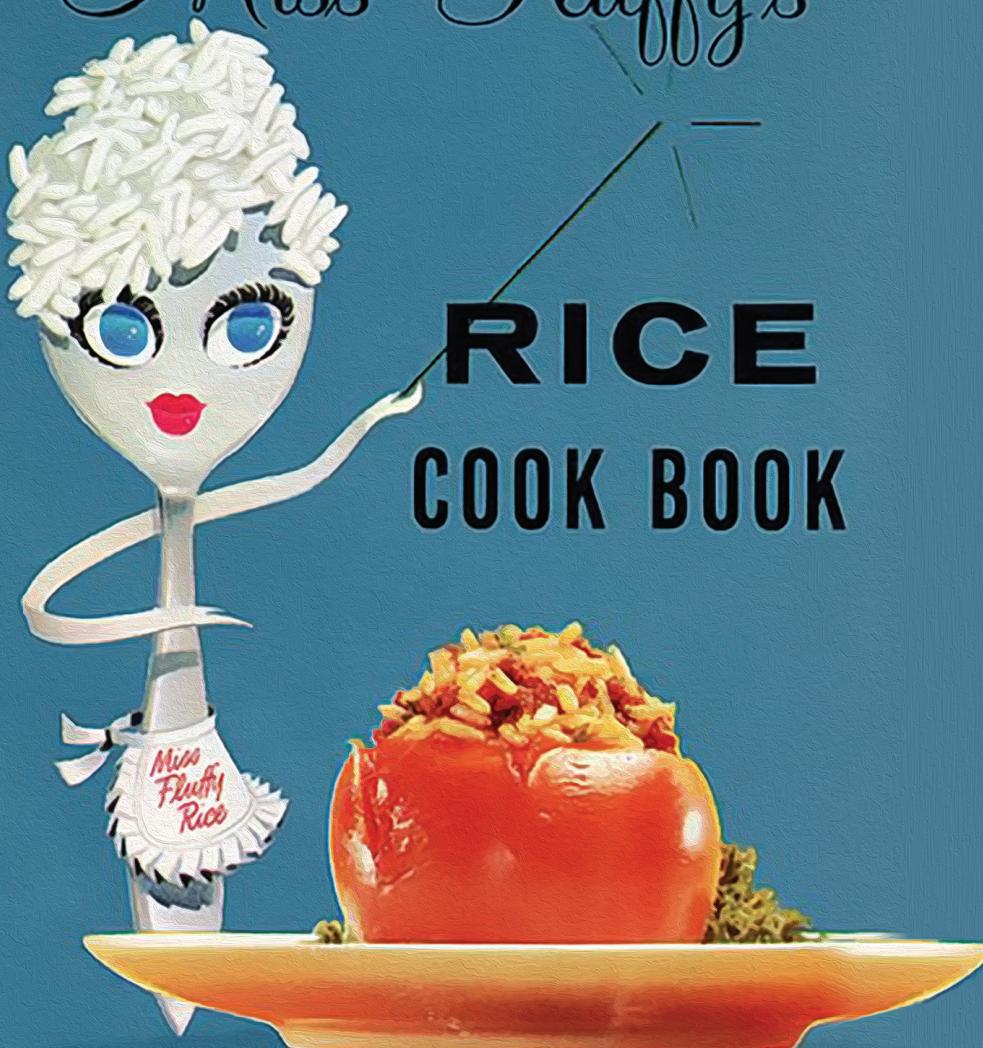


WHOLE GRAIN

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**RICE
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Add a Bright Change to Your Menus with Rice!

**THE ART OF ADVERTISING:
STAY FRESH** PAGE 6

The Rice Stuff
A Podcast from USA Rice



**LISTEN UP TO NEW
PODCAST** PAGE 4



DRINK RICE PAGE 10

also in this issue:

**MEETINGS &
MEMBER SERVICES:**
New Leadership at USA Rice
PAGE 12

SUSTAINABILITY:
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PAGE 14

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What A Way to Start!

BY BOBBY HANKS

CROWLEY, LA — This is my first column as chair of USA Rice, and I am truly honored to serve this industry. I assumed the position this summer during our first ever virtual Annual Business Meetings and look forward to leading this great organization.

One of the things I so appreciate about our national rice trade association is that it brings the entire industry together...literally. But since March I think I can count on one hand the number of times I've been with colleagues outside the Supreme Rice Mill universe. I'd be lying if I said I like it. I do not. And I look forward to the time – soon I hope – when we can all gather again in a meeting room, exhibit hall, and share a meal together.

But as my predecessor, Charley Mathews, wrote in the last issue, while much of the world and our country has been in a weird state of hold, the rice industry, like several others, has kept moving forward. People continue to buy rice at a record pace and our mills are working overtime to keep up with demand. Our farmers have been tending their crops through this pandemic and are now harvesting what early indicators said will be a good year.

Of course, it wouldn't be 2020 if there wasn't some kind of challenge thrown at us. True to form we were given disastrous wildfires in California that have dangerously degraded air quality in rice country there, and, then across the mid-South, we've been promised the most active hurricane season ever. When Hurricane Laura slammed into us a few weeks ago, she was the earliest "L" hurricane and one of the strongest hurricanes to hit the United States ever.

The damage Laura brought to Louisiana has been catastrophic in places – beautiful Lake Charles will be a long time recovering and rebuilding – but the impact to the rice industry could have been far worse. Some here lost bins, almost all lost power at some point, and heavy wind and rain in Louisiana, Arkansas, and Mississippi caused damage, lodging, and may have delayed harvest in spots.

But as always, we will get through this. We will salvage this crop and continue to feed anxious Americans and people around the world. Because it is what we do. It's



in our blood. And this is why I am so proud to serve as your chair for the next two years.

Two years that I trust will get a little closer to "normal" every day.

