

ARKANSAS RICE RESEARCH AND PROMOTION BOARD MEETING

Minutes

February 25, 2025

1:30 p.m.

The Arkansas Rice Research and Promotion Board meeting was held at the Grand Prairie Center, 2709 Highway 165, Stuttgart, AR.

Members present: Becton Bell, Jay Coker, David Gairhan, Carl "Cap" Phillips, Jeff Rutledge, Paul Schwarz, Jim Whitaker, Charles Williams

Member(s) present via Zoom: Scott Matthews

Chair Jim Whitaker called the meeting to order and welcomed all members and guests.

Minutes of the February 5 – 6, 2025 Rice Research and Promotion Board meeting were presented for review and approval.

Moved by Phillips, seconded by Bell to approve the February 5 – 6, 2025 minutes as presented.

Motion carried.

Inoussa Zaki, Chief Fiscal Officer, presented the financial report for the period ending February 15, 2025, shown as **Attachment 1**.

Zaki covered the board's revenue, deductions, expenditures, and accumulated revenue.

As of February 15, 2025, the collections have reached a total of \$4 million. This amount represents 61% of the overall collections target.

Also included is a chart of the USDA NASS gross collections vs. Arkansas actual gross collections. Current standing as of this reporting period is 61.38 percent collected.

Additionally, there are six proposals up for presentation to the board today, requesting a total of \$3,142,500 in funding.

Moved by Rutledge, seconded by Coker to approve the financial report as presented.

Motion carried.

Proposals – Attachment 2

The board heard and reviewed research proposals and participated in questions and answers with the researchers, followed by discussion.

At this time, the board considered each proposal and selected the projects to fund.

Moved by Phillips, seconded by Bell to approve the proposal from the Arkansas Department of Agriculture in the amount of \$2,500.

Motion carried.

Moved by Coker, seconded by Bell to approve the proposal from Four States Fair, Ag Learning Center in the amount of \$2,500.

Motion carried.

Moved by Phillips, seconded by Coker to approve the proposal from Farm Bureau, Ag in the Classroom Program in the amount of \$20,000. The board would like to review the updated Arkansas Ag Reader brochure before publication.

Motion carried.

Moved by Schwarz, seconded by Bell to approve the proposal from University of Arkansas Division of Ag, Arkansas Ag Leaders Tour in the amount of \$5,000.

Motion carried.

Moved by Bell, seconded by Rutledge to approve the proposal from the University of Arkansas Division of Ag, Rice Discovery Program in the amount of \$5,000.

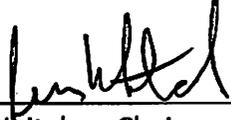
Motion carried.

Moved by Rutledge, seconded by Phillips to approve the proposal from USA Rice Council, Promotions Program in the amount of \$3.1 million.

Motion carried.

The next meeting is scheduled for July 31, 2025 at 1:00 p.m. in Jonesboro, AR.

Meeting adjourned.



Jim Whitaker, Chairman

**Arkansas Rice Research and Promotion Board
Income, Expenses, and Accumulated Revenue
July 01, 2024 Through February 15, 2025**

REVENUE:

Beginning Fund Balance	\$ 1,065,930
Gross Collections	\$ 4,005,572
Producer	\$ 2,001,957
Buyer	\$ 2,001,957
Audit penalties and interest	\$ 1,659
Other Revenue	\$ 551

DEDUCTIONS:

Less Revenue and Treas. (3%)	\$ 111,114
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TOTAL AVAILABLE REVENUE \$ 4,960,939

EXPENDITURES:

Board Member Expenses	\$ 4,807
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Program Expenses:

USA Rice Council	\$ 1,892,823
University of Arkansas	\$ 2,342,277
Producer Information	\$ -
Rice Foundation	\$ -
Coop. Ext. Service	\$ -
Total Program	\$ 4,235,100

TOTAL EXPENDITURES \$ 4,239,907

ACCUMULATED REVENUE: \$ 721,032

Contingency Reserve	\$ -
Payable to Rice Foundation	\$ -
Payable to USA Rice Council	\$ 150,039
Payable to UofA	\$ 570,993
Unallocated Balance	\$ 0

Arkansas Rice Research and Promotion Board
Projection of Collections
As of February 15, 2025

	PROJECTED			Current Year Actual
	@ 100% of Max. Gross Collections	@ 95% of Max. Gross Collections	@ 90% of Max. Gross Collections	
Production, measured in bushels	241,680,000	229,596,000	217,512,000	148,354,507
Rate	\$0.027	\$0.027	\$0.027	\$0.027
Max. Gross Collections (MGC)	\$6,525,360	\$6,199,092	\$5,872,824	\$4,005,572
ACTUAL COLLECTIONS:				
Producer Collections	\$3,262,680	\$3,099,546	\$2,936,412	\$2,001,957
Buyer Collections	\$3,262,680	\$3,099,546	\$2,936,412	\$2,001,957
Audit Settlements (Penalties and Intere	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,659
TOTAL COLLECTIONS	\$6,525,360	\$6,199,092	\$5,872,824	\$4,005,572
Percent of MGC Realized				61.38% †
Less:				
Revenue and Treasury (3.1%)	\$202,286	\$192,172	\$182,058	\$111,114
Board Expenses	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$4,807
Total	\$207,286	\$197,172	\$187,058	\$115,921
NET COLLECTIONS	\$6,323,074	\$6,006,920	\$5,690,766	\$3,894,458
Beginning Balance				
Due USA Rice from Previous Year	\$98,036	\$98,036	\$98,036	\$98,036
Unallocated Beginning Balance (Resea	\$967,894	\$967,894	\$967,894	\$967,894
PROMOTION/MARKET DEVELOPMENT:				
AVAILABLE FUNDS	\$3,257,073	\$3,098,996	\$2,940,919	\$2,042,861
USA Rice Council	\$3,257,073	\$3,098,996	\$2,940,919	\$1,892,823
RESEARCH:				
AVAILABLE FUNDS	\$4,126,931	\$3,968,854	\$3,810,777	\$2,912,719
24-25 Research Funding	\$342,277	\$342,277	\$342,277	\$342,277
25-26 Research Funding	\$3,784,654	\$3,626,577	\$3,468,500	\$2,570,442
25-26 Research Funding Advance	(\$2,000,000)	(\$2,000,000)	(\$2,000,000)	(\$2,570,993)
Contingency Reserve	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$551
Unallocated Balance	\$1,784,654	\$1,626,577	\$1,468,500	\$0

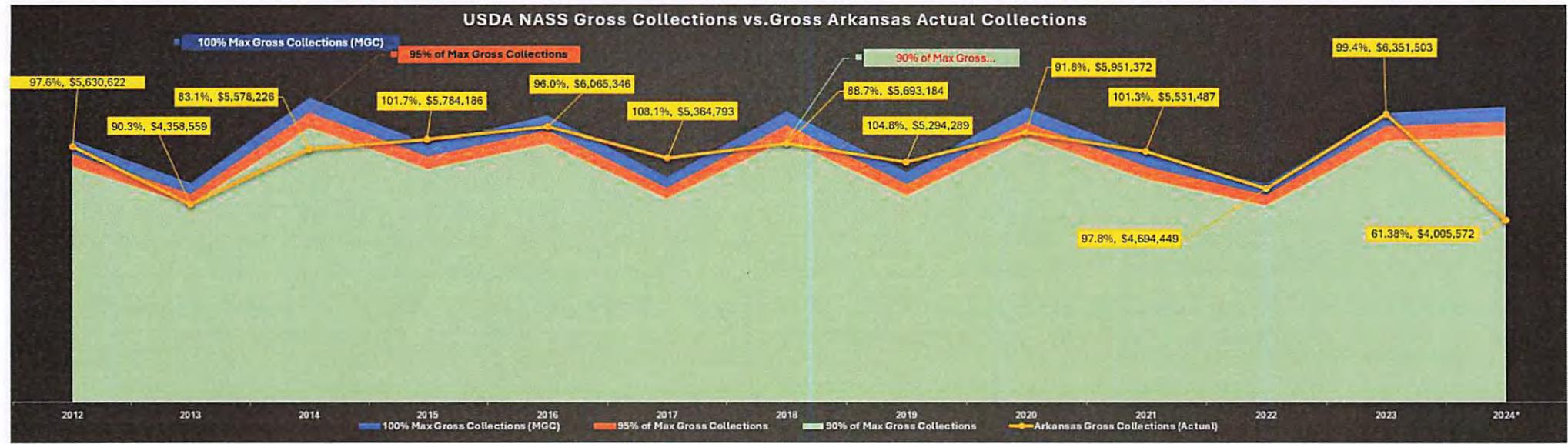
* 2024 Production est. based on September 2024 USDA/NASS Forecast. of 1.431 mil. acres harvested @ 7,600 lbs/acre

† Percent of the \$6,525,360 (MGC) realized to date.

USDA NASS Gross Collections vs Arkansas Actual Gross Collections

USDA NASS Arkansas acreage, yield, production, and price; check-off rate per bushel; USDA NASS estimated gross collections by fiscal year; and Arkansas actual gross collections by fiscal year for production years 2012 to 2024

Production Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024*
Fiscal Year, July 1 - June 30	FY-2013	FY-2014	FY-2015	FY-2016	FY-2017	FY-2018	FY-2019	FY-2020	FY-2021	FY-2022	FY-2023	FY-2024	FY-2025
Planted Acres	1,291,000	1,076,000	1,486,000	1,311,000	1,546,000	1,161,000	1,441,000	1,161,000	1,461,000	1,211,000	1,106,000	1,436,000	1,451,000
Harvested Acres	1,285,000	1,064,000	1,480,000	1,291,000	1,521,000	1,104,000	1,422,000	1,126,000	1,441,000	1,193,000	1,080,000	1,411,000	1,431,000
Yield, measured in pounds / acre	7,480	7,560	7,560	7,340	6,920	7,490	7,520	7,480	7,500	7,630	7,410	7,550	7,600
Yield, measured in bushels / acre	166	168	168	163	154	166	167	166	167	170	165	168	169
Production, measured in pounds	9,611,800,000	8,043,840,000	11,188,800,000	9,475,940,000	10,525,320,000	8,268,960,000	10,693,440,000	8,422,480,000	10,807,500,000	9,102,590,000	8,002,800,000	10,653,050,000	10,875,600,000
Production, measured in bushels	213,595,556	178,752,000	248,640,000	210,576,444	233,896,000	163,754,667	237,632,000	187,166,222	240,166,667	202,279,778	177,840,000	236,734,444	241,680,000
Price received, measured in \$ / cwt	\$ 14.30	\$ 15.20	\$ 12.00	\$ 10.90	\$ 9.39	\$ 11.10	\$ 10.70	\$ 11.90	\$ 12.50	\$ 13.50	\$ 16.70	\$ 16.00	\$ 15.10
Price received, measured in \$ / bushels	\$ 6.44	\$ 6.84	\$ 5.40	\$ 4.91	\$ 4.23	\$ 5.00	\$ 4.82	\$ 5.36	\$ 5.63	\$ 6.06	\$ 7.52	\$ 7.20	\$ 6.80
Rate	\$0.0270	\$0.0270	\$0.0270	\$0.0270	\$0.0270	\$0.0270	\$0.0270	\$0.0270	\$0.0270	\$0.0270	\$0.0270	\$0.0270	\$0.0270
Rate - Arkansas rice farmers and handlers each pay \$0.0135 per bushel sold for the Arkansas Rice Checkoff program.													
100% Max Gross Collections (MGC)	\$ 5,767,080	\$ 4,826,304	\$ 6,713,280	\$ 5,685,564	\$ 6,315,192	\$ 4,961,376	\$ 6,416,064	\$ 5,053,488	\$ 6,484,500	\$ 5,461,554	\$ 4,801,680	\$ 6,391,830	\$ 6,525,360
95% of Max Gross Collections	\$ 5,478,726	\$ 4,584,969	\$ 6,377,616	\$ 5,401,286	\$ 5,999,432	\$ 4,713,307	\$ 6,095,261	\$ 4,800,614	\$ 6,160,275	\$ 5,188,476	\$ 4,561,596	\$ 6,072,239	\$ 6,199,092
90% of Max Gross Collections	\$ 5,190,372	\$ 4,343,674	\$ 6,041,952	\$ 5,117,008	\$ 5,683,673	\$ 4,465,238	\$ 5,774,458	\$ 4,548,139	\$ 5,836,050	\$ 4,915,399	\$ 4,321,512	\$ 5,752,647	\$ 5,872,824
Arkansas Gross Collections (Actual)	\$ 5,630,622	\$ 4,358,559	\$ 5,578,226	\$ 5,784,186	\$ 6,065,346	\$ 5,364,793	\$ 5,693,184	\$ 5,294,289	\$ 5,951,372	\$ 5,531,487	\$ 4,694,449	\$ 6,351,503	\$ 4,005,572
Arkansas Gross Collections (Actual) % of MGC	97.6%	90.3%	83.1%	101.7%	96.0%	108.1%	88.7%	104.8%	91.8%	101.3%	97.8%	99.4%	61.38%



