

WHOLE GRAIN



1ST SALE OF U.S. RICE TO CHINA

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Sharing the Good News on International Trade

BY BOBBY HANKS

CROWLEY, LA — This issue of the *Whole Grain* is near and dear to my heart with the cover story and focus on international trade. So important to me and my business, and to the industry as a whole, trade is the lifeblood of U.S. rice.

In a year as difficult as 2020, with so many obstacles to normal everyday life, and the ups and downs we've all been experiencing on a weekly or daily basis, one might expect the trade story for rice to be just as confounding as everything else. But in fact, there were plenty of good news trade stories that at least should make you feel hopeful if not downright proud.

You can read about the landmark sale and delivery of U.S. rice to China on page 8, positive developments in Korea on page 9, and steps USA Rice has taken to stay in touch with international customers in this age of limited travel on page 20. And don't miss Sarah Moran's excellent overview and explanation of new trade opportunities for us in the coming months on page 9.

We may face obstacles to trade around the world, and USA Rice is working to mitigate them, but one thing is for certain – we have an outstanding reputation that we have earned through our dependability as a trading partner and the high quality of our product and unparalleled food and worker safety standards.


I think that's why we were asked to host a South Korean documentary film crew, shortly before we went to press, to expose them to the great U.S. rice industry. Their documentary, *The Rice Road*, is envisioned as a four-part series about rice all around the world. But after spending a few days with us in southwest Louisiana, participating in ratoon harvest, touring the Supreme Mill, and listening to us go on and on about our rice brothers



The Rice Road travels through Louisiana and stops in Crowley for an interview with Bobby Hanks, chair of USA Rice and CEO of Supreme Rice Mill.

and sisters in the other five states, the filmmakers told us they needed to come back to do more filming just about U.S. rice.

And as I told them, they are welcome any time, because while we may face adversity and setbacks, we are a united industry, lifting each other up here and around the world.

Thank you for reading the *Whole Grain*, please support our advertisers, and most importantly, stay safe, stay healthy, and have a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year! 

... while we may face adversity and setbacks, we are a united industry, lifting each other up here and around the world.

LISTEN UP!

Two rice-related podcasts cover the U.S. industry from top to bottom, north to south, east to west, and all points in between!



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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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PUTTING THE SQUEEZE ON 2020

BY BETSY WARD

ARLINGTON, VA — This issue of the *Whole Grain* is usually unveiled at our USA Rice Outlook Conference where around 1,000 rice industry leaders, friends, family, customers, and suppliers gather to learn, share, and network. But like so many of our plans for 2020, it was not to be.

This is, of course, disappointing. I enjoy visiting with attendees and sitting side-by-side with my rice family as we listen to speakers, ask each other questions, and talk about the year that was and what lies ahead. Now, granted I think we're all ready for 2020 to be behind us — from the terrible loss of life and livelihood we've experienced to the extreme weather — I would have liked to bid this tough year goodbye with you in person.

However, there are some rays of light. And we're going to grab on to them and ride them as long as we can!


For starters, the USA Rice Outlook Conference is where we celebrate excellence and outstanding contributions to the rice industry. And we're still doing that, even though we're not in a ballroom sharing lunch together. We've found a new way to honor some very special individuals and I know you join me in congratulating them.

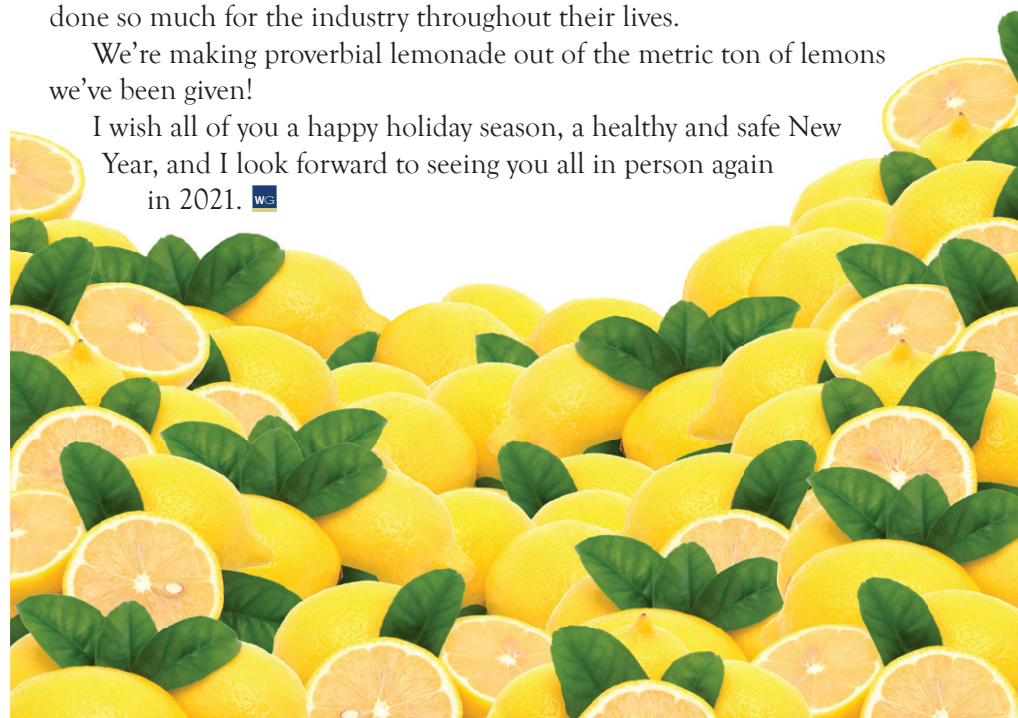
The *Rice Farming* accolades for Rice Farmer of the Year, Rice Industry Award, and Lifetime Achievement Award are still being conferred this year. The awards, sponsored by *Rice Farming Magazine*, Horizon Ag, and USA Rice are being presented to three very deserving individuals. You can read about them in the December issue of *Rice Farming Magazine* and you can hear exclusive interviews with the honorees on Episode 11 of our podcast, *The Rice Stuff*, available on December 8 wherever podcasts can be found.

We are also excited to have been able to award our National Rice Month Scholarship prizes this year, despite the turmoil and uncertainty we've seen in school systems around the country. We thank our new sponsor, American Commodity Company, for ensuring the scholarships would go forward and we congratulate our winners, who you can read about on page 17.

For sure this is not the December any of us envisioned or wanted, but we're going to do our best to make it special for the high school students who maybe hadn't thought much about rice before but now have rice to thank for helping them achieve their higher education goals, and for those who have done so much for the industry throughout their lives.

We're making proverbial lemonade out of the metric ton of lemons we've been given!

I wish all of you a happy holiday season, a healthy and safe New Year, and I look forward to seeing you all in person again in 2021. 



DADDY'S GOT DIRT

BY LESLEY DIXON

GRIDLEY, CA — Move over, Dr. Seuss! *Daddy's Got Dirt*, Matthew Sligar's children's book about farming rice, has arrived just in time for the holidays. With beautiful color illustrations by Brazilian artist Daniel Vincent, *Daddy's Got Dirt: a California Rice Story* is the perfect gift for the little farmers in your life.

"I have two young daughters, a four-year old and a one-year old, and I have read many, many books about subjects varying from cats in hats to dragons that love tacos," said Sligar, a California rice farmer and the creative mind behind Rice Farming TV. "But none of them is about how rice is grown. So, I thought, hey, I could write that book."


Daddy's Got Dirt takes readers on a journey about how rice is produced, from planting to harvest. Vibrant, artful illustrations complement the book's clever and catchy four-line rhyming stanzas, which Sligar says he wrote while driving his combine, recording his ideas on his phone, and then polishing them up when he returned home in the evening. This book about rice farming was actually written while rice farming.

Sligar says his daughters were a big inspiration for writing a book. "I'm out working a lot, especially during spring and fall with planting and harvest, and I wanted to write a children's book for them that explained what I was doing while I'm not at home. Often during the busy season, I only get the chance to read them a book at night before they go to sleep and that time is very important to me."

USA RICE — WORKING TOGETHER FOR THE U.S. RICE INDUSTRY

BY REBECCA GREENWAY

ARLINGTON, VA — Each year USA Rice brings together funding from many sources — from rice farmers, millers, merchants, associated businesses, and federal resources — 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 ensure 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 USA Rice annual financial audit is conducted by an external CPA firm hired by the USA Rice Audit Committee — also comprised of representatives from all industry segments — and their report 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. 

Rebecca Greenway is USA Rice CFO.

“I have two young daughters ... I have read many, many books about subjects varying from cats in hats to dragons that love tacos ... But none of them is about how rice is grown. So, I thought, hey, I could write that book.”

— MATTHEW SLIGAR

He has also been inspired by children from the broader community. “Through Rice Farming TV, I’ve been invited to many elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools to talk about how rice is grown, and it’s just amazing the questions I get from kids. They’re so astute. They know about tractors, they know about common agricultural practices, especially here in these rural communities where I live. I thought that this book would be a nice tool for them.”

