

WHOLE GRAIN



JENNIFER JAMES LEADS THE WAY ON SUSTAINABILITY PAGE 8



'THERE SHE IS' AT OUTLOOK 2016 PAGE 20



CORPORATE SUPPORT FOR SUSTAINABILITY PAGE 12

also in this issue:

INTERNATIONAL RICE LEADERSHIP:

Lessons from Great Britain & Spain

PAGE 22

DOMESTIC PROMOTION:

Retail Dietitians Valued Voice for Rice

PAGE 26

The Bühler rice sorting portfolio.

For the ultimate rice product, choose the ultimate rice optical sorters.

For nearly 70 years, Bühler has taken the lead to deliver innovative optical sorting solutions in rice. Built into all Bühler optical sorters is the ethos of superior machine performance, revolutionary technologies and balanced, stable sorting. This is the Bühler competitive edge and the reason why Bühler is the leading brand of choice for so many processors. Packed with innovative technologies across our range including Intelligent Automation, Crosshair Targeting™, SORTEX ProSort™ operating software and high definition cameras as well as new remote monitoring capabilities such as AnywarePro™, Bühler has the right sorting solution for you, no matter the capacity, sorting requirement or budget. It is no surprise that so many rice processors choose Bühler.

Interested? Contact us today or visit us at:

2016 Rice Market & Technology Convention, Houston, Texas, May 31 to June 2, 2016

2016 Rice Millers Convention, Colorado Springs, Colorado, June 28 to July 1, 2016

rice.processing@buhlergroup.com, www.buhlergroup.com/rice



Innovations for a better world.



We're In This Together

BY BRIAN KING

I'M THRILLED THIS ISSUE OF THE *Whole Grain* is dedicated to the conservation record of the U.S. rice industry and our overall sustainability. "Sustainability" is one of those buzzwords that lots of people use, but because it has different meanings to different people it can be confusing and even dangerous.

I've heard farmers say sustainability means they're farming the same land their parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents farmed. And they're taking steps to ensure their children and grandchildren can go on farming it. That seems like a pretty solid definition to me.

To a merchant, such as myself, sustainability might mean that, but it also might mean I'm taking steps to ensure I'm still in business next year, in five years, in ten years, and beyond.

Consumers, who are more often than not disconnected from the land and where their food comes from, and the companies that bring them that food, sometimes have a different take on sustainability. It's often hard to pin down, with big ideas like, "reduce your carbon footprint," or "return the land to some pre-human development state."

Technically, there's no right or wrong answer about what sustainability means to people. It means what it means. But if government and corporate policies are going to be set based on an interpretation of what is sustainable and what's the best way to get there, well, then I'm afraid there are right and wrong – good and bad – approaches.

"I'm particularly proud of the sustainability record of the U.S. rice industry. I define it as continuity of farming and business – and it's all made possible and supported by our deep commitment to conservation."

— Brian King, USA Rice Chairman

USA Rice Chairman Brian King with fellow Arkansan and Outlook 2016 keynote speaker Miss America Savvy Shields.

I'm particularly proud of the sustainability record of the U.S. rice industry. I define it as continuity of farming and business – and it's all made possible and supported by our deep commitment to conservation.

There's plenty to be proud of there, and on these pages you'll read a lot about where we've been and where we're going. I trust you will enjoy reading about it, and I look forward to you lending your voice and definitions to the discussion. Because one thing we can be certain of - discussions of sustainability are clearly sustainable.

Enjoy. 



who we are:

EDITOR:

Michael Klein
mklein@usarice.com

DEPUTY EDITOR:

Deborah Willenborg
dwillenborg@usarice.com

CONTRIBUTORS:

Peter Bachmann, David Green, Bruce Knight, Julie Knight, Korinne Leonardis, Meghan Mahoney, Hartwig Schmidt, Linda Sieh, Eszter Somogyi, Chuck Wilson

GRAPHIC DESIGN:

Dara Fowler
dara@dfgraphics.com

ADVERTISING:

Deborah Willenborg
dwillenborg@usarice.com

Brian King

USA RICE CHAIRMAN

Betsy Ward

USA RICE PRESIDENT & CEO

Jeremy Baltz

USA RICE COMMUNICATIONS
COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

CIRCULATION: 25,500



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.

2101 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 610
Arlington, Virginia 22201

www.usarice.com

[@usaricenews](https://twitter.com/usaricenews)

[@eatusrice](https://twitter.com/eatusrice)

[@think_rice](https://twitter.com/think_rice)

www.pinterest.com/usarice

www.facebook.com/usarice

PRINTED IN THE USA

WEST RIGHT SLOT 72 Z BINGO U SPLIT

BY BETSY WARD

IF YOU UNDERSTAND THE TITLE OF THIS COLUMN I think you'll understand the way I think about sustainability.

To me, a major part of sustainability is looking ahead – seeing where things are heading, what's going to be different, and figuring out how we're going to get there. It's like the quarterback who targets a precise spot on the field and fires the ball at it while his receiver is only just starting his run. If executed correctly, ball and receiver will arrive at the same point at the same time. We've all seen it countless times – many of you have done it. It's an impressive feat that is often overlooked.



Sustainable agriculture is a lot like that, but probably with less communication; certainly with less practice. Think of yourself as the quarterback, your receivers are consumers, food companies, and the government. They're running their routes, but they're not always telling you precisely where they're going to be. "Down the field," is maybe all you'll get from them.

That's where we come in.

We're your offensive and defensive coordinators rolled into one. We're on the sidelines and up in the box, surveying the field, trying to help you figure out what the defense is going to be doing, where your receivers are going to be running, and also, importantly, whispering – or shouting – into the receivers' ears telling them where they should be to catch that pass you're about to throw.

We all have tough jobs – especially you. Not only are you trying to connect on these passes, but you're also just trying to run your business – feed your families and make sure your employees can as well. And feed all of us too.

I'm particularly proud of the new conservation programs we've helped create with your help and that of our financial and government partners. They're kind of a special third down package we devised to get us all to the same place. With a strong conservation record and sustainable by all the definitions there are.

I hope you are able to take advantage of these programs – they were designed with you in mind to help ensure you have a sustainable business you can pass on to future generations. And if you are unsure about the programs or just learning about them – keep reading. There are a lot of options out there for you, and we just reset the play clock.

“.Think of yourself as the quarterback, your receivers are consumers, food companies, and the government. They're running their routes, but they're not always telling you precisely where they're going to be.”

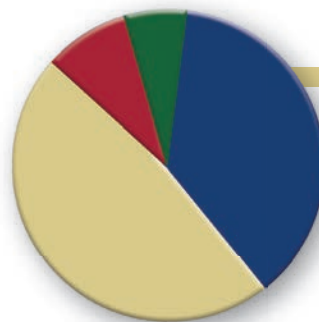
USA RICE FUNDING SOURCED FROM ALL INDUSTRY SEGMENTS EQUALS PROGRAM ACTIVITIES FOR ALL

BY LINDA SIEH

ARLINGTON, VA — Like all federated trade associations, USA Rice brings together funding from many industry sources — in our case growers, millers, merchants, and associated businesses — and uses that funding to conduct programs on behalf of the entire U.S. rice industry. A total of more than three hundred rice industry representatives sit on USA Rice boards and committees that are tasked with oversight of USA Rice activities to assure each year's goals and accomplishments address industry needs. Financial reports are designed to show sources and uses of funding, allowing board and committee members to monitor progress throughout the year.

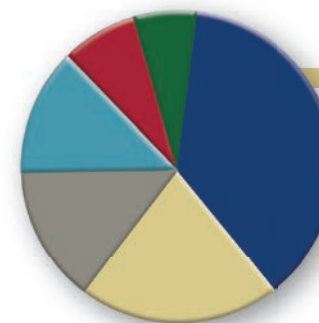
The annual financial audit report, prepared by an external CPA firm hired by the USA Rice Audit Committee – also comprised of representatives from all industry segments – stated that USA Rice's financial records and reports were prepared according to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, that no significant errors were found, and internal controls over financial assets and reporting were adequate. The audit report also included positive results from the required review of USA Rice's compliance with federal regulations regarding expenditure of federal funds. It is the combined efforts of board and committee members and other volunteers and staff that results in USA Rice's continued record of clean financial audits and compliance reviews.

Linda Sieh is USA Rice CFO.



FY 2016 INCOME -
\$11,392,000

State checkoff forwarded by USA Rice Council	5,274,000	
USDA international promotion funds	4,350,000	
Mill, merchant, producer, and other rice industry dues	1,051,000	
Other income	717,000	



FY 2016 EXPENSE -
\$11,392,000

International promotion - USDA funded	4,350,000	
Rice state relations, membership and meetings	2,500,000	
Domestic initiatives and communications	1,740,000	
International promotion - rice industry funded	1,155,000	
Management and general	909,000	
Government affairs	738,000	



Sharpen[®]

Powered by **Kixor**[®] Herbicide

GROW *the highest
yield count
with the
lowest
weed count.*

 **BASF**

We create chemistry

If the presence of broadleaf weeds in your young rice is getting old, go with Sharpen herbicide from BASF. It's perfect as a preemergent application to stop broadleaf weeds in their tracks. Plus it's one of the few PRE herbicides that give you plenty of residual control that lasts all the way to flooding. And it gives you an additional site of action to help control yield-robbing broadleaf weeds. Now that it's planning time, sharpen your thinking: Put this PRE herbicide in the mix, and Grow Smart with BASF.

