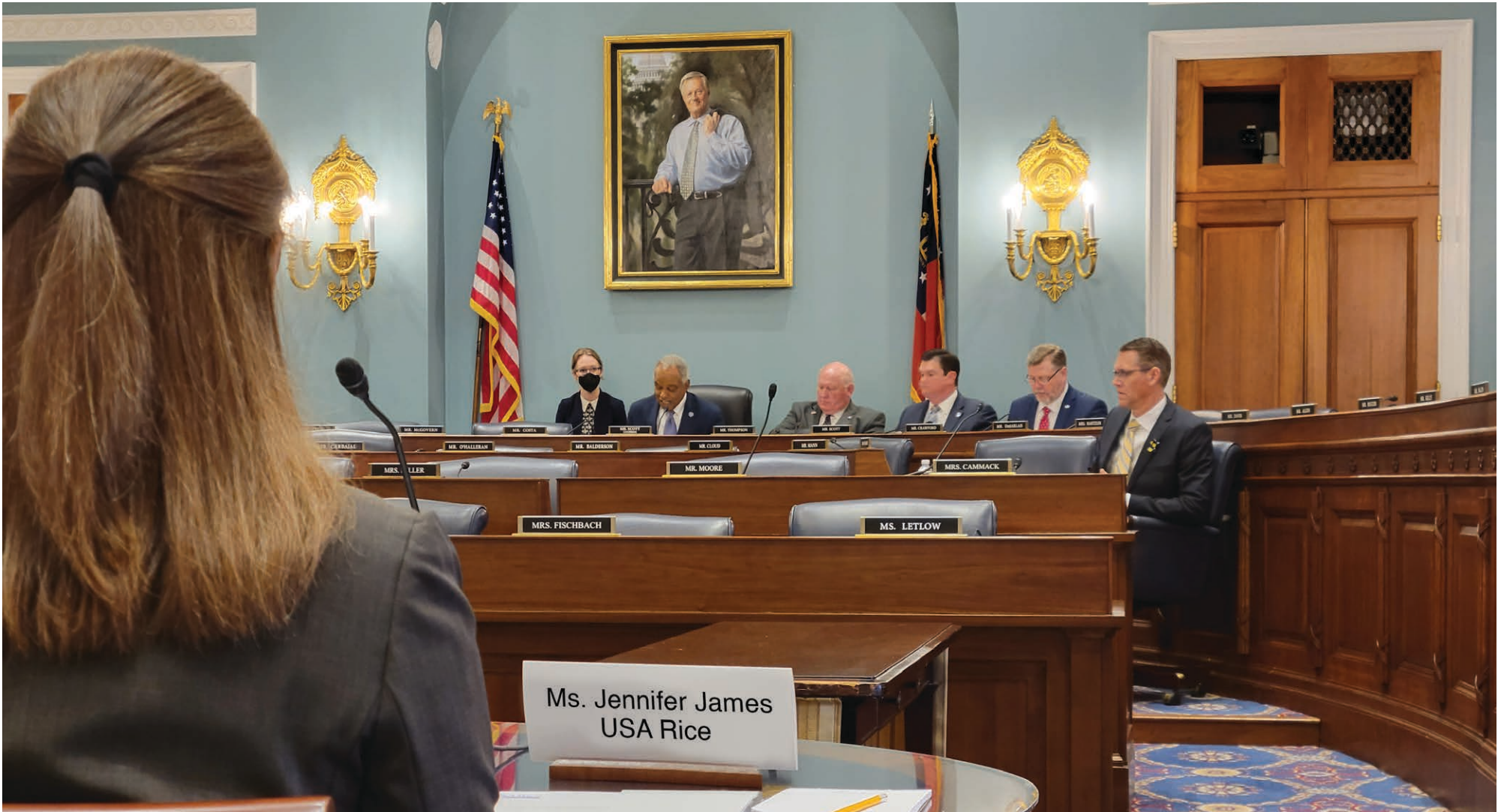
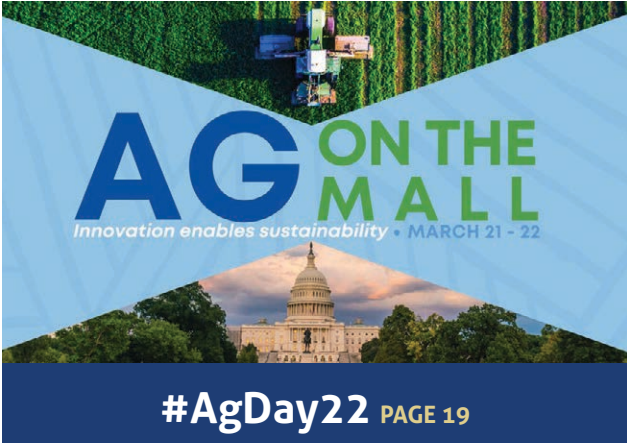


WHOLE GRAIN



CLAIMING RICE'S SEAT AT THE TABLE PAGE 14



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It's Tough Out There

BY BOBBY HANKS

CROWLEY, LA — There's a lot to take in in this issue of the *Whole Grain* — there always is because USA Rice is hard at work on behalf of every segment of the industry. You can read about a lot of our initiatives here and in the *USA Rice Daily*. You can also read about activities on our website, www.usarice.com, or our many social media accounts, including @usaricenews on Twitter. Our podcast, *The Rice Stuff*, takes deeper dives into all these issues, and you can go deeper still at the USA Rice Outlook Conference every December.

Two issues that have dominated our attention, and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future, are linked and they require U.S. government action.

The first is skyrocketing input costs. Supply chain problems and the Russian invasion of Ukraine have rocked the ag world, and while all are seeing increases in prices, rice is being disproportionately hit. According to the Agricultural and Food Policy Center (AFPC) at Texas A&M University, variable input costs for rice are up more than \$170 per acre over 2021.

There's often an assumption that with prices going up for inputs and transportation, the end product will also see a price increase. And for corn, cotton, soybeans, and wheat, that assumption is correct. For rice it is not. And that brings us to the second crisis.

India recently became the top rice producer and exporter in the world, exporting as much rice in 2020 and 2021 as the next four largest exporters combined. This year will likely be more of the same.

How are they doing it and why is it impacting us?

The Indian government has removed all the risk for India's rice farmers. They are covering input costs — seed and fertilizer — and guaranteeing a price floor. Farmers there would be crazy not to grow rice under this scenario.


By their own admission, India says they are violating their World Trade Organization (WTO) commitments. And we're quite confident they are underreporting anyway.

So, India has the ability and intention to flood the world market with their cheap rice, depressing global prices and hurting not just the U.S. rice industry, but the entire world's. I was pleased to see Australia, Brazil, Canada, the European Union, Japan, Paraguay, Thailand, and Uruguay all join the United States in voicing concerns about India at the WTO's Committee on Agriculture. Thailand! Imagine that.

The point is, our backs are once again up against the wall. It costs too much to produce our crops and we're not competing on a level playing field.

I know you are as frustrated as I am and you'll read in this issue about our recent interactions with the U.S. government — where we asked them to look at these soaring input costs and unfair trade practices that are hobbling us, as well as other important issues.

We'll keep pressing our government and hopefully you can hang on while we seek remedies that run the gamut from offsets for the more than \$500 million in losses America's rice farmers are expected to see this year, to a case against India at the WTO, and more.

Thanks for reading and for supporting our industry. 

Supply chain problems and the Russian invasion of Ukraine have rocked the ag world, and while all are seeing increases in prices, rice is being disproportionately hit.

USA Rice Chair Bobby Hanks leads the effort as the U.S. industry searches for answers to relentless challenges, both at home and abroad.



USARices

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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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CHALLENGES,
OPPORTUNITIES,
AND SOLUTIONS

BY BETSY WARD

ARLINGTON, VA — Like all of our *Whole Grain* issues, we cover a lot of ground here, but the focus is quite clearly on government affairs – a primary function for USA Rice.

The government touches so many parts of our lives — for better and sometimes for worse — it is crucial to have a strong voice in Washington. As the old adage goes, “if you don’t have a seat at the table, you could end up on the menu!”


As you’ll read here, we are working hard to keep that seat, from meeting with lawmakers and policymakers during our farmers fly-in (page 14) to pushing the government to act on skyrocketing input costs (page 16), and unfair trade practices (page 8).

Though those realities are dire, there are positive developments here too. We received good news on the international trade front with the UK (page 7) and Colombia (page 9), and we’re busy promoting the great story that is U.S. rice on social media (page 21), at events in person (page 19), and through a new animated short (page 20).

As always, I hope you find this issue informative and helpful, and feel a sense of pride knowing you have an excellent team in Washington, around the country, and around the world working for you every day.

I want to remind you that this is our second all-digital issue of the *Whole Grain* so you’ll see live links in several stories as well as the ads. Click-through to go straight to source material whether it’s the [Farm Credit website](#), a [restaurant menu](#) featuring U.S. rice, or the [slate of winning entries](#) from the National Rice Month Scholarship Video Contest.

Please forward this publication to anyone in the rice industry or adjacent to the rice industry – this information and our advocacy is for all. So too should you subscribe to the *USA Rice Daily* for weekday updates of importance to our industry, and listen and subscribe to our podcast, *The Rice Stuff*, available online and wherever you get your podcasts.