Sligar also hopes that the book can resonate with kids that don’t have as much experience with farms, teaching them where their food comes from and fostering an early connection with agriculture. “I’d like to spark that interest,” said Sligar. “It’s important to start that conversation young.”

A college writing professor once told Matthew Sligar to “write what you know.” As a father and a rice farmer, he’s accomplished exactly that with *Daddy’s Got Dirt*.

Daddy’s Got Dirt: a California Rice Story is available to purchase via Sligar’s website, RiceFarmingTV.com, as well as on Amazon. Every book purchase features a coloring page download that young artists can make their own and share on social media. If you’d like to hear more about the book, tune in to episode 10 of *The Rice Stuff* podcast to hear an in-depth interview with Sligar. [WS](#)

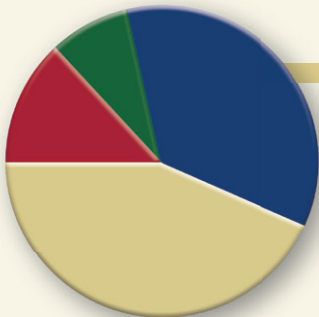
Lesley Dixon is a writer,
And an editor to boot,
She’s a big fan of reading
She thinks it’s a hoot

She hopes that you’ll check out
Matthew’s new book
Crack open the cover
And give it a look!

Matthew Sligar’s latest creative
effort makes rice farming seem
like child’s play.



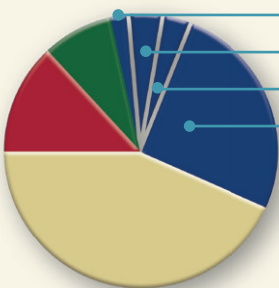
USA Rice brings together funding from many industry sources — from farmers, millers, merchants, and associated businesses – and we use that funding to conduct programs on behalf of the entire U.S. rice industry.



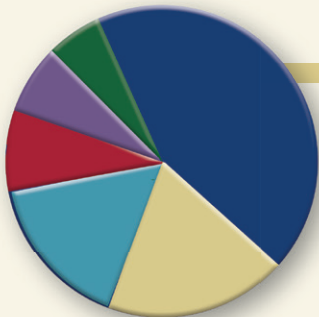
FY 2020/2021 REVENUE - \$12,692,900

The single largest source of revenue for USA Rice is the state promotion funds received from Arkansas, California, Louisiana, and Mississippi.

State Promotion Funds	\$4,465,000	35%	●
USDA-FAS Funds	\$5,546,000	44%	●
Other Industry Dues	\$1,622,000	13%	●
Other income	\$1,059,000	8%	●



Mississippi	\$312,000
Louisiana	\$783,000
California	\$917,000
Arkansas	\$2,888,000



FY 2020/2021 EXPENSES - \$12,692,000

USA Rice presents its expense budget in terms of programs to show how resources are being used appropriately to meet the organization’s goals.

International Promotion & Market Access (USDA Funded)	\$5,456,000	43%	●
Rice State Relations, Membership & Meetings	\$2,385,000	19%	●
Domestic Initiatives & Promotion	\$1,976,000	16%	●
International Promotion & Market Access (Rice Industry Funded)	\$1,187,000	9%	●
Management & general	\$910,000	7%	●
Government affairs	\$778,000	6%	●

U.S. RICE WITH A BRITISH ACCENT

BY LESLEY DIXON

ARLINGTON, VA — The idea of English cuisine typically conjures images of simple, traditional classics like Yorkshire pudding, fish and chips, and scones. But it is widely agreed upon that the unofficial national dish of England is chicken tikka masala, served, of course, over white rice.

Most people would not expect the United Kingdom, a region known for its love of meat and potatoes, to be a significant consumer of rice. But the UK is the single largest market for U.S. rice sales in Europe, valued at \$6.2 million in 2019. UK residents consume about 23 pounds of rice annually, much of it served with Asian dishes like curry and sushi, and the country's cultural diversity and close historical relationship to its many former colonies has led to a great love affair with rice dishes.

"Due to their large ethnic population as well as the heritage of the British Empire, the UK's rice consumption is very diverse," says Eszter Somogyi, USA Rice director of international promotion in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. "Every eighth person in the UK is coming from an ethnic background, which has a strong impact on eating habits and food preferences. As we all know, rice is a staple commodity for cultures around the world, and the UK has a wide variety of ethnic restaurants, particularly in London and other major cities. Chinese markets use a lot of long grain white rice, Afro-Caribbean markets prefer long grain parboiled, and Japanese and Korean markets use medium grain japonica—much of which is sourced from the U.S. The diversity of the United Kingdom is what drives its rice consumption."

To begin with, chicken tikka masala, while Indian-inspired, is not strictly an Indian dish, but rather the most famous example of the fusion cuisine developed by British-Indian chefs in the 20th century to cater to English tastes. Traditional Indian tikka is small pieces of boneless chicken marinated in yogurt and spices and roasted on a skewer in a tandoor clay oven. Masala is a term that simply refers to a spice mix. But chicken tikka masala, the savory and mild yet complex curry dish so familiar to most of the western world, has distinctly British origins.

The specifics of those origins are hotly debated. Shish Mahal of Glasgow, Scotland, is one of the many restaurants that lays claim to the dish's conception. The story goes that in 1971 on a cold, rainy Scottish night, British-Pakistani chef Ali Ahmed Aslam served chicken tikka kebab with an improvised sauce to a bus driver who complained the meat was too dry (Scottish diners being accustomed to having their meat served with gravy). Using ingredients at hand, including a can of tomato soup, Aslam whipped up a creamy tomato sauce spiked with Indian spices that would become the familiar and beloved chicken tikka masala. The bus driver raved about it, and soon he and his friends were all coming in regularly to order the comforting, satisfying dish.

Others say that chicken tikka masala has its roots in the famous British-Indian cookbook, *Mrs. Balbir Singh's Indian Cookery*. Author, entrepreneur, and culinary maven Balbir Singh published her cookbook in England in 1961 to instant acclaim

... it is widely agreed upon that the unofficial national dish of England is chicken tikka masala, served, of course, over white rice.



A fan favorite is born when Chef Ali Ahmed Aslam (left) improvises a new sauce that turns a traditional Pakistani dish into the chicken tikka masala now served across the UK (above).



and popularity, influencing professional and home chefs alike around the world for generations and earning her the reputation of "India's Julia Child." Combining the intricately balanced spice blends and techniques of traditional Indian cooking with the precise measurements and detailed instructions English cooks were accustomed to, Mrs. Singh's book was instrumental in popularizing Indian cuisine in the UK—including "shahi chicken masala," a recipe that bears a striking resemblance to today's chicken tikka masala.

Naturally, Mrs. Singh's seminal cookbook included thorough instructions on how to cook perfect rice — something most English home cooks in the 60s probably benefited from. "An Indian rice dish is an object of exquisite beauty," she wrote. "It is the main attraction on a table, spreading its fragrance all over

the dining room. Other dishes appear like satellites revolving round this mother planet.”

British Indians are the largest ethnic minority group in the UK, having emigrated in large numbers after World War II and the dissolution of the British Empire. With the British Nationality Act of 1948, members of the Commonwealth, including Indians, Pakistanis, and Bangladeshis, were able to emigrate to the UK with few obstacles, bringing their passion for rice with them. Britain had begun importing most of its rice from the United States during the Second World War after its main source, Burma, was cut off by the Japanese. As a country emerging from the drudgery of wartime food rationing, this midcentury boom of new, foreign, and fusion cuisines — many of which were rice-based — was inevitable.

Whether it's tikka masala, Caribbean curried goat, Japanese sushi, or the traditional English rice pudding, rice is as important to British culture as tea. It may not be native, but it's now a staple in the land of meat and potatoes. [WGB](#)



Mrs. Balbir Singh and her legendary cookbook share precise cooking instructions for making perfect rice.

“An Indian rice dish is an object of exquisite beauty. It is the main attraction on a table, spreading its fragrance all over the dining room.”

— AUTHOR, ENTREPRENEUR, AND CULINARY MAVEN BALBIR SINGH



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FIRST COMMERCIAL SHIPMENT OF U.S. RICE UNLOADS IN CHINA

BY PETER BACHMANN

XIAMEN, CHINA — The first ever commercial shipment of U.S.-grown rice was unloaded in China in late October, following more than a decade of regulatory and political effort by USA Rice to establish a two-way trading relationship with the nation.

The premium, medium grain Calrose rice was grown in California and sold by ADM Rice, Inc. to a private importer under the ‘Sungiven’ brand for retail distribution.

China is the world’s largest rice producer and consumer, and only second to the Philippines in global rice imports. The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates Report has projected that China would consume more than 146 million MT of rice this year, dwarfing the 4.6 million MT estimated for consumption by Americans.