Grow Smart[™] with **BASF**

Always read and follow label directions.

Grow Smart is a trademark and Kixor and Sharpen are registered trademarks of BASF. © 2016 BASF Corporation. All rights reserved. APN 16-DIV-0016

RICE AND DUCKS BAG ANOTHER \$15 MILLION IN NRCS AID TO FARMERS

BY PETER BACHMANN



WASHINGTON, DC — Just before the halls of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) cleared for Christmas, the agency announced their list of 80+ projects that were awarded funding through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) for 2017.

USA Rice, through the USA Rice-Ducks Unlimited Rice Stewardship Partnership, championed their cause and brought in funding for two projects totaling \$15 million that will be spent in the Mid-South and Gulf Coast's rice-growing regions. The NRCS funds, along with \$15+ million in financial and in-kind support of 45 companies and organizations, will help producers implement a variety of conservation practices on their operations through the NRCS-led Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and supplement a reservoir construction for irrigation water in Texas.

USA Rice took the lead for the Mid-South Graduated Water Stewardship Program, which was awarded \$7 million to be used for rice-specific EQIP and CSP contracts in Arkansas, Central and Northeast Louisiana, Mississippi, and Missouri. The second project, led by the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA), was awarded \$8 million to supplement the building of a conservation reservoir in Eagle Lake, Texas, to provide water for irrigation and flooded water bird habitat across 50,000 acres of ricelands and includes a small amount set aside for CSP contracts for Texas rice farmers.

Big Dreams - Big Help

Josh Hankins, USA Rice Stewardship Partnership Coordinator, is based in Little Rock and led the development of the Mid-South Graduated Water Stewardship Program project and will oversee its implementation in coming years. "I'm glad that our dreams for this project will finally be coming to fruition over the next three or four years and I'm sure looking forward to being a part of that process," said Hankins. "I'd encourage growers to stay patient as we work with NRCS to get the contract officially signed and then begin to develop the program sign-up periods within each of the states over the course of the next 12 to 18 months."

He added, "We saw huge numbers of applications come in for our National Rice RCPP project for EQIP and so we know there's a demand out here for cost-sharing conservation work. We'll do what we can to spread this money out in the most effective manner and use grower input to do that."

USA Rice and Ducks Unlimited currently deploy more than 15 field staff to work on rice conservation projects, namely the implementation of the 2015 RCPP project, *Sustaining the Future of Rice*, across all six major rice-growing states. The Partnership is in the process of completing that \$10 million-project with hundreds of rice farmers expected to sign EQIP and CSP contracts throughout the three-year life of its funding.

Louisiana rice farmer and co-chair of the Rice Stewardship Partnership, Jeff Durand, shared his excitement about the announcement. "Hearing our proposals were funded was just great for us and justified all the time and energy we've put into the Partnership. The news of this funding could really not have come at a better time," he emphasized. "As producers we're dealing with an ongoing streak of low commodity prices and luckily, the

wide suite of practices available through EQIP and CSP will, in most cases, improve our bottom lines and add to our overall sustainability as an industry."

Stronger Together

USA Rice President & CEO Betsy Ward was equally pleased, saying, "We're proud of our continued, strong relationship with Ducks Unlimited, LCRA, and NRCS as well as our many other contributing partners on these RCPP projects.

"Rice and ducks have a unique relationship, they play vital roles in ecosystems throughout the U.S. and we fully embrace the motto 'what's good for rice is good for ducks.' And so it comes as no surprise to us that our Partnership's proven success will be bringing record levels of conservation funding solely to rice farmers over the next couple of years as the projects are implemented," Ward added.

The success of the USA Rice-Ducks Unlimited Rice Stewardship Partnership would not be possible without the help from financial and in-kind partners. Rice Stewardship financial contributors include the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Walmart Foundation, the Mosaic Company Foundation, Chevron U.S.A., Freeport-McMoRan Foundation, Irene W. and C.B. Pennington Foundation,



"... it comes as no surprise to us that our Partnership's proven success will be bringing record levels of conservation funding solely to rice farmers over the next couple of years..."

— BETSY WARD
USA Rice President & CEO

RiceTec, BASF, American Rice, Inc. - Riviana Foods, Inc., Delta Plastics, Wells Fargo, Farmers Rice Milling Company, Horizon Ag, Turner's Creek & Bombay Hook Farms, MacDon Industries, Dow AgroSciences, and other major Ducks Unlimited sponsors. 

Peter Bachmann coordinates all USA Rice sustainability efforts.



Good stewardship on a rice farm means active water management.



The New #1 for Weed Control

RiceOne® CS

RiceCo® does it again. Now you have a more consistent option due to proprietary patented formulation technology which generates improved efficacy not available in tank mixes. You get the broadest spectrum grass and small seed broadleaf residual on the market. Our micro encapsulated formula addresses issues with drift and volatility plus our two complimentary modes of action provide the ultimate in resistance management. Rely on RiceCo®



www.ricecollc.com

5100 Poplar Avenue, Suite 2428 • Memphis, TN 38137
1-901-818-9161 • info@ricecollc.com

Always read and follow label directions. RiceOne and RiceOne CS are registered trademarks of RiceCo LLC. © 2017 RiceCo LLC. All Rights Reserved.



WE DO GRAIN SYSTEMS
DESIGN • BUILD • SERVICE • PARTS

844-VVA-BINS

www.valleyviewagri.com

"We saw huge numbers of applications come in for our National Rice RCPP project for EQIP and so we know there's a demand out here for cost-sharing conservation work. We'll do what we can to spread this money out in the most effective manner and use grower input to do that."

— JOSH HANKINS,
USA Rice Stewardship Partnership Coordinator

JENNIFER JAMES: LEADING THE WAY ON RICE SUSTAINABILITY

BY BRUCE KNIGHT & JULIE KNIGHT



Members of the USA Rice Sustainability Committee spent 2016 aggressively tackling self-imposed goals associated with the development and implementation of an industry-wide Sustainability Plan to position USA Rice at the forefront of all commodity groups looking at sustainability.

Jennifer James, a rice and soybean farmer from Newport, Arkansas, has led the Sustainability Committee for eight years and helped shepherd the recent Sustainability Plan process evaluating sustainability surveys circulated to growers, discussing research needs, examining challenges and successes of other commodity groups, and looking at existing sustainability platforms with which the industry could align itself.

We sat down with James to hear her thoughts on the progress made so far and to get an idea of where she thinks the industry is headed.

Strategic Conservation Solutions (SCS): *The Sustainability Committee was originally initiated as a Task Force in 2009, and you have served as the chair for this effort since its inception. What led you to become involved and what changes have you seen since you started?*

Jennifer James (JJ): Honestly, I never back down from a challenge and this seemed like a huge challenge! As a farmer in the rice industry I hadn't had the interaction with food companies or retailers at the other end of the supply chain. If I learned what their challenges were in the sustainability arena, I would be better equipped to convert that to useable information for the farmers, millers, and merchants at the beginning of the supply chain. I believe the most significant change I've witnessed is an overall increase in general awareness of sustainability as an issue throughout the rice supply chain.

SCS: *Sustainability seems to be a word that's often misunderstood and sometimes off-putting to people who work in agriculture. How would you approach a fellow rice farmer about sustainability and why should they care?*

JJ: As farmers, we fully understand the concept of economic sustainability. My family has been in this business for decades, so I would say that we've been successful in achieving economic sustainability. We also understand that in order to stay competitive in the marketplace, we've got to continually improve what we're doing on our operation and look to innovation to increase efficiencies and meet our buyer's requirements.

I think a disconnection occurs when we feel as though others in the supply chain are dictating how we operate our business. This new movement where consumers want to know the farmer growing the rice on their plates can be a difficult concept for farmers to wrap their heads around. Farmers and processors haven't had to answer these questions before and a system where consumer concerns drive our growing and operating methods is foreign.

Unfortunately, poor market conditions right now are threatening our economic sustainability and our investment as growers in environmentally-sustainable practices can



USA RICE SUSTAINABILITY VISION

*Advancing a sustainable rice industry
that is economically profitable,
socially responsible, and
environmentally sound.*

help us improve the resiliency of our operations long-term.

Luckily our industry has a great story of sustainability success to tell consumers. We've been able to really ramp up our communication efforts and begin getting our message out there with the science to back it up. Our results in the 2016 National Indicators Report (see story on page 11) are proof of that.

SCS: *Can you tell us a little about your Committee's strategic plan and why it's important?*


JJ: Our Committee's plan brings all sectors of the industry and all rice-growing states to the table to create a unified, proactive voice rather than pitting various interests against one another. The plan includes guiding principles for action that reinforce and support this plan in alignment with the mission of USA Rice without ever regulating or even hinting at requiring that the industry implement anything. It's important this is fully industry-led and voluntary-based.