As always, thank you for reading the *Whole Grain*, please support our advertisers, and most importantly, stay safe, stay healthy, and have confidence that we will gather together again soon. 

... as always, we will get through this ... Because it is what we do. It's in our blood. And this is why I am so proud to serve as your chair for the next two years.



**OUTLOOK 2020
CANCELLED
due to COVID-19**

**HOPE TO
SEE YOU
NEXT YEAR IN
NEW ORLEANS!**

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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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MARKING A MILESTONE IN AN UNUSUAL WAY

BY BETSY WARD

CHEVERLY, MD – I hope this issue of the *Whole Grain* finds you and your family well and your harvest and yields strong. As you know, we are in the midst of National Rice Month, but not just any National Rice Month. 2020 marks the 30th anniversary of this special time when we celebrate the harvest of our mighty grain and everything and everyone that makes it possible.

This is also the first National Rice Month we've celebrated while under various levels of quarantine, and it feels strange.

The month is typically full of group events, from the charitable to the celebratory, but like so many things this year, we're going to do it a little differently.

We know our farmers will still be harvesting and our mills will still be milling, but as face-to-face meetings, field days, and photo ops have been put on hold, much of our activity is moving online.

We're using a lot more social media than usual to commemorate this milestone and you can join in by using #NationalRiceMonth. We're sending out two consumer newsletters filled with recipes, tips, and industry profiles, and we're launching new consumer recipe contests – including one with our digital partner FeedFeed who reach tens of thousands of home chefs every day.

I'm also happy to see our National Rice Month Scholarship Video Contest revamped with a new sponsor – American Commodity Company – new award levels, and a new fun website to draw attention to this exciting opportunity for high school seniors in the six primary rice producing states (see ad on page 11).

This is certainly not the way any of us thought the 30th anniversary of National Rice Month would unfold, but we'll make the best of it. If there's one thing I've learned working in agriculture all these years – the reality is never quite what you expect, but you figure out a way to make it work.

So, I wish all of you a happy National Rice Month, a bountiful harvest, and I hope you all have your health and we'll be sure to celebrate properly, in person as soon as we can. 



LISTEN UP TO THE NEW USA RICE PODCAST

BY DEBORAH WILLENBORG

ARLINGTON, VA – USA Rice's media empire expanded this summer with the official launch of the organization's podcast, *The Rice Stuff*. The first episode, "The Voice of the Farmer Garden in Washington, DC," is about the Farm Journal Foundation's project on the National Mall (see page 5).

Subsequent episodes have featured discussions on the wonderful sustainability record of the U.S. rice industry, international rice promotion in the western hemisphere, and the role U.S. rice plays in food aid. And, there's plenty more to come.

The twice monthly podcast is hosted by USA Rice's Michael Klein and Lesley Dixon, and offers a deep dive into rice topics from promotion efforts here and around the world to the latest in agronomy, and everything in between.

"Podcast listenership has been steadily increasing for years with 155 million Americans reporting that they listen to podcasts and 68 million Americans listening weekly," said Klein, USA Rice vice president of communications and domestic promotion. "It's a great way to reach people on their own schedule with topics they are interested in, and we foresee a lot of combine listening during harvest."

Klein said he and his team have spent a year researching the market, technology, and best practices, talking to other podcasters in and out of ag, including Jim Morris, host of the California Rice podcast, *Ingrained*; Kurt Richter, host of *Rice Radio*; Dr. Bobby Golden, host of *Mississippi Crop Situation*, and Jeff Lenard, host of *Convenience Matters*, a wildly popular podcast for the fuel and convenience store industry.

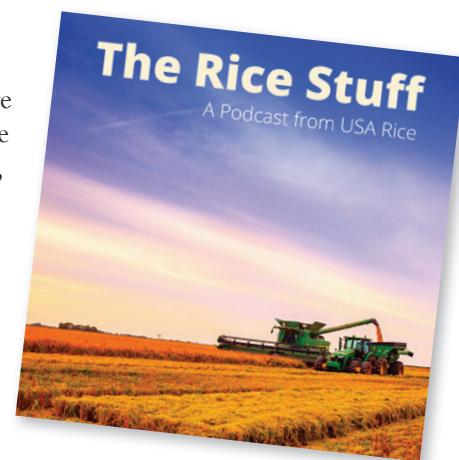
"On the advice of a lot of people, we're keeping our episodes focused and short – under 30 minutes is our goal," said Dixon, USA Rice staff writer. "The time goes by quickly, but we try to pack as much useful information in as possible."

About half the episodes will look at rice farming and specifically sustainability practices. USA Rice's in-house sustainability experts Dr. Steve Linscombe and Lydia Holmes will helm those episodes.

"We're having a great time planning and recording episodes and we really hope people enjoy listening," Klein said. "We encourage everyone in the industry to subscribe today."

Each episode features a cameo intro from a USA Rice member and provides an opportunity for listeners to reach out to Klein and Dixon via email (podcast@usarice.com), Twitter using #RiceStuff, or by recording a voice memo on the podcast webpage www.thericestuffpodcast.com.

The Rice Stuff publishes new episodes on the second and fourth Tuesday of every month and can be found on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Stitcher, and Google Podcasts in addition to on the website. 



While researching this article, Deborah Willenborg learned that "podcast" is a portmanteau combining "iPod" and "broadcast," and portmanteau is a linguistic blend of words, where parts of multiple words are combined into a new word, as in smog, blending smoke and fog.

If there's one thing I've learned working in agriculture all these years – the reality is never quite what you expect, but you figure out a way to make it work.



Lesley Dixon (left) and Michael Klein (right) know their way around ag and the media.

“VOICE OF THE FARMER” GARDEN INCLUDES CONVERSATION ABOUT RICE

BY LESLEY DIXON

WASHINGTON, DC — It’s true that the vast majority of rice in the U.S. is grown in the south and in California. But rice is a resourceful plant that can surprise you and show up where you least expect it – even in our nation’s capital.