“As seasoned exporters, this small shipment of California milled rice sounded routine at the outset, but the many logistical challenges of exporting to this new market proved to be one of our most complex transactions to date,” said Todd Burich, vice president, ADM Rice.

Burich added that, “This shipment would not have been possible without the teamwork of all involved at Arbuckle, California-based ADM Rice, the USA Rice Federation, U.S. Department of Agriculture officials, and our esteemed customer, Sungiven, a retail chain in China. We hope this initial collaborative effort will lead to increased sales of U.S. rice to China and contribute to stronger trade relations between both nations.”

“We are pleased to see the first shipment to China of U.S.-grown rice take place following the U.S.-China Phase One Agreement in January, calling for U.S. commodity purchases, including rice,” said Bobby Hanks, chair of both USA Rice and the USA Rice International Trade Policy Committee. “We hope to see more buyers, both private and government, step forward to purchase U.S. rice. As a reliable supplier with high-quality long, medium, and short grain, the U.S. is well positioned to help fill some of the import demand in China moving forward.”

Hanks added, “USA Rice has spent many years working cooperatively with the U.S. and Chinese governments to get us to the point that sales and shipments were possible. We have also invested significant promotional funds



On the shelves...at long last.

into the market for more than 15 years to establish relationships with importers and start developing demand for our products. Our recent reverse trade missions have confirmed that the Chinese buyers visiting our U.S. rice farming and milling operations are interested in our crop and those efforts have now begun to materialize into sales.”

A reverse trade mission for Chinese importers hosted by USA Rice that visited Arkansas, Louisiana, and California in December 2019 helped lead to this sale and eventual shipment. China’s rice market has a demand for all types of U.S. rice, so all the U.S. rice growing regions stand to benefit. China’s neighboring countries currently provide the bulk of their needed rice, but access to U.S.-grown rice brings another premium option to the market for more high-end hotel, foodservice, and retail channels and consumers who prioritize sustainability and strong food safety practices.

Under the terms of the phytosanitary agreement reached between the U.S. and Chinese governments, all rice entering China must be milled and packaged according to specifications and originate from a pre-approved export facility. There are currently 32 approved export facilities spread across the six major rice-growing states.

U.S. rice entering China under their tariff rate quota faces a 1 percent in-quota duty in addition to a 25 percent retaliatory duty. In most cases, importers in China may apply to waive the retaliatory duty. [W3](#)

Peter Bachmann is the USA Rice vice president of international trade policy, with prior experience working on trade and farm policy at the U.S. Department of Agriculture and government affairs for USA Rice.

“We hope this initial collaborative effort will lead to increased sales of U.S. rice to China and contribute to stronger trade relations between both nations.”

— TODD BURICH, VICE PRESIDENT, ADM RICE

RECIPE FOR NEW U.S. RICE TRADE OPPORTUNITIES IN 2020 AND 2021

BY SARAH MORAN

WORLDWIDE — Global weather issues and panic-buying induced by COVID-19 have exhausted local supplies of rice throughout many heavy rice-consuming countries in 2020. This environment has presented unique export opportunities for U.S. rice, just as America's new crop is ready to hit the market. Export powerhouses like India and Viet Nam have dropped their pandemic-related export restrictions imposed earlier this year and maintain supply surpluses, so U.S. rice will still face competition in key export markets but changing global dynamics could benefit the U.S. rice industry this year and next.

Drought conditions in South America has led Brazil to open a temporary duty-free quota for 400,000 MT of rice, which is typically subject to a 12 percent duty on milled rice and a 10 percent duty on paddy rice to suppliers outside MERCOSUR (Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay). While Brazil is likely not more than a short-term market, their aggressive interest in U.S. rice indicates the great need for rice there, typically satisfied by their MERCOSUR neighbors. As it stands, nearly 200,000 MT of U.S. rice has been shipped or committed to Brazil before the quota closes at the end of this year.

Weather hasn't only affected the Western Hemisphere. An ongoing drought in Australia means that domestic rice supplies there will not last through the end of 2020. Annual U.S. exports to Australia are typically around 10,000 MT but Australian producers are strong U.S. competitors in markets such as Taiwan, South Korea, and Israel. Their reduced exports or absence in these markets will be notable, particularly in the West Bank/Israel where USA Rice began promotional activities in 2019 and has already seen significantly increased market share from 5 percent (\$9.8 million) in 2018 to 254 percent (\$28 million) in the first nine months of this calendar year. Israel went from the 22nd to now the tenth largest export market for U.S. rice based on value.

Iraq imports 1.2 million MT of rice annually, and manages a public distribution system which provides the population access to a variety of staple commodities, including

three kilograms of rice every two months. They, too, are facing a massive rice shortage. Economic challenges due to the low global price of oil have restrained the government's ability to purchase strategic supplies of wheat and rice; approximately 90 percent of the government's revenue comes from oil revenue. The recent ExIm \$450 million insurance coverage on lines of credit will help with Iraq's ability to purchase U.S. rice.

On the international food aid front, the U.S. shipped 124,000 MT of U.S. rice (nearly \$72 million) in FY20 to help countries provide nutritious food to those in need. A Food for Progress program, which is utilizing rice in Burkina Faso (a landlocked country in West Africa), is soliciting tens of thousands of metric tons of U.S. rice this year, in addition to other food assistance programs in Africa.

"While world food stocks and production levels for the most widely consumed staples, such as rice, are near all-time highs, the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on jobs and income has increased the number of food insecure people worldwide, so the demand is strong throughout our commercial and international food aid channels," said USA Rice President & CEO Betsy Ward. "USDA's most recent figures for global rice trade for 2021 continue to project increased trade tonnage, looking at 44.34 million MT, which equates to a 2 percent bump from 2019 trade levels."

Ward added: "While we continue to supply our traditional global customers with high quality rice, USA Rice will work to capitalize on these new market opportunities and will operate promotional activities dynamically so we can adapt to the changing market opportunities both domestically and abroad."

Recent second waves of COVID-19 infections has led to the imposition of additional lockdowns which leads to more panic-buying of shelf-stable foods like rice. [WQ](#)

Sarah Moran is the USA Rice vice president international, and is as excited as Dr. Seuss about all the places U.S. rice will go.

KOREA MAKES SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS TOWARD FILLING NEW 2020 QUOTA

BY PETER BACHMANN

SEOUL, KOREA — The start of 2020 brought with it a new era for U.S. rice relations with Korea during the implementation of the U.S. country-specific quota (CSQ) agreement, negotiated and signed late last year by the U.S. Trade Representative, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the government of Korea. The agreement pledges 132,304 MT on a milled basis, of annual U.S. rice purchases, as part of Korea's WTO commitments, along with purchases from Australia, China, Thailand, and Viet Nam.

Since the CSQ was signed, 110,704 MT of the 132,304 MT commitment has been contracted for, after a large tender was held in mid-September. Following those sales, just 21,600 MT is still outstanding before the 2020 CSQ commitment is fulfilled. Prior to the CSQ, the majority of the sales were contracted at the end of the calendar year.

While the U.S. government initially estimated the CSQ would provide \$110 million in annual sales of U.S. rice, the 2020 CSQ contracts to date total more than \$100 million.



"While we spent some time earlier this year acclimating to the logistical challenges associated with implementing a new quota system and then handling the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are still on target to meet the terms of the new country-specific quota," said Michael Rue, California rice farmer and chair of the USA Rice Asia Trade Policy Subcommittee. "After the last tonnage is contracted this year and USA Rice members hold our annual consultations with our Korean counterparts, we hope to be on a smooth trajectory going into the second year of the CSQ. Once travel starts back up, our exporters are certainly looking forward to building on our long-time relationship with buyers in Korea."

Over the last 10 years, U.S. rice exports on a milled basis to Korea have averaged 116,072 MT per year, all prior to the establishment of the new quota system for U.S. rice. [WQ](#)

USA RICE SUCCESSFULLY PETITIONS REMOVAL OF DUTY-FREE BENEFITS UNDER GSP

BY PETER BACHMANN

WASHINGTON, DC — In a move that helps level the playing field for U.S. rice in international trade, the U.S. government signed a proclamation removing rice from the list of commodities afforded duty-free access under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) Program.

USA Rice submitted a petition to the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) earlier this year, requesting the broad removal of six rice tariff lines from receiving duty-free benefits through the GSP, a program originally designed to help developing countries build new markets.

The new proclamation removes one of the six tariff lines, for parboiled rice imports, from eligibility for all GSP beneficiary countries, primarily impacting Argentina, Brazil, Pakistan, Paraguay, and Thailand. Additionally, India would be impacted if they eventually meet the USTR requirements to regain GSP eligibility.

The remaining five tariff lines are still eligible for use by “least developed countries” only, namely Cambodia and Myanmar. Over the last ten years, combined imports from those least developed countries averaged less than \$1.5 million in annual value at a rate of roughly 1,500 MT per year.