SCS: *What are some of the actions your group is currently working on?*

JJ: We have established four work groups — Strong Sustainability Platform, Research, Relationships with Key Players, and Communications — and each group has taken first steps to tackle strategies in our strategic plan and move us forward. Some actions include:

- working to improve Field to Market and make the Fieldprint Calculator work for rice — looking at better addressing greenhouse gas effects, water quality, and biodiversity;
- looking at overlap between all sustainability platforms that rice growers are asked to participate in and looking to streamline them to reduce the burden on growers;
- considering development of sustainability awards programs to create awareness of good work already underway by growers, millers, and end users of rice.

SCS: *What do you envision as the next steps and ultimate outcome of the Sustainability Committee's efforts?*

JJ: This may sound cliché, but sustainability really is a journey. With many small steps, we will move towards our Committee's vision for sustainability. Ultimately, I'd like to see all farmers no longer afraid of sustainability but engaged in helping to tell the great story of rice. I'd rather us shape the message than others who don't know our story. With so many members of the industry actively engaged in this effort I really hope we can keep the momentum going and make significant progress in the foreseeable future. 

Julie and Bruce Knight lead Strategic Conservation Solutions, LLC, a conservation-oriented consulting firm based in Washington, DC.

Jennifer James & her son, Dylan, having the talk about the birds and the bees and sustainability.



45,705 LAPS: THIS IS WHAT 504 MORE HOURS LOOKS LIKE.

What would you do with three extra weeks? Because with two modes of action and a wider spectrum of control than propanil, RebelEX[®] herbicide provides up to 504 additional hours of residual control of barnyardgrass. Its double dose of powerful control also knocks out propanil-resistant weeds, grasses and aquatics, including sprangletop. So enjoy your extra time, however you spend it. Visit 504hours.com to find out more about the benefits of RebelEX.



Dow AgroSciences

Solutions for the Growing World

*Trademark of The Dow Chemical Company ("Dow") or an affiliated company of Dow. RebelEX is not registered for sale or use in all states. Contact your state pesticide regulatory agency to determine if a product is registered for sale or use in your state. Always read and follow label directions. ©2015 Dow AgroSciences LLC. L38-382-003 (11/15) BR DAAGRICE5055

OUTLOOK FOR THE CONSERVATION TITLE

BY PELHAM STRAUGHN

WASHINGTON, DC — The main theme that pervaded Congressional hearings on Farm Bill conservation programs last Congress was the success of voluntary, incentive-based conservation programs. This message will be integral as Congress takes up reauthorizing the next farm bill. Whether it is popular cost share programs like the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) or the innovative Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), rice growers depend on these programs to manage water, protect wildlife, and make their crop more sustainable and profitable.

The Agricultural Act of 2014 had a number of reforms, consolidations, and innovations and it will be important to build on those accomplishments. Like most farm bills, funding will be key to many decisions made, not only in the conservation title, but through the Farm Bill as a whole. Whether the bill receives additional funding, receives the same amount of funding (a so-called “baseline bill”), or whether the Agricultural Committees must cut funding to find savings will dictate many of the decisions made.

Most of the focus in the conservation title will be on the “big five” programs which include the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), EQIP, the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), and RCPP. In addition, there will be some debate on how the new provision on conservation compliance tied to crop insurance is working.

FROM A TO E

Two programs that Congress will certainly want to evaluate are CRP and ACEP; both took significant funding reductions in the Agricultural Act of 2014. CRP currently has a cap of 24 million acres, which is an 8 million-acre reduction from the 2008 Farm Bill. Legislators will be exploring whether that cut was too much and looking for ways to make the program work more efficiently. ACEP, a program that consolidated three easement programs into one umbrella program, has a significant funding “hole” and several groups will be advocating to increase its funding. While not all rice farmers use CRP or ACEP, in a baseline bill scenario, if Congress elects to give significant funding increases to some programs, others will have to be reduced and this could impact EQIP and CSP.

The gold standard for conservation programs is EQIP and it is extremely popular on Capitol Hill. The program, which pays for a portion of the cost of implementing mostly structural-type conservation practices, is funded at \$1.75 billion per year throughout FY18 and beyond. This program is most likely not in danger of major reductions in funding but is traditionally reduced during the Appropriations cycle every year through changes in mandatory spending programs or “CHIMPS.”


Currently, CSP, which has more than 80 million acres currently enrolled, is going through a transition period as the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) looks to reform the program. The goal of this reform is to make the program easier to understand

As one of the biggest supporters of the conservation title, **USA RICE** will be tapped for suggestions and leadership as Congress begins the Farm Bill process this year.

and more transparent. While the program is popular among some producers, Congress will evaluate the program fully. CSP’s biggest champion, Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), has retired, so some in Congress may look at this program for further reform and possible cuts.

RICE AND DUCKS IN THE LEAD

USA Rice and Ducks Unlimited have taken great advantage of RCPP through the historic Rice Stewardship Partnership. In December 2016, NRCS announced that two projects would receive \$15 million in financial assistance to rice growers to implement a variety of conservation practices on their operations through EQIP and CSP, with the second project designed to construct an irrigation reservoir in Texas (see story on page 6). This new announcement along with current implementation of a 2015 RCPP project, *Sustaining the Future of Rice*, demonstrates the importance of the program to rice growers. It will be paramount for USA Rice to support reauthorization of this new program and find ways to improve it as Congress typically looks more skeptically at new programs.

As one of the biggest supporters of the conservation title, USA Rice will be tapped for suggestions and leadership as Congress begins the Farm Bill process this year. Rice growers must make their voices heard and emphasize that voluntary, incentive-based conservation programs are the best way to protect our natural resources and achieve profitability and sustainability for the rice industry. 

Pelham Straughn is a co-founder of 9b Group, working with clients to develop comprehensive strategies for all agricultural, conservation, and sustainability needs.



NATIONAL INDICATORS REPORT: U.S. RICE BOLSTERS SUSTAINABILITY CLAIMS


BY PETER BACHMANN

WASHINGTON, DC — Field to Market, an agricultural supply chain alliance focused on sustainability, recently published their highly anticipated 2016 National Indicators Report outlining improvements made to on-farm sustainability metrics made from 1980 through this year.

The Report evaluates ten crops using eight environmental indicators: biodiversity, energy use, greenhouse gas emissions, irrigation water use, land use, soil carbon, soil conservation, and water quality. Rice has been one of the original crops analyzed since the Report was first published ten years ago and has seen vast improvements over the 35-year period of the study. During the last ten years of the study, the biggest accomplishment has been increased soil conservation with substantially less soil erosion taking place on rice farming operations.

The Report states, “On a per-acre basis, rice consistently demonstrates the lowest per-acre soil erosion of all six crops examined.” The claim is backed by the highly adopted use of flood irrigation and land-leveling practices employed by the industry. Energy reduction and greenhouse gas emissions seen on rice farms are also credited to productivity gains by the industry.

Jennifer James, Arkansas rice farmer, chair of the USA Rice Sustainability Committee, and USA Rice Board Member for Field to Market, said of the Report: “While the scores for rice within the various metrics has fluctuated over the years, we have not stopped improving overall from where we were in 1980. We can’t look at a snapshot of our records to determine where we are for the long-haul, it’s important to look at the big picture to see just how far we’ve come.”

James added, “This Report is great for us to show to our buyers and export markets but it’s nothing we didn’t already know. U.S. rice farmers are sustainable and we know that, this is just another tool in our toolbox to help us tell our story and prove our point.” 



COMMAND
3ME MICROENCAPSULATED HERBICIDE

TAKE COMMAND

OF ANNUAL GRASSES, AND GET A **\$1 PER ACRE REBATE.***

*Must be applied at rates consistent with the rules of the program. Always read and follow label directions. Command 3ME microencapsulated herbicide is not registered for sale or use in California. FMC and Command are trademarks and Investing in farming's future is a service mark of FMC Corporation or an affiliate. ©2017 FMC Corporation. All rights reserved. 17-FMC-1836 01/17

Investing in farming's future.™ **FMC**



GREENWAY

EQUIPMENT, Inc.

Helping You Cultivate Success

In the field, in the yard and everywhere in between,
we're here to *Help You Cultivate Success!*
We know you have a choice;
thank you for choosing Greenway.

    **JOHN DEERE**

“This Report is great for us to show to our buyers and export markets but it’s nothing we didn’t already know. **U.S. rice farmers are sustainable and we know that**, this is just another tool in our toolbox to help us tell our story and prove our point.”

— JENNIFER JAMES
Arkansas rice farmer, chair of the USA Rice Sustainability Committee, and USA Rice Board Member for Field to Market

MAJOR FOOD COMPANIES LAUD RICE SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS

BY PETER BACHMANN

MEMPHIS, TN — Most USA Rice Outlook Conference successes have been widely shared across social media accounts or detailed in a *USA Rice Daily* story, but one event managed to fly under the radar, until now. The USA Rice Sustainability Committee held an informal dialogue following their business meeting last December where four representatives from major rice-buying food companies outlined their sustainability efforts and answered a myriad of questions from Committee members.

On the panel were Amy Braun, Sustainability Director at Kellogg Company; Stefani Millie Grant, Senior Manager for External Affairs and Sustainability at Unilever; Alana MacDonald, Strategic Sourcing Manager at Mars; and Kristopher Riggs, Rice Procurement Manager at Anheuser-Busch.

The panelists brought a wealth of information and background regarding the major footprint their employers have within the U.S. food supply.