In early May, the Farm Journal Foundation and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) planted rice in its “Voice of the Farmer” garden, a small plot of land adjacent to the National Mall exhibiting a variety of plants and crops with a focus on sustainability and conservation. Featuring pollinator gardens, mini-wetlands, row crops, and a large vegetable garden that provides fresh produce to local food assistance charities, the garden showcases growing and harvesting techniques used by farmers across the country.

Dr. Steve Linscombe, director of The Rice Foundation, provided his expertise on planting and flooding techniques to help get this small-scale rice crop up and running. Although Washington, DC, may seem like an unlikely place to grow rice, Linscombe had no doubts about the crop’s viability.

“The latitude of Washington is about 39 degrees north, which is very similar to the latitude of Colusa, California, where, of course, rice is grown,” said Linscombe. “So, I think it will be easy for them to complete the crop.”

Linscombe advised Farm Journal Foundation and USDA staff to plant the rice in containers set into the ground rather than directly into the garden’s soil, as a simple mechanism for maintaining a flood when the time comes. The seeds are a Clearfield long grain variety called CL153 and were provided by the Louisiana State University Rice Research Station near Crowley.

The Capital’s new rice crop will be in good company: Ducks Unlimited has provided the garden with a duck box and a small pond to entice cavity-nesting ducks to the area.

While the garden produces real food, its primary purpose is educational. Many of the visitors to the National Mall live in urban areas and may not have much knowledge about farming. The “Voice of the Farmer” garden connects visitors to the

food on their table and educates them about agriculture.

“I believe having rice grown near the National Mall facilitates communication of our sustainability efforts,” said Linscombe. “It’s a way for visitors and tourists to connect with where their food comes from and how it’s produced.”

“We’re honored to add rice to the menu this year at our “Voice of the Farmer” garden,” said Jay Vroom, senior advisor at the Farm Journal Foundation. “The National Mall has an overall estimated 20 million visitors in a normal year, so the garden is the perfect showcase to tell the story of modern agriculture to consumers.”

Vroom does hope to harvest the rice at the end of the growing season but recognizes that it is only a fraction of the size of an actual rice field. Whatever rice is produced will be donated to local food nonprofits. But the garden’s main goal is outreach.

“Last year our outreach connected with so many inquisitive and energetic visitors who want to know about their food and the farmers who grow it,” said Vroom. “The uniqueness of rice – alongside the DU wood duck box and pond – can help explain how farmers and nature need and coexist with each other.” 

Lesley Dixon is a writer and editor who lives in Washington, DC, where she enjoys being able to visit all the museums, monuments, and scenery the National Mall has to offer, including the Voice of the Farmer Garden! She wishes her apartment were a little bigger, though.



Farm Journal’s Jay Vroom plants his rice crop one seed at a time.

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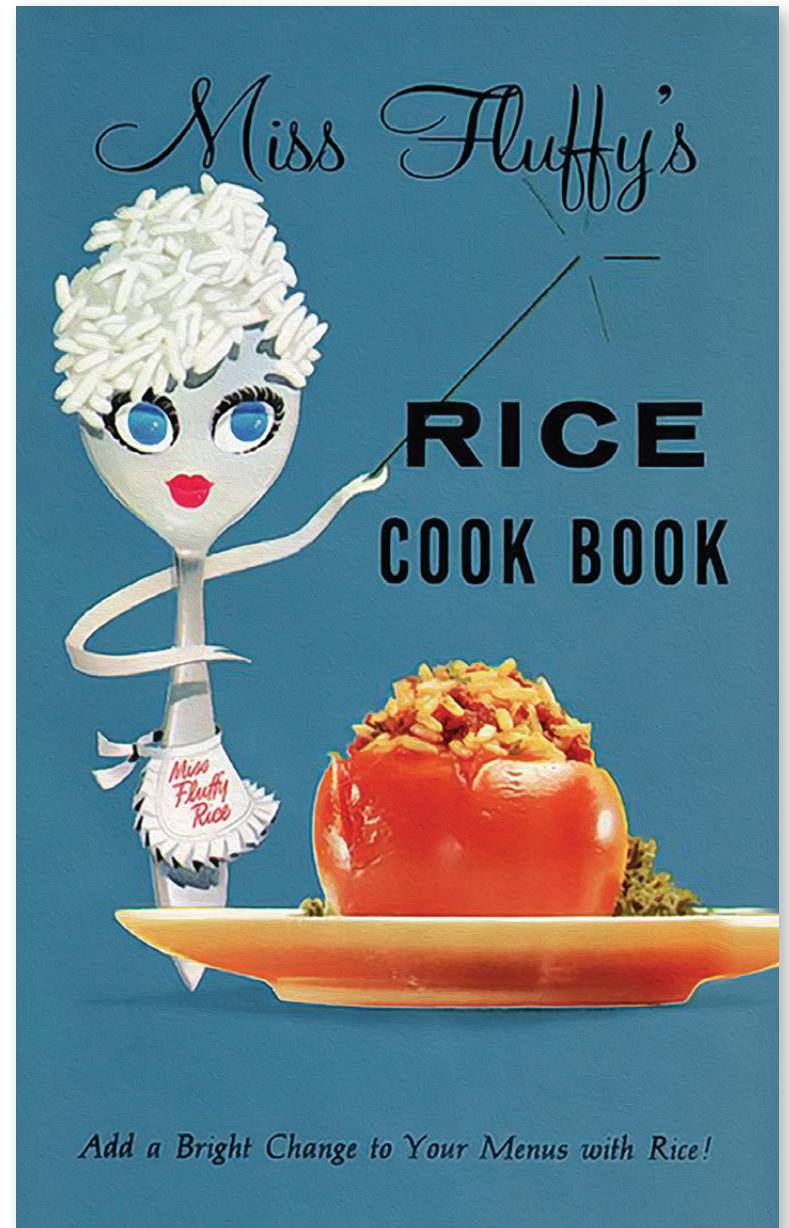
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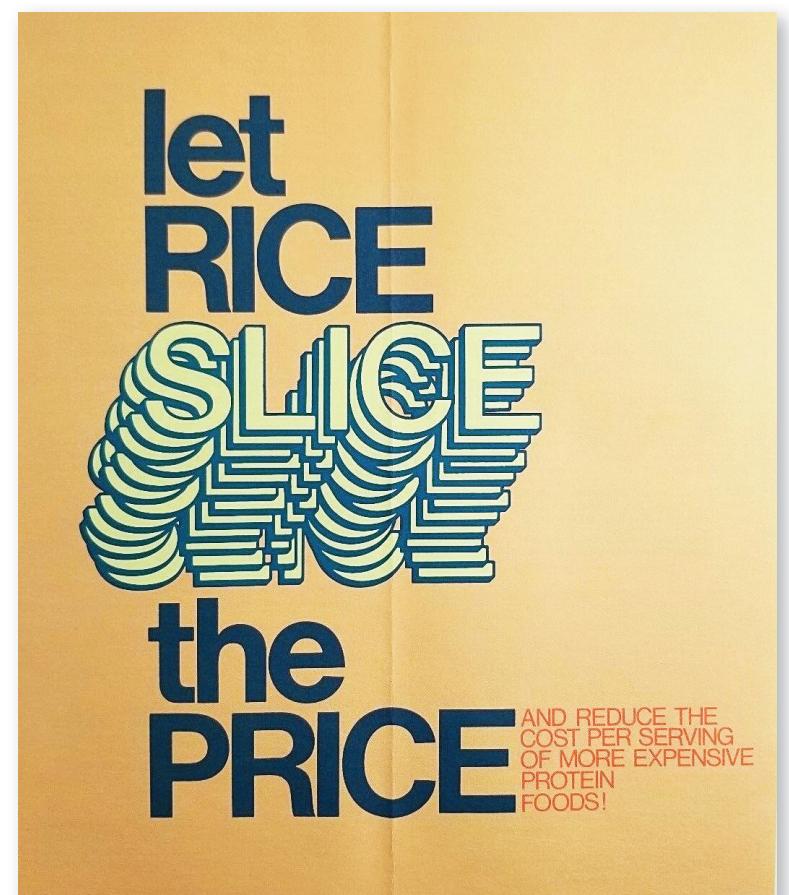
BY LESLEY DIXON