“We are pleased to see the government’s recognition that U.S.-grown rice is an important, import-sensitive crop and that they’re taking steps to remove incentives for foreign competitors to ship their rice to the U.S. by eliminating the outdated duty-free access these countries enjoyed under the GSP Program,” said USA Rice Chair Bobby Hanks. “The flow of rice imports is still a very real concern for our domestic industry but granting our petition will help put some of those exports on a more level playing field with domestic production. We will continue to advocate for adherence to WTO commitments by our competitors who continue to over-subsidize and maintain an unfair advantage.”

USA Rice’s petition was supported through participation in virtual hearings with the USTR and the U.S. International Trade Commission, as well as broad support from the rice grower community and letters sent to the Administration by Members of the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate.

Beginning on November 1, 2020, parboiled rice previously imported duty-free under the GSP Program is now assessed an 11.2 percent duty. [WGR](#)

In a move that helps level the playing field for U.S. rice in international trade, the U.S. government signed a proclamation removing rice from the list of commodities afforded duty-free access under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) Program.





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VOTERS TURNOUT IN RECORD NUMBERS FOR 2020 ELECTION

BY JAMISON CRUCE

(Results are as of press time.)

ARLINGTON, VA — On Election Day, November 3, and the weeks prior, more than 150 million Americans cast their ballots in the 2020 General Election. This cycle afforded the electorate an opportunity to select the President of the United States, one-third of the United States Senate, and all seats in the United States House of Representatives, in addition to state, local, and other municipal positions.

In the presidential contest, former Vice President Joe Biden defeated President Donald Trump. While legal challenges and recounts persist in some states, the outcome of the election is not anticipated to change. Electors from each state will formally meet on December 14, 2020, to cast votes for president and vice president to the Electoral College. Congress will meet jointly to count and certify votes on January 6, 2021. President-Elect Biden and Vice President-Elect Kamala Harris will be inaugurated on January 20, 2021.


Democrats will maintain control of the House with a current margin of 222 members to Republicans' 205, while eight seats have yet to be decided. Several races will result in runoff elections due to no candidate garnering a 50 percent plus one majority of the vote, including Louisiana's Fifth Congressional District which is an open seat race with the retirement of Rep. Ralph Abraham (R-LA). Of those Members of Congress running for election in rice-producing states and districts, a majority of the incumbents seeking re-election won their races.

The House Agriculture Committee will look much different in the new Congress where new leadership will be in place on both sides of the aisle. In a huge blow to the agriculture community, House Agriculture Committee Chairman Collin Peterson (D-MN) was defeated by former Lieutenant Governor and GOP nominee Michelle Fischbach for Minnesota's Seventh

Congressional District. With the retirement of Rep. Mike Conaway, the top Republican slot on the House Agriculture Committee also becomes available next Congress and jockeying for the position is already underway. However, both leadership roles will ultimately be decided by their respective party and are not expected to be known until early next year.

Control of the Senate is yet to be known as both U.S. Senate races in Georgia require runoff elections in early January. Republicans currently hold 50 seats to Democrats' 48. It's likely that Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) will remain lead Democrat on the Senate Agriculture Committee, while many expect Sen. John Boozman (R-AR) will take over the helm from retiring Sen. Pat Roberts (R-KS) for the top Republican slot.

The new Congress is expected to be sworn in on Monday, January 4, 2021. As stipulated in the 20th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, Congress is to be sworn in on January 3, however, given that date is a Sunday, traditionally Congress has moved the biennial ceremony to the following Monday.

"On behalf of USA Rice, I'd like to thank all of our members who voted ~ the ultimate and arguably the most fundamental involvement in the political process," said Ben Mosely, USA Rice vice president of government affairs. "We look forward to continuing our work to secure policies that benefit the U.S. rice industry." 

Jamison Cruce is the USA Rice director for government affairs.



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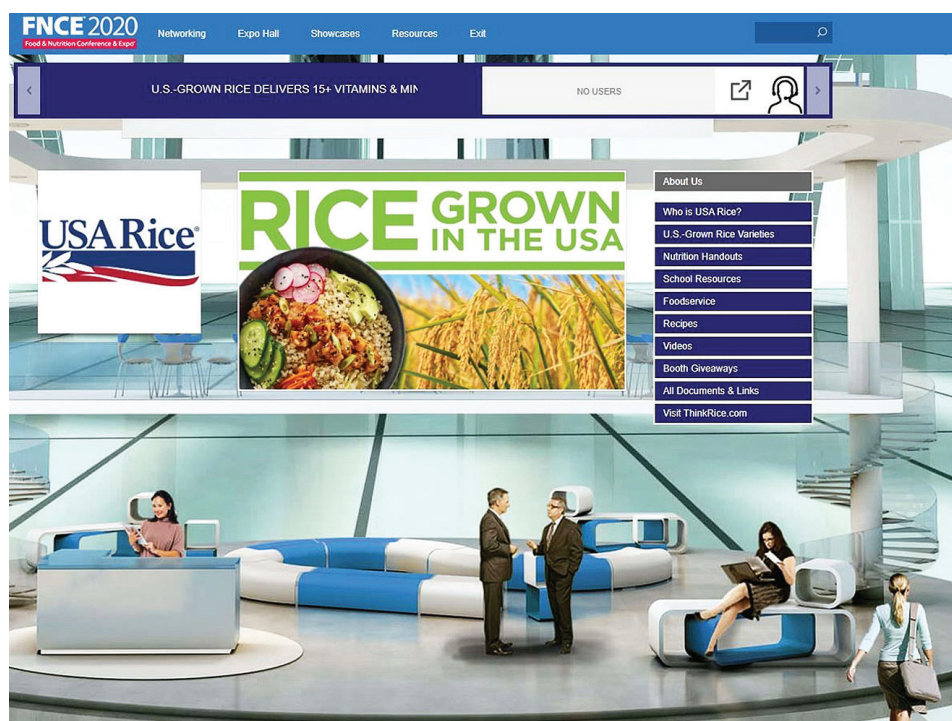
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NUTRITION PROFESSIONALS GET A VIRTUAL TASTE OF RICE AT 2020 FOOD & NUTRITION SHOW

BY DEBORAH WILLENBORG

VIRTUAL WORLD — For the first time in its history, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics’ held its 2020 Food & Nutrition Conference & Expo (FNCE) online and USA Rice was there, hosting a virtual booth with USA Rice nutrition handouts, U.S.-grown varietal information, recipes, industry videos, and access to foodservice resources.

“The trade show’s new format didn’t change our mission — to promote U.S.-grown rice nutritional messaging, interact with audiences responsible for supporting healthy diets and shaping food policy, and make valuable connections within the nutrition space,” said Cameron Jacobs, USA Rice director of domestic promotion.



Step into the USA Rice booth at the virtual FNCE conference!

Attendees were able to chat in real time with USA Rice staff, download business cards, and take an industry survey on rice usage, applications, nutritional reputation, and the importance of the “Grown in the USA” claim.


More than 600 dietitians, food policy makers, healthcare providers, nutrition scientists and researchers, and food industry leaders from around the world took part in the online survey and the results were exceedingly positive for rice as a whole and specifically U.S.-grown rice.

Sixty-nine percent of respondents indicated they use or recommend rice once a week or more, followed by 19 percent who answered their usage rate was monthly. On the subject of rice’s nutritional reputation, 47 percent said they thought rice’s nutritional reputation had strengthened recently. And an overwhelming 70 percent of survey respondents indicated country of origin is important to them and that packaging emphasizing “Grown in the USA” matters.

“That last statistic about the importance of American-grown to nutritionists really stands out to me,” said Jacobs. “This is a testament to the strong reputation of the U.S. rice industry, and a decisive sign that USA Rice has an opportunity to increase U.S.-grown talking points for current and future nutrition programming.”

USA Rice also debuted “Rice Nutrition 101,” a new one-page handout that summarizes The Rice Foundation’s latest published research on infant rice cereal consumption, provides up-to-date takeaways from the 2020 Dietary Guidelines Scientific Report, and includes a round-up of past rice research reports.

Throughout the three-day show, USA Rice promoted its portfolio of nutrition resources and highlighted the importance of U.S.-grown rice in healthy diets to the RD-focused audience. Maintaining a strong presence at FNCE helps establish USA Rice as the ultimate resource for all things rice to anyone who “stopped by” the USA Rice booth.

“USA Rice is a longtime exhibitor at FNCE,” said Jacobs. “We always bring back fresh insight from nutrition professionals, and this year was no different. The interactions may have been virtual but the content and connections we made were real.” 

Deborah Willenborg could get used to living in a virtual world where her avatar is taller and thinner than the real-life model.

“This is a testament to the strong reputation of the U.S. rice industry, and a decisive sign that USA Rice has an opportunity to increase U.S.-grown talking points for current and future nutrition programming.”