Mark Isbell, Arkansas rice farmer and co-chair of the Committee's Relationships with Key Players Work Group, served as the moderator for the informal panel. "What's clear from all the panelists was that they see growing consumer demand for products on the shelves with sustainability in mind," said Isbell. "What was also clear, and the panelists recognized, is that U.S.-grown rice is incredibly sustainable in terms of water use, wildlife habitat, and other factors when compared to most imported rice."

Another question often asked in relation to the issue is "what do I get for being sustainable?" Isbell said, "Though panelists did not see much potential for premiums offered for rice



grown using 'sustainable' methods, they did seem to indicate a willingness to partner and support sustainable practices within the industry in various ways as we continue to build on the already positive sustainability story we have to tell our customers."

"The most rewarding part of the experience was our ability to have a frank discussion with the panelists," said Isbell. "Our goal was to further our relationships with some of the major rice buyers and create more of an open dialogue about what the rice industry is doing in regard to sustainability and how their companies can use that information to the advantage of the entire supply chain. We are grateful to the food company reps who generously shared their time with us and look forward to continuing those relationships down the road."

The overall message of the dialogue was the need to work together to tell a holistic story to consumers and stakeholders, and share all of the great sustainability success the rice industry continues to accomplish. [w3](#)



For American rice farmers, sustainability is not just a buzzword, it's a way of life.



It's been a rough season for rice farmers. We were hit hard, too.

That's why RiceTec is planning to substantially increase our seed production acres for 2017. We're working to make sure bad weather won't limit our seed inventory again next year.

Rest assured, RiceTec is still here to support our partners with advice and best practices whenever you need us. We value your business, and we thank you for your understanding.



RiceTec

To find your local RiceTec representative, call 877.580.7423 • RiceTec.com

USA RICE STORMS THE HILL AT ANNUAL GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS CONFERENCE

BY MICHAEL KLEIN

WASHINGTON, DC — More than 140 rice farmers, merchants, and millers participated in USA Rice’s annual Government Affairs Conference (GAC) here in mid-February to share policy positions and priorities with Members of Congress, their staffs, and Trump Administration officials.

There were 54 meetings with individual Congressional offices and key committees including at the House Ways & Means and Senate Finance Committees.

“We had a very strong showing from all segments of the industry and all the major rice states, and our messages were well-received in all of the offices we visited,” said Blake Gerard, a Missouri rice farmer and chairman of USA Rice Farmers.

“It’s important to thank our Members for their past help and express our concerns about the future,” said fellow Missourian Rance Daniels. “What I find most encouraging is when we express those concerns to our home state Member and they are able to share with us the work they’ve already started on the issue.”

Trade Dominates Discussion

“Given the Trump Administration’s new trade agenda, it was important for us to be here to let Members know that maintaining and expanding export markets is vital for us – from Japan and Iraq, to our top market of Mexico and what was once our top market, Cuba,” explained Robert Trahan of Falcon Rice Mill in Crowley, Louisiana, and chairman of the USA Rice Millers’ Association.

The looming Farm Bill and pending nomination of Governor Sonny Perdue to be Secretary of Agriculture were also central to discussions.

“[House Agriculture Committee] Chairman Conaway is pretty determined to get the new Farm Bill in place by the time the current bill expires in 2018,” said Linda Raun, a Texas rice farmer who was instrumental for the rice industry in the development of the 2014 Farm Bill. “They’ve already had more than 80 hearings which is good, but as the Chairman told us, there are some things that work really well in the current bill, particularly for rice, but there are also some things that need fixing, so it is going to be interesting.”

“One of the things we told Members we met with is that we feel very good about Governor Perdue because he understands commodity agriculture, the importance of trade, and the plight of farmers today,” said Joe Mencer, an Arkansas farmer. “We only heard back positive things about the Governor and expect he’ll be confirmed, which is good because there are a lot of important positions within USDA that the new Secretary needs to fill.”

Trending on Twitter: #riceonthehill as USA Rice members spent two days meeting with state legislators, administration officials, and the occasional Cabinet nominee.



California Legislators Anxious to Hear About Flooding Back Home

“Almost all of our Hill meetings began with the Oroville Dam situation,” said Nicole Van Vleck, a rice farmer from Yuba City, California. “But frankly, that provided us with the opportunity to drive home the point to the Members we met that water fixes are extremely important in California, especially additional surface storage, Sites Reservoir, and the need for regulatory agencies to take a serious look at our Salmon Recovery Plan as a way to save salmon and still allow farmers to farm.”

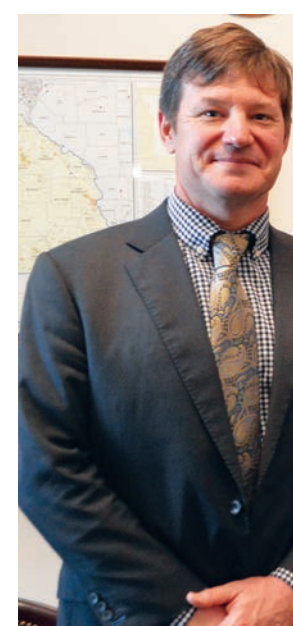
Meetings with Trump Administration

While much of the action at this year’s USA Rice GAC took place on Capitol Hill, attendees also participated in a dozen meetings with Trump Administration officials around the city. Groups made up of producers, millers, and merchants from all the major rice producing states visited with representatives and leadership at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), World Food Program (WFP), Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR).

“Preserving trade agreements that work and holding our trading partners accountable that don’t live up to their obligations was our message in meetings with USDA and the U.S. Trade Representative’s Office,” said Carl Brothers, chairman of the USA Rice International Trade Policy Committee and COO at Riceland Foods, Inc. “We were very clear that NAFTA works for the rice industry and any improvements to this nearly 20 year-old trade deal can’t come at our expense.”

Kick-starting the U.S. effort to sign a long-completed phytosanitary protocol permitting the purchase of U.S. milled rice by China’s importers was a key topic at the USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service meeting. “This bilateral negotiation has been going on in one form or another for over a decade,” according to Michael Rue, California producer and vice chairman of the International Trade Policy Committee. “China is delaying signature and we’re asking the incoming Administration to bring this protocol across the goal line. They understand how important this is to the rice industry and we will assist in any way possible.”

Members also met with officials from USDA’s Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS) on international market opportunities and USA Rice promotional strategies for 2017 in key export markets. FAS



officials also reviewed the state of play regarding NAFTA and Mexico, WTO panels on China's domestic support and TRQ administration, rice trade with Cuba under the new Administration, and the future of Brexit and its impact on EU and UK trade agreements.

Food aid was high on the agenda in meetings with officials from USDA, USAID, and the WFP who provided an update on a study of rice fortification technologies and the use of fortified rice in food assistance programs.

"Rice fortification is a proven, cost-effective way to combat malnutrition" said Bobby Hanks, CEO of Louisiana Rice Mill and Chair of the USA Rice Food Aid Subcommittee. "We encourage USDA and USAID to utilize every technology at their disposal so that fortified rice can be used successfully, and as a healthy and nutritious option for feeding programs."

USA Rice members also were clear in their support of in-kind commodity contributions in food aid programs as opposed to cash or vouchers, which can seriously increase the risk of fraud and abuse of funds that cannot be easily monitored.

A robust group of growers attended back-to-back meetings with the USDA sub-agencies overseeing farm programs including, the Farm Service Agency (FSA), Risk Management Agency (RMA), and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Daniel Berglund, a rice farmer and crop insurance aficionado from Wharton, Texas, said, "It's great to get a chance to meet with USDA staff that can really get in the weeds with us about technical issues and historical knowledge because of long careers in the industry. We were able to cover a lot of ground ranging from several new insurance endorsements we're submitting to the latest 'practical to replant' dates regulated by RMA."

Berglund continued, "Our meeting with NRCS just felt really effective, the room was brimming with excitement because of our great partnership with the agency, not to mention the \$25 million in cost-share funding that's been collectively secured by the industry through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program. Our staff have clearly built strong relationships with many of the folks within the agencies and it makes working with USDA that much easier on us when we come into town."



Fresh, Flavorful and Fast!

Spicy Chicken and Brown Rice Lettuce Wrap

For more brown rice recipes, visit mahatmarice.com, successrice.com, riceselect.com, or minuterice.com

©Riviana Foods Inc. 2017

NATIONAL RICE COMPANY
IS HONORED TO HAVE SERVED THE
USA RICE INDUSTRY
SINCE 1905

Through changing times,
technologies, and customer demands,
we provide continuity.

nationalrice.com

Industry Unity on Display

All of the officials shared the sentiment that meeting with a unified rice industry is helpful as they begin navigating their portfolios under the new Administration.

"The fact that we come here together – farmers, millers, merchants, and end users – to talk to our government with one voice is really important," said Mississippi rice farmer Kirk Satterfield. "Of course there's strength in numbers, but the way the country and Congress seem divided now, I think us coming here and showing our leaders that we unite for our common good is encouraging, and frankly, I hope sets a good example."

Michael Klein covered a lot of political storms when he worked on Capitol Hill in the 90s.