ARLINGTON, VA – Legendary 20th-century advertising executive Bill Bernbach once said, “However much we would like advertising to be a science – because life would be simpler that way – the fact is that it is not. It is a subtle, ever-changing art, defying formularization, flowering on freshness and withering on imitation; where what was effective one day, for that very reason, will not be effective the next, because it has lost the maximum impact of originality.”

Promoting rice isn't always easy for many of the same reasons: it is so popular. A ubiquitous part of almost every pantry and a trusted staple in every world cuisine, it might be easy to take rice for granted if not for continuous, innovative marketing. To rise above the noise and bring U.S.-grown rice to the forefront of consumer consciousness, rice ads have always had to keep it fresh. As each decade of the



Walking the line between the women's lib movement and suggestive, tongue-in-cheek humor, these ads ... certainly left an impression.



A ubiquitous part of almost every pantry and a trusted staple in every world cuisine, it might be easy to take rice for granted if not for continuous, innovative marketing.

20th century came and went, the rice industry evolved with the times – and times change.

In the 1930s and 40s, ad campaigns touted rice as a food that could give you more bang for your buck – both figuratively and literally. Not only was rice a great deal for families pinching pennies through the Great Depression and World War II, but it was also a technological marvel, boasting the ever-popular new invention of puffed rice as “food shot from guns!”

In the more stable and prosperous 1950s, rice ads focused on the traditional family unit. Geared toward housewives, these ads highlighted how easy it was to whip up a meal based around rice that would keep your nuclear family (always a father in a dapper business suit and two rosy-cheeked children) happy and satisfied. In high heels and an impeccable apron, a woman need only buy a box of Minute Rice to complete the idyllic portrait of the 1950s family unit.

The 1960s turned the advertising world on its head. Ads became sleeker, edgier, and more steeped in psychology. New markets



Travel back in time with rice ads from the 20th century.



were opening up, and the rice industry adapted their ads to a more diverse and savvy consumer base. But the more things change, the more things stay the same, and everyone's favorite anthropomorphic fork, Miss Fluffy Rice, defended rice's status as the ultimate family-friendly food.

The beautiful Miss Fluffy may have set the stage for rice's bold new approach in the 1970s. Sex sells, as they say, and the Rice Council of America launched the “Va-rice-ity” ad campaign to remind consumers that rice is anything but boring. Walking the line between the women's lib movement and suggestive, tongue-in-cheek humor, these ads were a stark departure from earlier ad campaigns, and they certainly left an impression.

By the time the materialistic 80s rolled around, rice was promoted as a weight loss tool. Quaker rice cakes became synonymous with diet-obsessed aerobics fanatics clad in leotards and leg warmers. At the same time, quick, comforting Rice-a-Roni was the dinnertime savior of busy career moms with big hair and padded shoulders.

Rice ads have come a long way. Women are not the only ones in the kitchen or the grocery store anymore, and the domestic market for rice is more diverse and adventurous than ever. As advertising continues to evolve and innovate, maybe someday we'll look back at our current campaigns and think, “My, how times have changed.” 

RICE EXCHANGE FROM BRAZIL TO THE BAYOU AND BACK

BY LESLEY DIXON

ABBEVILLE, LA. – Cicero Marcon Manenti has known he wanted to take on the family rice farm since he was ten years old.

“When I was a kid, I was always out with my dad in the tractor, planting and harvesting. I decided to study agronomy because I wanted to farm with my dad,” said Manenti.