I know things are tough, but we’re here for you and we won’t stop fighting for you. 

The government touches so many parts of our lives — for better and sometimes for worse — it is crucial to have a strong voice in Washington.

#WeStandWithUkraine

BY JESICA KINCAID


ARLINGTON, VA — The last week of March, several USA Rice members worked together to deliver a shipment of U.S.-grown rice to help feed the people of Ukraine. The extraordinary effort came together as the industry saw the urgent need facing Ukrainian people, who are experiencing unprecedented food insecurity as a result of the latest Russian invasion that began on February 24.

Taking advantage of rice already on the European continent, three USA Rice members – Sun Valley Rice, Farmers’ Rice Cooperative, and Kennedy Rice Mill – generously gifted 20 metric tons of U.S. Calrose rice. In partnership with freight forwarders in the United Kingdom and the European Union, and Megasnab, an importer in Ukraine, that rice was trucked out to help feed the Ukrainian people.

Since the war began more than 10 million Ukrainians have been displaced, and millions more continue living in cities under constant bombardment. According to Reuters, property damage is estimated to exceed \$565 billion, including a great deal of infrastructure that has been destroyed, cutting off supply lines, making food and water scarce in many parts of the country. As a result, the need for direct food assistance will only continue to grow.

“We could not in good conscience watch as innocent people were being killed, starved, and driven from their homes. We had rice in position, and though it was destined for other customers, we agreed it was urgently needed in Ukraine. And we are thankful our customers understood and agreed,” said Ken LaGrande, CEO of Sun Valley Rice; Meryl Kennedy, CEO of Kennedy Rice Mill; and Rick Rhody, CEO of Farmers’ Rice Cooperative, in a joint statement.

“The U.S. rice industry has always been proud of our long record of helping those in need through international food assistance,” said USA Rice President & CEO Betsy Ward. “What is taking place in Ukraine is unprecedented, and we stand ready to further assist and continue to be in contact with our U.S. government and private voluntary organization (PVO) partners to find the best ways to do so.”

Ward added that working with the United Nations’ World Food Programme (WFP) is an excellent way to ensure supplies are getting to the people who need them and she encouraged rice companies to register as goods and services providers with [WFP’s supply chain division](#). 

Jesica Kincaid is the USA Rice senior manager for international trade policy.

“We could not in good conscience watch as innocent people were being killed, starved, and driven from their homes. We had rice in position, and though it was destined for other customers, we agreed it was urgently needed in Ukraine. ”



GIFTED BY
SUN VALLEY RICE, KENNEDY RICE MILL,
FARMERS RICE COOPERATIVE, B2L CARGO CARE,
RBF CARGO CARE

#WE STAND WITH UKRAINE

TEX-MEX CHAIN ON THE BORDER PROUDLY SERVES U.S. RICE

BY CAMERON JACOBS

ARLINGTON, VA — USA Rice recently kicked off a new promotional foodservice partnership with On the Border Mexican Grill & Cantina, a national dining chain. After meeting with the leaders of their culinary and purchasing teams to understand On the Border's goals and how USA Rice could best support the operation, the organization is providing culinary and marketing support to On the Border (OTB) and in turn the restaurant chain has added a callout for U.S.-grown rice to their menus that feature the industry's "Grown in the USA" (GITUSA) logo.

Starting the first week in February, the GITUSA logo was printed on [Page Ten of every menu](#) for the chain's more than 120 locations, positioned next to the two signature sides of Mexican Rice and Cilantro Lime Rice, both made with U.S.-grown long grain rice.

"Rice is an important part of many food cultures, and this is no different in Tex-Mex cuisine. It is a staple component of almost every dish we serve at On the Border," said Daniel Camp, OTB senior director of culinary. "We proudly source U.S.-grown rice because of its high quality, cooking characteristics, and the fact that we are able to support the local economy as well. We are now featuring the Grown in the USA logo on our menus to help bring this to the attention of our guests and look forward to continuing to offer high quality U.S. rice products to our guests in the future."

In addition to the U.S.-grown rice menu callout, USA Rice hosted a menu ideation session for the OTB culinary team where the USA Rice team of R&D chefs developed and presented seven recipe concepts for a new rice option that the chain plans to add to their offerings. OTB also will promote U.S.-grown rice through a series of social posts highlighting their use of domestic rice and the importance of choosing U.S.-grown.

"This partnership is a great opportunity to get the word out on U.S.-grown rice and we are thrilled to be working with an established brand like On the Border."

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



"This partnership is a great opportunity to get the word out on U.S.-grown rice and we are thrilled to be working with an established brand like On the Border," said Robbie Trahan, Louisiana rice miller and chair of the USA Rice Domestic Promotion Committee. "We anticipate this ongoing collaboration adding new U.S.-grown rice options to OTB offerings, but we are also going to have eaters across the country seeing the Grown in the USA logo featured on all their menus. That kind of exposure for the GITUSA logo is tremendous and will help consumers make the connection that it stands for the highest quality and safest rice available."

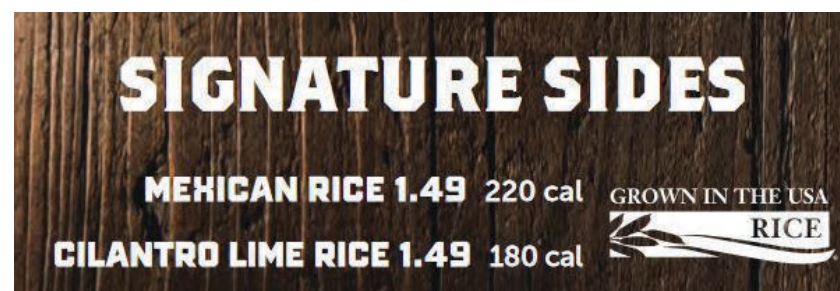
The partnership is a result of the USA Rice Domestic Promotion Chain Engagement Program that works to solve specific marketing or back of house (BOH) needs through USA Rice foodservice partner offerings in exchange for U.S.-grown rice recognition on marketing materials and restaurant communications.

Partner offerings include marketing support (e.g., social content and collaboration, custom point of sale materials, customer research, trend webinars), industry research (rice consumption data, sustainability report), operator learning tools (training videos, guides, foodservice playbooks), culinary support (menu ideation, BOH training and custom support), and the Foodservice Farm & Mill Tour.

On the Border Mexican Grill & Cantina is a forty-year-old Tex-Mex casual dining chain based out of Irving, Texas, with more than 120 locations across the country and South Korea. Each week, OTB feeds on average 246,000 consumers and has rice served with every entrée. [W3](#)

Visit the [OTB website](#) to find the location nearest you.

Outside of work, USA Rice Director of Domestic Promotion Cameron Jacobs enjoys watching his local sports teams (mostly lose), and has recently tried to understand exactly what koji is.



USTR ONBOARDS WTO EXPERTS PAGÁN AND DURKIN, CHIEF AG NEGOTIATOR NOMINEE TREVINO WITHDRAWN

BY PETER BACHMANN

WASHINGTON, DC — Updates from the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) are aplenty as several key vacancies responsible for World Trade Organization (WTO) interaction were filled in March and a nominee for a critical political position was withdrawn from consideration.

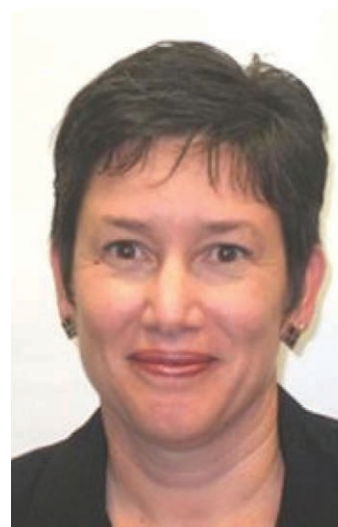
On March 10, María Pagán was confirmed as the U.S. Ambassador to the WTO by the U.S. Senate after a monthslong hold was placed on her and another USTR nominee. She is a deputy to USTR Ambassador Katherine Tai and she's chiefly responsible for negotiating at the WTO on behalf of the U.S. Pagán has been with USTR since 2003 and has twice served as the acting USTR during presidential transitions. She is an experienced trade negotiator, having served as lead lawyer for the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement talks. She has also worked in areas including services, government procurement, and WTO disputes.

"One coalition that we hope Ambassador Pagán will quickly assemble once she gets to Geneva is a bloc in support of meaningful agricultural reforms and another to pursue long overdue action against India's domestic supports on rice," said Bobby Hanks, Louisiana rice miller and chair of USA Rice and the USA Rice International Trade Policy Committee.

The same week, Andrea Durkin was named the Assistant USTR for WTO and Multilateral Affairs, a career position that is also responsible for WTO negotiations and serving as the U.S. liaison to international organizations and coalitions, similar to Pagán's role. Durkin previously worked at USTR from 2001 to 2004, serving as director for multilateral trade and environment policy and head of Central America. In these roles, she oversaw the launch of free trade agreement negotiations with Panama and the Dominican Republic. Durkin also worked for the International Trade Administration, where she led sectoral initiatives at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, as well as the Commerce Department.