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

CONGRESSIONAL STAFF AWARDS RECOGNIZE EXTRA EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF U.S. RICE

BY PETER BACHMANN

WASHINGTON, DC — At the Government Affairs Conference last month, USA Rice continued its tradition of recognizing Congressional staff that go above and beyond their duties to support the U.S. rice industry. The 2017 recipients of the USA Rice Outstanding Congressional Staff Award are Ted Verrill and Carlisle Clarke.

Ted Verrill has been a staple in the halls of Congress for quite a while and currently serves as the deputy chief of staff and legislative director for rice champion Representative Ralph Abraham (R-LA). Verrill is no stranger to the issues facing the rice industry as prior to joining Abraham's staff, he served as legislative director and counsel for Representative Rick Crawford (R-AR) and also worked for former Senator Dale Bumpers (D-AR).

"Ted is certainly most deserving of this award," said USA Rice Vice President of Government Affairs Ben Mosely. "He is a great communicator and frequently reaches out to us as a resource to make sure he and Congressman Abraham can effectively support the rice industry."

The Senate awardee, Carlisle Clarke, currently serves as the clerk for the Senate Appropriations Committee's Agriculture Subcommittee, overseeing the annual funding



USA Rice members show their appreciation to Ted Verrill (top photo) and Carlisle Clarke (bottom photo) at the 2017 USA Rice GAC.

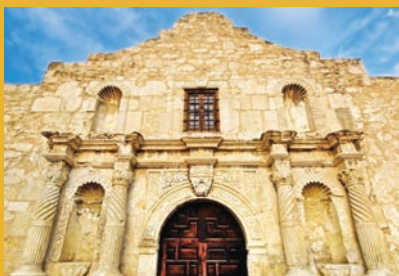


RMG
THE RUSSELL MARINE GROUP
specializing in bulk cargo
www.rmgcal.com

SAVE THE DATE


USA RICE

OUTLOOK CONFERENCE
December 10-12, 2017 • San Antonio



bills for the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Food and Drug Administration. Clarke has worked under Subcommittee Chairmen Roy Blunt (R-MS), Jerry Moran (R-KS), and most recently John Hoeven (R-ND), but got his start as the legislative assistant covering agriculture for Senator Thad Cochran (R-MS), another rice champion.

Mosely said, "Carlisle has been instrumental in ensuring that programs that are vital to the needs of the rice industry continue to be funded in the annual appropriations bills, including food aid and conservation-related accounts. His efforts on behalf of the industry go all the way back to his days serving on Senator Cochran's personal staff.

"Verrill and Clarke are just two of the many Congressional staff that USA Rice has strong relationships with," added Mosely. "It's important to continue to strengthen our ties with staff and recognize those who really take our issues to heart and work overtime for the rice industry when the needs arise." 



AMERICAN COMMODITY
COMPANY, LLC

THE High Quality California Rice Producer's Gateway to the Top Dollar Markets of the World

*Consistently THE highest industry
returns over the past decade*

Please contact our Field Staff for details about
opportunities within the ACC marketing programs:

John Valpey – [530] 520-4844, jvalpey@accrice.com
Brad McGeoghegan – [530] 514-7497, bradm@accrice.com
Damon Roush – [530] 218-4133, droush@accrice.com



P.O. Box 520, 6133 Abel Road, Williams, CA 95987, USA • Phone [530] 473-2827 • Fax [530] 473-2449
www.accrice.com

DUNAVANT

GLOBAL • FREIGHT • DISTRIBUTION • SOLUTIONS

WE GET GRANULAR WITH THE DETAILS

Delivering end-to-end logistics and dedicated customer
service, backed by more than five decades of experience
as a global leader in commodities distribution.



DUNAVANT.COM | 888.955.3547

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACTS ON EXPORT MARKETS

BY DAVID GREEN

WASHINGTON, DC — Sustainability in the food and agriculture sectors is neither a fad nor a trend, but fast becoming an established part of doing business, particularly in a number of overseas markets for U.S. rice.

But what exactly is sustainability, what does it mean, how can it be ‘delivered?’ The practical demonstration of what is deemed to be sustainable in agriculture and food production can be confusing with many different definitions, questions, and messages. For example, today there is a vast array of sustainability certification schemes with more than 500 different labels in use globally.

An important market for U.S. rice is the European Union which relies heavily on certified sustainability schemes and labels, often based on social and environmental issues. While such schemes can show that producers have met a definitive set of criteria, they suffer from a one-size-fits all approach and also place burdens on producers and suppliers to meet any number of different certification standards demanded by different customers.

In the U.S., sustainability relies more on demonstrating ongoing improvement in production which can be demonstrated through voluntary schemes that are independently verified or benchmarked. This approach, which does not set arbitrary standards, is closer to one of the core definitions of sustainability – to leave the land in better condition for the next generation.

To promote a better understanding and acceptance among European customers and stakeholders about the U.S. approach to sustainability, a group of American farmers, fishermen, and producers, including USA Rice, joined together to form the U.S. Sustainability Alliance to share their values regarding sustainability and to explore ways to work together with EU customers and stakeholders for greater understanding of common issues.

The program, supported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), began by meeting with stakeholders in several key EU countries to gain insight into their perceptions of



USA RICE SHARES PRODUCTION OUTLOOK AND CONSUMER TRENDS AT UK RICE SYMPOSIUM

BY ESZTER SOMOGYI

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM — A delegation of USA Rice members and staff participated in the Biannual Symposium of the UK Rice Association last fall, where more than 100 members of the UK rice trade, including importers, wholesalers, and retailers servicing the mainstream and ethnic markets gathered.

Meryl Kennedy-Farr, president of Kennedy Rice Mill, Kennedy Rice Dryers, Planters Rice Mill, and Delta Land and Farm Management, gave a presentation on the 2016 U.S. rice production and outlook for the crop year 2016/17. USA Rice President & CEO Betsy Ward focused on consumer trends in the U.S., including their views on genetically modified organisms, food safety, diet and nutrition, and food preferences, among other topics. Ward showed several videos of consumer interviews, both hidden camera and “man on the street” style.

Additional presenters shared views on the serious challenges ahead for the UK as a result of last summer’s Brexit vote; a world rice market outlook; and one food company shared its perspective on meeting demands for sustainable rice production while keeping costs down and production up.

“The UK Rice Symposium is an excellent event with informative presentations and unparalleled networking opportunities,” said Ward. “We were able to connect with local trade, discuss new opportunities, and further build and solidify our relationships here.”

Following the symposium, USA Rice met with key importers in the UK rice industry, including S&B Herba Foods, Westmill, Tilda, Veetee, Riceworks, as well as the UK FAS Minister Counselor, and representatives of the UK Rice Association.




The USA Rice contingent takes time out from the UK Rice symposium to see how U.S. rice is packaged, marketed, and sold there.



In a United Nations Global Impact survey of 1,000 chief executives from 103 countries, 93 percent said sustainability was important to the future success of their business.

U.S. sustainability. The results were instructive: across the food chain there was a limited understanding of U.S. agriculture, and in several cases negative perceptions of U.S. farming practices. In short, the U.S. was seen as less sustainable than the EU.

Today, the Alliance represents more than twenty FAS Cooperators, including USA Rice. Over the past two years, the Alliance has held workshops, one-on-one meetings, and spoken at conferences in Europe to share experiences and the challenges they face. And also to educate and inform EU stakeholders that there are many different ways to demonstrate sustainability with no one way being the only path.

In a United Nations Global Impact survey of 1,000 chief executives from 103 countries, 93 percent said sustainability was important to the future success of their business. This underscores the importance the global marketplace is placing on sustainability. For the EU, the U.S., and all other markets, the goal must be to appreciate the differences, find common ground, and continue to trade and do business. 