Attachment 2

Funding Proposals



Sarah Huckabee Sanders
Governor

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

1 Natural Resources Drive, Little Rock, AR 72205
agriculture.arkansas.gov
(501) 225-1598



Wes Ward
Secretary of Agriculture

Arkansas Rice Research and Promotion Board
Promotion Request: 2025 NASDA Annual Meeting

State the goals and objectives of the promotional activity.

The National Association of State Departments of Agriculture's (NASDA) president, Arkansas Agriculture Secretary Wes Ward, requests your support of the upcoming 2025 NASDA Annual Meeting, September 14 through September 17 in Rogers, Arkansas. NASDA is a nonpartisan, nonprofit association that represents the elected and appointed commissioners, secretaries and directors of the departments of agriculture in all fifty states and four U.S. territories. NASDA enhances American food and agricultural communities through policy, partnerships and public engagement.

During the 2025 Annual Meeting, local partners receive access to an unprecedented level of networking with over 350 agricultural leaders advancing agriculture at the state, regional and federal levels. The success of this national event is dependent upon local partners.

State the expected benefits to the Arkansas industry from the proposed promotional efforts.

Hosted in Northwest Arkansas, the 2025 NASDA Annual Meeting will provide many opportunities to highlight Arkansas agriculture and will also be a great opportunity to gain insights on critical issues affecting the agriculture industry. There will be opportunities to engage with producers and leaders from local, state and national levels. Opportunities to showcase the importance of rice to the state's economy and its impact on the global rice market.

Seek to promote generic commodity and non-specific business entities.

Arkansas is serving as the host state for this year's Annual Meeting. The team at the Arkansas Department of Agriculture is working with NASDA staff and vendors in Northwest Arkansas to highlight Arkansas products and incorporate Arkansas rice into the menu. Our goal is to serve Arkansas grown and made whenever possible.

Include a budget and explain how the entity will be accountable for its use of the requested funds.

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture respectfully requests \$2,500 in funding to support the 2024 NASDA Annual Meeting. All funds will go to the general sponsorship fund that will support the meeting. Sponsorship dollars will be used to highlight and showcase Arkansas through meals, off-site tours, regional dinners, plenary sessions, among other events. We look forward to elevating the Arkansas rice industry and raising awareness of its impact through Arkansas and the world.



Arkansas Rice Research and Promotion Proposal

Mission Statement:

The Agriculture Learning Center at the Four States Fairgrounds is dedicated to promoting and educating the non-rural public on the importance of agriculture. Through engaging experiences and a focus on Arkansas Commodities, including rice, we highlight the significance of agriculture in our daily lives and its role in sustaining our communities.

Key Objectives:

- **Enhancing Agricultural Education:**
Providing local schools with quality, hands-on learning opportunities to foster understanding and appreciation of agriculture.
- **Promoting Arkansas Commodities:**
Emphasizing the economic and cultural importance of commodities like rice in Arkansas and beyond.
- **Connecting Communities:**
Building a bridge between rural and non-rural audiences, inspiring curiosity and respect for the agricultural industry.

Vision for the Future:

By collaborating with educators, industry professionals, and community members, the Agriculture Learning Center aims to inspire the next generation of agricultural leaders and advocates. Our vision extends beyond food to include all aspects of life influenced by agriculture, such as housing, clothing, and sustenance. We strive to cultivate an understanding of how agriculture impacts every facet of our daily lives, from the materials that build our homes to the fibers that make our clothes, and the food that nourishes our families.

Project Overview

In 2024, the Ag Learning Center at the Four States Fairgrounds has continued to grow and thrive through strong community partnerships. These collaborations have allowed us to develop new games and hands-on activities, enriching the educational experiences we provide to young minds in our community.

We have found that engaging students through interactive, sensory-based learning helps them retain and understand the information more effectively. Our approach—"hear it, see it, do it"—ensures that students are actively involved in lessons. At the Ag Learning Center, we emphasize hands-on activities focused on rice and its by-products, teaching students about their significance in everyday life.

During classroom field trips, we explore the diverse products derived from rice, along with other commodities, discussing their uses and nutritional value. Students participate in activities such as identifying rice-based products and by-products, as well as those from other key agricultural commodities. This makes learning more

dynamic and memorable. The hands-on approach has proven to be far more impactful than traditional reading-based methods, creating a fun and engaging experience for students of all ages.

From June to December 2024, we reached over 15 schools and nearly 700 students ranging from Preschool to High School, through field trips and outreach programs. Teachers have been highly responsive to these initiatives, and many have already scheduled future visits with us. The success of these programs reinforces our belief in the importance of providing interactive agricultural education.

The Ag Learning Center's dedicated staff, along with the support of community leaders and enthusiastic volunteers, is committed to the success of this program. Together, we are shaping a brighter future by fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of agriculture among the next generation.

Project Details – Goals and Objectives

The Ag Learning Center continues to focus on promoting education about Arkansas-grown commodities, with a particular emphasis on rice, while incorporating hands-on activities and community involvement. Our goals and objectives for 2024 are outlined below:

Goal 1 – Educate students and adults on the importance of the rice industry and other commodities.

- Incorporate hands-on activities and lessons.
- Develop engaging projects and educational exhibits.
- Add new interactive learning games to enhance participation.

Objective: Deliver valuable and engaging information through games, demonstrations, and diagrams that capture interest and encourage retention.

Goal 2 – Promote health and nutrition awareness in the community.

- Highlight the nutritional benefits of rice and its by-products.
- Use handouts, educational exhibits, and displays to inform the community about the health benefits of agricultural products.

Objective: Provide practical and accessible health and nutrition education, emphasizing the role of rice products and by-products in a balanced diet.

Goal 3 – Strengthen community involvement through effective volunteer participation.

- Train more volunteers to confidently and effectively lead lessons.
- Develop additional programs and activities to engage the community during events such as the fair.

Objective: Expand the volunteer base and ensure they are equipped to support the Ag Learning Center's educational mission while fostering greater community engagement.

Clientele

The Ag Learning Center serves three primary groups:

- 1. Students and Educators:**

This includes students from schools, educational organizations, youth groups, and summer camps who participate in our programs. It also encompasses the teachers and sponsors who accompany these

groups. Additionally, students engaged in our outreach program benefit from on-site presentations when visiting the Ag Learning Center is not possible.

2. Fair Attendees and the Public:

These are individuals and families who experience the Ag Learning Center during the Four States Fair and other public events.

3. Volunteers:

Dedicated community members who assist in delivering educational programs and supporting activities at the Ag Learning Center.

Methods

To effectively reach these groups, the Ag Learning Center employs the following strategies:

- Incorporating educational activities that align with industry partnerships into programs for students and educators.
 - Developing new games and activities focused on key agricultural commodities and industry topics.
 - Delivering outreach programs directly to schools and organizations, bringing our classes to students unable to visit the center.
 - Hosting community educational events to highlight industry partnerships and foster greater awareness.
 - Recruiting and training volunteers through outreach to local clubs and organizations, ensuring adequate support for our programs.
-

Staff/Administration

Kristen Larey

Director, Ag Learning Center

Kristen is a certified teacher in Arkansas and Texas with 15 years of classroom experience. This background in education is beneficial when creating engaging, hands-on lessons at the Ag Learning Center by connecting students to agriculture in meaningful ways. The Director of the Ag Learning Center is responsible for coordinating and scheduling programs with schools, educational organizations, youth groups, and clubs that visit the center for agricultural education. This includes designing, developing, and delivering engaging programs for students, educators, and the public. Additional responsibilities involve collaborating with local agencies, recruiting, training, and scheduling volunteers to assist with activities as needed.

The director also oversees the creation of educational materials such as handouts, brochures, coloring books, and pamphlets, as well as the design and development of new games and exhibits that align with the partnering industry.

Lisa Garner

Four States Fair

The Ag Learning Center operates under the umbrella of the Four States Fair. The Four States Fair team collaborates with the Ag Learning Center staff to support the creation and implementation of educational programs during the annual fair and throughout the year. They also assist with budget management and facility maintenance to ensure the center's ongoing success.

Support System and Volunteers

The Ag Learning Center is supported by a dedicated network of over 250 volunteers from local organizations and the broader community. These volunteers play a critical role in delivering programs and engaging the public, especially during the annual fair and other community events.

Needed Resources

To ensure the continued success of our programs, the Ag Learning Center requires the following resources:

- Support for both permanent and temporary staff to coordinate and deliver educational programs.
- Assistance with facility-related costs, including necessary updates and utilities.
- Promotional items from partnering industries to enhance educational outreach.
- Supplies and funding to support events, activities, and program development.

The Ag Learning Center respectfully requests funding of \$10,000 from the Arkansas Rice Board to help sustain and expand our efforts in agricultural education. This support will enable us to continue providing impactful learning experiences for students, educators, and the community.

Evaluation Plan

The Ag Learning Center staff will be responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of all programs and activities. To ensure continuous improvement, the staff will create new and informative programs aimed at expanding our reach and educating more individuals. Evaluations will be conducted in collaboration with volunteer committees, the Four States Fair Board, and the Arkansas Rice Council Board to assess the impact and success of these initiatives.

Feedback will be gathered from volunteers, community leaders, teachers, and staff members who participate in these programs. This input will help measure the educational outcomes and the effectiveness of our ongoing efforts in both regular programs and special events.