"While neither of these new leaders at USTR have agriculture-specific portfolios, both of them will be key in representing agricultural interests at the WTO and in future trade negotiations while closely working with USTR's Agricultural Office," said Hanks. "USA Rice is pleased to have two experienced people take on these roles at such a critical time. They should have no problem hitting the ground running."

In mid-March, USTR's nominee for Chief Ag Negotiator, Elaine Trevino, was withdrawn from consideration by the Biden Administration for unknown reasons. Trevino was nominated for the position in September 2021 but a Senate Finance Committee confirmation hearing was



USTR veterans María Pagán (left) and Andrea Durkin have stepped into key positions dealing with the World Trade Organization (WTO).

never scheduled. As of publication, the Administration has yet to nominate a new candidate for the role.

"It seems that Elaine will land elsewhere within the Administration to work on supply chain issues, which we definitely need," said Hanks. "However, I can't stress enough how important it is that the President nominate both a USDA Under Secretary for Trade and Agricultural Affairs and the USTR Chief Agriculture Negotiator, as soon as possible." 

USA Rice VP of International Trade Peter Bachmann is responsible for knocking down trade barriers in current and future markets for U.S. rice across the globe and helping to level the global playing field for U.S. exporters.

"While neither of these new leaders at USTR have agriculture-specific portfolios, both of them will be key in representing agricultural interests at the WTO and in future trade negotiations while closely working with USTR's Agricultural Office."

— BOBBY HANKS, RICE MILLER AND CHAIR OF USA RICE AND THE USA RICE INTERNATIONAL TRADE POLICY COMMITTEE

BIDEN ADMIN ANNOUNCES UK RETALIATORY DUTIES ON U.S. RICE TO BE LIFTED ON JUNE 1

BY PETER BACHMANN

BALTIMORE, MD — In mid-March, U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai met here with her British counterpart, Secretary of State for International Trade Anne-Marie Trevelyan to hold a dialogue around strengthening the U.S.-UK trade relationship. Prior to the roundtable held with Chamber of Commerce and union representatives, the two toured the Port of Baltimore.

“It has never been more important for us to work to strengthen our economic ties with our closest allies – like the United Kingdom,” said Ambassador Tai. “In that spirit, Secretary Trevelyan and I, along with our respective staffs, will seek to identify concrete steps to advance the U.S.-UK trade relationship.”

Secretary Trevelyan also met with U.S. Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo to further negotiations towards the removal of the U.S. Section 232 tariffs on steel and aluminum imports from the UK. Those tariffs were met with retaliatory tariffs on U.S. exports into the UK, including a 25 percent duty on all milled and broken rice shipped since June 2018.

Following those meetings, the Biden Administration announced that a deal was reached to remove tariffs on both sides of the Atlantic on June 1, 2022. A move that is supported by both USA Rice and the UK Rice Association.

“The U.S. rice industry applauds the Biden Administration for reaching a deal with the UK to bring these retaliatory tariffs to an end soon,” said USA Rice President & CEO Betsy Ward. “Our rice exports have been unnecessarily caught in the crossfire of the steel and aluminum trade wars for nearly four years, impacting decades of business relations with our customers in Europe. With rising inflation, skyrocketing input costs, and uncertainty all around us, the lifting of this burden is welcome news. We believe this will help pave the road for U.S.-UK Free Trade Agreement negotiations to restart and further deepen our trans-Atlantic relationship.”

Currently, U.S. rice has access to the UK market through a limited duty-free milled rice quota or outside the quota, where it’s subject to Most Favored Nation tariffs. A comprehensive Free Trade Agreement with the UK would provide an opportunity to achieve duty-free and quota-free access for U.S. rice exports. Per capita consumption of rice is growing in the UK, a market that eats but does not grow any rice, and the U.S. has a strong existing customer base that would benefit from freer trade.

“We are delighted that this dispute has been brought to a conclusion,” said Alex Waugh, director of the UK Rice Association. “Through flexible use of brown rice imports milled in the UK we have been able to maintain supplies to key customers for U.S. rice in Britain, which will help now that normal trading relationships have been restored. We look forward to the further opportunities that will develop as we deepen our trade partnership in the coming years.”

Exports of U.S. milled rice to the UK have suffered over the last four years with just minimal tonnage flowing through the U.S. country-specific quota, operated through the Association for the Administration of Rice Quotas, Inc. U.S. sales in recent years mostly ranged between 20,000 and 30,000 metric tons of primarily brown rice, entering at a lower duty and without a retaliatory tariff. The next UK quota auction for July 2022 shipments is scheduled for May 5.

The removal of the retaliatory tariffs for U.S. rice is the second in the last several months, following the January 1, 2022, lifting of extra tariffs for shipments bound for the European Union. Turkey and China are the remaining markets with a 25 percent retaliatory duty for imports of U.S. rice. Unfortunately, there are no signs of interest by the Administration to engage in talks to remove those tariffs. [W3](#)



INDIA'S RICE SUBSIDIES FRUSTRATE CONGRESS, INSIST ON WTO ACTION BY USTR

BY PETER BACHMANN

WASHINGTON, DC — Rice and wheat state Members of Congress were busy over the winter, rallying 18 U.S. Senators for a [letter](#) to the Biden Administration in December and 28 Members of the U.S. House of Representatives for a companion [letter](#) in January.

The letters, addressed to U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai and Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, were led by Reps. Rick Crawford (R-AR), Tracey Mann (R-KS), and Senator John Boozman (R-AR), expressing support for a dispute settlement case at the World Trade Organization (WTO) regarding India's domestic supports for rice and wheat production.

"This significant showing of bicameral support for the Administration to initiate a WTO case against India has been years in the making," said USA Rice President & CEO Betsy Ward. "If left unchecked, the Indian export market will continue to grow at an uncontrollable rate and threaten the viability of rice and wheat producers throughout the world."

Farmers across the world are being slammed by fertilizer prices and supply chain delays, but farmers in India won't feel a thing. The Indian government announced that they will increase subsidies to fertilizer companies this year, for the first time exceeding \$20 billion in support. This will ensure that Indian rice and wheat exports can continue to undercut the rest of the world as they insulate themselves from fluctuations in input costs.


"We commend these Members of Congress for leading these letters and for the impressive showing of support they rallied for our cause," said Bobby Hanks, Louisiana rice miller and chair of USA Rice and the USA Rice International Trade Policy Committee. "Momentum is building not just here in the U.S., but in all of the markets impacted by trade distortion stemming from India."

Hanks continued: "India is a major part of the world economy, but that doesn't give them a pass to skirt around the rules that they agreed to when joining the WTO. It also means they don't get to hold all of the WTO reforms on the table hostage until they secure permanent public stockholding allowances. This selfish behavior is not in the spirit of the WTO and as a result they'll be left alone on an island."

In addition to the letters, two rice-state Members of Congress turned the spotlight on India during hearings in late March with Ambassador Tai while she presented the President's 2022 trade agenda. Rep. Jason Smith (R-MO), directing comments to Ambassador Tai during a House Ways and Means Committee hearing said: "U.S. rice depends on a strong export market, but with India's sheer export volume they have nearly full control over world prices, and as long as India keeps their finger on the scale, heavily subsidizing their rice industry from seed to the ship, U.S. [rice] producers cannot compete."



The following day, during a Senate Finance Committee hearing, Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-LA) remarked to Ambassador Tai during his line of questioning: "[India] heavily subsidizes their rice, from even before the seed is planted, and our [rice] folks are competing against something which is being sold below cost because of heavy subsidies."

Following the hearings, Hanks said: "It is important to note that the USTR Ambassador is not often called up to Capitol Hill for Congressional hearings, so every minute she spends on the record and in that spotlight is valuable. During these hearings, Members of Congress on these committees get just five minutes to make remarks, so the fact that Congressman Smith and Senator Cassidy prioritized rice is much appreciated by our industry." 

"If left unchecked, the Indian export market will continue to grow at an uncontrollable rate and threaten the viability of rice and wheat producers throughout the world."

— BETSY WARD, USA RICE PRESIDENT & CEO

DEMAND FOR U.S. RICE IN COLOMBIA IS BACK

BY PETER BACHMANN

BOGOTA, COLOMBIA — In January, the entity that oversees the sales and distribution of Colombian import certificates for U.S. rice, Colombia Rice Export Quota, Inc. (COL-RICE), held the largest of their three quota auctions for 2022. A total of 85,913 metric tons (MT) milled rice equivalent of U.S. rice quota was made available to the market, ultimately providing an opportunity for quota holders in the U.S. to ship paddy, brown, milled, or broken rice duty-free, as long as it clears Colombian customs by June 30, 2022.

With a record Colombian rice crop in 2021 and inflated food prices, demand in Colombia sank for the first time since the signing of the Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement (TPA) in 2012, leading to just 6 percent of the annual U.S. tariff rate quota being subscribed.