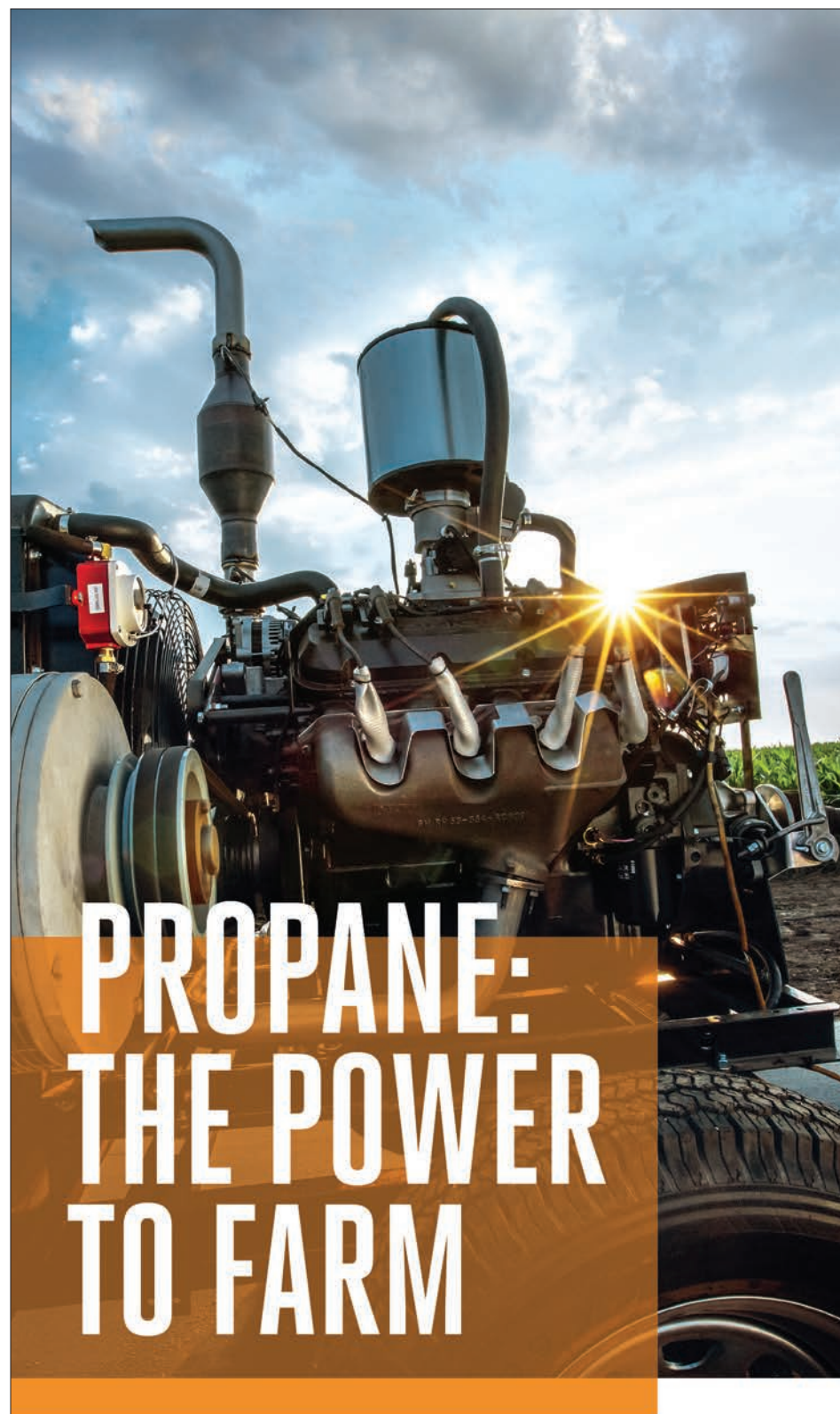
David Green is a senior technical consultant with the U.S. Sustainability Alliance.

USA Rice members and staff also conducted market visits in the ethnic as well as mainstream wholesalers and retailers to see how U.S. rice is sold in these market segments.

“The most important market for U.S. rice sales here in volume terms is still the ethnic sector, including Chinese and Afro-Caribbean communities,” said Hugh Maginnis, vice president of international for USA Rice, who attended the symposium. “However, we are quite excited that since 2015, two identified U.S. long grain rice brands are also available in the mainstream retail segment in selected Tesco and Asda shops, expanding our consumer base.”

Maginnis said USA Rice supports both market segments in cooperation with the local U.S. rice importers with promotional activities to further increase U.S. rice sales and further establish a brand equity for U.S.-grown rice. 

Eszter Somogyi is the USA Rice marketing director based in Hamburg, Germany. She and her family recently welcomed their third child, Oskar Benjamin.



UPGRADE TO A HIGH-EFFICIENCY PROPANE IRRIGATION ENGINE.

It's the upgrade that'll save you money from day one: not only can you save up to 50 percent on the purchase price compared with a diesel engine, you'll lower your fuel costs up to 40 percent, too. And these Tier 4-ready engines deliver all the horsepower you need, with up to 11 percent fewer greenhouse gas emissions compared with diesel. Add a new, high-efficiency propane irrigation engine to your operation, and you've got the power to farm.

See why producers from coast-to-coast are making the switch, and learn about incentives for propane-powered ag equipment at PowerToFarm.com.

 PROPANE EDUCATION & RESEARCH COUNCIL


PROPANE
CLEAN AMERICAN ENERGY®

2016 USA RICE OUTLOOK CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

BY DEBORAH WILLENBORG

MEMPHIS, TN — Welcoming everyone to the 2016 USA Rice Outlook Conference last December, host-state representative and Mississippi rice farmer Kirk Satterfield explained, “The conference has grown so much and is still growing that we had to move to Memphis to find a venue big enough to accommodate all the attendees and exhibits. We certainly appreciate the level of participation.”

Keynote Speakers

USA Rice Chairman Brian King echoed that sentiment: “It’s encouraging to see so many in the industry come out - it shows we’re on the right track and offering good value to our customers. Attendance this year was close to 800 and I attribute that to excellent programming - from exciting keynote speakers like NASA Astronaut Michael Massimino, Ambassador to Iraq Stuart Jones, and crowd-favorite 2017 Miss America Savvy Shields - to the new Innovation Stage and to the Sustainability panel discussions.

Massimino thanked the rice industry for producing a great tasting already dehydrated food that’s easy to eat in zero gravity. He said food, real food, was important to the space program not just for its nutritional value but also the psychological element. “Thank you for what you do, growing food for all of us to eat - that by the way, we love eating in space,” said Massimino. He shared video of a crewmate grabbing a bite out of a burrito as it floated by and talked about making rice pilaf as one of his favorite meals on the Space Shuttle.

“The U.S. rice industry has a dedicated and powerful ally in Ambassador Stuart Jones,” explained USA Rice President & CEO Betsy Ward when introducing the former U.S. Ambassador to Iraq. “The insights he gave us on Iraq and the entire Middle East, and the direct advocating he did with the government of Iraq on our behalf over the last two years are unique in my experience. We were fortunate to have had him in Baghdad.”

Jones shared how he reinforced the positive attributes of U.S. rice with the government of Iraq, and the Memorandum of Understanding between the two countries on U.S. rice that he helped make a reality.

Miss America 2017 Savvy Shields is a real rice-state celebrity from Fayetteville, Arkansas! She shared insights from her personal platform, “Eat Better, Live Better,” which aims to educate people on how the foods we eat make an impact on our lives as a whole. She encouraged everyone to embrace a lifestyle that can drastically improve health and made us all want to eat better, just like Miss America.

Dick Ottis (left) tells earthly tales to NASA Astronaut Michael Massimino.



Betsy Ward, Vicky Boyd, and Tim Walker (far right) congratulate the 2016 Annual Rice Award Winners Steve Linscombe, Gary Sebree, and Richard Fontenot.



The Innovation Stage draws the early morning crowd.

New Innovation Stage

The early morning schedule each day included the debut of the Innovation Stage centrally located in the Exhibit Hall. “The new Innovation Stage was a big hit and showcased the latest and greatest technology has to offer the industry,” said Ward. “We really appreciate all of our exhibitors and sponsors for their support and knew the change in venue would move their messages front and center.”

Awards Luncheon

The Annual Rice Awards Luncheon is always a conference centerpiece. Attendees heard moving speeches from award winners Richard Fontenot, farmer of the year; Dr. Steve Linscombe, rice industry award winner; and Gary Sebree, rice lifetime achievement award.

Dr. Scott Manley, director of conservation innovation for Ducks Unlimited (DU) was the recipient of USA Rice’s 2016 Distinguished Conservation Achievement Award. Manley works out of the DU Southern Regional Office in Jackson, Mississippi, where he oversees staff for the organization who work directly on the National Rice Regional Conservation Partnership Project (RCPP) project.

USA Rice presented a special award, the 2016 USA Rice Conservation Communications Award, to the Ducks Unlimited Communications Team that works closely with Manley on the Rice Stewardship Partnership’s outreach and education efforts, and includes: Karen Almand, Graphic Designer; Clay Baird, Video Productions; Katie Burke, Heritage Center Curator; Andi Cooper, Southern Region Communications Specialist; and Greg Taras, Communications Productions.

The 2017/19 Rice Leadership Development Program class was announced and the National Rice Month Scholarship debuted the winning entry in the first ever video contest (see story on page 26).

Between traditional program offerings like state outlook and rice research reports from all six major rice-producing states, USA Rice showcased several videos, including the P.F. Chang’s Farm-to-Wok video featuring Arkansas rice farmers Jennifer James and Dow Brantley that captures the artistry of rice farming and tells the story of the U.S.-grown grain.



From Top: AR Rice markets the merch; Memphis restaurant Blue Fin Sushi proudly serves U.S.-grown rice; checking out the Outlook schedule; and Miss America Savvy Shields, here with Kirk Satterfield, was the hit of the conference.



Hot Topic: Sustainability

This year's conference included two panels focusing on conservation and sustainability practices in the rice industry that were moderated by outgoing Chief of the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Jason Weller who spoke eloquently about the importance of industries telling their stories. (Read the transcript of Weller's speech on page 24.)

Crowd Favorites

The Friday afternoon sessions offered up 2017 projections from conference veterans and crowd favorites Nathan Childs and Jim Wiesemeyer.

Childs, senior economist at the Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service, gave an overview of global and domestic trends in rice production and trade. His detailed statistics and analysis are an invaluable resource to those involved in the rice industry, and this year was no exception.

During his talk, Wiesemeyer, senior vice president of Informa Economics IEG, dissected the results of the presidential election and forecasted what he sees ahead for U.S. agriculture in a Trump administration, for instance less regulation and probable SNAP reform. He opined that 2018 Farm Bill negotiations would be pushed back to late 2017.