After graduating in 2019 with a degree in agronomy from Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina in southern Brazil, Manenti decided he wanted to spend some time abroad learning about other rice farming methods before heading back to his family’s operation near Turvo, a small city in Santa Catarina. Manenti’s father – who is president of the rice farming co-op in Turvo – is friends with Richard Bacha, former director of the Agricultural Research and Rural Extension Company of Santa Catarina (EPAGRI), who in turn knows USA Rice’s very own Dr. Steve Linscombe, director of The Rice Foundation.

Manenti’s interest in learning about U.S. rice farming made its way through the grapevine to Louisiana rice farmer Allen McLain, and he jumped at the opportunity to invite Manenti to stay at the McLain family farm in Abbeville for the summer.

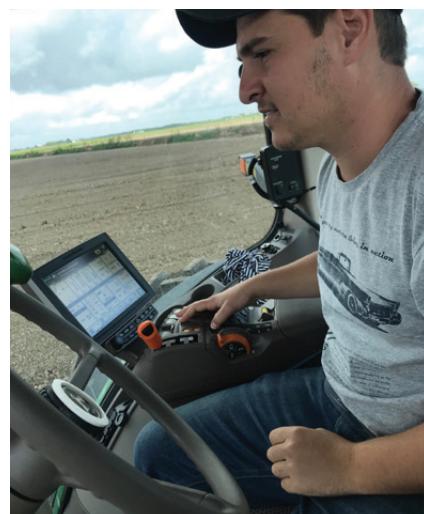
“Steve contacted me and said that they had a young guy down in Brazil who wanted to come and learn about rice production in the U.S., to enhance his rice farming skills, and observe the growing season into the harvest for a couple months,” said McLain. “And I thought, great! We can always use more help on the farm.”

Manenti arrived in mid-March, and began accompanying McLain out on the farm every day, learning how they do rice in Louisiana. For the most part, rice farming in Brazil and rice farming in the U.S. is pretty similar, according to Manenti – with one big exception.

“The way they use water here is different than what we have in Brazil,” said Manenti. “We don’t have water available to put in the field. We rely on rain, and it’s hard. Last year, in 2019, we had a big problem with water. We couldn’t plant. All that is different here.”

McLain was more than happy to show Manenti all the benefits of his water systems.

“Every day Cicero goes out and makes sure all the water is good,” said McLain. “I tell



Above left: Walking the levees at home in Brazil.

Above right: Manenti suits up in protective gear before his first encounter with Louisiana crawfish.

Below: The difference in equipment between Brazil (left) and the U.S. (right) is all about size.

him to start the pump, and it boggles his mind that he can just flip a switch and water is on the field. He was very impressed that you could mark it on a calendar, like every five days it will rain no matter what.”

Manenti was also eager to learn how McLain and other U.S. rice farmers deal with an old foe: red rice. The weed has been present in Brazilian rice farms for decades, but recently has grown resistant to treatments and become more of a problem.

One unexpected obstacle in Manenti’s stay has been COVID-19. He was unfortunately unable to do any sightseeing, but it didn’t stop him from getting to experience some Louisiana culture.

“My first week here I ate some crawfish,” says Manenti. “We don’t have crawfish in Brazil, and I’d never seen one before.”

In the meantime, he’s perfectly happy to stay on the farm and keep learning and observing. It’s also given him a chance to work on his English – which has made excellent progress – and for McLain to try out his own language skills.

“For the first two weeks, Siri had no idea why I was speaking so much Portuguese,” said McLain.

“I’m really enjoying everything here, and I plan to be back,” said Manenti. “The people in Louisiana are so cool and helpful. I don’t know how to say it...”

“Hospitable?” McLain offered.

Manenti laughed. “Yes, in Portuguese it’s almost the same word. I’d like to return next year to see Allen’s family again. I hope I get to come back.”

UPDATE: After returning home to Brazil in early August, Manenti has enjoyed catching up with friends and family, and showing them his many pictures of life in Louisiana. One aspect of growing rice in Louisiana that caught their attention is the sheer size of U.S. farming machinery, which would quickly get stuck in the mud in Manenti’s home rice-growing region. The rice-growing season is just starting out in Brazil, so it’s right back to work for Manenti on his family farm. “I certainly learned a lot of things with the McLains that I will take with me for the rest of my life,” he said. 

“The way they use water here is different than what we have in Brazil ... We don’t have water available to put in the field. We rely on rain, and it’s hard.”



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USA RICE DOMESTIC PROMOTION DELIVERS DURING LOCKDOWN

BY CAMERON JACOBS

ARLINGTON, VA — When the majority of the country went on lockdown in mid-March due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and schools and restaurants essentially closed, USA Rice adapted domestic promotion programming to meet the needs of the changing foodservice and consumer landscapes. The new reality of a much smaller foodservice footprint and a more engaged consumer audience shifted focus to the at-home consumer.

“With dining out no longer an easy option for most, Americans are cooking more for themselves,” said Robbie Trahan, a Louisiana rice miller and chair of the USA Rice Domestic Promotion Committee. “We’ve made a big push to provide these home cooks with what they need to make use of all the U.S.-grown rice they are stocking up on – recipes, tips, and inspiration.”

Trahan said that while total restaurant sales may have been off by as much as 70 percent in April, nationally rice retail sales were up 78.1 percent for the 10-week period ending May 9 compared with that same 10-week period in 2019. He adds that analysts say “Center of Store” sales remain up 15-30 percent and could stay that way well into 2021. USA Rice promotions are responding appropriately.

James Beard-nominated chef and USA Rice foodservice consultant Hari Cameron, fresh off the debut of a series of inspirational rice cooking videos aimed at foodservice operators has also expanded his focus, appearing on local morning news programs to offer quarantine cooking tips that include rice dishes.