— CAMERON JACOBS, USA RICE DIRECTOR OF DOMESTIC PROMOTION

30TH ANNIVERSARY MAKES FOR A BUSY NATIONAL RICE MONTH

BY CAMERON JACOBS

ARLINGTON, VA — September is a busy time for USA Rice as promotional programming is launched to celebrate National Rice Month (NRM) and the many contributions the U.S. industry makes to the nation.

“This September marked the 30th anniversary of NRM, and our team responded accordingly, with ramped up social media, recipe contests, and giveaways, all month-long,” said Michael Klein, USA Rice vice president for marketing, communications, and domestic promotion.

Daily social media posts on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram gave consumers a reason to #ThinkRice every day, and featured rice recipes, nutritional information, sustainability facts, cooking tips, meet the farmer profiles, and much more. The robust social schedule yielded tremendous results for the month with more than 128,000 impressions and 1,212 new followers.

The USA Rice team of nutrition influencers shared NRM talking points and rice nutritional information with their extensive networks. The Registered Dietitians (RD) created six new rice recipes in honor of NRM that were distributed through individual blog posts and highlighted the nutritional benefits of U.S.-grown rice.

Two NRM contests challenged consumers on their rice knowledge, both factual and practical. The first giveaway was a U.S.-grown rice trivia contest in which three lucky winners received NRM prize packs filled with 30th anniversary branded cooking aprons, tote bags, koozies, and rice paddles. The second giveaway was for a rice recipe contest made with short or medium grain rice accompanied by a quote on why the home cooks love using U.S.-grown rice. The grand prize included a 30th NRM prize pack plus an Aroma rice cooker and samples of U.S.-grown rice.

“The winning recipes were Toasted Rice & Chicken Soup and Refreshing Pineapple Rice,” said Klein. “What really made those two dishes stand out were their quotes. One winner called U.S.-grown rice ‘a versatile pantry must-have that makes it easy to pull together quick, delicious, and nutritious meals my whole family loves!’ The other winner said, ‘I love using U.S.-grown rice because I know each grain is carefully harvested and packaged with love. What makes eating U.S.-grown rice even better is having the opportunity to support the hard-working farmers, mill operators, truck drivers, and everyone else in between!’”

Special-themed editions of USA Rice consumer and foodservice newsletters were distributed and filled with historical information on the 30th anniversary, ways to celebrate, recipe inspiration, and additional rice resources.

“This is our time to ‘rice and shine,’ and we took advantage of the opportunity to reach new consumers with U.S. rice messaging while driving organic social content and highlighting the contributions of the U.S. rice industry to this country,” concluded Klein. 



USA RICE DELIVERS EXPERT TESTIMONY TO DIETARY COMMITTEE

BY CAMERON JACOBS

WASHINGTON, DC — Starting in 1980, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Health and Human Services (HHS) has published dietary guidelines every five years to help Americans achieve better health by improving their overall eating patterns. The guidelines are based on scientific research and go through a public vetting process that includes input from health professionals and other federal agencies.

Last August, USA Rice spokesperson and nutrition expert Dr. Julie Miller Jones testified on the latest Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee Scientific Report which serves as the foundation for the next edition, the 2020-2025 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (DGA).

Dr. Jones, distinguished scholar and professor emerita of foods and nutrition at St. Catherine University, spoke via video conference, and focused on three components of the report: the recommendations for grains (whole, enriched, and refined), the significance of fortification, and the importance of respecting cultural-based preferences in the guidelines.



U.S. rice contributed to this Happy Baby Pose.


Dr. Jones applauded the Committee's conclusion that whole grains are an integral part of a healthy diet. She noted that enriched grains provide important nutrients such as folic acid, and asked that the final DGA clarify the role of refined grains as a staple food for many cultures that provide some nutritional benefits.

Her testimony also focused on the role that rice, and rice products, play in increasing the consumption of certain under-consumed nutrients, and advocated that iron-fortified rice cereal can help children under two-years-old meet the new recommendation of consuming foods rich in iron and zinc during the second six months of life among breastfed infants.

Finally, Dr. Jones talked about the importance of respecting cultural-

based preferences by reminding the Committee that rice provides nutritional benefits as a staple food for many cultures across the U.S. and the world that also is affordable and easily accessible.

“Having an expert like Dr. Julie Miller Jones testify ‘in-person’ on behalf of the U.S. rice industry is powerful,” said Michael Klein, USA Rice vice president of domestic promotion.

“The DGA report recommendations are largely positive for rice, and because they help determine school lunch programs and shape state and local health promotion efforts, we put a lot of effort behind this advocacy.” 

Publication of the final version of the 2020-2025 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* is expected in early 2021.

RICE TO THE RESCUE PROGRAM DELIVERS NEEDED RELIEF TO RESTAURANT INDUSTRY

BY CAMERON JACOBS

ARLINGTON, VA — Rice is considered a super food for its power-packed nutrition, versatility, and great taste, but with a new foodservice relief program scheduled to launch by the end of the year, U.S.-grown rice is now poised for superhero status. The program, called *Rice to the Rescue*, was created in response to the devastating impact on the foodservice industry caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and was developed to not only support beleaguered restaurants but also to encourage operators to add U.S.-grown rice to their menus.

Rice to the Rescue kits include a 10-pound sample of U.S.-grown rice, how-to rice guides, Think Rice branded to-go packaging, rice recipe guides, meal kit concepts, To-Go/Curbside Best Practices Guide for Rice, a 60-cup Aroma Housewares commercial rice cooker, branded masks, and access to USA Rice's digital COVID foodservice resources.

"U.S.-grown rice can play a very important role in operators navigating the impacts of COVID-19," said USA Rice Foodservice Subcommittee Chair John Hasbrook. "Our product is inexpensive, shelf-stable, travel-friendly, well-known, and grown locally, all qualities that now have a heightened importance for operators and their customers. The versatility of U.S.-grown rice allows it to be easily adapted to a variety of takeout applications that cater to a range of different foodservice operations from ethnic cuisine to fast casual and upscale dining. The *Rice to the Rescue* kits communicate and demonstrate this to operators and showcase U.S.-grown rice as an answer to many of the hurdles they are facing."

Kits will be mailed to one hundred strategically-chosen independent foodservice operators, and five major chains will receive an additional invitation for a one-on-one menu ideation

The Rice Rescue kit (above) comes complete with branded face masks (below) to ensure the safety and well-being of foodservice operators.




"The *Rice to the Rescue* program has the ability to make a big impact ... As a restaurant owner, I can tell you that these kits will make a world of difference to operators as they look to navigate the changing restaurant landscape. "

— CHEF HARI CAMERON

session with USA Rice and a team of research and development chefs. The five major chains are Sweetgreen, Chop't, Applebee's, El Pollo Loco, and Texas Roadhouse.

"The *Rice to the Rescue* program has the ability to make a big impact and some noise within the foodservice industry," said Chef Hari Cameron. "As a restaurant owner, I can tell you that these kits will make a world of difference to operators as they look to navigate the changing restaurant landscape. People are seeking comfort food and U.S.-grown rice delivers that while being versatile enough to help operators adapt their menu and operations to this new reality."

The relief kits are scheduled for distribution in early December and USA Rice will follow up with each recipient.

"With one in six restaurants out of business due to the pandemic, according to a National Restaurant Association report, it's more important than ever to support the foodservice sector by positioning U.S.-grown rice as an immediate solution," said Hasbrook. "By providing some much-needed relief, *Rice to the Rescue* has the potential to convert operators who had not been serving rice while reinforcing the importance of sourcing U.S.-grown." 

Go to www.thinkrice.com/rescue/ for more information about the program and to request a kit.

USA Rice Director of Domestic Promotion Cameron Jacobs, AKA The Great Arancini, is obsessed with new applications for grains and committed to expanding the reach of U.S.-grown rice.

RICE HAS AN IMPACT ON SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

BY LESLEY DIXON

MCKINNEY, TX — Considering Molly Ellis’s obvious talent, it would be easy to assume that film has been a lifelong passion for the graduating senior at McKinney Boyd High School here. But her interest in filmmaking is relatively recent. After focusing on music for many years, Ellis pivoted to film about a year ago, joining up with her school’s audio/visual program and jumping right into the action.

So when she began to seek out scholarship competitions, she knew she wanted to do something with video. And that’s how she came across the National Rice Month Scholarship.

“I don’t enjoy writing essays, but I love making and editing videos,” said Ellis. “When I found this scholarship, I didn’t know what I was going to do it about, but then my mom told me the town she is from is all about rice.”

Jennifer Ellis, Molly’s mother, grew up in Katy, Texas, a town that was quite literally built by rice. Ellis also reached out to her grandmother, Anne Miller, who has lived in Katy since the 1970s and still resides there. Turns out, Ellis had some family connections to rice after all. A good friend of her grandmother is Edward Keith Morton, whose family has grown rice in the Katy area for generations. While Morton no longer farms, and the landscape of Katy has changed over the years to be more suburban than farmland, the influence rice has on the town is obvious even today.