Ag Learning Center estimated total year expenses:

Category	Description	Total (\$)
Facilities	Upkeep, Utilities, Office, Maintenance; Personnel Salary, Postage, Travel	65,000.00
Special Events	Kid's Day, Crossties Fall Festival, Fair; Pizza Ranch, Volunteer Meals, Ice Cream Mix, Ice Cream Cones	5,000.00
Supplies	Class Supplies, Crafting Supplies, Crayons	4,500.00
Educational Equipment	Educational Posters, Signage Displays, 3-D Educational Displays	8,500.00
Games/Activities	Games/Activities	1,000.00
Promotional	Backpacks, Totes, Brochures, Coloring Books; Staff Logo Shirts, Signage	15,000.00
Barnyard	Shavings, Feed, Weed/Insect Control, Maintenance, Repairs	800.00
Special Entertainment	Agricultural Live Programs and Guest Speakers	5,000.00

Total Estimated Expenses: \$104,800

Ag Learning Center

Arkansas Rice Research and Promotion Proposal

 alc@fourstatesfair.com



Four States Fair 

Introduction

- Mission Statement: The Agriculture Learning Center is dedicated to promoting and educating the non-rural public on the importance of agriculture, focusing on Arkansas Commodities such as rice.
- Key Message: Agriculture sustains our communities and impacts daily life.



Four States Fair 



Key Objectives



Four States Fair 

- Enhancing Agricultural Education: Hands-on learning for schools.
- Promoting Arkansas Commodities: Emphasis on rice importance.

Connecting Communities: Bridging rural and non-rural audiences.



Vision

For the Future

- ✔ Collaborating with educators and community members to inspire future agricultural leaders.
- ✔ Highlighting agriculture's role in housing, clothing, and food production.



Project Overview



Four States Fair 

2024 Highlights:

- Reached 15 schools/ organizations and 700 students.
- Developed new interactive activities focused on Arkansas commodities.

Key Methods

- “Hear it, see it, do it” approach.



Goals and Objectives



● Goal 1:

- Educate about rice industry.
- Hands-on lessons, exhibits, and games.

● Goal 2:

- Promote health and nutrition awareness.
- Emphasize benefits of agricultural products.

● Goal 3:

- Strengthen community involvement.
- Train volunteers, develop programs.



Our Clientele

Who We Serve:

- Students and educators
- Fair attendees and the public
- Volunteers



Students



Educators



Fair Attendees



Volunteers

Four States Fair 



Needed Resources

- Funding Request
 - \$20,000

- Resource Allocation

- Staff support.
- Facility costs and updates.
- Supplies for educational outreach.



Evaluation Plan

- Feedback from volunteers, teachers, and community leaders.
- Continuous improvement through collaboration.

 (870) 774-6455

 alc@fourstatesfair.com



 www.fourstatesfair.com

 3700 East 50th Street
Texarkana, AR 71854





**Arkansas Ag in the Classroom
Funding Proposal for the Arkansas Rice Research and Promotion Board**

January 9, 2025

Submitted by:
Donette Spann, Director, Ag in the Classroom

The Arkansas Ag in the Classroom program interacts with and educates students and teachers about the importance of agriculture in Arkansas. The program reached over 175,000 people in the last year with educational materials and programs. Through various workshops and partnerships, we are able to work with schools and various county organizations.

Arkansas Ag in the Classroom programs work to educate youth and adults about each of the commodities grown in the state. With Arkansas being the #1 state in rice production, we see an opportunity for the education of this specific commodity in various ways.

Rice Ag Readers

Over 75,000 Ag Readers have been distributed to students since 2023 to schools and other organizations at no charge. The Arkansas Ag in the Classroom Rice Ag Reader is one of the most popular offerings in the Ag Reader series. To tie into rice’s connection to other commodities, we also include rice messaging in the Poultry and Beef Ag Readers, as rice and rice hulls are an important part of the diets of livestock. We plan to update the Rice Ag Reader in 2025 and the Poultry and Beef Ag Readers towards the end of this year. We want to request \$5,000 for these updates and print new Rice Ag Readers. We also want to continue to offer them at no charge.

Elementary Agriculture Education Pilot Program – Rice Curriculum

The Arkansas Legislature enacted the Elementary Agriculture Education Pilot Program as Act 243 in 2023. The pilot program intends to introduce K-6th grade students to agriculture through the curriculum in development by the National Council of Agricultural Literacy through the University of Utah. The lessons will emphasize commodities grown in Arkansas. Rice will be featured in at least one of the ten lessons for each grade. We are asking for funds to offset the curriculum development costs and purchase rice supplies and materials needed to complete the hands-on STEM projects within the classroom. Our request is for \$15,000.

Budget

Rice Ag Readers Update/Printing	\$5,000
Elementary Agriculture Education Pilot Program – Rice Curriculum/Materials	\$15,000
Total Requested	\$20,000



Arkansas Ag in the Classroom

Arkansas Rice Research & Promotion Board Funding Proposal

Donette Spann

Director, Ag in the Classroom

Arkansas Farm Bureau Federation

February 25, 2025



Who We Are

- Our goal is to engage both youth and adults about topics in agriculture.
- We strive to improve agricultural literacy—this includes raising awareness, knowledge, and appreciation of agriculture and its impact on quality of life—specifically among preK-12 teachers and students.
- Using materials developed in-house and collaborating with other Ag in the Classroom programs and commodity programs, we provide students with materials and lessons that align with state academic standards.



What We Do

- We develop materials and opportunities for schools and communities
 - Arkansas Ag Readers for every commodity
 - Rice, Soybean, Corn, Beef, Small Ruminants, Dairy, Aquaculture, Swine, Cotton, Poultry & Forestry
 - Ag Fact Booklets
 - Classroom Grants for Teachers
 - Outstanding Teacher of the Year
 - Interactive Education Trailers
 - Partnerships with FFA and 4H
 - Outdoor Classroom Garden Grants
 - Youth Ag Immersion Events



Rice Ag Reader

- Over 50,000 Ag Readers distributed to students since 2023
- Eight-page tabloid-style full-color publication
- Topics include types of rice, nutrition, products & by-products, and production
- Plans are to update and print in 2025
- To offer for no charge
- Request: \$5,000



READ ALL ABOUT IT!

ARKANSAS #1 RICE PRODUCER IN THE US!

IT'S TRUE! Arkansas is the #1 producer of rice in the United States. Arkansas farmers produce almost 50% of the rice grown in America. Each year Arkansas farmers plant over 1.3 million acres of rice and harvest over 200 million bushels of rice. A bushel of rice weighs 45 pounds. That means Arkansas farmers produce over 9 billion pounds of rice each year!



WHERE DID RICE COME FROM?

Rice was first cultivated by the Chinese around 2800 B.C. Rice migrated across the continents from China to Persia, Greece, and the Nile Delta. In the late 1860s, it found its way to America on a ship. A storm battered ship sailing from Madagascar limped into the harbor at Charleston, South Carolina. The ship's captain gave a gift of "Golden Seed Rice" (named for its color) to a local farmer.

In 1904 William Fuller from Lonoke County became one of the first farmers to grow rice successfully on his farm in Arkansas. After his success many more Arkansas farmers began to plant rice crops on their farms. By the 1980's Arkansas had become the largest rice producing state in the U.S. Today, rice is Arkansas' largest cash crop, and the rice industry provides thousands of jobs across rural Arkansas.



Elementary Agriculture Education Pilot Program

- Established as Act 243 in 2023 by the Arkansas Legislature.- Aimed at introducing K-6th grade students to agriculture.
- The curriculum will be developed by the National Center for Agricultural Literacy (NCAL) and will emphasize the commodities grown in Arkansas.
- 30 schools have been accepted into the program.
- Rice will be the focus of at least one lesson for each grade, covering seven lessons in total.
- Funding is requested for curriculum development and for purchasing supplies and materials for rice projects at the pilot schools.
- Request: \$15,000.



Summary

Arkansas Ag in the Classroom requests:

Rice Ag Readers Update/Printing	\$5,000
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Elementary Ag Education Pilot Program Rice Curriculum & Classroom Supplies	<u>\$15,000</u>
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Total	\$20,000
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Thank you!



Arkansas Rice Research and Promotion Board – 2025-2026 Proposal

Title: Arkansas Future Ag Leaders Tour

Lead Investigators: Julie Robinson

Status (i.e., New, Year 2 of 3, Year 2 of 2, etc.): 2 of 3

Stated Goal: A five-day professional development opportunity for undergraduate juniors and seniors enrolled in Colleges of Agriculture or are pursuing agriculture related majors across the state of Arkansas. Agriculture and agriculture related professions are the number one employer in the state. This one-week experience will enhance students' leadership and employability skills, provide first-hand networking opportunities with potential employers, and highlight the vast resources, services, and careers available through Arkansas' agriculture industry. Participants will get to interact with farmers, producers, vendors, and many others that support the agricultural industry in Arkansas. The goal of this tour is to better prepare and inform new graduates about the wide variety of employers and employment opportunities available to them. The tour helps participants discover jobs across the state, keeping homegrown talent in-state, and local.

Specific Objectives:

- Increase participant's employability in agricultural careers.
- Acquaint participants with the vast resources, market segments, and services available through Arkansas' number one industry.
- Provide participants with a "bird's eye view" of current employment opportunities in the Arkansas agriculture industry.
- Increase student's options and opportunities by networking with future employers.

Methods:

The fourth annual Arkansas Future Ag Leaders Tour was hosted in May 2024. Ten students from fine universities across the state participated. The tour was successful in connecting students with employers. To continue to provide this same professional development for future agricultural professionals, project coordinators are planning a five-day state-wide tour for undergraduate students who are in their junior and senior year of college. The call for applications will go out to all colleges with agriculture-related academic departments, including Arkansas State University, Arkansas Tech University, Southern Arkansas University, University of Arkansas – Fayetteville, University of Arkansas – Little Rock, University of Arkansas – Monticello, and University of Arkansas – Pine Bluff. The tour will begin at the Arkansas 4-H Center in Little Rock, on Monday, May 12, 2025. Participants will engage in leadership and team building activities to get to know each other and the coordinators. Participants will also participate in professional development activities related to networking, key tips for snagging the job of their dreams, and career advancement strategies. Each day, participants will travel across the state to pre-arranged tour sites to visit facilities and network with professionals. This will allow students to experience first-hand the diversity of opportunities within Arkansas' agriculture industry. Growers, producers, processors, manufacturers, educators, and research facilities will host students across Arkansas.

Planned Milestones:

1. Formalization of a detailed project management and evaluation plan: February
2. Creation and dissemination of marketing resources: February.
3. Applications open: March
4. Coordination of the tour, scheduled for May 12 – 16, including arrangement and confirmation of tour stops including North East Arkansas, North West Arkansas, South East Arkansas, Southwest Arkansas, and Central Arkansas.
5. Communication with participants leading up to the tour: April
6. Conduct the Arkansas Future Ag Leaders Tour: May 12 – 16
7. Collaboration with news media and community partners to leverage resources. Management and utilization of program evaluation data to improve participation experience and outcomes.

Statement of Projected Value:

The Arkansas Future Ag Leaders Tour helps create a more prepared and informed workforce that better understands the needs and dynamics of the farmers and producers that they will serve in their agricultural related careers across the state. This professional development program addresses some job readiness skills that have been identified as deficient by employers. Other states, such as Georgia and South Carolina, offer similar opportunities for undergraduates for a significant cost. By providing this opportunity for free, many students who would not be able to otherwise afford to pay their way can participate, in addition to missing a week of work in order to participate. The greatest value to the rice industry is that this provides an opportunity to inform and educate future agriculture industry professionals and leaders about challenges facing farmers and producers. In addition, touring across the state makes students aware of what jobs are available in the state and in local communities all across Arkansas.