USA Rice social media campaigns have increased with double the posts, keeping followers supplied with nine new rice recipes: Chicken Green Onion Fried Rice being the overwhelming favorite. Regular USA Rice influencer and blogger programs hosted by TheFeedFeed and affiliated registered dietitians generated the new content to keep U.S.-grown rice top of mind for home cooks who are creating dishes using on-hand ingredients and pantry staples.



Enlisting established food bloggers with their own online followers helps USA Rice expand the reach of new recipes, like Chicken Green Onion Fried Rice (right), designed to spark creativity for home cooks spending a lot more time in the kitchen.

In March and April, USA Rice distributed two new consumer newsletters packed with recipes, student activities, and other consumer resources including the ThinkRice.com consumer recipe database. USA Rice also distributed a school nutrition newsletter in April to a network of school foodservice professionals offering support, inexpensive to-go recipes for schools, and directing readers back to USA Rice online foodservice offerings.

“In no way are we abandoning foodservice,” said Michael Klein USA Rice vice president of domestic promotion. “In the early days of the lockdown, we were encouraging consumers to get take-out, curbside service, or purchase gift certificates from their favorite restaurants

SERVES YOU RICE BEER TOASTS NEW USA RICE PARTNERSHIP

BY DEBORAH WILLENBORG

WASHINGTON, DC — USA Rice’s first ever craft beer collaboration launched this Spring. The relationship began in the Fall when the Think Rice Truck Tour visited Hellbender Brewing Company in the Fort Totten neighborhood here. The brewery hosted a rice-themed trivia night and USA Rice provided Aroma rice cookers and samples of U.S.-grown rice to all attendees.

That, as they say, was the beginning of a beautiful friendship! And after a few months of conversation, USA Rice partnered with Hellbender and Black Narrows Brewing of Virginia Beach to brew this special rice beer.

“Here at Hellbender, we are all about using as many local ingredients as possible to brew our beer,” said Ben Evans, Hellbender’s owner and head brewer. “After our successful event with the Think Rice Truck, it was a natural fit to partner with USA Rice. The story behind U.S.-grown rice and their reputation for high quality grain made this the perfect adjunct ingredient for a unique and tasty beer.”



“We’ve made a big push to provide these home cooks with what they need to make use of all the U.S.-grown rice they are stocking up on – recipes, tips, and inspiration.”

— ROBBIE TRAHAN, LOUISIANA RICE MILLER AND CHAIR OF THE USA RICE DOMESTIC PROMOTION COMMITTEE



to help those businesses weather this storm. Now we have adapted our programs to help restaurants stay profitable, keep customers and employees safe, and menu U.S.-grown rice as many of them shift to a to-go and curbside model.”

“Nobody is certain what the future holds for any of us, but whether it’s fine dining, quick casual, take-out, or a home-cooked meal, U.S. rice can and should be a part of it, and we’re going to do our best to make that happen,” Trahan concluded. 

Cameron Jacobs is USA Rice’s director of domestic promotion and proud owner of last year’s winning fantasy football team The Fighting Jazzmen.

The beer, aptly named *Serves You Rice*, is a saison style beer with a light pink hue and an alcohol content of 5 percent. *Serves You Rice* was produced using Blanca Isabel Purple Rice grown by Fred Zaunbrecker in Rayne, Louisiana. The can design features an overhead shot of rice fields, and both the “Grown in The USA” and “Think Rice” logos along with this description: *Blanca Isabel is a purple rice varietal grown exclusively in Rayne, LA for the past eight years. USA Rice supports American Farmers who share a commitment to producing the highest quality product through sustainable farming practices.*

“This collaboration is a big milestone for USA Rice as it’s our first giant step into the craft beer world,” said Cameron Jacobs, USA Rice director of domestic promotion. “While the amount of rice needed may not be astronomical, being able to reach a new consumer audience with USA Rice messaging and logos is an exciting new avenue to pursue.” 



NATIONAL RICE MONTH SCHOLARSHIP VIDEO CONTEST

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U.S. RICE IN FOOD AID ALREADY AT RECORD HIGH FOR FY20

BY REBECCA BRATTER

ARLINGTON, VA — With one month remaining in the federal government’s procurement fiscal year, more than 100,000 MT of U.S. rice has already gone into global feeding programs, including almost 34,000 MT of fortified rice.

“This is a record amount for U.S. rice going into all three U.S. government food aid programs, Food For Progress (monetization), Food For Education (school feeding), and Food For Peace (Title II PL 480) at this point in the fiscal year,” said Jesica Kincaid, USA Rice manager of international trade policy. “And the largest amount of fortified rice used in global feeding programs overall.”

In each of the last three years, 80,000 MT of U.S. rice was used in food aid over the course of the entire fiscal year, including 25,000 MT of fortified rice.

Traditionally rice is used most frequently in the U.S. Department of Agriculture school feeding programs but this year has seen wider use of rice in multi-year development and emergency initiatives through the U.S. Agency for International Development Title II programs and two large monetization programs in Sub-Saharan Africa of more than 20,000 MT each.

“It has always been the goal of USA Rice to advocate for widespread use of all kinds of rice across all global feeding programs and to see greater use of fortified rice,” said Kincaid. “Rice is one of the most widely consumed commodities in the world and fortified rice provides significant new possibilities for rice to play a critical role in defeating global malnutrition, especially now in response to the effects of the global pandemic.”

The number of countries consuming rice through U.S. food aid programs has continued to diversify and increase every year, reaching new destinations such as Timor L’Este (East Timor) and numerous Sub-Saharan African nations.

“As the world continues to face food insecurity and as we continue to assess the deep and lasting effects of COVID-19, USA Rice is committed to providing nutritious and fortified rice to the world’s most vulnerable populations,” Kincaid said. 