In Ellis’s grand prize winning video, “How Rice Impacted a Small Town,” she weaves a narrative of Katy’s history, from its origins as a rural rice farming community to a growing city that still features rice dryers, street signs named after rice farmers, and an annual rice festival that celebrates the town’s heritage. Texas’s current rice production is now largely further


south of Katy, but rice remains a part of the community’s DNA.

Ellis doesn’t consider herself a history buff, but learning about the history of her family and rice in Katy has taught her about how important it is to the character and identity of her home state.

“I’ve always visited Katy and driven through the farmland around it but never put together why those rice dryers were there. I didn’t even know they grew rice in Texas. I just thought of it as food before doing research for this contest. I knew that rice influenced a lot of cultures, but I didn’t realize it could really build a whole city and draw people there and create a whole economy.”

Now that she knows Texas grows about 140,000 acres and contributes more than \$140 million to the state’s economy every year, she’s going to eat even more of it.

“When my mom suggested making a video about rice, I was in. I love eating rice! Now that I know it’s grown here in the U.S. and in Texas, I’ll definitely look for *Grown in the USA* labels at the store. It’s so cool to have rice grown in my own state.”

As grand prize winner, Ellis will be awarded a \$5,000 scholarship from contest sponsor American Commodity Company. The \$3,000 second prize went to Simon Portillo Perez from California, and the third prize award of \$2,000 went to another Texas student, Aniya Misher Allison from El Paso. 

The winning videos can be seen on the USA Rice YouTube page (www.youtube.com/TheUSARiceFederation).



Grand prize winner Molly Ellis and her grandmother, Anne Miller.

SOCIAL MEDIA OUTREACH BUILDS ON HISTORIC RESULTS

BY DEBORAH WILLENBORG

ARLINGTON, VA — Having a strong online presence has been crucial since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Fortunately for USA Rice and its domestic promotions efforts, the organization has an ongoing partnership with FeedFeed, a digital network connecting people who love to cook, and recently completed a year-long social media campaign celebrating U.S.-grown rice using visual storytelling via Instagram, blog posts, and recipe videos.

FeedFeed selected four of their influencers to promote U.S. rice, each creating four unique and on-trend rice recipes accompanied by photography, a blog post, and an Instagram post for each recipe. These new influencer recipes were then included in FeedFeed’s weekly meal planners and on their site’s special page featuring USA Rice recipes, and also highlighted on IGTV through FeedFeed’s digital TV series.

“In late March, as the response to the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown resulted in changing consumer shopping and cooking habits, the overall recipe production strategy for this campaign was tweaked to incorporate more pantry staples and minimal steps to create more approachable recipes for new at-home cooks,” said Cameron Jacobs, USA Rice domestic promotion director.


The campaign’s final numbers are impressive! In all, 16 U.S.-grown rice recipes were developed, posted, and amplified by the network of influencers, FeedFeed, and USA Rice. Together, the recipe posts, regrams, blogs, and videos generated a new social media record of more than 31.7 million consumer impressions and 1,021,668 engagements.

“For two straight years USA Rice has been heavily engaged in the social conversation,

exposing a new consumer segment to U.S.-grown rice, reaching demographics like millennials, foodies, and conscientious consumers,” said Jacobs. “This program not only surpassed last year’s record-setting 31.6 million impressions, it more than doubled the engagements to more than one million which demonstrates how well our content and messaging is resonating.”

The collection of recipes also are available on the thinkrice.com recipe database: Crispy Pork Rice Salad, Mediterranean Brown Rice Salad, Purple Rice Coconut Pudding, Vegan Brown Rice Stuffing, Crab Fried Rice, Thai Peanut Crunch Rice Salad, Stir Fried Tomato Beef Rice Bowls, Japanese Curry, Beet Salad with Wild Rice, Chicken & Rice Soup, Roasted Squash with Purple Rice, Instant Pot Spanish Rice, Teriyaki Meatballs, Jasmine Rice Bibimbap, and Wild Rice Soup.

In addition to the immediate impact of the campaign, USA Rice retains the right to use and access all created recipes, videos, and photos.

“Through our ongoing partnership with FeedFeed, we are making tremendous progress connecting with U.S. consumers — our largest market. We’re excited about USA Rice’s evolution in the digital space and look forward to this ongoing collaboration,” Jacobs said. 



BACK TO BACK STORMS HIT RICE COUNTRY HARD

BY KANE WEBB

LOCATIONS IN LOUISIANA, TEXAS, ARKANSAS, MISSISSIPPI & MISSOURI — Mother Nature dealt mid-south rice country a one, two punch earlier this year when Hurricanes Laura and Delta blew through the area, giving residents a new reference point for weather severity and destruction.

In late August, the first storm made landfall on the Louisiana coast just south of Lake Charles, Louisiana. Fortunately, the port and the rail facility there were largely spared, but there was almost total devastation directly beneath the eye of the storm in Cameron and Calcasieu Parishes. Farmers in Vermillion, Jeff Davis, Allen, Beauregard, Evangeline, and Avoyelles Parishes dealt with flooding and power outages in the aftermath of the storm's strong winds and rain.

A majority of the southwest Louisiana first rice crop was out of the field prior to Laura's arrival, and post-storm recovery focused on shoring up operations against standing water, and regaining full capacity in the bins and drying facilities.

"The storm damage was considerable, especially in southwest Louisiana," said Bobby Hanks, CEO of Supreme Rice Mill in Crowley and chair of USA Rice. "Even with time to prepare, you can never lock down everything. Our immediate concern was to get power restored to farms and dryers to maintain the quality of what was harvested."

Laura had a minimal impact on the Texas rice crop. LG Raun, who farms near El Campo in Wharton County, reported that less than 5 percent of the rice in his area had not been harvested and they received no rain or wind from Laura. As in Louisiana, major power outages in the region impacted the ability to dry recently harvested rice. Unharvested rice in the eastern rice zone was lodged by the winds associated with the hurricane.

As Hurricane Laura traveled across Arkansas rice country, it brought an average of 3 inches of rain and winds that reached speeds of 55 mph.

Joe Mencer, in Lake Village, reported, "The wind was our real worry. My weather station in the field recorded gusts up to 44 miles per hour. Fortunately, our crop held up. We were harvesting rice the last three days ahead of the storm at higher moisture levels than we like in anticipation of high winds. The yields were good on what was harvested prior to the storm."

High winds also caused downed rice around Stuttgart and Pine Bluff. Some south Arkansas producers were able to get in the field and start harvesting early.

By the time the storm reached northeast Arkansas, Laura had added tornadoes to her repertoire. "On our farm in Newport we had tornadoes pop up around us and one tornado took out a field of corn and mangled one of our center pivots," said Jennifer James. "The storm actually caused more damage to our corn and beans than to our rice."

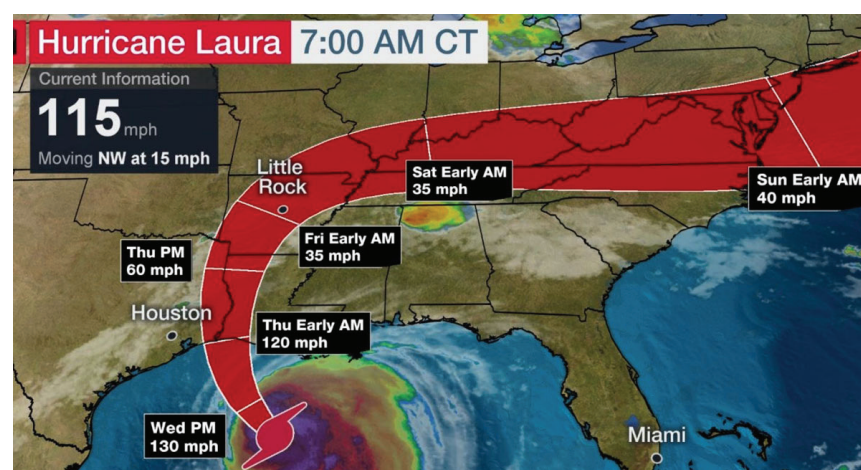
In Mississippi, Marvin Cochran in Washington County reported heavy wind and some rain but no significant damage. Kirk Satterfield in Bolivar County said they saw rain and strong winds, but that late planting and draining meant much of their rice was green, which helped it withstand the storm.

Reports of Laura's path through Missouri's Bootheel also were encouraging. "We were fortunate," said Rance Daniels, from Hornersville. "People I talked to had less than an inch or so of rain with no wind damage to speak of. Everyone here is pleased to have dodged the bullet of Laura."