"Add up all the good information from the sessions and exhibits, plus getting to see an astronaut and Miss America in the same conference, and you got your money's worth," concluded Satterfield.

The Outlook conference is the largest annual rice-specific gathering in North America and is an educational service of USA Rice. Next year's conference is scheduled for December 10-12 in San Antonio, Texas, where of course, it will be even bigger. [we](#)

Deborah Willenborg was part of the advance team for the 2016 Outlook Conference and spent an enjoyable afternoon on Beale Street in Memphis perusing record stores in search of perfect "walk-in" music for the conference AV crew.



"Add up all the good information from the sessions and exhibits, plus getting to see an astronaut and Miss America in the same conference, and you got your money's worth"

— KIRK SATTERFIELD
host-state representative and Mississippi rice farmer

INTERNATIONAL RICE LEADERSHIP CLASS – LESSONS FROM GREAT BRITAIN & SPAIN

BY CHUCK WILSON

GREAT BRITAIN & SPAIN — Last fall, the 2016 International Rice Leadership Class traveled to Europe to get an overview of the market for U.S. rice in the UK and to learn about the Spanish rice market. The class met with a diverse group of industry representatives including importers, exporters, and millers, and U.S. government officials working in London and Madrid.

Members of this year's International Rice Leadership Class are alumni from previous Rice Leadership Development classes and included: Brandon Bauman, Stuttgart, AR; Wes Long, Benton, AR; Robert Petter, DeValls Bluff, AR; A.J. Sabine, Baton Rouge, LA; and Eric Unkel, Kinder, LA.

The group traveled to Cambridge, England, where Peter Walker, general sales manager with S & B Herba Foods, Ltd., led a mill tour and talked about how they import and market U.S. rice. In London, the class met with U.S. Agricultural Counselor Stan Phillips, Agricultural Specialist Steve Knight, and Agricultural Marketing Specialist Julie Vasquez-Nicholson who gave an overview of the British rice market.

"The UK market is literally hungry for our story of conservation, sustainability, and a high quality product," said Louisiana rice farmer Eric Unkel. "Their consumers want a product that's good for the environment and healthy for them, too."

Next was a session with Iain Forbes of The Garden Marketing and PR firm, USA Rice's promotion coordinator in Great Britain, who talked in detail about marketing programs used to promote U.S. rice. He led the group on a tour of various wholesale and retail stores to observe the different ways U.S.-grown rice is packaged and marketed there.

"Everyone we heard from asserted that the people of the United Kingdom want to relate to a rice grower with a unique narrative," said ag journalist A.J. Sabine. "This is a theme of many of my stories written for the Louisiana Farm Bureau. Consumers want a relationship with the farmer who grows their food. It's a notion that's as old as food itself."

Arkansas rice farmer Robert Petter summed up the first leg of the trip, saying, "After the tours and talks in the UK, I believe the consumer market needs a variety of different

approaches including a more emotional and personal connection being made between the rice people are eating and where it comes from."

In Madrid, Spain, the group met with U.S. Agricultural Attaché Rachel Bickford and Agricultural Specialist Marta Guerrero where they learned that Spain produces both long grain and medium grain rice but only exports long grain.

After one day in Madrid, the class boarded a bullet train to Valencia, along the Mediterranean Sea in southern Spain, where they met with Luis Marques Falco, director of Copsemar, a cooperative of rice seed producers that produces 50 percent of the seed rice in Spain.

"It was interesting to hear how the industry in Spain is so label specific. For instance, rice produced in Valencia not only has origin listed on the label but also has to have a special seal designating it as a product of Valencia," said rice producer Brandon Bauman.

Next on the schedule was a tour of Arroz Dacsá, the second largest rice mill in Spain, and the final stop was at IVIA-Sueca, the main public institution for rice research in Spain where the group met with Dr. Concha Domingo to discuss their rice research program.

Arkansas rice consultant Wes Long came away from the trip with a new outlook and some words of advice for the U.S. industry. "The romance the



Rice research, promotion, and production comes in different shapes and sizes overseas.





Hairnets – the great equalizers.

Spanish articulated for their rice was powerful. Rice was not just a crop but a centerpiece of pride. In the southern U.S. we seem to think of rice as just another commodity, another revenue stream, and we have chosen to commoditize our harvest rather than celebrate it,” said Long. “In Spain, rice is THE centerpiece of their social gatherings and a source of pride for their countrymen. The Spanish take a great deal of pleasure in relaxing with friends and family to enjoy a lunch of hearty paella made with locally sourced rice. It is a good model to learn from. I wish we in the U.S. could slow down, take more time with friends to enjoy what life has to offer, and really celebrate the fruits of our labor.”

The Rice Leadership Development Program is sponsored by John Deere Company, American Commodity Company, and RiceTec, Inc. as part of their commitment to build a strong base of future leaders who have had the opportunity to learn more about international markets and the issues the U.S. industry faces in developing and servicing those markets. [WG](#)

As director of The Rice Foundation, Chuck Wilson coordinates all the activities of the Rice Leadership Program.

At the U.S. Embassy in London.



2017/19 LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM CLASS ANNOUNCED

BY CHUCK WILSON

MEMPHIS, TN – Members of the 2017/19 Rice Leadership Development Program class were announced during the annual Rice Awards Luncheon at the 2016 USA Rice Outlook Conference. The class is comprised of five rice producers and two industry-related professionals selected by a committee of agribusiness leaders.

“The rice industry enjoys strong leadership, and the Rice Leadership Development Program continues to select and develop young leaders to keep that tradition going strong. This program plays a critical role thanks to the intensive training and the high caliber participants,” said Rice Foundation Chairman Charley Mathews. In addition to numerous alumni serving on various local, state, and national boards and committees, USA Rice, USA Rice Farmers, USA Rice Council, and The Rice Foundation are chaired by Rice Leadership Program alumni.

The new rice-producer class members are: Scott Franklin, Monroe, LA; Kim Gallagher, Davis, CA; Alan Lawson, Crowley, LA; David Martin, Bernie, MO; and Ross Thibodeaux, Midland, LA. The new industry-related class members are: Brian Greathouse, Sutter, CA with Bunge Milling, Inc., and Dr. Jarrod Hardke, Hazen, AR with University of Arkansas Extension Service.

The Rice Leadership Development Program gives young men and women a comprehensive understanding of the U.S. rice industry, with an emphasis on personal development and communication training. During a two-year period, class members attend four one-week sessions that are designed to strengthen their leadership skills.

John Deere Company, RiceTec, Inc., and American Commodity Company are sponsors of the Rice Leadership Development Program through a grant to The Rice Foundation, and USA Rice manages the program. [WG](#)



From left: David Martin, Bernie, MO; Alan Lawson, Crowley, LA; Kim Gallagher, Davis, CA; Scott Franklin, Monroe, LA; Ross Thibodeaux, Midland, LA; Brian Greathouse, Sutter, CA; Dr. Jarrod Hardke, Hazen, AR.

“The rice industry enjoys strong leadership, and the Rice Leadership Development Program continues to select and develop young leaders to keep that tradition going strong...”

— CHARLEY MATHEWS
Rice Foundation Chairman

NRCS CHIEF JASON WELLER GOES OFF SCRIPT AT 2016 USA RICE OUTLOOK CONFERENCE

Let's thank our panelists. It was a great panel discussion, and my apologies for what's going to happen next but I have a couple things I want to say.

So, as I said at the outset, this probably is my last appearance, certainly before a commodity organization as my time as chief. But I wanted to make this an absolute must for me to be here, because I'm so proud of the partnership NRCS has with the rice industry. I wanted to be here personally to thank you all for your commitment to be partners with us, to invest in conservation, and to really be national leaders — not just regional or local leaders, but national leaders in production agriculture. In my view, production ag is sustainable ag. Full stop.

You're not going to feed the world of ten billion people with artisanal arugula plants planted on top of Brooklyn buildings. It's going to be production big ag that's going to make this happen.

And so, I have a couple things to ask you guys. I'm going to be cheering you on from the sidelines going forward, but there's a couple things I need to ask of you. Mike [Sullivan, NRCS], when he was up here, talked about this in his own way. He was very diplomatic and sort of mild-mannered about it, but I'm going to be less diplomatic, more energized.

Number One: I am tired - and this is more to my NRCS colleagues, so maybe this is a pep talk for my folks here from around the country, but really I think this is for all of us, because you've talked about it, and our panelists here talked about it, telling our story. I'm tired of us visualizing ourselves as the ninety-pound weakling on the beach getting sand kicked in the face by the bully. "Oh! Sorry sir! I'll move my blanket down the beach! I won't be here tomorrow!" Enough.

You look at any sector in terms of what it's doing for economic activity, for economic development, feeding the world, food security, providing for habitat, water supply, air quality improvements, greenhouse gas attenuation — it's agriculture. And it's time we all collectively stood up and not just *told* our story, but *demand*ed our story to be told, and told effectively.

So you guys need to stand up and be proud of what you do, you need to advocate for what you do. I don't care your political alignment, your beliefs in climate change, whatever. You need to defend your interests, but do so in a way that advocates for what you do while also connecting with people who aren't familiar with production agriculture. And that's in part what the sustainability effort is all about.