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



CHANGING OF THE GUARD AS USA RICE ELECTS NEW LEADERSHIP

BY DEBORAH WILLENBORG

ARLINGTON, VA — New chairs for USA Rice, The Rice Foundation, the USA Rice Millers’ Association (RMA), and the USA Rice Merchants’ Association were elected by their respective Boards of Directors during annual meetings held via video conference calls in July. All newly elected officers assumed their two-year posts on August 1.

USA Rice’s new chair, Bobby Hanks, CEO of Supreme Rice in Crowley, Louisiana, took over for Charley Mathews, Jr., a rice farmer from Marysville, California, who was chair of the organization since 2018.

“Bobby is going to make a great chair,” Mathews said. “He is well versed in U.S. rice industry issues and is a long-term member of USA Rice having joined in 1999 when he first acquired Louisiana Rice Mill.”

Hanks has served on numerous USA Rice committees, including past chair of the USA Rice Millers’ Association and current chair of the USA Rice International Trade Policy Committee and the Food Aid Subcommittee.

“Under Charley’s leadership over the past two years, USA Rice finally opened the world’s largest market – China – to U.S. rice. We also solidified relationships in Iraq, did great outreach in Central America and Mexico, and received our largest ever grant from the federal government to promote U.S. rice overseas,” said Hanks. “He has represented USA Rice in markets around the world, and made presentations at the annual Mexico trade mission and the annual international promotion planning conference in Colombia in Spanish!”

“Here at home,” Hanks added, “Charley helped us notch wins for rice in domestic purchasing programs and federal aid programs and lent his support to retail efforts. He also visited the White House twice – something no USA Rice chair has ever done.”

David Petter was elected chair of The Rice Foundation. Petter, a fourth-generation rice farmer from Stuttgart, Arkansas, succeeds Frank Carey, who served as chair for two years.

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— USA RICE PRESIDENT & CEO BETSY WARD

The Rice Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization, which serves as the research and education program arm for the rice industry, and under Carey’s term funded projects like a nutritional analysis on the effects of rice in the diets of infants from 0-24 months; a study on improvements in U.S. rice competitiveness; and research on blast in U.S.-grown japonica, invasive pests in Texas rice, and acephate degradation.

Outgoing RMA Chair Keith Gray passed the gavel to Keith Glover, president and CEO of Producers Rice Mill. As RMA chair, Gray worked on the renegotiation of NAFTA and the passage and adoption of its replacement, USMCA. He led efforts to combat unfair trade practices hampering U.S. milled rice exports and also oversaw the process of updating RMA membership requirements and benefits as well as the organization’s dues structure.

Ryan Carwell, vice president at Poinsett Rice and Grain, succeeds Dick Ottis who helmed the USA Rice Merchants’ Association for six years. During his tenure as chair, Ottis successfully guided the Merchant’s Association to a much stronger place: reserves have grown, the size of the Board has doubled, and the merchants have a strong, respected voice for the rice industry.

“On behalf of USA Rice, I extend special thanks to our great board leaders who served with distinction – Charley, Keith, Dick, and Frank,” said USA Rice President & CEO Betsy Ward. “We are very grateful for their guidance and support.” 

NEW WORLD, NEW PROMOTIONS

BY SARAH MORAN

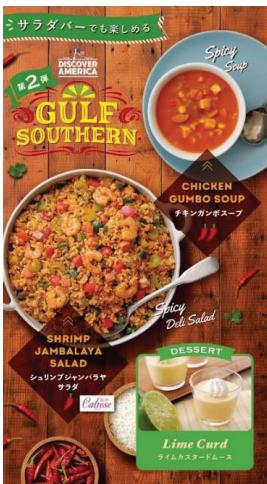
ARLINGTON, VA — As people all over the world have changed how they work, play, and consume, USA Rice has made changes to the organization’s international marketing programs. Meetings with importers and utilizers of U.S. rice are happening virtually, rather than in person, and most of the consumer-facing promotions have transitioned to social media as social distancing restrictions due to the COVID-19 crisis are still in effect in many countries.

Other changes include taking a step back and using this time to conduct additional research on rice.

“In Mexico, we are commencing nutraceutical research, which means determining the health benefits of rice in addition to its basic nutritional value, to help create messaging that resonates with health-conscious consumers,” said Asih Grigsby, director of international promotion for the Western Hemisphere. “And in Canada, we are developing consumer surveys to determine how the pandemic has affected purchasing behavior over the past year.”

“In Taiwan we’re researching cooking attributes of various types of U.S. rice to share with the foodservice industry to increase the use of rice in cakes, snacks, and prepackaged foods,” said Jim Guinn,

COVID-19 pushed USA Rice behind the camera for social media promotions and to the front lines with meals to support healthcare workers and first responders.



director of Asia promotion programs. “Particularly during these past few months, the humanitarian aspects of our promotions are important, as we show appreciation for those on the front lines of the coronavirus pandemic. We have participated in several of these events in Singapore, delivering bento boxes to hospital workers and other unsung heroes.”

“Many retail sectors are seeing significant increases in their online sales platforms,” said Eszter Somogyi, director for Europe, Middle East, and Africa. “We’re reaching out to U.S. rice importers in several markets to develop marketing materials and activities that can further help U.S. rice sales in this arena.”

The only constant in life is change and USA Rice is ensuring overseas activities are evolving to remain effective in increasing sales of U.S. rice and are relevant in the current environment.

The U.S. exported more than 1.7 million tons in the first six months of 2020, valued at \$988 million – a 5 percent decrease in volume from 2019 but a 6 percent increase in value. [WG](#)

During the pandemic, Sarah Moran, USA Rice vice president international, has rediscovered the fun, calming effect of coloring. On most evenings, you can find her coloring PJ Masks and Ninjago pages with her 3- and 5-year old.

INDUSTRY SUSTAINABILITY SUCCESSSES CONTINUE

BY LYDIA HOLMES

MEMPHIS, TN — Amidst all the unknowns of our world right now, the U.S. rice industry remains steadfast in its commitment to sustainability. USA Rice members are involved in new projects and ongoing conservation work and here are a few of their success stories.