Hurricane Delta Deja Vu

Less than six weeks later, in a nightmare situation, the record-breaking tenth named storm to strike the U.S. and the fourth to strike Louisiana, Hurricane Delta, cut a nearly identical path through the mid-south. Residents had only seen power returned to their homes and businesses for a few days before losing electricity again. Compromised structures suffered further damage, but one of the most devastating results was in the rice fields of southwest Louisiana where the ratoon crop that was ready for harvest was all but stripped away from the stalk.

Christian Richard and Allen McLain, both rice farmers in Vermilion parish, described the damage as "looking like a stripper header went through the crop." Delta also brought more rainfall to the area, causing more flooding, including amounts in excess of 12-13 inches in northeast Louisiana, where the rice harvest was nearing the final stretch to completion.



"Even with time to prepare, you can never lock down everything. Our immediate concern was to get power restored to farms and dryers to maintain the quality of what was harvested."

— BOBBY HANKS, CEO OF SUPREME RICE MILL IN CROWLEY AND CHAIR OF USA RICE

Hurricane Laura passed directly over rice country in the mid-south. Storm damage from Laura and then Hurricane Delta affected fields, equipment, grain bins, and milling facilities alike. Louisiana rice farmer Paul Johnson (far right) tours the aftermath.



Farmers Rice Mill, which has operated for more than 100 years just east of Lake Charles, was in the middle of Hurricane Laura repairs, and reported damage to newly replaced roofing, as well as having to replace temporary measures such as tarps and metal siding that were still in place from the first recovery efforts.

Excessive water from the relentless storms caused the most problems for farmers in Arkansas. Harvest there had begun but kept getting pushed back due to rain, wind, and soggy field conditions.

“Rice that has been blown on the ground from strong winds, called lodging, is time consuming and more expensive to harvest,” said Dr. Jarrod Hardke, state rice specialist at the Rice Research and Extension Center in Stuttgart. “Delays in harvesting mature rice reduces grain quality. And, finally, rutted fields effect the timing of next year’s crop by impeding early field work ahead of planting. It is a domino effect.”

Crop Update, Post Storms

The 2020 rice season in Louisiana will be one that will be remembered for many years to come.


“Hurricane Laura hit with about 95 percent of the harvest in southwest Louisiana complete and in the early stages in northeast Louisiana. Infrastructure and crop damage estimates by the AgCenter were 28 million dollars,” said Dustin Harrell, rice specialist at the Louisiana State University AgCenter’s Rice Research Station. “Hurricane Delta, arriving approximately six weeks later, caused another estimated 24 million dollars in

damages to the ratoon crop in southwest and the main crop in northeast Louisiana, which was delayed and reeling from the wet conditions, and lodged and shattered rice from the first storm.”

Overall yields for Louisiana will be difficult to estimate due to the early bumper crop coupled with the below average crop in northeast Louisiana and the ratoon losses due to the storms.

The end results in Arkansas and Missouri are more positive. Hardke said, “this year, the yield was average to perhaps slightly above average and the milling yield was above average.” Mississippi is also expecting higher yields, according to Bobby Golden, an agronomist with Mississippi State University.

Another positive result and actually something that never changes, no matter the weather, is the resiliency of the U.S. rice industry.

“We’re all in it together,” said Paul Johnson, who grows rice near Thornwell, Louisiana. “Communication and assistance between fellow growers, millers, and merchants helped coordinate access to generators, available storage, and equipment for repairs to those with resources and those in need. The outreach and support received was overwhelming and greatly appreciated.” 

Kane Webb is field director for USA Rice. He got help compiling this report from fellow field staffers Josh Hankins, Steve Linscombe, and Emily Woodall.

WORLDWIDE WEBINAR SERIES REACHES INTERNATIONAL MARKETS

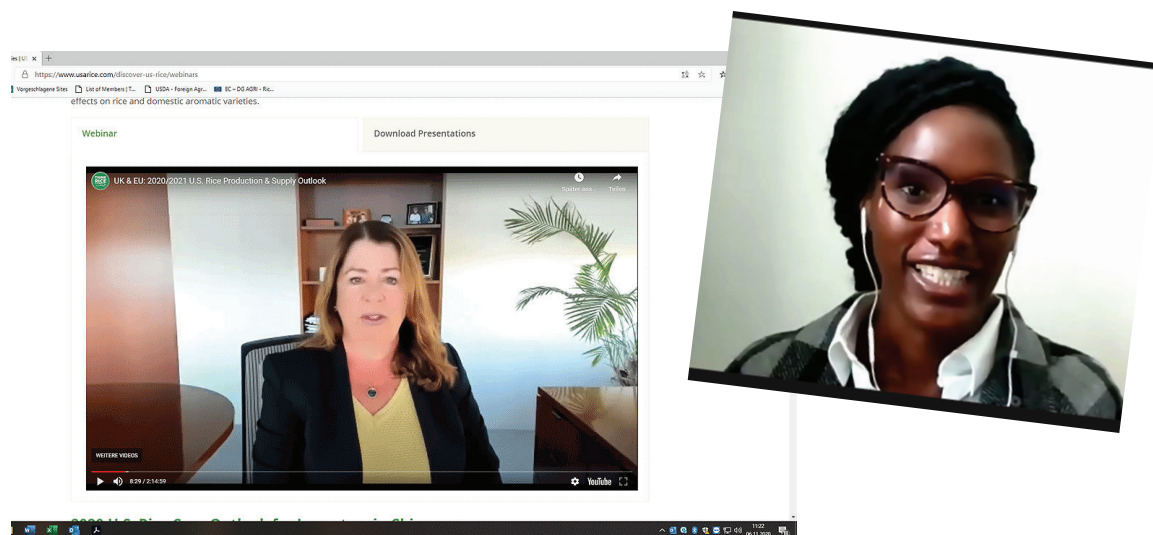
BY SARAH MORAN

ARLINGTON, VA — This fall, USA Rice hosted a series of webinars targeting importers in top U.S. rice export destinations to talk about the 2020/2021 U.S. rice crop including production and export outlook. Each webinar addressed a different industry issue, with sessions highlighting sustainability, food safety, and the nutritional aspects of rice.

“This webinar series is part of the USA Rice outreach to importers and users of U.S. rice abroad, given the restraints on face-to-face meetings,” said Dr. Steve Linscombe, director of The Rice Foundation and a former rice breeder. “The first webinar was the result of a listening tour we went on last year, meeting with importers in Latin America and hearing about the quality standards they require.”

Rice breeders from both public and private research facilities showcased rice varieties currently being developed specifically for Latin American consumers. Quality parameters including amylose, chalk content, and grain length were discussed as well as the milling quality, among other criteria.

The second webinar focused on China. Despite the 10 p.m. east coast start time, it was mid-morning in China and 176 people signed on. Additionally, USA Rice staff in Shanghai engaged with approximately 50 of the Chinese participants on WeChat, a Chinese instant messaging app. Presenters fielded questions on future U.S. rice shipments to China, whether U.S. rice will be available for purchase on e-commerce platforms, if there is a quota for U.S. rice, specific requirements for imports in China, can wild rice be imported into China, and many others.



USA Rice’s Betsy Ward (top left) and Asih Grigsby (top right) zoomed into all four trade webinars. An online cook-off (bottom) shows a side-by-side comparison of fortified rice and regular milled rice to demonstrate that there is almost no discernible difference in the final products.



“This webinar series is part of the USA Rice outreach to importers and users of U.S. rice abroad, given the restraints on face-to-face meetings.”


— STEVE LINSCOMBE, DIRECTOR OF THE RICE FOUNDATION
AND A FORMER RICE BREEDER

USA Rice President & CEO Betsy Ward welcomed the EU/UK and Swiss trade audience to the third session, saying, “Europe remains an important market for the U.S., but also one we hope to expand by strengthening existing relationships and building new ones.”

Webinar host Eszter Somogyi, USA Rice director of Europe, Middle East, and Africa, said: “We had great participation with more than 75 people logging in from all over Europe including the UK, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Spain, Poland, and Belgium, as well as several USA Rice members and Foreign Agricultural Service post representatives from the U.S. Department of Agriculture stationed across Europe and the U.S.”

A regularly scheduled, in-person workshop on fortified rice was moved online and became the final session in the webinar series. Fortified rice is a relatively new product used in global food assistance. It was introduced to the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) master commodity list about five years ago and has since grown to include more than 30,000 MT utilized annually by numerous agencies to target malnutrition and hunger.

USA Rice consultant Rebecca Bratter led the discussion on the usage patterns and technical developments of fortified rice, including shelf life and packaging, and also gave a live cooking demonstration showing the visual and taste aspects of fortified rice versus milled rice.

“This year has definitely had its challenges, but USA Rice is capitalizing on the fact that everyone has moved online to stay connected as it has helped us expand our outreach,” Ward said. “If you did not have the chance to join us live for this series, I would encourage you to access all four webinars through the USA Rice website (<http://www.usarice.com/discover-us-rice/webinars>) to hear how your industry continues to promote U.S.-grown rice abroad.” 