Budget Justifications/Explanation of Travel and Direct Costs:

Coordination will be provided by the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture project team, led by Community, Professional, and Economic Development faculty and staff. Monetary support for this project totals in the amount of \$20,000. Program coordinators are requesting \$5,000 from the Rice Research and Promotion Board and seeking additional contributions from other commodity and industry groups to fund the total. The greatest expenses for this program are lodging, meals, and bus rental. Funds will support meals for participants and guest speakers, vehicle usage and mileage, lodging, and materials and supplies. Program coordinators will utilize a coach bus to transport participants across the state. While several meals are usually donated by some of the companies visited, not all meals are covered and there are still mileage and fuel expenses, lodging, and supplies that need to be budgeted.

**University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture
Promotion Board Budget**

Robinson, Julie

Arkansas Future Ag Leaders Tour

		Maintenance & Operations						
		M&O				Total	AES Portion	CES Portion
	Supplies					\$0	\$0	\$0
	Fertilizer/Chemicals					\$0	\$0	\$0
	Publication					\$0	\$0	\$0
	Statistical Consulting					\$0	\$0	\$0
	Other Direct Costs					\$0	\$0	\$0
Station Maintenance	SAREC, Fayetteville	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	CTST, Marianna	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Lonoke County Ext. Center	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	NERE, Keiser	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	NERREC, Harrisburg	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Jackson County Ext. Center	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	PTST, Colt	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	RIRE, Stuttgart	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Rosen Center	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	SEST, Rohwer	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	SWRE, Hope	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	VGSS, Kibler	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	FRSS, Clarksville	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	LFST, Batesville	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	CSES Greenhouse, Fayetteville	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	M & O Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Total for Proposal	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,000	\$0	\$5,000

Budget errors delay submission of your proposal. Any proposal submitted with errors in the budget cannot be guaranteed accurate presentation for funding. Please check budgets for accuracy.

Fringe Benefit Rates (as of 7/1/2022)				
Campus	Fulltime	Temp/Hourly	Graduate	Student
AES	28.60%	7.30%	5.10%	0.10%
CES	28.60%	7.30%	5.10%	0.10%

Arkansas Future Ag Leaders Tour

Investigator(s): Julie Robinson

Year: 2 of 3

Amount Requested: \$5,000

Objectives:

- Increase participant's employability in agricultural careers.
- Acquaint participants with the vast resources, market segments, and services available through Arkansas' number one industry.
- Provide participants with a "bird's eye view" of current employment opportunities in the Arkansas agriculture industry.
- Increase student's options and opportunities by networking with future employers.

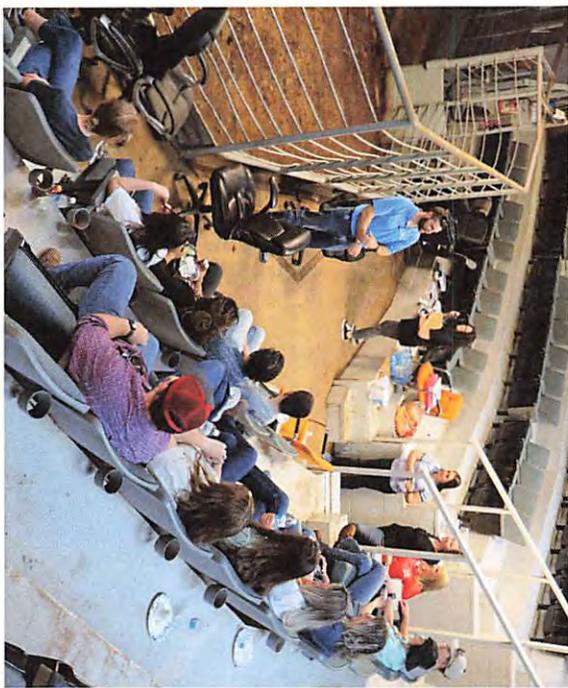
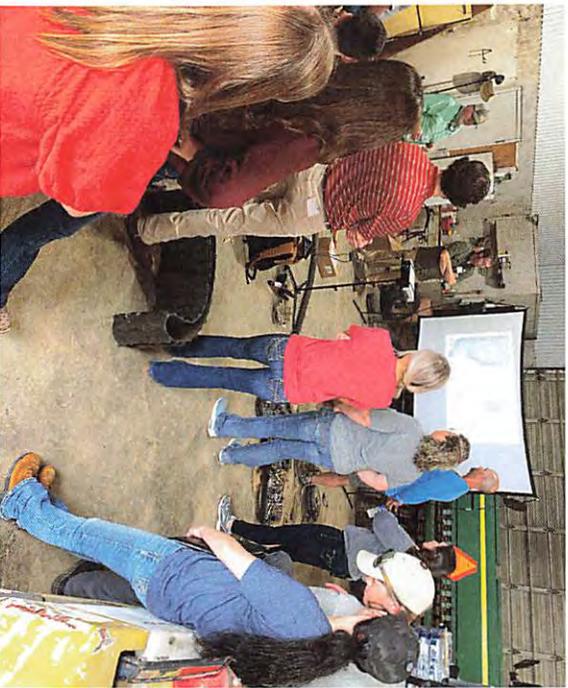
Arkansas Future Ag Leaders Tour

Significant Findings for Previous Year for Current Studies or Value to Rice Industry:

1. The Arkansas Future Ag Leaders Tour helps create a more prepared and informed workforce that better understands the needs and dynamics of the farmers and producers that they will serve in their agricultural related careers across the state.
2. Addresses some job readiness skills that have been identified as deficient by employers.
3. Touring across the state makes students aware of what jobs are available in the state and in local communities all across Arkansas.

Quotes:

- “I learned that there are way more ag jobs in AR than I thought.”
- “I will use this experience to lead others and grow or carry this knowledge to others.”
- “I will use the knowledge I have received from the many speakers on the job.”
- “I learned that Ag careers are about passion for agriculture and helping people.”



Arkansas Rice Research & Promotion Board | Promotion Grant Proposal 2025-2026

Title: Rice Discovery Program

Lead: Ashlyn Ussery, Agriculture and Natural Resources Educator

Promotion Area: Education

Goal:

The Rice Discovery Program is cultivating a unique learning space with hands-on learning opportunities related to Arkansas' agriculture industry, specifically Arkansas rice. The Rice Discovery Program is operated within the Northeast Rice Research and Extension Center (NERREC) and provides agriculture learning opportunities for students, teachers and parents. NERREC's dedicated education space for the Rice Discovery Program consists of a greenhouse, classroom, and kitchen. Each of these areas are equipped for students to experience different aspects of agriculture first-hand, while cultivating conversations about where the food we eat comes from and the dedication that farmers in and around our area have when growing it.

Objectives:

- Provide teachers, parents and students with hands-on learning opportunities that focus on agriculture from the field-to- the-fork
- Obtain and maintain hands-on equipment that can be used by 1st-12th grade students to learn about different elements of agriculture
- Support the continuation of Arkansas agriculture education in schools and other education spaces
- Promote the Arkansas rice industry and its positive impact on the region, state and nation

Value to the Rice Industry:

The Rice Discovery Program was inspired by the leadership of Arkansas Rice Research and Promotion Board members and their want for students to have more agriculture education opportunities in Northeast Arkansas. As the leading state in the US rice industry, Arkansas should be the place to come for information regarding all things rice farming, including easy access to rice focused education opportunities and materials. The Rice Discovery

Program is dedicated to helping support and inspire educators to bring agriculture, specifically rice education, into their classrooms by providing access to online materials as well as a beautiful facility that is equipped with hands-on learning opportunities; taking students through the journey of rice, from the field to the fork. We believe by doing this, students in Arkansas will have a greater appreciation for the agriculture industry and a foundation to make informed decisions about the food they purchase and consume.

Budget & Explanation:

Coordination of funds will be provided by the University of Arkansas System Division of agriculture, led by Agriculture and Natural Resources faculty and staff.

The program lead is requesting \$5,000 from the Arkansas Rice Research and Promotion Board.

Funds will be used to support the purchase of three pieces of hands-on equipment for the classroom that will be used to enhance current and future learning opportunities, materials for a new ag-in-a-bag lesson to be distributed to teachers and other educators in our area, logoed “swag” items for students to take away from the station after a visit or for the programs educator to have at off-site events for program promotion, and lastly four travel education posters that will be used to enhance current and future learning opportunities in the NERREC education space as well as at off-site education events.

To learn more about the Rice Discovery Program, visit our webpage [HERE](#).

www.uaex.uada.edu/rice-education

Rice Discovery Program



Program Lead: Ashlyn Ussery

Amount Requested: \$5,000

- Created in 2021
- Located within the Northeast Rice Research and Extension Center since 2024
- Dedicated to providing hands-on learning opportunities related to agriculture and natural resources, with a unique focus on rice and rice production.
- In person resource, online resources, off-site resources
- 2021 to 2024 → 1,500 students
- 2025 → 200 students signed up to participate within the first five months

Arkansas Rice Promotion

Rice Discovery Program

Program Lead: Ashlyn Ussery

Amount Requested: \$5,000



Greenhouse

Rice at different growth stages with plans to have displays available year round

Classroom

Home to small scale rice processing equipment and specific activities related to rice production

Kitchen

Rice tastings available with every in-house class with specific cooking activities available

Community

Partnerships at local industry events as well as with county extension agents across the state



Promotional Funds

Rice Discovery Program

Program Lead: Ashlyn Ussery

Amount Requested: \$5,000

Hands-on Equipment

Used to enhance current and future learning opportunities for students

Ag-in-a-bag Lesson

A complete activity in one bag, ready for teachers, parents and educators to bring to their students

Promotional Items

Promoting Arkansas Rice and the Rice Discovery Program beyond a class or activity

Education Travel Posters

Used to enhance current and future learning opportunities at the station and at off-site education events





USA Rice Council Funding Request
to the Arkansas Rice Research & Promotion Board

January 9, 2025

Contents

- a) Request Letter
- b) 2023-24 USA Rice Accomplishments
- c) USA Rice Program Area Updates
 - a. Communications
 - b. Conservation & Sustainability
 - c. Domestic Promotion
 - d. International Promotion
 - e. International Trade Policy
 - f. Meetings & Member Services

Attached Separately

- d) USA Rice Council Audit Report
- e) USA Rice Federation Audit Report



Promoting U.S.-Grown Rice at Home and Around the World

A USA Rice Federation Charter Member

January 9, 2025

Arkansas Rice Research and Promotion Board
1 Natural Resources Drive
Little Rock, AR 72205

Dear Board Members:

On behalf of the USA Rice Council, we thank you for the opportunity to meet with you and provide our annual financial and program report, that is accompanied by audited financial statements for the USA Rice Council and the USA Rice Federation from an independent, certified public accounting firm. USA Rice Council strives for a high level of transparency and accountability and will continue to provide program updates and financial statements to the boards throughout the fiscal year. To this end, in addition to attending your Board meetings to discuss our activities and answer the Board's questions, we are including here USA Rice Program Activity Updates that were presented to the USA Rice Council in December 2024. Covering the first half of the 2024/2025 year, the reports detail International and Domestic Promotion, Trade Policy/Market Access, and Communications activities performed on behalf of, and with the support of, this Board.

Founded in 1958, the USA Rice Council is a nonprofit association that promotes the use of U.S.-grown rice in domestic and international markets through advertising, publicity, education, and other legal means. We request funding from the Arkansas Rice Research and Promotion Board for fiscal year 2024/2025 in the amount of \$3,100,000, based on estimates of assessment collections of 1.35 cents per bushel, less administration expenses and collection costs. We request funds be provided on a monthly basis, as has been done in years prior.