“As late as last fall, we expected the demand for imported rice in Colombia to remain low, until we heard that Colombia had overstated their stocks by a significant amount, leading to creation of demand prior to the recent auction,” said Michael Rue, California rice producer and alternating chair of the COL-RICE Board of Directors. “If the January auction serves as a barometer for the 2022 demand in Colombia, I’d say that it appears to be back for now. When you look at our top export markets for 2021, it is unusual to see that Colombia had disappeared after so many years of market growth, but we have strong relationships with our customers there and are glad to see that they’re picking back up as a viable market this year.”

The January auction saw 85,913 MT of import licenses awarded, remarkably 100 percent of what was available. There will be two more U.S. rice auctions this year: 17,834 MT on June 2 and 18,939 MT on October 6 for delivery later this year.

Since the signing of the TPA and implementation in 2012, the U.S. has had access to an annually increasing duty-free quota for those who are awarded import certificates in COL-RICE auctions. Proceeds of the auctions are split between the U.S. and Colombian rice industries, with more than \$86 million contributing to rice research across the six rice-growing states to date.

For U.S. rice entering Colombia outside the quota, the duty decreases annually, from 80 percent at inception to 49.2 percent this year. Despite that out-of-quota duty,

the March 31 USDA Export Sales Report reflected 142,000 MT of rough rice in the combined outstanding sales/accumulated exports category and 6,000 MT of outstanding milled rice sales for this marketing year. On a milled rice equivalent basis, that translates to roughly 105,000 MT meaning that approximately 20,000 MT paid the out-of-duty quota. The duty will eventually phase-out in 2030 and U.S. rice will be able to enter Colombia duty-free and without purchasing import certificates.

The U.S. ships primarily long grain rice to Colombia in both paddy and milled forms and has seen some recent market growth for California medium grain rice used for sushi and other international cuisines. 



2021 USA RICE OUTLOOK CONFERENCE PHOTO GALLERY

NEW ORLEANS, LA — After a two-year hiatus, hundreds of rice-minded folks came together for the 2021 USA Rice Outlook Conference, the largest rice conference in the United States, to talk shop, get some work done, and have some well-earned fun. Gathering together face-to-face to share ideas, examine current industry trends, learn from experts, and celebrate the excellence in our industry has always been invaluable, and we're so grateful we were able to make it happen once again. [WGA](#)





9



12



13



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14



15



16



11

1. Headed for the Exhibit Hall where all the Outlook action is.
2. Keynote speaker Dan Gardner.
3. Dr. Tim Walker, with Horizon Ag, emcees the Annual Awards Luncheon.
4. All your questions get answered at the Registration Center.
5. Nicole Montna Van Vleck, the 2021 Rice Farmer of the Year, congratulates Distinguished Conservation Award Winner Jeff Durand.
6. Kent Wiley (center) and the Satterfields are happy to be in New Orleans.
7. It was tough to find a seat at jam-packed breakout sessions.
8. Dr. Jarrod Hardke delivers the Arkansas state report.
9. After being postponed a year, conference attendees have a lot of catching up to do.
10. Arkansas River Rice Mill owner PJ Haynie (left) shows an interest in John Deere.
11. 2021 Rice Industry Award recipient Dr. Qiming Shao (left) shares research insights.
12. Jeremy Jones and Jonathan Hobbes reminisce about their Rice Leadership Program experiences.
13. USA Rice President & CEO Betsy Ward (left) and 2021 PAC Award Winner Chris Crutchfield.
14. A delegation from the Powell Group steps up to receive the 2021 USA Rice Sustainability Award.
15. A meeting of the minds on the show floor.
16. A panel of economists report on rising farm input costs.

SCHOLARSHIP WINNER TURNS RICE INTO ART

BY LESLEY DIXON

ARLINGTON, VA — Every year, thanks to the generous support of the American Commodity Company, USA Rice awards \$15,000 to young people from the six rice-growing states who use video to tell a unique story about rice. The 2021 grand prize scholarship winner, Josefine Sedler, used rice as art to create her award-winning video, “California Rice & Wildlife,” that explores some of the many creatures sustained by the habitat rice fields provide in her home state.

Sedler employed stop-motion animation to construct intricately textured portraits of animals using only grains of rice in a wide variety of colors, lengths, and shapes; a rainbow of earthy tones that transform into the dappled wings of a bird before the viewer’s eyes.

“I’ve always loved arts and crafts,” said Sedler, a high school senior from Oxnard, California. “I love to draw, so it wasn’t entirely new. I’ve never used rice before, but when I was looking for a topic for my video, I knew I wanted to use art, and since it’s all about rice it just made sense to make the pictures out of rice.” The mosaic style of art she used was also new territory for her.

As Josefine weaves a voice-over narrative about the mutually beneficial relationship between rice farms and wildlife, portraits of a snowy plover, a black-necked stilt, a snowy egret, a long-billed curlew, and a deer mouse materialize onscreen. Each of the mosaics took between 45 minutes to an hour to make and film, with the exception of the final long-billed curlew, which was more labor intensive. Sedler used a GoPro and a camera stand – made from PVC pipe bent with a heat gun – that she designed and constructed herself.

Participating in the contest made Sedler consider and appreciate the impact of the rice she grew up eating daily at home, including in her favorite dish: her mother’s rice with mole. It also gave her a deeper perspective on the importance of rice farms in an environmental sense.



NRM Scholarship Grand Prize Winner Josefine Sedler is taking her considerable talents to Thomas Aquinas College in Ventura, California, this fall.

“... when I was looking for a topic for my video, I knew I wanted to use art, and since it’s all about rice it just made sense to make the pictures out of rice.”

“I loved the idea that we can have something that’s beneficial for us and for our wildlife at the same time,” said Sedler on [Episode 35](#) of *The Rice Stuff* podcast. “So instead of having a scenario where it’s either us or them, instead we have us AND them. We’re kind of helping each other out in a way, so we both get what we need. That’s something I really appreciate about what our rice farmers are doing.”

California student and vegan athlete Asjia Roberson took second place for an inspiring video on how U.S. rice is an integral part of her training routine. Her title says it all: “Winning With Rice!” Third place went to Mallory Gilbertson from Mississippi for her video, “Life Is Like A Bag Of Rice,” a parody of the movie “Forrest Gump.”

The top three videos were screened at the 2021 USA Rice Outlook Conference in New Orleans last December. These, and Honorable Mention videos from students in Arkansas, California, and Missouri, can be viewed on the [USA Rice YouTube](#) page. [WE](#)

USA Rice Staff Writer Lesley Dixon lives in Austin, Texas, with her husband and cat, as well as occasional hawks, owls, possums, deer, coyotes, raccoons, and anole lizards in the backyard. That would make a colorful rice mosaic!

2021 USA RICE OUTLOOK CONFERENCE HONOREES VISIT *THE RICE STUFF* PODCAST

BY DEBORAH WILLENBORG


ARLINGTON, VA — Every industry has core leaders who make countless sacrifices to advance their industry. Often unsung, these heroes give of themselves, push the envelope, and seek to leave their world better than it was when they arrived on the scene. Fortunately for those dedicated people in the rice industry, we sing their songs quite a bit.

We did so at the annual Rice Awards Luncheon at the USA Rice Outlook Conference last December and we've done it again on [Episode 35](#) of *The Rice Stuff* podcast. Honorees from 2021 joined show hosts Michael Klein and Lesley Dixon to share their amazing stories of resilience and dedication.

2021 Rice Farmer of the Year Nicole Montna Van Vleck explained how she turned a love of public policy into the prestigious recognition, while 2021 Rice Industry Award recipient Dr. Qiming Shao shared differences he has observed in the Chinese rice research community where he began his career and the U.S. rice industry he has called home for many decades. Dr. Kent McKenzie, the recipient of the 2021 Rice Lifetime Achievement Award, also generously shared time-tested words of wisdom for anyone in the industry.

Also joining the podcast was the grand prize winner of the National Rice Month (NRM) Video Scholarship Contest, Josefine Sedler of Oxnard, California.

The Rice Awards are sponsored by Rice Farming Magazine, Horizon Ag, and USA Rice. The NRM Scholarship contest is sponsored by American Commodity Company.

New episodes of *The Rice Stuff* are published twice each month on Tuesdays and can be found on Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Spotify, and Stitcher. All episodes and additional information can be found on the podcast's dedicated website at thericestuffpodcast.com. The site includes a "Podcast 101" section on the "About" page for people new to the medium and a means to reach out to the show hosts and guests via the "Talk to Us" button. 

Deborah Willenborg, USA Rice director of marketing & communications, is a faithful listener to The Rice Stuff during her morning workout and might see a vast improvement in her physique if the podcast were broadcast twice a day rather than twice a month.

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Every industry
has core
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advance their
industry.

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The 2021 Rice Award Winners (from left): Rice Farmer of the Year, Nicole Montna Van Vleck; Rice Industry Award, Dr. Qiming Shao; and Rice Lifetime Achievement Award, Dr. Kent MacKenzie. (photos by Vicky Boyd)

FARMERS FLY-IN TO DC TO ADVOCATE FOR U.S. RICE INTERESTS

BY JOSIE MCLAURIN

WASHINGTON, DC — Teams of rice farmers spread out across Capitol Hill in early March meeting with lawmakers and key staff to share industry concerns and priorities as preparations for the 2023 Farm Bill get underway.