ADVERTORIAL

WHY IS THE S-TECH 1000X TRACK KIT MADE FOR RICE HARVESTING

Soucy has been invested in the rice industry from the very beginning of our journey in agriculture. We have listened closely to the needs of the rice farmers and have developed a system that addresses those needs. As we have an integrated approach, we can control the process of every component of manufacturing and we have used those resources to bring an all new perspective to our track system for combine.



The dynamics of rice farming can be quite difficult. Farming is always against budgets and timing. Planting in the spring on time with the unpredictability of weather conditions all the way through to the harvest is challenging. Spring rains, tropical storms, wind damage, muddy conditions, and blown down rice make for long days.

PERFORMANCE WITHOUT COMPROMISE

Soucy tracks are the industry standard and the S-TECH 1000X proves why. Combines are heavier than they have ever been. The S-TECH 1000X has the largest footprint on the market giving the greatest support and stability available. Getting combines stuck, pulling combines out and the damage it creates makes soil damage that lasts for years. Keeping the combine on top of the field, maintaining header stability, and preventing soil damage all goes to the bottom line of costs and productivity.



EASY MAINTENANCE WITH DIFFICULT SOIL TYPES

We did not stop with performance. The S-TECH 1000X was designed to be easy to use as well. The evolution of combine tracks has brought this system easily to the front of the line.

The S-TECH 1000X has an open frame design that keeps mud from accumulating that makes for easy cleaning. The frame design itself is shaped to allow mud to roll out and keep the internal components clear. Easy maintenance with difficult soil types was an imperative that had to be at the top of the list.

The wheels have oil bath with large, easy to see sight glasses that allow the operator to see at a glance what is happening. The oscillating tandems follow ground contours and make crossing levees effortless. Even the pivot points are sealed in oil.



TRACTION AND COMFORT

The journey continued with the design of the track itself. The need for traction and the need for comfort are usually not found in the same place but the rubber track addresses both. The track has two different length tread bars. The long tread bar is for traction, a need that rice farming makes very clear. The short bar between the long bars provide a bridge for the wheels to make less vibration and a better ride. The best of both worlds.

The future of rice farming will be one of capitalizing of innovation, increasing yields, and lowering costs. Ask any rice farmer running the S-TECH 1000X, there is no comparison, an investment that will pay dividends for years to come.

S-TECH 1000X
Track Systems for Combines

Visit soucy-track.com to learn more about this track systems and to find out if it is compatible with your combine.



Soucy

RICE CONSERVATION PROGRAM RENEWED FOR \$7M

BY EMILY WOODALL

LITTLE ROCK, AR — The year 2020 definitely brought its challenges, but area rice farmers finally got some good news with the recent announcement that the Mid-South Graduated Water Stewardship Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), led by USA Rice, has been renewed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) with a \$7 million award from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

“The 2018 Farm Bill allows USDA to renew worthy RCPP projects and the Rice Stewardship Partnership’s Mid-South project was an obvious candidate,” said Josh Hankins, the USA Rice field director who manages the Rice Stewardship Partnership. “This new funding will allow the Partnership to implement working lands conservation practices for rice producers in Missouri, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Louisiana.”

To date, Partnership program opportunities have focused on three core areas: water management, nutrient management, and winter habitat for wildlife. The renewed Graduated Water Stewardship RCPP will continue that focus.

“This Mid-South RCPP is one of two renewals landed by the Partnership,” said Scott Manley, director of conservation programs with Ducks Unlimited. “The other is “Improving Water Quality with Nutrient Management Conservation Practice 590” in south Louisiana.”

The sign-up timelines for these renewal projects have not been finalized but will likely take place at the end of 2021. That critical information will be shared as soon as it is available.

“The Graduated Water Stewardship RCPP project has been a model of successful collaboration between partners to maximize the delivery of conservation on the ground in the Mid-South,” said Mike Sullivan, Arkansas state conservationist with NRCS.

The rice industry’s working partnership with NRCS is supported by the following financial sponsors: National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Walmart Foundation, the Mosaic Company Foundation, Nestlé Purina PetCare, Chevron U.S.A., RiceTec, Entergy, Anheuser-Busch InBev, Freeport-McMoRan Foundation, the Irene W. and C.B. Pennington Foundation, BASF, American Rice, Inc. — Riviana Foods, Inc., the Joe W. and Dorothy Dorsett Brown Foundation, Delta Plastics, Corteva Agriscience, Cargill, Wells Fargo, Farmers Rice Milling Company, Horizon Ag, Turner’s Creek & Bombay Hook Farms, MacDon Industries, Riceland Foods, and Ducks Unlimited. [w-](#)

Emily Woodall is manager of rice conservation services, based out of Little Rock, where she performs weekly DIY COVID smell tests for her family by burning dinner.

Rice fields are irrigated with water that has graduated with advanced degrees in conservation and sustainability.



“This new funding will allow the Partnership to implement working lands conservation practices for rice producers in Missouri, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Louisiana.”

— JOSH HANKINS, USA RICE FIELD DIRECTOR



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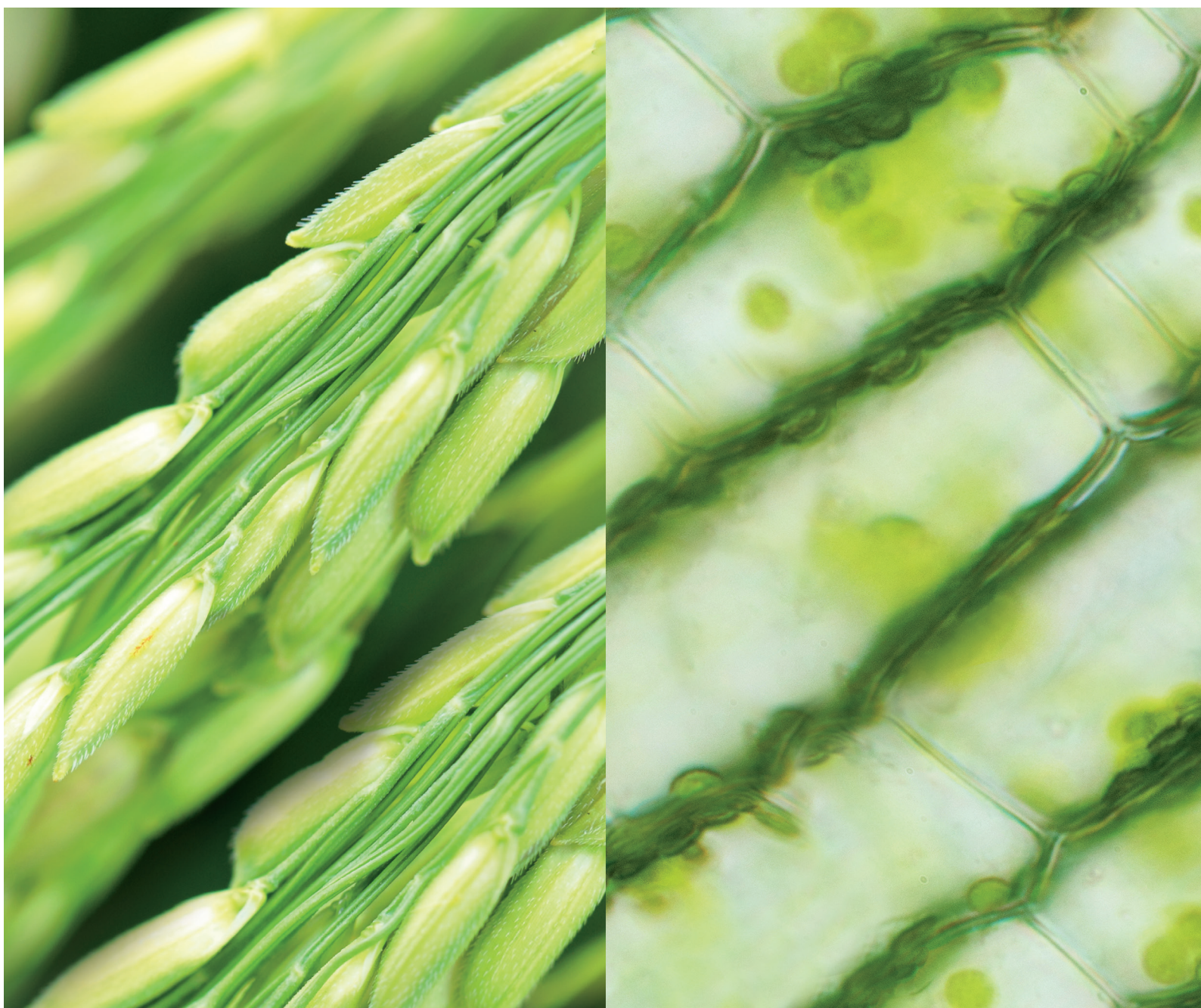


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