The funds requested will not be utilized to promote any one company, brand, or variety of rice, but rather will be used for the purpose of conducting domestic and international promotion and market development programs on behalf of the Arkansas rice industry as a whole, which include:

- a. advertising, public relations, marketing, education, trade missions, reverse trade missions and/or other activities in the United States and in foreign markets to expand use, consumption, and sales of Arkansas rice and other U.S. rice and rice products; (~10%)
- b. market surveys and research to determine the factors that bear upon the domestic and foreign utilization of Arkansas and other U.S. rice and rice products, and identify market potential and marketing opportunities, both domestic and foreign; (~5%)
- c. promotional activities aimed at fostering greater use and consumption of Arkansas and other U.S. rice in the domestic and foreign markets; (~50%)
- d. working to improve market access and open new markets for U.S. rice, including work to eliminate trade barriers and prevent new trade barriers from arising and work to increase the use of U.S. origin rice in U.S. government aid programs; (~8%)
- e. facilitating industrywide promotion campaigns that will increase consumption of Arkansas and U.S. rice and rice products by promoting the health, safety, sustainability, versatility and conservation benefits of U.S. grown rice; (~22%)

- f. leveraging government food policy and programs to benefit the rice industry in Arkansas and the United States; (~2%)
- g. developing and implementing other activities that will assist in promotion and market development for rice and rice products produced in Arkansas and the United States. (~3%)

The funds requested will be combined with funds from other state promotional boards and industry sources, as well as from the Foreign Agricultural Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA/FAS), for the purpose of conducting promotion and market development programs for U.S.-grown rice. In this way, we develop and implement a coordinated, non-duplicative, and effective domestic promotional program and foreign market development program for the entire U.S. rice industry.

It is important to note that USDA/FAS takes industry contributions into consideration when determining their allocation of funds; without the funds from Arkansas, the millions of dollars USDA/FAS allocates to promote U.S. rice overseas would be in jeopardy.

The goals of our promotional activities vary depending on the audience but essentially aim to increase awareness of U.S. rice and then develop a preference and thus a purchasing decision for American rice. Our ultimate objective is to maintain or increase consumption and purchases of U.S. rice at a sustainable value that allows for long-term, continued rice production.

We appreciate the opportunity to work on behalf of the Arkansas rice industry and must acknowledge that as the largest rice producing state by orders of magnitude, the entire industry looks to Arkansas to lead on most matters. From innovation in the field to supporting dynamic promotion programs, and from helping the industry broaden its base to demanding accountability from all vendors and contractors, Arkansas sets the tone, making the Arkansas Rice Research and Promotion Board the de facto conscience of the U.S. rice industry. It is our great privilege to work with you, and we appreciate your consideration of this request for funding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Bachmann". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and "B".

Peter Bachmann
President and CEO

2023/24

USA RICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

USA RICE MISSION

Our mission is to ensure the health and vitality of a unified U.S. rice industry by advocating on behalf of farmers, millers, merchants, and allied businesses.

CORE OBJECTIVES



Government Affairs

Develop and influence the implementation of legislative and regulatory policies favorable to the growth and profitability of the U.S. rice industry.



Market Access & Promotion

Gain and maintain meaningful domestic and international market access for all types and forms of U.S. rice.



Enhance Knowledge

Inform and educate USA Rice members, rice industry segments, government officials, researchers, consumers, the media, and others.



Conserving our Natural Resources

Promote the adoption of economically viable conservation practices to drive positive environmental outcomes and ensure the long-term sustainability of the U.S. rice industry.

2023/24 GOALS

- 1 Work to ensure federal and state legislation and policy is developed in accordance with U.S. rice industry priorities and values.
- 2 Work with regulatory agencies to ensure positive, science-based outcomes for the U.S. rice industry in food safety, farm, and manufacturing areas.
- 3 Grow the resources of the USA Rice PAC.
- 4 Work to reduce and eliminate unfair trade barriers to U.S. rice.
- 5 Expand the reach and use of U.S.-grown rice in international markets.
- 6 Promote the use of U.S.-grown rice in the domestic market.
- 7 Produce industry meetings and communications to advance understanding and cooperation within the industry and related government agencies.
- 8 Enhance and promote the value of USA Rice for membership recruitment and retention, and to generate non-dues revenue.
- 9 Continue to develop and promote the sustainability and conservation credentials of the U.S. rice industry.

GOAL

1

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

Work to ensure federal and state legislation and policy is developed in accordance with U.S. rice industry priorities and values.



HOUSE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE FARM BILL PASSAGE

On May 24, the House Agriculture Committee considered and passed the Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2024 with a bipartisan vote of 33 to 21. The bill addresses nearly all USA Rice Farm Bill priorities, including:

Improvements to Title 1 Commodities Programs

- ▶ Increases PLC Program reference price for long- and medium-grain rice from \$14.00 to \$16.90 per cwt and Temperate Japonica from \$17.30 to \$20.96 per cwt
- ▶ Modernizes and streamlines payment limitation provisions and increases the marketing assistance loan rate from \$7.00 to \$7.70 per cwt

Prioritizes working lands conservation programs and ensures programs remain voluntary, incentive-based, and locally led

- ▶ Expands funding and improves the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Conservation Stewardship Program, and the Regional Conservation Partnership Program



Enhances international promotion and food aid programs

- ▶ Doubles funding for the Market Access Program and Foreign Market Development Program
- ▶ Bolsters international food aid programs by prioritizing in-kind, commodity-based aid



Improves area-based crop insurance policies and maintains product development provisions

- ▶ Increases the premium support for the Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO) to 80%, increases the maximum coverage level to 90% for Whole Farm Revenue Protection and SCO.
- ▶ Continues the 508(h) product and endorsement development process

SENATE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE FRAMEWORKS RELEASED

Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee leaders have released their individual versions of what they believe the 2024 Farm Bill should look like. Ranking Member John Boozman's proposal largely mirrors the House Agriculture Committee bill and is very favorable to the rice industry compared to Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow's framework which dismisses USA Rice's priorities across the board.

BELTWAY RELATIONSHIPS



250+ interactions

with lawmakers, Congressional staff, and industry partners



20+ meetings

with the White House, USDA, EPA, FDA, USTR, and other federal departments, to educate on and discuss issues important to the U.S. rice industry



20+ coalition memberships

comprised of fellow agriculture trade associations and agribusiness partners

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT



35+ communications

on policy and economic updates sent to USA Rice Boards and membership



15+ meetings

of USA Rice Boards and Committees to discuss policy and political direction and updates



3 fly-ins

to Washington, D.C. where members advocated for positive outcomes in farm, trade, and transportation policy

GOAL 2

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

Work with regulatory agencies to ensure positive, science-based outcomes for the U.S. rice industry in food safety, farm, and manufacturing areas.



FOOD SAFETY

- ▶ Met with food manufacturers and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to advocate for science-based standards for food safety and to highlight the industry's proactiveness and progress on reducing heavy metal uptake by rice.
- ▶ Advocated against legislation that would force the FDA to implement arbitrary and non-scientific regulations for heavy metals in infant rice cereals.
- ▶ Worked closely with USDA, FDA, and Congress to encourage agronomic research funding targeted at meeting the goals of the FDA's Closer to Zero Initiative.
- ▶ Joined specialty crop producers, food marketers, and other impacted stakeholders on state and federal policies related to heavy metals, including advocacy for additional federal funding for research.



ENVIRONMENTAL / CLIMATE CHANGE

- ▶ Engaged with numerous public officials from various departments with jurisdiction on climate change regulations to educate them on the sustainability advancements the rice industry has made over the past three decades and to highlight the industry's 2030 sustainability goals.
- ▶ Submitted comments to EPA raising concerns on the draft toxicological review of inorganic arsenic produced by the Integrated Risk Information System.



PESTICIDES

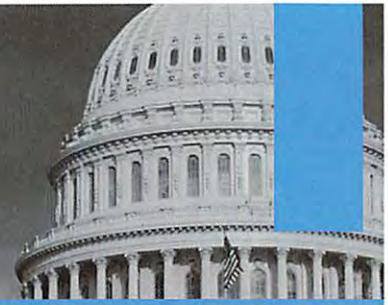
- ▶ Monitored domestic and international regulatory actions pertaining to pesticides used by U.S. rice farmers, millers, and merchants and worked to ensure continued access to these pesticides.
- ▶ Worked with allies on Capitol Hill and other industry stakeholders to educate Members of Congress and their staff hostile to pesticides, about how and why pesticides are used, and the comprehensive regulatory structure at the federal and state level to ensure pesticide safety.
- ▶ Continue to actively engage with EPA, USDA, National Marine Fisheries Service and Fish and Wildlife Service to bring EPA into compliance with the Endangered Species Act as it relates to pesticide regulation. Successfully encouraged EPA to exempt herbicide applications from additional runoff or erosion mitigation measures when applied to fields where levees are maintained.
- ▶ Secured numerous provisions related to pesticide regulatory reform in the Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2024 (House Farm Bill).
- ▶ Developed and supported public comments and correspondence by the Pesticide Policy Coalition.



GOAL 3

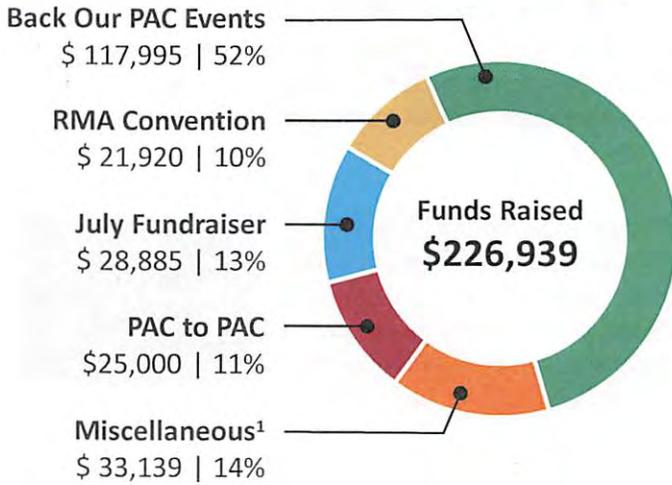
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

Grow the resources of the USA Rice PAC.