So Number Two: I'm going to ask you guys to be involved in the next Farm Bill. I don't care what you think of our programs. I view them as America's conservation programs; they're not NRCS or whatever acronym, they're America's conservation programs. If

"In my view, production ag is sustainable ag. Full stop."

you think they work for rice, for production agriculture, your voice has to be part of the discussion. You can't be passive, you can't let interests in Washington, DC or inside the Beltway figure it out for you, because they have other interests that don't necessarily align with yours. If you benefit from these programs - and I submit to you that you do, I hope you do - I hope you take advantage of them, avail yourselves of these opportunities, have a chance to converse with our colleagues here in the room and our field staff in the states and our water district partners. They are there for you.

During this country's election, there's been a lot of rancor about what government does and doesn't do, and a lot of people are dislocated from the government. I submit to you that conservation is the best about government. [applause] That's right. Amen. Why? Because we're here to empower you. We're here to help you. We're here only but for your invitation. If you don't want us in your farm, we're out of here. We respect your privacy. But it's also, in my view, one of the most American of enterprises. It's small D democratic, it's local. It's about neighbors helping each other, it's about leveraging our expertise and relationships, and at the end of the day, it's about helping families stay on their land. Good old-fashioned barn-raising.

So I am really proud of the partnership NRCS has with USA Rice as an organization, but more specifically with the growers in this room, not just rice growers, but producers of every size, shape, and background across this country. We are here to serve you. In return, we need for you guys to advocate not for NRCS but for the private land approach, the voluntary approach, because there's a lot of critics who say it doesn't work, and we have to hold up examples of how it is the proven way.

So you have much to be proud of. I congratulate you, but we also have a lot left to do. And that's where we all have to collectively get after it. So thank you for inviting me here today. I apologize to my panels for holding them up here extra long, but I flew a long way just to say: thank you very much, it's been a real joy and pleasure to work with you, and I really commend the rice industry for your leadership; for your partnership through our programs; and for standing up for what was right for farmers, for families, and for rural communities, but also what's right for American conservation. Thank you, everyone. 

Jason Weller was chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service from 2012 to 2016.



... it's time we all collectively stood up and not just told our story, but demanded our story to be told, and told effectively.



Farm Press...for all things rice.

**FARM
PRESS®**

STUDENT CHANNELS HER CREATIVITY TO SCORE RICE SCHOLARSHIP

BY MEGHAN MAHONEY

INDIANAPOLIS, IL — Texas high school senior Heaven McKinley was scouring the internet for scholarship opportunities when she came across the National Rice Month Scholarship, sponsored by Dow AgroSciences. To enter, students were asked to use visual storytelling to promote U.S.-grown rice. McKinley was excited about the opportunity to flex her creative muscles and dive into a new topic.

“I wanted to find something more interesting than the scholarships requiring only boring essays,” McKinley says. “The video contest caught my eye because the open criteria provided freedom for my imagination and creative side to take over.”

A Natural Alignment

Living outside of Dallas in Grand Prairie, Texas, McKinley had always enjoyed red beans and rice, but she knew little about the latter crop. She saw her lack of knowledge as an opportunity to learn rather than a hindrance to participate. During her research, she found that rice production aligned with one of her passions — environmental science.

She became interested in the environment during a field trip to the state’s longest river, Trinity River, where she learned about the efforts to clean the water after it was used as an illegal dumping site. While the other students appeared disinterested, McKinley loved the trip and found the information fascinating.

“In college, I want to major in environmental engineering or biology,” McKinley says. “It was interesting to learn about the positive effect rice production has on the animals and plants that live in the ecosystem in and around rice fields.”

Getting Creative

Armed with information from the USA Rice website, McKinley split her promotion into four topics: economics, environment, nutrition, and preparation.

“My favorite part of the project was conceptualizing the video,” McKinley says. “To keep my audience interested, I shared the information as a news reporter who interviews guests to incorporate different perspectives.”

Over a week’s span, McKinley wrote the video script and memorized it during downtime between basketball and school. She developed scenes, created costumes, planned locations, and filmed with her dad. She admits stage fright caused many outtakes, but she pushed through and enjoyed her time to shine.

Hard Work Pays Off

Knowing the competition was tough from viewing the contest site, McKinley was surprised and honored when she won the grand prize, a \$4,000 scholarship and trip with a chaperone to the USA Rice Outlook Conference in Memphis. She attended the December 8 conference to accept her award, with her parents, sister, grandmother, and uncle supporting her in the audience.

“I had never been to anything like the USA Rice Outlook conference before, and it was a lot of fun,” McKinley says. “When they showed my video on the big screens, it was cool to see the crowd’s reaction. I knew my friends and family thought it was funny, but it was reassuring to see other people did, too. Afterwards, people came up to congratulate me, which made me feel good and proud of what I accomplished.”

“I would like everyone to know how much I enjoyed creating the video and how thankful I am for the generous scholarship. I would also like to thank my parents for helping film the video.”

Go to thinkrice.com/scholarship for more information on USA Rice and the scholarship sponsored by Dow AgroSciences and to view McKinley’s video, titled *Power Plants*.

DIETITIANS ARE VALUED VOICE FOR RICE

BY KORINNE LEONARDIS

ARLINGTON, VA — U.S. shoppers consider their primary grocery store an ally in their health goals, and look to in-store retail dietitians to help navigate the grocery aisles to make healthier choices when it comes to food.

“Nutrition plays a vital role in prevention and management of chronic disease,” says Samantha Woulfe, a community dietitian at Jewel-Osco, a supermarket chain with 185 stores across the Midwest. “We like to show our customers that healthy choices start in the grocery store and promoting rice is important because rice is a versatile and budget-friendly way to incorporate healthy grains into family meals.”

September’s National Rice Month (NRM) is an important time to engage retail dietitians to increase visibility of U.S.-grown rice and boost consumer awareness of the many benefits of locally grown rice. September is also Family Meals Month, which many retail dietitians believe is a great fit for rice. Throughout September 2016, USA Rice promoted U.S.-grown rice at Jewel-Osco, ShopRite, Kroger, Rouses, and United Supermarkets, through custom retail dietitian programs, reaching shoppers with key messages before, during, and after their shopping experience.

This year, Angela Lee of Los Angeles, California, was awarded second place and a \$3,000 scholarship for her video, *Rice Production in California*. There was a tie for third place and Ana Little-Sana from San Diego, California (*Think Local, Think Rice*), and Max Morrison of Yuba City, California, (*National Rice Month Promotions*), each received \$1,500 scholarships for their videos. [w.a.](#)

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



USA Rice President & CEO Betsy Ward (left) and Leslie Rogers of Dow AgroSciences (right) presented the award to McKinley during the annual Awards Luncheon at the USA Rice Outlook Conference.





Last fall, USA Rice partnered with Jewel-Osco's "Build a Better Basket" program where U.S.-grown rice was promoted to shoppers through the retailer's quarterly newsletter, weekly ad circular, blog, social media, and through in-store, point-of-sale signage.

"With an overall 12 percent sales lift in the rice category and customer interaction via social media, we feel it was a successful campaign," says Wolfe. "In the future, we hope to work with USA Rice for another promotion and show a higher increase."

Tailoring Outreach

As the number of retail dietitians is increasing, they are becoming a more integral part in helping grocery chains meet sales goals. "As retail dietitians, we want to help our customers realize the full array of healthful options available to them inside our stores," said Allison Kuhn, director of retail dietetics at The Little Clinic at Kroger. "The ability to share relevant, up-to-date information about commodities, such as rice, means more peace of mind, convenience, and better choices for our shoppers."

USA Rice sponsored tasting and learning stations at The Little Clinic's wellness festivals at Kroger stores in four cities including Denver, Cincinnati, Columbus, and Nashville. "USA Rice was a great partner for our in-store outreach providing simple recipes and nutritional information that was beneficial for our shoppers," said Kuhn.

Other unique promotions included local radio segments with United Supermarkets to educate listeners about how locally grown rice is affordable and nutritious, and customized promotions that reached shoppers at Rouses Markets through instore radio announcements,

e-blasts, in-store signage, an in-store magazine advertisement, and a local TV segment on Good Morning New Orleans.

Other NRM promotions included a local Massachusetts broadcast segment with Big Y, blog posts and social media content with Martin's Supermarkets, County Market, and Giant Eagle, as well as health and wellness text messages with HEB. The program's combination of in-store, broadcast, online and social media channels garnered more than 128 million impressions.

"Sharing resources, such as the retail dietitian toolkit, with a greater network of retail dietitians helps USA Rice continue to build relationships with this influential and credible audience," said Paul Galvani, chairman of the USA Rice Retail Subcommittee. "This spring, we'll be working with retail dietitians at Redner's and Hannaford Supermarkets to conduct in-store rice demos as well as include rice in multiple shopper communication channels."

Korinne Leonardis is an Account Supervisor with Pollock Communications, USA Rice's Nutrition Communications agency.



California
FAMILY FOODS

P.O. Box 1230
Arbuckle, CA 95912
(530) 476-3326
www.californiafamilyfoods.com



THIS
BUD'S
FOR
YOU.



ENJOY RESPONSIBLY © 2016 ANHEUSER-BUSCH, BUDWEISER® BEER, ST. LOUIS, MO