“We had excellent participation in our fly-in, our first in-person DC meetings in about two years,” said Kirk Satterfield, a Mississippi rice farmer and chair of the USA Rice Farmers Board of Directors. “It was good to get back into the swing of things, and finally see our Members of Congress, and each other, face-to-face once again.”

Throughout the week, USA Rice members met with their respective state Congressional delegations and attended fundraising events for Members of Congress who support the rice industry. Satterfield said runaway input costs, access to skilled workers, and trade and regulatory uncertainty were dominant issues at these meetings.

The USA Rice teams heard presentations on the upcoming Farm Bill by staff from both the Senate and House Agriculture Committees, and met with U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Production and Conservation Under Secretary Robert Bonnie and Environmental Protection Agency Senior Agriculture Advisor Rod Snyder.

“It’s important that we continue to build upon relationships with legislators and executive branch officials, and this year especially, we made sure to express our appreciation for a strong farm safety net that has been essential for keeping many farmers financially afloat,” Satterfield said. “I appreciate all our members who made the trip to Washington and the Members of Congress and their staffs who took time to meet with us and hear our concerns. It won’t be the last they hear from us, but I’m confident we can work together to achieve our mutual goals.”

USA Rice has scheduled a trade-focused fly-in in May. [WG](#)

Josie McLaurin, USA Rice manager of government affairs, interned at USA Rice in 2018 while a student at Mississippi State University.

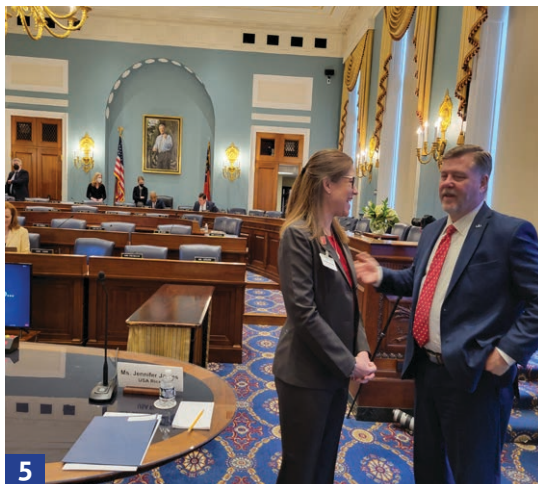


1. The delegation from the Magnolia State at the U.S. Capitol.
2. Rep. Julia Letlow (pink jacket) has an informal meeting with members from her home state of Louisiana.
3. U.S. rice farmers make the case for rice to USDA Under Secretary Robert Bonnie (left).
4. USA Rice President & CEO Betsy Ward greets EPA Ag Advisor Rod Snyder.
5. Rep. Rick Crawford and farmer Jennifer James get caught up on all the news from Arkansas before a Farm Bill hearing got underway.



CLASS TRIP TO DC PROVIDES NEW PERSPECTIVE ON ADVOCACY

BY MICHAEL DURAND



WASHINGTON, DC — In late February, the time had come to embark on another journey with the Rice Leadership Development Class and I was looking forward to getting together with the guys again. During this session we also were scheduled to meet up with members of the USA Rice Farm Policy Task Force to be included in fly-in activities on Capitol Hill.

My fellow class members who made the trip to Washington were Austin Davis, from Shaw, Mississippi; Austin Littleton, Parma, Missouri; Matthew Morris, Carlisle, Arkansas; and Justin Nix, Maurice, Louisiana.


Our first stop was USA Rice headquarters in Arlington, Virginia, where we got a complete overview of the organization's day-to-day operations that gave me a deeper understanding of the importance of USA Rice. They are really the central driving force of this industry, promoting our products both domestically and globally, working to not only enforce the imports but also improving and expanding the export markets. I realize now what a strong voice they are, advocating for the rice industry in Washington.

The first thing Monday morning, we met with staff from both the Senate and House Agriculture Committees and officials from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Then we walked to the Senate building for a tour of the Senate Agriculture Committee hearing room and discussions with staff members there. Later that afternoon we attended fundraisers for Representative David Scott (D-GA), chair of the House Ag Committee, and Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), chair of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Tuesday we met with Senator John Boozman (R-AR), ranking member of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, before splitting up to meet with Senators and Representatives from each of our respective states. Since I am from Louisiana, my agenda included visits with Senators Bill Cassidy and John Kennedy, as well as Representatives Garret Graves, Clay Higgins, Mike Johnson, Julia Letlow, and Steve Scalise. I really appreciated having face-to-face discussions with my home-state legislators about topics impacting the rice industry, and being able to offer feedback on what they could do to help with these issues.

We also had meetings with Representatives Sanford Bishop (D-GA), chair of the House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee; Glenn Thompson (R-PA), ranking member of the House Agriculture Committee; and John Garamendi (D-CA) who explained the important agricultural policies they are working on to preserve and improve our industry.

The class toured the Canadian Embassy, located on Pennsylvania Avenue, the only embassy located between Congress and the White House. We met with Agriculture and Fisheries Counselor Gizem Eras, who is responsible for trade policy issues related to meat and livestock, fisheries, the environment, and climate change. Eras gave a [presentation](#) on the importance of bilateral trade between the U.S. and Canada focusing on collaboration, supporting shared common values, and overcoming current challenges effecting trade.

This trip definitely gave me a better understanding of what our state checkoff funds are used for and the importance these activities have in keeping the rice industry viable. Policy makers want and need as much information as possible to make the best decisions they can and we owe it to them, and us, to engage with them on a regular basis. 



Taking in one of the best views in Washington, DC, from the roof of the Canadian Embassy are class members (from left): Matt Morris, Austin Davis, Justin Nix, Austin Littleton, and story author, Michael Durand.

RICE INDUSTRY FACING A FORMIDABLE ECONOMIC CRISIS

BY JAMISON CRUCE

ARLINGTON, VA — The U.S. rice industry is in a critical situation. The combination of stagnant rice prices and high input costs are creating a severe financial squeeze for rice farmers threatening the viability of the U.S. rice industry. Rice prices are not keeping pace with other major crops and input costs are hitting rice farmers disproportionately hard.

A [report](#) released by Texas A&M University's Agricultural and Food Policy Center (AFPC) in January analyzing the economic impacts of higher fertilizer prices on the AFPC's 64 representative crop farms highlighted the severity of the crisis. Rice farms face the highest per-acre increase at \$62.04 on fertilizer alone. On average, fertilizer costs will increase \$98,000 for rice farms.

A separate, [rice-specific study](#) from AFPC published in February found that rice farmers will see more than \$500 million in losses this year.

On February 25, USA Rice Farmers Chair Kirk Satterfield sent a [letter](#) to Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack on behalf of all U.S. rice farmers, outlining this situation and the need for financial assistance using existing

funds available to the USDA, including those designated for market disruptions.

The letter stated: "I am writing to respectfully request that you use the available authorities of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to provide assistance to the nation's rice farmers who are facing both low commodity prices and disproportionately higher input costs, creating a severe financial squeeze that threatens the continued viability of U.S. rice farms and the rural communities they support."

No official response from USDA has been received as of press time.

USA Rice has made Congress and the Biden Administration aware of the impending financial calamity and the situation has been highlighted in numerous Congressional hearings.

On March 1, in a Farm Bill hearing at the House Agriculture Committee, Arkansas rice farmer Jennifer James joined corn, sorghum, soybean, wheat, cotton, and peanut farmers to testify about the commodity title of the current Farm Bill and what she thinks the new Farm Bill should address. She also highlighted the current economic situation for the rice industry.

"Because of the combined conditions of low rice prices and accelerating input costs, rice farmers are in trouble," said James. "Important steps can and should be taken to shore up the nation's rice farm families in the near term, even before the next Farm Bill. That is why we sent a letter to Secretary Vilsack seeking such relief. I would ask for your support of our request."

During a March 16 House Agriculture Committee hearing, Representatives Rick Crawford (R-AR) and Julia Letlow (R-LA) homed in on the unique situation impacting the rice industry.

Directing a question to Dr. Joe Outlaw, co-director of the Agricultural and Food Policy Center at Texas A&M University (AFPC), Rep. Crawford offered:

"The Russians just announced the suspension of fertilizer exports to the west. We know that's driving input costs. And meanwhile, India, the world's second biggest producer of rice, wheat, and sugar is set to spend \$20 billion this year to provide free fertilizer to their farmers. So, everyone here is aware of the staggering increase. And for inputs on the farm, fuel is one of them. As I mentioned, fertilizer, pest control, seed machinery, I want to say that for most field crops there's been a corresponding or even greater increase in the commodity prices...But this is not the case for rice. Prices are only slightly up, not nearly enough to cover rising input costs. India is spending billions of dollars to flood the world with cheap and dirty rice while taking the lead on emissions and distorting the world rice



"... the nation's rice farmers who are facing both low commodity prices and disproportionately higher input costs, creating a severe financial squeeze that threatens the continued viability of U.S. rice farms ..."

market...I hear U.S. rice farmers are even starting to decline, maybe even go out of business. Can you comment on the situation for rice?"