2023 PAC FUNDRAISING REVIEW

2024 PAC AT-A-GLANCE



\$17,642

Raised from January 1 – May 31, 2024



\$125,000 contributed

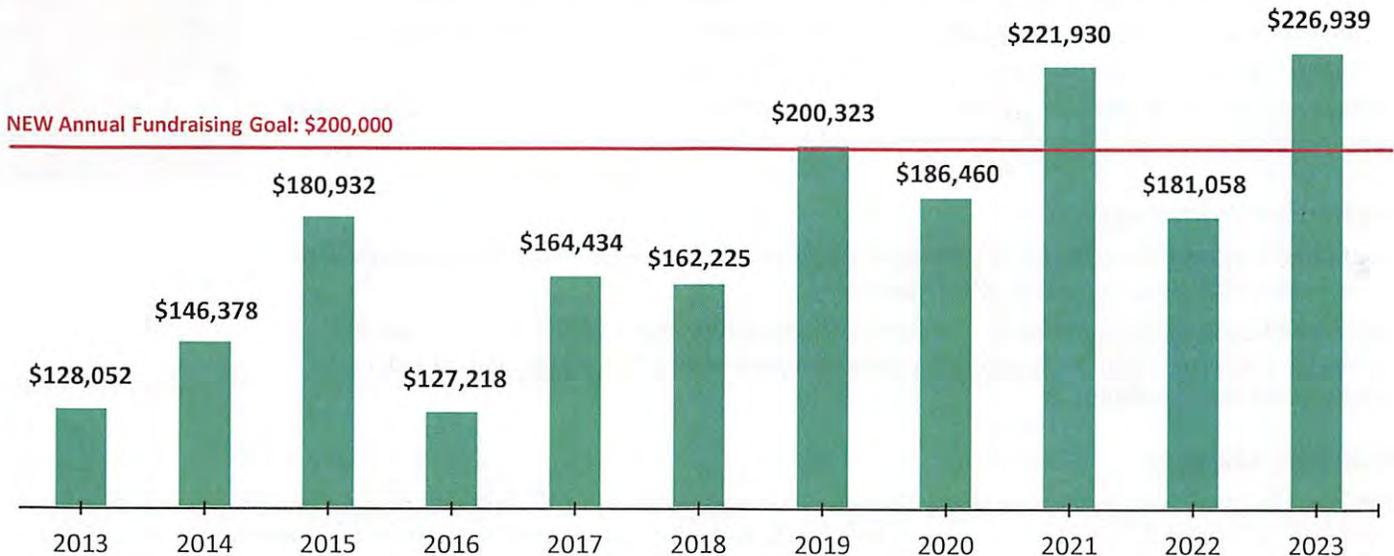
to more than 45 Congressional candidates for re-election support



¹Miscellaneous includes General Member Contributions (\$22,646), Staff Payroll Deductions (\$4,793), and Harvest Fundraiser (\$5,700).

ANNUAL PAC FUNDRAISING TOTALS (2013 – 2023)

After five consecutive years of surpassing our annual fundraising goal of \$175,000, the USA Rice PAC Board of Directors voted during its December meeting to increase the annual goal to \$200,000 beginning in 2024.



GOAL 4

ACCESS & PROMOTION

Work to reduce and eliminate unfair trade barriers to U.S. rice.

MARKET ACCESS

Turkey

- ▶ Elevated our request to the U.S. Department of Commerce to continue bilateral discussions for the removal of the Section 232 retaliatory tariffs and began organizing a Fall 2024 reverse trade mission to encourage purchases.

Iraq

- ▶ Advocated to the U.S. Department of Treasury, State, and Agriculture for a financing solution following the Federal Reserve's restriction of Iraqi banks regarding access to U.S. dollars.

Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs)

- ▶ Developing residue data for Piperonyl Butoxide and Deltamethrin to submit tolerance applications to Japan, Korea, and Taiwan by the end of 2024.

Cuba

- ▶ Participated in the U.S. - Cuba Agricultural Business Conference in Havana to engage with government officials as well as private sector companies, some of which import U.S. rice.



LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD

Trade Policy D.C. Fly-In

- ▶ Held the third annual trade-focused member fly-in to educate the Executive and Legislative Branches on rice trade issues, including the need for action against India's trade distorting policies, Iraq, food aid, transportation, and other industry priorities.



30 members

representing the grower, merchant, and milling sectors participated

Holding India Accountable

- ▶ Organized a group of 21 bipartisan U.S. House Members and six U.S. Senators to introduce and cosponsor the Prioritizing Offensive Agricultural Disputes and Enforcement Act. The bill establishes a joint USTR/USDA task force on agricultural trade enforcement. The language was included in the Farm Bill version passed by the House Agriculture Committee.
- ▶ Commissioned a study examining how Indian non-Basmati rice exports work in practice in conjunction with market price support, public stockholding schemes, and other relevant policies.



World Trade Organization (WTO)

- ▶ Continued to grow the Aggies for WTO Reform Coalition membership and meeting regularly with government officials to encourage WTO reforms.
- ▶ Joined the Coalition in Abu Dhabi to represent U.S. agriculture at the WTO's 13th Ministerial Conference and successfully engaged with delegation to ensure a firm stance against India's public stockholding position.



USITC Section 332 Study

- ▶ Fulfilling USA Rice's request, House Ways & Means Chair Jason Smith (R-MO) initiated an updated U.S. International Trade Commission Section 332 study to be used to help justify and advocate for actions by the U.S. government to help level the global playing field for rice. USA Rice provided written and verbal testimony to support the investigation.

GOAL 5

ACCESS & PROMOTION

Expand the reach and use of U.S.-grown rice in international markets.

GENERAL

In 2024, USA Rice received more than \$11 million from USDA to promote all types and forms of U.S. rice in 20+ countries.

- ▶ Worked with USDA to send 80,000 MT (\$65 million) of U.S. rice shipped as food aid overseas.
- ▶ Received more than half of the requested RAPP funds for tranche 1, which allows 8% (or approximately \$100,000 each year to go towards overhead expenses).

WESTERN HEMISPHERE

Canada

- ▶ Conducted an extensive advertising campaign across the city, including subway displays, station posters, transit shelter ads, and billboards.



Central America

- ▶ Conducted 412 in-store promotions at supermarkets throughout Central America.

33% increase in U.S. rice sales during the promotion



EUROPE / MIDDLE EAST

Saudi Arabia

- ▶ Kicked off a Ramadan campaign centered around a rice cooking video hosted by a well-known local influencer.



video received more than **1.9 million views**

United Kingdom

- ▶ Conducted two outdoor campaigns featuring bus shelter advertising and digital billboards to increase exposure for U.S. rice products in select locations near stores selling those products.



More than **200** advertising locations during **4 month** promotion

ASIA

Japan

- ▶ Participated in the U.S. Embassy's "Taste of America" promotion with 22 restaurants representing 31 outlets.



U.S. rice was one of the **most featured** U.S. foods in the promotion



Taiwan

- ▶ Conducted 111 in-store demos at 14 Costco stores nationwide which led to a 500% increase in sales of U.S. long grain enriched rice, compared to the period preceding the promotion.



Costco began importing U.S. long grain enriched rice as its house brand, Kirkland, in 2022 and continues to this date!

GOAL 6

ACCESS & PROMOTION

Promote the use of U.S.-grown rice in the domestic market.

CONSUMER CONTENT

Consumer Research

- ▶ Continued research program analyzing consumer habits, demographics, opinions, and emotional need states associated with rice consumption. Data now covers children, teens, and adults.

FeedFeed

- ▶ Continued partnership to keep U.S. rice at the forefront of digital culinary space through the creation and promotion of 16 new recipes.



Generated
57.6M
impressions
+
12.7M
engagements

Recipe Production

- ▶ Developed 40 recipe videos and 85 new consumer and foodservice recipes covering multiple day parts and all U.S. rice varieties.

Grown in the USA Logo Update

- ▶ Developed a new Grown in the USA mark in response to operators and member brands requesting a refreshed logo to promote their use of U.S.-grown rice.



Retail Partnerships

- ▶ Partnered with Weis and ShopRite retail chains to conduct promotions highlighting the U.S.-grown difference and share industry resources to promote the purchase and use of U.S.-grown rice.



The three-month campaign at Weis resulted in an average **15% increase** of store brand U.S. rice sales.

NUTRITION

K-12 Chef Advisory Board

- ▶ Added two chefs to the Board and hosted an accredited webinar for school operators, debuted the Reimagined Rice in Schools cookbook, and created 16 recipes.



Registered Dietitian Bloggers

- ▶ Enlisted 7 Registered Dietitian bloggers to create and share healthy rice recipes.


24 new
recipes


11.4 million
impressions


72 thousand
engagements

FOCUSED ON FOODSERVICE

Chain Engagement

- ▶ Continued operator engagement to develop opportunities for partnership, placement, and promotion of U.S.-grown rice. Hosted menu ideation sessions for Sodexo and Modern Market and have ongoing meetings with the CAVA chain.



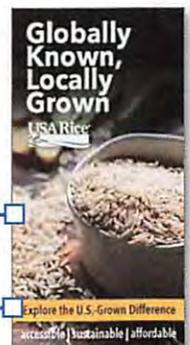
Through the program, the Grown in the USA Rice logo was added to menus nationwide at Rock N' Roll Sushi.

Advertising

- ▶ Developed a series of advertisements for *Plate* magazine showcasing rice's versatility, back-of-house advantages, and the U.S.-grown difference.


28K+ foodservice professionals reached


44% open rate averaged



GOAL 7

ENHANCE KNOWLEDGE

Produce industry meetings and communications to advance understanding and cooperation within the industry and related government agencies.

INDUSTRY COMMUNICATIONS

The Rice Stuff Podcast

- ▶ The bimonthly podcast continues to grow with a listenership in 34 countries and 36 states. Episodes cover sustainability, conservation, agronomy, and other topics of interest to the industry. Episodes are available on all podcast services and the web at www.thericestuffpodcast.com.



93 episodes
of the podcast as of June 2024



25K+ unique downloads
of the 93 podcast episodes

USA Rice Daily

- ▶ The Daily is published 230 times per year and distributed to more than 3,600 subscribers, boasting an open rate in the mid-to-low 30 percent range.

Social Media

- ▶ Steady rise in social media engagement across Facebook, X, Instagram, and LinkedIn thanks to our growth in followers.



9.2K page likes



8.2K+ followers



4.8K followers



1.4K+ followers

USA RICE OUTLOOK CONFERENCE

- ▶ Hosted thought-provoking General Session speakers and 10 hours of educational programming on two stages, providing simultaneous translation for many sessions for the more than 40 international attendees.
- ▶ Successfully held the 4th Annual U.S. Rice Quality Symposium, featuring six breeders showcasing 26 U.S. rice varieties currently either in development or in production. More than 140 members and international attendees joined the event.



532 participants
attended the conference



29 exhibitors
joined the tradeshow



THE RICE FOUNDATION

Provided staff management and administrative services for The Rice Foundation.

Education

- ▶ Conducted four domestic sessions of the Rice Leadership Development Program and one international session to Australia.



Funding & Grants

- ▶ Held a golf tournament fundraiser in conjunction with the USA Rice Outlook Conference, raising \$33,000.
- ▶ Continued the campaign to increase support for The Rice Foundation, including efforts to increase funding from state rice research boards, corporate sponsors and government and NGO funding agencies.



GOAL 8

ENHANCE KNOWLEDGE

Enhance and promote the value of USA Rice for membership recruitment and retention, and to generate non-dues revenue.

PRESENCE & PARTICIPATION

Advancing the Value of USA Rice

- ▶ Actively supported meetings and events, at the state and local level, through sponsorships, presentations, materials, as well as staff support and coordination.
- ▶ Provided field services support in the development and implementation of in-state and USA Rice activities.

Supporting State Activities

- ▶ USA Rice hosted the 2024 International Temperate Rice Conference (IRTC) in New Orleans, and took part in hosting multiple Congressional delegates, USDA staff, and international guests through various aspects of the U.S. rice industry.
- ▶ Organized local National Rice Month events including a student cooking contest, media promotions of U.S.-grown rice, and donations of more than 300,000 pounds of rice to food banks.



40+ events & meetings

attended across seven rice growing states



MEMBERSHIP OUTREACH

Growing the Tent

- ▶ Recruited 4 new members to the USA Rice community.
 - USA Rice Enterprise Partner: AgriCapture and Talam Biotech
 - USA Rice Millers' Association: Pope Packaging (Associate) and Western Foods (Mill)



VOLUNTEER LEADERS

2024/25 Board Transitions

- ▶ Conducted the USA Rice Millers' Association and USA Rice Merchants' Association elections for representation on various boards.
- ▶ Collected appointments from each of the rice states for farmer representation on various boards.