Anheuser-Busch Foundation Invests in Research Farms

The Anheuser-Busch Foundation recently announced a commitment to provide \$530,000 to support model farms at four land grant universities around the country, with a primary focus on enhancing environmental sustainability. In rice country, the University of Arkansas (UofA) System Division of Agriculture, will receive \$130,000 to establish a Discovery Farm to test different irrigation strategies to help rice farmers become more efficient and to document continuous improvement towards sustainability, including profitability and methane emission reductions.

“We are grateful for the support the Anheuser-Busch Foundation is providing for Discovery Farms, a program whose mission is sustainability,” said Mark Cochran, with UofA. “The grant will enable us to expand the work we’re already doing to improve water-use efficiency in rice and conserve a resource that is so critical to our state and our farmers.”

Results of California Salmon Project Promising

The second year of the Pilot Salmon Project in the Sacramento River Valley yielded exciting results and should pave the way for the California Rice Commission (CRC) and their fish conservation partners to develop methods to utilize winter-flooded rice fields to help struggling salmon populations. The outmigration survival rate of 2020 rice field-reared salmon was nearly 4.5 percent; nearly 4.5 times higher than control groups and substantially higher than other similar tagging studies during this period. CRC and its fish conservation partners plan to develop a larger-scale strategy to use rice fields to help salmon just as they’ve helped birds for decades.

Indigo Agriculture and Anheuser-Busch Partnership Exceeds Goals

Indigo Agriculture and Anheuser-Busch announced the results of their first-year partnership that focuses on helping farmers sustainably grow rice while empowering them with technology, research, and financial incentives. In the first year, the 29 Arkansas rice farmers enrolled in the program achieved: a 23.7 percent average decrease in water use, a 13.3 percent average reduction in nitrogen applications, and a 26.6 percent average reduction in methane emissions.



Rice industry partners in action everywhere you look, pushing the envelope when it comes to sustainability by investing in research to decrease the environmental footprint, enhance wildlife habitat, and maintain profitability.



“As a farmer-owned cooperative, we believe we are uniquely positioned to capitalize on the growing needs and demands of the supply chain to share our story.”

— ADAM SHEA, RICELAND FOODS DIRECTOR OF SUSTAINABILITY



“We are thrilled with the environmental results the Indigo growers achieved that advanced three of our 2025 sustainability goals: smart agriculture, watershed health, and carbon emissions,” said Bill Jones, rice agronomy manager at Anheuser-Busch.

Following the success of the first year, Indigo Ag and Anheuser-Busch have extended their partnership through the 2020 growing season adding more acres and advanced data collection methods to further optimize the sustainability outcomes.

Producers Rice Mill Solar Farm

Producers Rice Mill recently announced a solar project that will enable them to offset more than 65 percent of their annual energy needs at their Stuttgart mill facility. This 26-megawatt solar power plant with up to 40 MWh of energy storage capacity will be the largest commercial solar array and energy storage facility in Arkansas. The solar facility will sit on approximately 160 acres of land and will feature more than 65,000 individual solar modules.

“We project savings of more than \$100 million on our electricity bills over the next 30 years,” said Keith Glover, Producers CEO and recently elected chair of the USA Rice Millers’ Association. “These savings will be passed along to our more than 2,000 hard-working farm family members. This landmark project continues a proud tradition of our members improving the sustainability of growing and processing rice, while providing one of the world’s most important foods.”

Riceland Foods Announces Ingrain Good Initiative

In June, Riceland Foods announced its new Ingrain Good initiative focused on creating value through sustainability across the farmer-owned cooperative. The mission of Ingrain Good is to create value for Riceland’s members, employees, customers, and consumers by prioritizing the education and adoption of sustainable practices. Riceland will focus improvement efforts on reducing its carbon footprint, maximizing efficiencies, reducing consumption of natural resources, and optimizing the safety and well-being for all people associated with the cooperative.

“As demand for sustainably-produced food increases across the food supply chain, the need to ‘tell our story’ through data rings louder than ever before,” said Adam Shea, Riceland’s director of sustainability. “As a farmer-owned cooperative, we believe we are uniquely positioned to capitalize on the growing needs and demands of the supply chain to share our story.” 

Lydia Holmes is USA Rice’s director of industry affairs & sustainability, based out of Memphis, Tennessee, where her focus is traversing the I-55 corridor in search of great BBQ and ways to better serve Mid-South rice farmers, millers, and merchants.



RICE SUSTAINABILITY WEBINAR SERIES NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE

ARLINGTON, VA — A four-part webinar series on U.S. rice industry sustainability is now available on the USA Rice website. The webinars are targeted to those who may be unfamiliar with rice sustainability efforts and practices and are an extension of the work done around the *U.S. Rice Industry Sustainability Report*.

The webinars feature speakers from Arkansas, California, Louisiana, and Mississippi, and each one takes on a specific topic including ways the rice industry impacts rural economies across America, energy efficiency, the latest in rice irrigation systems, and how U.S. rice farmers are preserving resources and providing wildlife habitat and why that’s important to them.

“Anyone with an interest in sustainability and conservation will appreciate this important content developed by The Rice Foundation, through a grant with the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resource Conservation Service,” said Lydia Holmes, USA Rice director of industry affairs & sustainability. “Listening in on these recorded webinars also allows certified crop advisors and professional agronomists to earn continuing education units (CEUs) through the American Society of Agronomy (ASA).”

Go to www.usarice.com/sustainability/webinars to access the webinars, and find out how to receive CEUs through the American Society of Agronomy.





What if your rice crop **had multiple buyers?**

What if you could sell to those buyers instantly? And what if you knew you already agreed on quality and price? What if that meant you could put all your focus on your growing practices?

Now, what if together we questioned the entire agriculture system?

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