In response, Outlaw said, "among all the different types of production systems we work with, rice is the one that's actually not doing very well and not projected to do very well over the next few years mainly because they don't benefit from the higher prices to offset all these high costs."


Letlow also questioned Outlaw on the economic situation for rice farms since AFPC published a study requested by her office:

"I continue to hear the concerns of our farmers particularly our rice farmers about the unpredictable challenges they face with increased cost of production. Many who are considering whether to plant this year...This is a troublesome trend. With additional challenges we're now facing globally, the situation has only gotten worse, particularly on fuel and fertilizer. Your study concluded that rice farms experience the highest fertilizer cost increase, averaging \$62.04 per acre, which accounts for an astronomical impact and overall input cost. What might that look like today and do you agree it is getting worse and could we quantify that?"

Outlaw responded, "The reality is when we did that study, we had polled numbers at the end of last year and the first couple of months this year, but conditions have deteriorated even more. I would suggest that the estimates we gave you are probably 20 to 30 or maybe even a greater percent lower than they will be next time."

USA Rice reiterated these grave concerns to Members of Congress from rice-producing states and districts in a letter sent on March 18 that read, "Unfortunately...we're looking at a deep potential decline in rice plantings. As farmers make planting decisions, higher prices for other commodities with lower costs of production will prevail. This will ultimately have a negative impact not only rice farmers, but the necessary infrastructure supporting the rice industry such as mills, dryers, and other agribusinesses as well as the rural communities that rely on the support from business generated by our industry."

"If Secretary Vilsack is to do anything to help the U.S. rice industry, it must happen now before all planting decisions are made. We value your continued support of the rice industry, and it is our hope that you will support our efforts to secure assistance for U.S. rice farmers."

The rice industry, like all of agriculture, is resilient, resourceful, and resolute, but between unfair trade practices that artificially depress global prices, skyrocketing costs pushing farmers to the brink, extreme weather threatening the land, and regulatory and legislative uncertainty further keeping us off balance, it is time for transformative and courageous action. 

Jamison Cruce is the USA Rice director of government affairs.

FARM BILL UPDATE

BY JAMISON CRUCE

WASHINGTON, DC — While the 2018 Farm Bill runs through 2023, USA Rice activated its Farm Policy Task Force last year to begin the organization's policy development process. The House and Senate Agriculture Committees already have begun laying their own groundwork as well. The House Agriculture Committee has held several oversight hearings this year addressing various programs and issues along with outreach to commodity groups to gauge priorities, and the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry has announced it will hold field hearings later this spring. However, formal proceedings on a Farm Bill reauthorization seem unlikely this year.


The current Farm Bill covers 12 titles, including commodity, conservation, trade, crop insurance, nutrition, research, and others. On March 1, Arkansas farmer and member of the USA Rice Farmers Board of Directors Jennifer James testified before the House Agriculture Committee during a hearing reviewing Title 1, or the commodity title, of the Farm Bill. James' testimony centered around the cornerstone of farm policy for the rice industry – the Price Loss Coverage program.

"Other commodities might regard crop insurance as their primary safety net, but Title I of the Farm Bill — the Commodity Title — is the cornerstone of the safety net for rice farm families," said James in her comments before the Committee. "It helps us compete in a global marketplace that is highly distorted with high and rising foreign subsidies, tariffs, and non-tariff barriers. The fact is, Title I rice policy helps ensure that more of the world's rice is produced sustainably in the U.S., following the highest environmental, safety, and labor standards in the world."

Looking Ahead

Many questions remain regarding what the next Farm Bill will encompass. With a focus on combatting climate change from the Biden Administration and Congressional Democrats, it's widely expected there will be a strong push to incorporate climate measures into the next bill.

Failure to enact a bill by the end of 2022 — a year ahead of time — would mean having to start afresh in 2023, with the convening of a new Congress that will likely look very different than today's Congress, including a possible change in party control in both chambers.

Only one of the last six Farm Bills, the 2002 bill, was completed early. 

MIDTERM ELECTIONS – CHANGE ON THE WAY

BY JOSIE MCLAURIN

WASHINGTON, DC — The 117th Congress of the United States is more than halfway over, and midterm elections are just around the corner —Tuesday, November 8.

Democrats currently control both the House by 12 seats and the Senate, which is evenly split, but Democrats have the tie-breaking vote of Vice President Kamala Harris. All members of the House of Representatives are up for reelection this year, as well as rice state Senators John Boozman (R-AR), Alex Padilla (D-CA), and John Kennedy (R-LA). In addition, Senator Roy Blunt (R-MO) is retiring, leaving Missouri with an open election for his seat.

Congressional turnover is at an all-time high this year, with more than 50 members of Congress announcing they will not seek reelection. Several Members are leaving Congress to run in other elections.

Congressional Redistricting

Every ten years, the Department of Commerce conducts the U.S. Census to gather an accurate count of the nation's population. That data is then used to reapportion the 435 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives to reflect population changes so that each Member represents roughly the same number of individuals.

As a result of this year's census, Texas gained two seats, while California lost a seat for the first time in history. Arkansas, California, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas are five of the 47 states with approved new congressional maps. Florida, New Hampshire, and Missouri are the only states that have not yet approved a map. These maps play a large part in how many seats each party will have in the House and may still be in flux as fifteen approved maps are facing lawsuits. Redistricting has created ten more Democratic-leaning seats, six less Republican-leaning seats, and five fewer highly competitive seats.


First Come the Primaries

Primary elections have already begun across the country, with Texas being the first rice state to hold a primary on March 1. The Arkansas primary will be held on May 24, California and Mississippi on June 7, and Missouri on August 2.

Louisiana is different from all other states and conducts majority vote primaries where all candidates running for a seat campaign against each other, and the person with the simple majority of the votes wins. If no one receives a simple majority, a runoff election is held between the top two candidates from the open primary, regardless of their party affiliation. The Louisiana primary is scheduled on November 8.

Then the Generals

There are currently nine Senate seats that analysts think are not locks for the incumbent parties. Of those nine, seven are rated "toss-up," four currently held by Democrats and three by Republicans. Control of the Senate could rest with the races in Arizona, Georgia, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.

In the House, analysts are predicting 183 safe seats for each party with 23 "toss-ups." Thirteen of them are currently held by Democrats, eight by Republicans, and two are open seats. With a current Democratic majority of just 12, the safest prediction at the moment is that Election Night is going to be a long night. 

REGULATORY UPDATE

BY DR. JOHN GOLDBERG

WOTUS


The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Army Corps of Engineers are proposing to restore the 1986 "waters of the United States" (WOTUS) regulations, with amendments to reflect the agencies' subsequent determinations, to the "pre-2015 regulatory regime." The agencies say this will have "zero impact" because it codifies "essentially the same" regulatory regime as the one currently being implemented; however, this proposal actually expands the scope of federal jurisdiction. Ten regional roundtables have been scheduled to gather stakeholder input on the issue.

In the meantime, the Supreme Court of the United States will hear *Sackett v. EPA* during its term this year which may determine the proper scope of federal jurisdiction as a WOTUS under the Clean Water Act. It's anticipated that the briefing will occur later this year. A decision on this case is expected no later than June 2023.

Food Safety

USA Rice continues to engage in activities related to heavy metals, including the Food and Drug Administration's Closer to Zero initiative. USA Rice has been working with researchers from the land grant universities in each of the major rice-producing states to identify options to maintain or reduce exposure from inorganic arsenic, and is preparing to submit a multi-state research proposal to USDA. If successful, funding would be allocated to begin the project late in 2022 or early 2023.

Pesticides

USA Rice continues to monitor domestic and international regulatory actions pertaining to pesticides used by U.S. rice growers and millers, and is working closely with other grower groups and pesticide registrants in support of pesticide registration and tolerance decisions in the United States, as well as with our trading partners on the issue of Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs). 

Dr. John J. Goldberg is the founder of Science Based Strategies, a Washington, DC-based food, agriculture, and environmental policy consulting firm, and a partner at the Normandy Group, LLC. Prior to his move to the private sector, Dr. Goldberg served 22 years as science advisor to the Committee on Agriculture in the U.S. House of Representatives, working on four Farm Bills under seven chairs.

SUSTAINABILITY

USA RICE JOINS CELEBRATION OF MODERN AG ON THE NATIONAL MALL


BY DEBORAH WILLENBORG

WASHINGTON, DC — A showcase of how innovation in agriculture enables sustainability debuted here this year to coincide with National Ag Day. Equipment manufacturers and commodity partners set up outside USDA headquarters between the Smithsonian Museums on the National Mall to share the work America's farmers, ranchers, and agriculture innovators do on the cutting-edge of science and technology.

"These fascinating displays of the innovations that are enabling modern agriculture to sustainably provide for a growing world serve as an opportunity to help educate policymakers on the sustainability of today's producers," said Nick Tindall, senior director of regulatory affairs for the Agricultural Equipment Manufacturers, the organization hosting the event.

On display were innovations in combines, seed traits, aerial application, data management, in-field conservation practices, creative chemistry, tractors big and small, and much more. All of the exhibits featured the advancements that drive American agriculture's long history of producing more while shrinking its environmental footprint.