GOAL 9

CONSERVING OUR NATURAL RESOURCES

Continue to develop and promote the sustainability and conservation credentials of the U.S. rice industry.

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP

Rice Stewardship Partnership

- ▶ Congress officially recognized the 10th anniversary of the USA Rice-Ducks Unlimited Rice Stewardship Partnership by introducing resolutions in the House and Senate in September during National Rice Month.
- ▶ Nutrien Ag Solutions joined as the newest financial partner of the Rice Stewardship Partnership, and Mosaic, Riceland, and Walmart renewed their commitments to supporting this on-the-ground work.



Climate-Smart Commodity Project

- ▶ The Partnership signed the agreement with USDA for the \$80 million Climate-Smart Commodity project.
- ▶ The seven-state Climate-Smart Commodity project will offer many of the same conservation practices offered in previous RCPP projects as well as additional financial opportunities.
- ▶ Hosted multiple Climate-Smart informational and sign-up meetings for growers seeking opportunities within their state.

 **6 of 7 states**
held general sign-ups

 **770 applications**
Received thus far

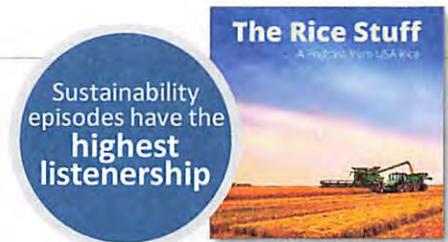


Combined, the 14 RCPP projects and Climate-Smart Commodity project will bring **\$170 million** directly to rice farmers to implement conservation practices on more than **1 million acres** of rice and rice rotation ground

SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAMS

Telling Our Story

- ▶ Sustainability episodes of *The Rice Stuff* podcast feature a range of topics and continue to be among the most popular.



Refining Sustainability Metrics

- ▶ Continued to assist Field to Market in their effort to update the biodiversity metric and is committed to creating a metric that is much more representative of rice's beneficial impact on biodiversity, especially for waterfowl.
- ▶ Continued to lead efforts to align metrics for rice production and better calculate the gains in sustainability as part of the 2030 Rice Industry Sustainability Goals.

COMMUNICATIONS

Media Relations

USA Rice Communications staff engage with the mainstream and ag media on their own and in coordination with partners and similarly aligned advocacy groups in the ag and food space every week. We assist departments at USA Rice and allied organizations with outward and inward-facing communications of all types – digital, printed, and verbal – all in an effort to effectively communicate rice messages and points of view.

Five Billboards Outside Little Rock, Arkansas

With the long-awaited return to Little Rock for the 2024 USA Rice Outlook Conference, USA Rice took the opportunity to take on some new outreach and paid media in an effort to grow attendance. In addition to the typical print campaign in Delta Farm Press (4 ads), Southwest Farm Press (3 ads) and Western Farm Press (1 ad), USA Rice added 3 ads in MidAmerica Farmer Grower publications that came with a 300-word article promoting the conference that ran in the November 1 issue. Additionally, we ran a recurring digital ad in the Creed Market Report for several months leading up to Outlook.

For the first time, USA Rice also added outdoor advertising for the conference. After careful analysis of traffic patterns in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi rice country, USA Rice purchased five USA Rice Outlook billboards. There are two in Jonesboro and one each in Newport, Waldenburg, and Marked Tree. One Jonesboro board is 12' x 48', the rest are 10' x 22.' The boards went up starting October 11 and will remain in place through at least November 30, delivering 334,000 weekly impressions.

USA Rice also produced ten 38" x 48" corrugated tower signs with a QR code directing to registration and conference information. The signs were distributed through southwest Louisiana at mills, equipment dealers, and chemical and seed companies farmers were likely to visit.



Podcast

In October, *The Rice Stuff* (TRS) podcast, released Episode 100 amidst almost no fanfare. The 'pod' is closing in on 28,000 unique downloads, with 2,000 downloads since the July 2024 report. Listeners average completing more than 75% of each episode and the episodes most frequently listened to multiple times were #1, an episode about the industry's sustainability goals, rice breeding for Latin America, and the 85th International Rice Festival in 2022. The single most repeated episode? #5 *The Problem with Feral Hogs*.



The Daily and the Whole Grain

The e-newsletter published each day at 3:30 p.m. ET includes feature stories on the latest industry news, market updates, and links to relevant press reports. The *Daily* has 3,600 subscribers and boasts an open rate in the mid-30s to low 40 percent range, which is remarkably high for a daily publication. In recognition of the efficacy of the *Daily's* curated list, advertisers have begun to purchase the Box Ad included in each issue.

Stories published in the *Daily* often make the jump to ag and traditional media.

The *Whole Grain* continues to have a limited print schedule with a deluxe, 32-page magazine-style issue scheduled for the release at the USA Rice Outlook Conference in Little Rock.

Social Media

As of publication, we have more than 8,200 followers across our consumer-facing and industry X accounts. ThinkRice Facebook followers are around 9,200 and we've got more than 4,800 Instagram followers.

In 2024, we implemented a strategy with USA Rice's LinkedIn page. We began slowly posting stories with broad appeal and podcast episodes with special guests in an attempt to increase awareness. We recently posted a custom video from Lt. Col. Dan Rooney, the 2024 Outlook Opening Keynote, encouraging attendance to the event.

Since August 1, we have posted 12 times, seen a 384% increase in impressions, a 14% increase in unique visitors, and a 9% increase in followers. Our posts have garnered 345 reader reactions, 17 comments, and 13 reposts.



CONSERVATION & SUSTAINABILITY

Rice Stewardship Partnership

The seven-state \$80 million Climate-Smart Commodity project offers many of the same conservation practices offered in previous RCPP projects as well as additional financial opportunities. General signups have been held in all 7 states, during which over 770 applications were received. Over 160 applications were received for the Historically Underserved signup. All applicants are being contacted and notified of their pre-approval status and those that are pre-approved are starting to build their contracts.



RiceTec renewed their commitment to supporting this on-the-groundwork. The company's commitment will allow the Partnership's 25 staff members to continue working and seeking new opportunities for rice producers.



Sustainability

Refining Sustainability Metrics

USA Rice participates in Field to Market and continues to monitor other sustainability metrics and platforms to ensure compatibility with U.S. rice industry practices. USA Rice holds membership on several Field to Market committees and working groups. Arkansas rice farmer Mark Isbell is the USA Rice representative on the Field to Market Board of Directors representing the grower sector.

Field to Market is updating several metrics. USA Rice continues to monitor metrics for rice production and better calculate the gains in sustainability as part of the 2030 Rice Industry Sustainability Goals. Additionally, USA Rice works with other metric platforms as well, and recently began discussions to align more closely with the Sustainable Rice Platform.

U.S. & Global Rice Sustainability Reports

USA Rice is currently updating the 2018 U.S. Rice Industry Sustainability Report to reflect additional improvements that have been accomplished by the industry since that report was completed. We are currently working with International Promotions to develop a Global Rice Sustainability Report to showcase the U.S. rice industry sustainability achievements compared to other rice producing countries.

The Rice Stuff Podcast

Sustainability topics continue to be prominently featured on *The Rice Stuff* podcast. Episodes cover a range of topics and are very popular among the podcast's listenership.

Meeting Presentations

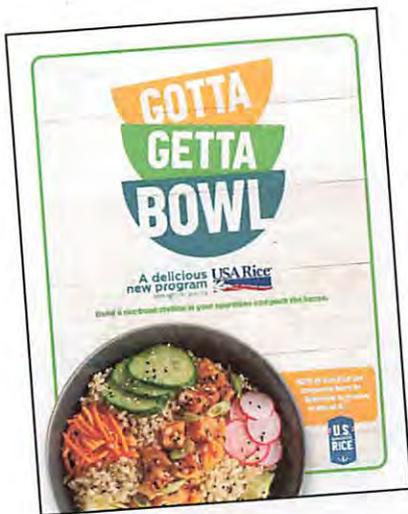
USA Rice regularly makes presentations on USA Rice sustainability programs at virtual and in-person meetings, including presentations at the National Conservation Systems Rice and Cotton Conference and the several Rice Research Station Field Days.

DOMESTIC PROMOTION

Foodservice

Fast Casual Executive Summit

USA Rice attended the Fast Casual Executive Summit, an exclusive trade show and conference reserved for top-level restaurant executives, leaders, and innovators of the fast casual industry, where attendees were exposed to USA Rice's brand and messaging. As an associate sponsor of the summit, USA Rice provided every attendee with a case study demonstrating the benefits of sourcing and marketing U.S.-grown rice in foodservice as well as branded promotional items. The Federation also delivered a fifteen-minute pitch in the press room of the show for the foodservice media in attendance. Through the sponsorship, USA Rice was able to make meaningful connections within the fast casual segment and present the Federation's foodservice offerings to potential operator partners. Additionally, as a sponsor of the conference, USA Rice signage was prominently displayed throughout the show and included on the conference website, social media promotion, and sponsor mentions in pre- and post-show emails. USA Rice also received the full list of show attendees which is available to members by request.



Noncommercial Bowl Program

USA Rice has created a new bowl menu platform program for noncommercial operators, especially college and university dining services. The "GottaGettaBowl" program highlights the range of benefits of using U.S.-grown rice in foodservice and the ease of implementation of rice bowls to any operation. The program includes a sell sheet brochure that explains the popularity of rice bowls and ROI of menuing them from an ingredient cost perspective and labor perspective and easy to make and introduce bowl recipes as well as other industry talking point. Operator partners who participate in the program will receive promotional assets from the Federation including editable menu boards, posters, pre-designed digital menu boards, small editable and printable menu cards, and social graphics.

Sodexo

The Federation continues to work with Sodexo, a leading foodservice distributor, in support of their new C&U food hall concept. The distributor recently hired a communications agency and are currently working out brand identity archetypes. Following that, work will begin on how Sodexo will tell the story of U.S.-grown rice and the industry's commitment to sustainability to students.



Chain Engagement

USA Rice continues to develop new foodservice relationships and engage with operators to uncover opportunities for partnership and promotion of U.S.-grown rice, while presenting the Federation as a valuable partner to receive U.S.-grown recognition on marketing materials and menus. USA Rice has currently been in conversations with Waba Grill, and Modern Market and other potential partners include The Salad Collective, Chopt, and Cowboy Chicken.

Consumer



Feedfeed Program

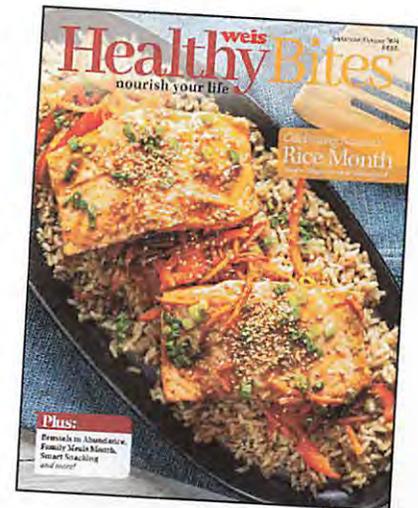
Midway through the 24/25 Feedfeed influencer program and U.S.-grown rice continues to remain relevant and prominently featured in their digital culinary & food space through content creation, distribution, and influencer activations. The original content series and the influencers have created six recipes accompanied by photography and videography that were distributed across four

influencer accounts and FeedFeed's platforms. Each recipe video includes industry talking points to further broadcast U.S.-grown rice messaging.

