plays Think Rice trivia at the USA Rice booth.



USA RICE AT THE HEAD OF CLASS

BY DEBORAH WILLENBORG

ASHBURN, VA & OSAGE BEACH, MO — Hands on learning is a sure bet and when the hands are reaching for a forkful of U.S.-grown rice, well, the learning is guaranteed. Throughout each year, USA Rice reaches out to students and teachers alike with lessons in production, nutrition, and conservation to tell the story of our great grain.

Earlier in the school year, USA Rice staff visited Rock Ridge High School in Loudoun County, Virginia, to host a “taste party” celebrating National Rice Month. During the lunch event, USA Rice taught more than 300 students about the U.S. rice industry and screened a short “Rice 101” film. Students also got to test their U.S. rice knowledge on the Think Rice trivia wheel and sample a dish of brown cilantro lime rice prepared by the school’s kitchen staff.

“School visits present a great opportunity for USA Rice to teach students and faculty the importance of U.S. rice in a fun and casual environment,” said Cameron Jacobs, USA Rice domestic promotion manager. “Plus we got to hear from those on the front lines of school foodservice about cooking rice for a population of 1,200 students.”

In addition to participating in the taste party, USA Rice also donated a commercial rice cooker to the school to help with future production of U.S. rice dishes.

“This rice cooker is a tremendous addition to our school’s kitchen and with rice becoming a staple in our cafeteria, demand has never been higher,” said Sherri Foster-Craft, Rock Ridge’s school nutrition manager.


In October, USA Rice was invited to the Missouri Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) conference to showcase the Missouri rice industry to more than 100 family and consumer sciences teachers. Through two interactive sessions, the teachers received a farm-to-table look at domestic rice production, cooking information, and learned about the nutritional benefits of rice for a healthy lifestyle from one of USA Rice’s professional chefs.

“Our FCCLA teachers instruct students in health, nutrition, personal, and professional culinary skills, and food science,” said Donna Sharpe, Missouri FCCLA adviser. “The Missouri FCCLA chapter is the fourth largest in the country and we have tremendous participation from across the state. USA Rice has presented here before and we welcomed them back as we really appreciated the free curriculum they provided along with the presentation by a professional chef.”

During the session, attendees sampled a rice dish made especially for them by Chef Charles Dottore, using jasmine aromatic rice donated by Martin Rice Company in Bernie, Missouri. Martin Rice also donated 2-pound bags of the same jasmine rice for the teachers to take home and practice the cooking techniques taught by Chef Charles.

“I learned so much in this teaching session,” said Whitney Hoffmann, an FCCLA teacher from Sullivan High School, in Sullivan, Missouri. “I am one of those people who didn’t realize we grow rice in the United States, let alone right here in Missouri! I’m excited to cook up my Missouri rice sample, and I know my students will get a kick out of the fact that the rice they’re learning to cook with may have come from their home state.”

The ongoing program with FCCLA is an effort by the rice industry to work with teachers to educate students about rice grown in their state, and the culinary and nutritional benefits of rice as part of a healthy diet.

“I’m grateful to USA Rice for making these experts available and providing this program to our teachers and to Martin Rice Company for helping make it all possible,” said Missouri rice farmer Rance Daniels. “This kind of outreach is very important for our industry and will have a lasting impact on teachers and students, turning them both into loyal customers and allies for us.” 



ABOVE: Chef Charles serves up rice dish samples made with Martin Rice Company jasmine grown in Missouri. **LEFT:** USA Rice’s Cameron Jacobs (left) encourages Virginia high school students to Think Rice!



“This kind of outreach is very important for our industry and will have a lasting impact on teachers and students, turning them both into loyal customers and allies for us.”


— RANCE DANIELS
MISSOURI RICE FARMER

MEETINGS & MEMBER SERVICES

USA RICE WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

The USA Rice Federation is proud to announce two new members from California. The USA Rice Millers' Association welcomes Ratliff Engineering and Packaging, Inc., headquartered in Sacramento, as an Associate Member. "The addition of Ratliff Engineering and Packaging adds value to the USA Rice Millers' Association," said RMA Chairman Alex Balafoutis. "We look forward to their involvement in the industry."

Rice Growers Association of California, Yuba City, is a new member of the USA Rice Merchants' Association. "We are thrilled RGA has decided to join our Merchants' Association," said Dick Ottis, chairman of USA Rice Merchants' Association board of directors. "Their participation will provide a more complete perspective from merchants in the rice industry."

USA Rice invites producer, mill, merchant, and industry partners who support the rice industry and the mission and goals of the organization as members. Benefits of membership range from communications to educational conferences to providing strategic direction to USA Rice through participation on boards and committees. 



For more information on membership opportunities with USA Rice, please contact Jeanette Davis at (703) 236-1447

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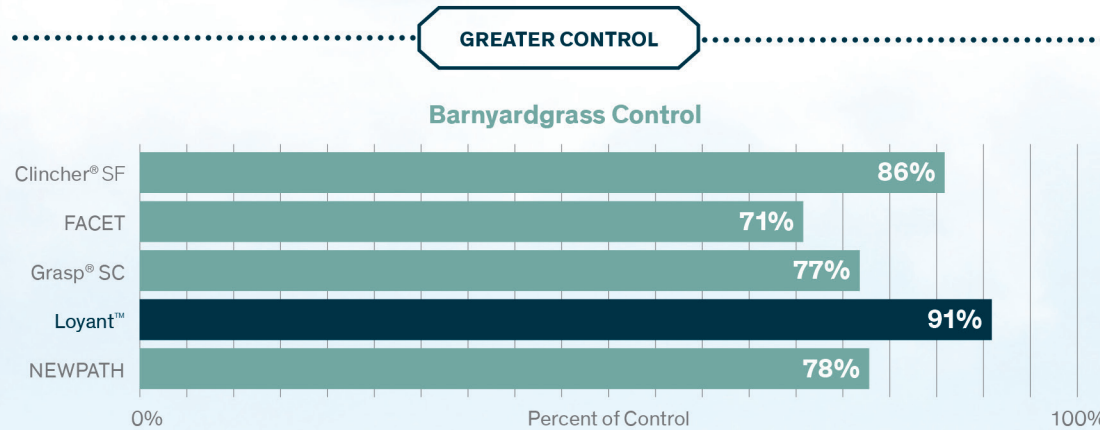
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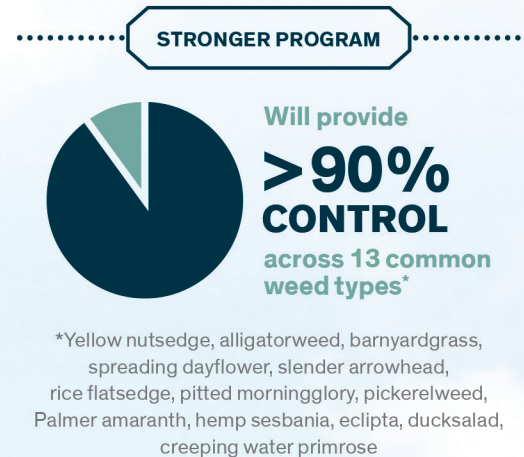
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— Ashley Peters, Peters Crop Consulting, Winnsboro, Louisiana



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