"It was wonderful talking to everyone who stopped by our booth, from Members of Congress, to people walking by on their way to work, to families visiting Washington on spring break," said USA Rice President & CEO Betsy Ward. "People love rice! And they love it even more after learning the industry's sustainability story and conservation efforts that foster wildlife habitat and benefit biodiversity."

Ward added, "the most memorable interaction by far was with a woman who recognized our 'Think Rice' logo as she had received a rice cooker and sample bag of U.S. rice at a Ride With Rice truck tour event in 2019. Her exact words were, 'you changed my life that day. Now me, my family, my neighbors, and friends only buy rice grown in the U.S. It's the best!'" 



USA Rice staff kept busy in the eye-catching booth, handing out giveaways and informational brochures (top), greeting legislators like Senators Debbie Stabenow (left) and John Boozman (above), and telling the U.S. rice sustainability story to all who asked (above right).

USA RICE PREPARED TO BUILD ON CLIMATE SMART RECORD

BY EMILY WOODALL

JEFFERSON CITY, MO — The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has begun accepting project applications for a new \$1 billion Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities program.

A “climate-smart commodity” is being defined as an “agricultural commodity that is produced using agricultural (farming, ranching, or forestry) practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions or sequester carbon.”

The funding will be provided to eligible partners through the USDA’s Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) who develop and deliver incentives to producers and landowners who: implement climate-smart conservation practices, activities, and systems on working lands; measure/quantify, monitor and verify the carbon and greenhouse gas (GHG) benefits associated with those practices; and develop markets and promote the resulting climate-smart commodities.


“Because the Rice Stewardship Partnership, established in 2012, has a proven history of success, we are well-positioned to capture some of this funding as the industry can check all three boxes,” said Josh Hankins, USA Rice director of grower relations and the Rice Stewardship Partnership. “That success makes the industry a prime candidate to participate in this initiative.”

Funding will be provided in two pools depending on the size and scope of the proposal. The deadline for proposals for the first funding pool (for projects

“Because [of our] proven history of success... the industry [is] a prime candidate to participate in this initiative.”

— JOSH HANKINS, USA RICE DIRECTOR OF GROWER RELATIONS

ranging from \$5 million to \$100 million) is May 6. The second pool of funding for smaller projects ranging from \$250,000 up to \$4,999,999 will have a deadline of June 10.

USA Rice is the lead partner drafting the application with all six rice states eligible to participate. There is a maximum ask of \$100 million, and we are working on our budgets to hit that maximum using a systems approach with preference on greenhouse gas reducing farm practices. 

Emily Woodall is USA Rice manager of rice conservation services, based out of Little Rock, Arkansas, and she is thrilled that this new funding opportunity is available to rice producers.



USA RICE RELEASES BIODIVERSITY ANIMATION FOR NATIONAL AG DAY

BY DEBORAH WILLENBORG

ARLINGTON, VA — The sustainability record of U.S.-grown rice is without parallel, but communicating the industry’s commitment and success stories can be just as challenging as reaching environmental goals in the first place. To that end, USA Rice commissioned a short, animated film to help deliver key messages, releasing “[Biodiversity and Rice](#),” in conjunction with National Ag Day on March 22.

“We’ve been working on this project for a long time because we wanted to get it right,” said David Petter, an Arkansas rice farmer and chair of The Rice Foundation, the educational arm of the U.S. rice industry. “We utilized a grant from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to highlight, in simple terms, the connection between rice farming and wildlife habitat.”

The video is 1:19 and starts with a family enjoying U.S.-grown rice before transitioning to a rice farm that features egrets, raptors, ducks, and other animals as the narrator explains the symbiotic relationship between rice and birds, and the value of wildlife habitat rice farms offer.

“This is definitely a departure for us, but there’s so much competition for people’s attention, we wanted to try something new,” said Michael Klein, USA Rice vice president of communications and domestic promotion. “We spent a lot of time looking for an animator who understood what we wanted, that U.S. rice is in harmony with nature and that makes it a uniquely sustainable crop. It’s our hope that the animation captures people’s imagination and interest and they begin sharing it on social media.” 

Animator Karla Bussey (right) illustrated the unique relationship between U.S. rice and nature, and why that alliance is good for birds, good for farmers, and good for all of us.



GROWN IN THE USA HIGHLIGHT REEL

BY DEBORAH WILLENBORG


ARLINGTON, VA — If you follow USA Rice on Twitter and/or Facebook, you're well acquainted with last year's social media campaign, "Sustainability Saturday," a weekly story or fact from different segments of the U.S. rice industry that emphasized a long-standing commitment to conservation and climate-smart agriculture.

"This year we're doing something new with that real estate — celebrating users of U.S.-grown rice," said Michael Klein, USA Rice vice president of marketing, communications, and domestic promotion. "From major corporations to small mom & pop restaurants, if you use U.S.-grown rice, we're going to send some love your way!"

The new "Grown In The USA" campaign, aka GITUSA, started in January with a shout out to Anheuser-Busch, the largest user of U.S.-grown rice and a strong supporter of agricultural sustainability and the Rice Stewardship Partnership.

"In the first post, @RiceArkansas was tagged to boost engagement, and we used a new hashtag: #nowyouknow," said Klein. "And now that you know, we encourage you to follow, like, and share to help spread the word about GITUSA."

Other posts have featured restaurant chains such as P.F. Chang's and Roti; Crowley, Louisiana's annual Rice Ball and its sponsors, Falcon Rice Mill and Supreme Rice Mill; and John "Shoostie" Shuster who carried the flag for Team USA at the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics and led the curling team to gold in 2018 after he added rice to his personal nutritional program.

"If you are aware of some place or product or person that should be promoted, let us know with a picture and a social media handle and any other relevant information we should share," said Klein. 



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"From major corporations to small mom & pop restaurants, if you use U.S.-grown rice, we're going to send some love your way!"

— MICHAEL KLEIN, VICE PRESIDENT OF MARKETING & DOMESTIC PROMOTION

.....



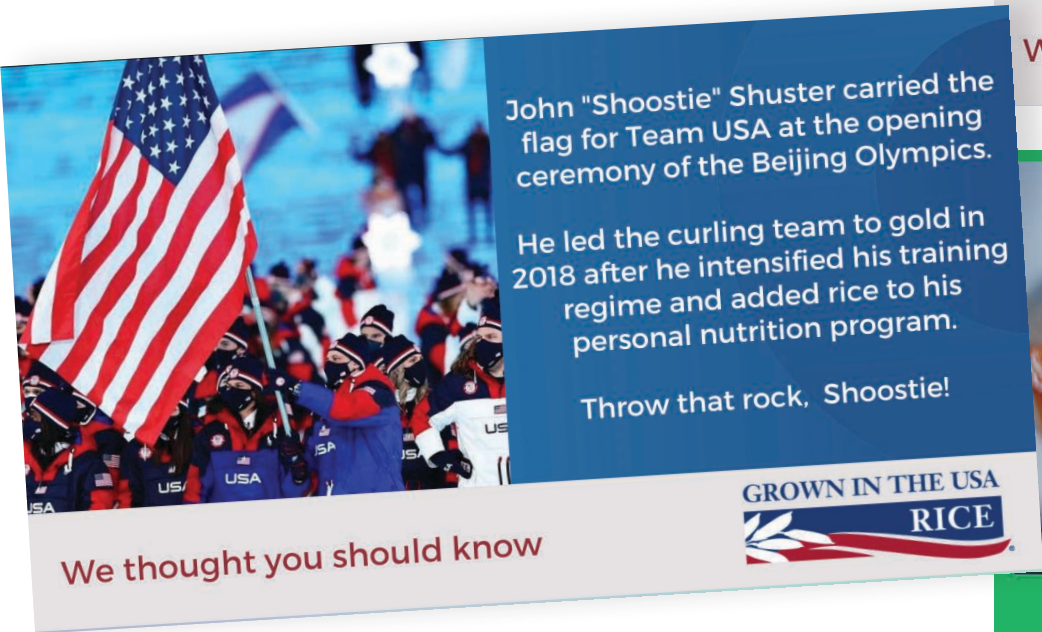
Anheuser-Busch is the largest user of U.S.-grown rice in the country.

Budweiser, Bud Light, Michelob Ultra, and their seltzers are all made with U.S. rice.

Critical partners in supporting our sustainability goals, the world is a better place for their choices.



We thought you should know



John "Shoostie" Shuster carried the flag for Team USA at the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics.

He led the curling team to gold in 2018 after he intensified his training regime and added rice to his personal nutrition program.

Throw that rock, Shoostie!



We thought you should know



AT DOOKY CHASE'S FAMILY RESTAURANT IN THE TREME NEIGHBORHOOD OF NEW ORLEANS U.S. RICE HAS BEEN AT THE CENTER OF THE PLATE SINCE 1941.



We thought you should know

2022 INTERNATIONAL PROMOTION FUNDING INCREASES FOR THE U.S. RICE INDUSTRY

BY SARAH MORAN

WASHINGTON, DC — Each year, USA Rice participates in a competitive process to receive funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture/Foreign Agricultural Service (USDA/FAS) to promote U.S. agricultural products overseas. This year, USDA/FAS gave USA Rice more than \$5.5 million in Market Access Program (MAP) and Foreign Market Development (FMD) funds, including a 35 percent increase in MAP funding from last year.

USA Rice utilizes a combination of these federal funds, state checkoff funds, and industry dues to conduct marketing activities aimed at increasing the volume and value of all types and forms of U.S. rice exports in nearly two dozen overseas markets.

These MAP and FMD allocations are augmented by the \$5.5 million USA Rice received from the Agricultural Trade Promotion (ATP) Program that covers activities from 2019-2023.

“As the global advocate for all segments of the U.S. rice industry, these funds help USA Rice attain improved market access and promote the U.S. crop to overseas markets,” said USA Rice President & CEO Betsy Ward. “Given the myriad challenges the rice industry is facing from rising input costs to unfair trade practices, this boost in funding couldn’t come at a better time.”

USA Rice also receives funds on behalf of the U.S. wild rice associations, the California Wild Rice Advisory Board and the Minnesota Cultivated Wild Rice Council, to develop promotional activities for those products as well.

“These USDA/FAS funds have been vital in opening up new market segments and increasing sales for U.S. rice, from promoting U.S.-grown rice at Costco stores in Japan to organizing trade missions for importers from Latin America,” said Steve Vargas, senior vice president of global rice trading for Sun Valley Rice and chair of the USA Rice International Promotion Committee. “The overall increase in funding is a testament to the great work USA Rice does promoting U.S. rice in markets around the world.” [WGB](#)

Sarah Moran, USA Rice vice president international, has been promoting U.S. rice internationally for more than 10 years, helping to develop new markets for U.S. rice and recapturing market share.



Promotion activities are conducted around the world and run the gamut from cooking school competitions, to recipe videos featuring professional chefs, to in-store outreach that features colorful displays and samples of U.S.-grown rice.



GLOBAL AUDIENCE EXPERIENCES

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A LOUISIANA RICE FARMER

BY KANE WEBB


KAPLAN, LA — Last summer, Julie and Christian Richard hosted a video production team from Wild Hive, a strategy and communications firm from Austin, Texas, to take part in a project highlighting U.S. rice and seafood for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS). The video, "Sustainability and High-Quality U.S. Ingredients - The Key to a Great Gumbo," is part of a larger project called DelicioUS!, a storytelling project that tells positive stories about U.S. agriculture.

"These videos are being used in the United Kingdom and European Union initially, and are intended to share compelling stories that depict the care and commitment of American producers across all regions of the U.S.," explained Allison Beadle, Wild Hive CEO. "The stories focus thematically on family heritage, sustainability, innovation, and the connection between agriculture and regional culture in the United States."

Beadle and her team started filming before sunrise to capture the full experience of how sustainability plays a key role in U.S. rice production from sunup to sundown. Every aspect of the Richard operation was included in the documentary process including rice production, crawfish production, and the family's involvement on the farm. Christian provided narration to explain his farming practices and the role sustainability and conservation play in the success of rice farming in today's world.

"We have an open-door policy," Christian told the production team. "Julie and I decided when we started this farm, we would welcome anyone to come and experience what we do. If we don't tell our story, someone else will, and we work hard to protect our resources so the next generation can continue to farm this land long after we're gone."

Throughout the day, the production team shot drone footage of waterfowl using the rice fields as habitat and underwater clips of crawfish making their way around the shallow waters of their feeding grounds. The full spectrum of the important ecosystem the Richards provide through their sustainability and conservation efforts is in view. Like many of their fellow rice producers, the Richards are committed to these practices year in and year out while continuing to produce a high-quality rice crop.

Go [here](#) to view the video, and when you share it on social media, don't forget to include the hashtag #DeliciousFoodUSA. 

Born and raised on a farm in southwest Louisiana, USA Rice Director of Field Services Kane Webb recently moved and is now the newest resident of Crowley, Louisiana, the Rice Capital of the World.



Christian Richard is a sixth-generation rice farmer from Kaplan, Louisiana, who incorporates sustainable practices focused on maximizing productivity and conserving natural resources while maintaining the safest food supply in the world.

WORKING TO RECAPTURE LOST MARKET SHARE

BY ASIHA GRISGBY

ARLINGTON, VA — Over the past two decades, U.S. market share has fallen in top export markets in the Western Hemisphere such as Central America and Mexico. On average, the U.S. had a 94 percent market share in this region during the beginning of this century – now it's down to 70 percent.

Importers in these countries will tell you it's due to the declining quality of U.S. rice, particularly in comparison with improved varieties from many other countries. In an effort to recapture this lost market share, breeders in the U.S. have begun developing varieties that capture the quality characteristics required by these important Latin American customers.

USA Rice held the second U.S. Rice Quality Symposium at the USA Rice Outlook Conference last December, where importers from Latin America met with breeders who showcased 18 newly-developed U.S. rice varieties.

Dr. Steve Linscombe, director of The Rice Foundation, kicked off the event with a brief explanation of the activity to a room filled with USA Rice members and trade partners from Central America, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, and Mexico. Eight tables, setup trade show style, displayed the up-and-coming rice varieties in raw form along with one-page factsheets detailing the unique characteristics of the rice including grain length, whiteness, and amylose content. Each table was also equipped with rice cookers to conduct live cooking tests.


"We are very happy to participate in the second U.S. Rice Quality Symposium as it is extremely important for our industry to have open communication about the developments in varieties of U.S. rice," said Eduardo Rojas, an importer from Costa Rica and president of FECARROZ, the Central America Rice Federation. "We look forward to more events like this one and welcome opportunities for access to suppliers as this event provided."

"... as it is extremely important for our industry to have open communication about the developments in varieties of U.S. rice."

— EDUARDO ROJAS, PRESIDENT OF FECARROZ

International participants reported unanimous interest in attending future rice quality symposiums. Sixty percent of the U.S. participants said they anticipated contacts made during the Outlook Conference would lead to sales in the coming months.

"Our industry is making efforts to address the U.S. long grain quality issues that Latin America and our FECARROZ friends have brought to our attention over the past several years," said Sarah Moran, USA Rice vice president, international. "U.S. rice breeders are developing varieties that adhere to the quality characteristics preferred by Latin American importers. These annual symposiums are meant to put a spotlight on these efforts and facilitate connections between our overseas buyers, U.S. suppliers, U.S. farmers, and other USA Rice members, so that we can recapture lost market share, ensuring that Latin America remains a top export market for us."

The U.S. Rice Quality Symposium has now become an important tool for demonstrating the latest advances in the industry and providing a forum for open communication between trade partners, and will be included in the programming of the 2022 USA Rice Outlook Conference, December 7-9, in Austin, Texas. See you there! 

Asiha Grigsby is the USA Rice director of international promotion for the Western Hemisphere.

Rice breeders shared the unique characteristics of their newly-developed varieties in a hands-on forum that included taste tests.



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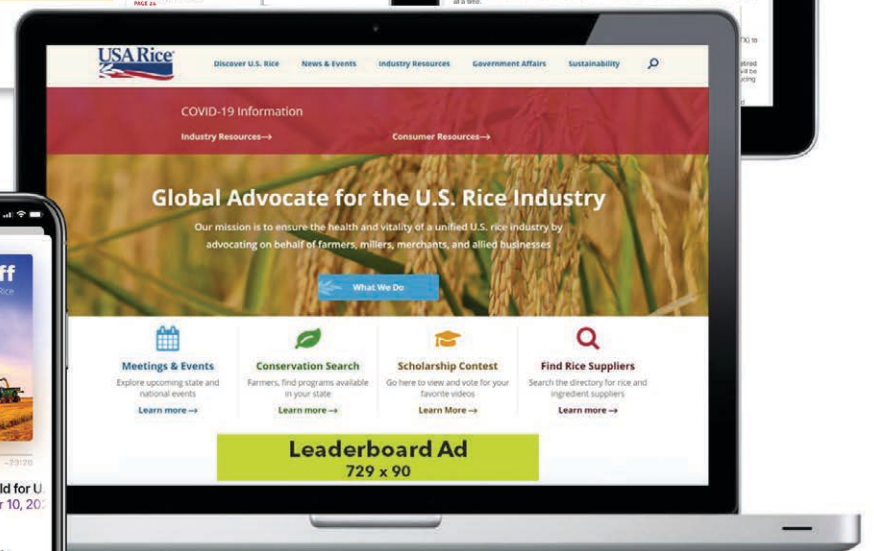
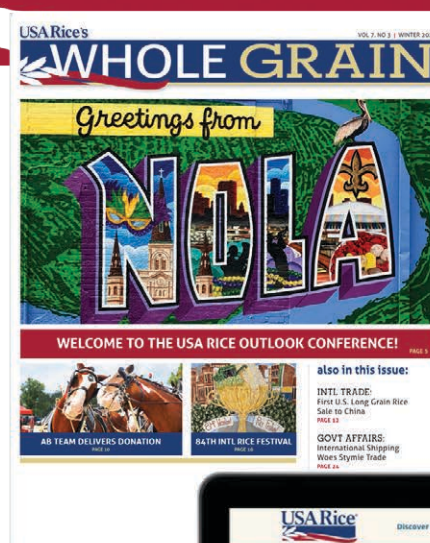
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