Beyond the influencer programming, Feedfeed conducted a focused National Rice Month activation that featured macro-Influencer, AlexaWhatsfordinner, for a USA Rice Trending Tuesday takeover during the month of September. This takeover produced three new recipes along with one reshares of an existing rice recipe. All NRM posts were cross promoted across Feedfeed's TikTok, Pinterest, YouTube, X, and Facebook. Recipe shared on USA Rice's Trending Tuesday include a Crispy Rice Salad, Avocado Sushi Boats, Chicken Teriyaki Rice bowls, the Brown Butter Puffed Rice Krispie. To date, the combined program tactics have yielded 25.7 million consumer impressions and 2.24 million direct engagements, ninety percent of the program's goal of 2.5 million engagements.

Weis Retail Partnership

USA Rice activated a retail partnership with the Mid-Atlantic grocery chain, Weis Markets for National Rice Month. The promotion combined multiple tactics over NRM and the fall season to celebrate U.S.-grown rice and promote the U.S.-grown difference to the grocer's customers. The partnership kicked off with the cover feature of Weis' Healthy Bites in-store magazine along with a two-page spread titled "U.S.-grown Rice: A Versatile Staple" which featured two rice recipes, U.S.-grown talking points, and encouragement for readers to look for the new GITUSA badge. 100K copies of the magazine were printed and available at all 200 store locations and online. In addition to the magazine spread, Weis shared two recipe videos featuring domestic rice across all their social channels to an audience of 170K consumers and hosted five dietitian-led virtual cooking classes, which were distributed in a monthly email to more than 2,500 consumers, that walked attendees through USA Rice recipes, spotlighted the GITUSA badge, and promoted NRM. The partnership also included in-store audio messaging where customers were able to hear two different recorded messaging that focused on celebrating NRM and the nutritional power of U.S.-grown rice.



Consumer Newsletter

The *Think Rice Newsletter* continues to keep industry messaging in front of consumers and Federation news and resources easily available throughout the year. The quarterly industry publication is sent to more than 3,730 emails with an average open rate of 42 percent. Newsletter content includes appropriate *USA Rice Daily* articles, rice recipes, consumer resources, promotions, and more. Editions themed to National Rice Month and celebrating holiday season with domestic rice were distributed during this reporting period.

Rice Consumption Research

The Federation continues to produce up to date research on rice consumers and consumption through the partnership with the Hartman Group. The data examines the rice category and rice eaters to understand the demographics of consumers who eat rice, key functional and emotional states relevant to rice consumption, sourcing and preparation

considerations, and commonly consumed items during rice consumption occasions. The data also provides a detailed look into the rice subcategories of white, brown, and flavored rice. The newest 2022-2023 report was recently published and continues to feature a profile of children and teen rice eaters while providing a full outlook on rice consumers ages 0-65+. All past Rice Eating Occasions Reports are available to download at usarice.com and are free to USA Rice members.

National Rice Month

During September's National Rice Month (NRM), USA Rice launched and hosted a series of different promotional events and activities that promoted U.S.-grown rice and the men and women behind the grain. The activities included a daily social media campaign, rice food bank donations, special edition newsletters, debuts of new recipes, and giveaway opportunities. Feedfeed promoted NRM through a four-part Trending Tuesday takeover during September where U.S.-grown messaging and four Instagram reels were shared, USA Rice's Registered Dietitians developed and photographed six new rice recipes. Instagram reels were posted with NRM talking points, and James Beard-nominated Chef Hari Cameron developed and debuted a special a Soursop Horchata recipe.



USA Rice also partnered with the Mid-Atlantic retail chain, ShopRite, to celebrate NRM through in-store and in the community promotions and activities. Retail dietitians at thirteen ShopRite locations across New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania hosted a series of promotions that highlighted the versatility of rice and broadcasted the nutritional benefits of rice throughout the month. The retail tactics targeted multiple audiences and featured a mix of in-store events, community events, recipe tastings, and cooking demonstrations. For each event, USA Rice resources were distributed, NRM information was shared, and in-store member brands were highlighted.



USDA Farmers Market Pop-Up

USA Rice held a pop up at the USDA Farmers Market in celebration of NRM. U.S.-grown rice was the spotlighted ingredient and marketgoers learned how to properly prepare and store grains. U.S.-grown jasmine rice was featured in the four cooking demonstrations, and USA Rice staff were interviewed by the USDA on the U.S rice industry, cooking and storage techniques, and the sustainability of U.S.-grown rice for the hundreds of market shoppers.

In addition to the educational programming, USA Rice conducted a varietal sampling for market guests to taste and understand the differences between a medium grain, a jasmine rice, and parboiled rice and distributed industry resources.

Recipe Creation

For the first half of the 2024/25 program year, the Federation developed 24 new consumer and foodservice (including K-12) recipes. The new recipes covered all meal parts and featured a range of different domestic rice varieties. Each recipe was professionally photographed, distributed, and added to USA Rice's recipe database.

Nutrition

Registered Dietitian Program

USA Rice's Registered Dietitian (RD) Blogger program utilizes a network of experienced RD influencers to promote the nutritional benefits of rice consumption along with the versatility of domestic rice. Over the course of year, seven RD influencers will create and share healthy on-trend rice recipes in a series of social and blog posts that showcase different varieties of U.S.-grown rice. Each recipe post includes professional photography and will further broadcast rice's importance to maintaining a healthy diet along with other key USA Rice messages. At the midway point, seven recipes and recipe videos have been created and shared, resulting in more than 5 million consumer impressions and 33,027 direct engagements.

School Cookbook Updated

The Federation updated *Reimagined Rice Meals for Schools*, a rice cookbook created by USA Rice's K-12 Chef Advisory Board. The downloadable school foodservice cookbook now features 24 K-12 rice recipes that were developed and photographed by the members of the Chef Advisory Board as well new information on USA Rice's MyPlate Gold Partner status and the new Grown in the USA badge. The updated cookbook is available both in-print and digitally and was distributed to various school foodservice audiences through the *Schools Think Rice* Newsletter, School Nutrition Services Dietary Practice Group (SNS DPG) E-Blast, and by members of the advisory board across their professional networks.

Schools Think Rice Newsletter

USA Rice's *Schools Think Rice* newsletter works to effectively distribute the Federation's school nutrition resources directly to audiences of K-12 foodservice professionals and school nutrition officials. Each edition of the tri-annual newsletter features foodservice recipes, helpful resources, educational opportunities, ways to engage with USA Rice. The school publication is sent to more than 1,320 school nutrition professionals and had an average open rate of 46% and click-through rate of 10% during the reporting period.



Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics Conference

The Federation participated in Academy's Food and Nutrition Conference and Expo (FNCE), the largest gathering of nutrition officials in the country. As an exhibitor for the 2024 Expo, USA Rice promoted U.S.-grown rice as part of the foundation of a healthy diet, shared nutritional messaging, highlighted the Federation's new MyPlate Gold Partner status, answered diet and food safety questions, established new nutrition connections, addressed arsenic concerns, and distributed nutrition and foodservice resources to the more than 500 nutrition professionals that visited the USA Rice booth. USA Rice debuted the revamped *Kids Who Eat Rice* nutrition one-pager, showcased a rice varietal display, and conducted an attendee survey on rice usage, applications, nutritional reputation, and the importance of the product of origin claims.

2025-2030 Dietary Guidelines

USA Rice has been actively involved with the development process of the 2025–2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans to ensure that rice in all forms remains recognized as a component of a healthy diet and recommended for maintaining healthy eating patterns for all federal nutrition policies and programs. The Federation has been a participant in all seven meetings of the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee (DGAC), where committee members are tasked with analyzing consumption patterns, research, and nutrition science for each stage of life to create the new federal recommendations.

USA Rice has submitted six official comments to the HHS, USDA, and DGAC, and provided testimony to members of the advisory committee advocating for the importance of whole grains and enriched rice as pillar ingredients in achieving diets consistent with the recommendations of the guidelines. These efforts have resulted in no proposed modifications to the grain category from the DGAC, marking a big win for the industry as refined grains were a target throughout the three-year development of the new guidelines. The final guidelines are expected to debut in 2025 and the Federation will continue to monitor this process while advocating and promoting the range of nutritional benefits of domestic rice, and positioning the industry as a valued partner to HHS, USDA, and the DGAC.

Nutrition Advocacy- Healthy Definition

Throughout this year, USA Rice has submitted comments to federal agencies to promote and advocate for rice in response to proposed program changes or standards. A proposed “healthy” labeling rule is expected to be publicized and in response, USA Rice has been active in providing evidence to support rice being included in the federal “healthy” definition.

USA Rice met with the White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) to provide evidence for rice regarding FDA's "healthy" label. The meeting included representatives from OIRA, the FDA, the Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN), and Health and Human Services. The Federation provided an overview of rice as a healthy plant-based and natural product, highlighted research that shows rice as a driver of other healthy foods, presented information about the importance of fortified refined grains supplying folic acid and iron, and dwelled on the accessibility of milled rice especially in low-income communities. The information was very well received by the committee members and made the case that rice in all forms should fall under the “healthy definition” as be qualified to use the healthy logo.



MyPlate Gold Leader

USA Rice was recognized as a MyPlate Gold Champion National Strategic Partner by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion. To achieve the gold level designation, strategic partners must be active and consistent in promoting MyPlate, a USDA program that serves a consumer-friendly guide for healthy eating based on the Dietary Guidelines, through website promotion, logo and message inclusion on consumer resources, and collaborating with other MyPlate organizations to make MyPlate a household name.

USA Rice Domestic Usage Report (DUR)

The 2022/23 U.S. Rice Domestic Usage Report was published in October. Twenty-one companies participated in this survey, capturing 101.2 million hundredweights (cwt) of rice shipped to domestic and foreign markets, a decrease of 3.3% versus the 2021-22 market year (MY). According to the report, 68.9 million cwt of rice was shipped domestically, an increase of 3.3 percent compared to last year. Of that, 62.2 percent is for direct food use, and 37.8 percent for processed foods like pet food, beer, sake, and rice flour. This distribution remains similar to that of 2021-22, indicating stable trends in domestic demand in these areas. This year's report also continued to feature a section on demographics of rice consumers from USA Rice's *Rice Eating Occasions Report*.

California Wild Rice Promotion Rice

In partnership with the California Wild Rice Advisory Board (CWRAB), USA Rice continues to promote California-grown wild rice in selected activities to consumer, health professional, and foodservice audiences. Activities include wild rice inclusion in nutrition policy efforts, influencer sampler mailings, the RD Blogger Program, social media posts, National Rice Month and Whole Grain Month promotions, retail activations, recipe development, and the influencer program as well as distribution of wild rice information and talking points to health professionals at the 2024 FNCE show.

INTERNATIONAL PROMOTION

Western Hemisphere

Mexico

- Supported the virtual reality game “Harvest Rush” in the lobbies of 14 movie theaters in Guadalajara and Mexico City. To date nearly 4,000 consumers have played and submitted surveys on their perception of US rice.
- Co-sponsored the mini-concerts of local musical talent with the radio station “La Ke Buena” where a combined 11,000 consumers participated in two shows bringing awareness to brands that source US rice.
- Hosted a social media series with Chef Ambassador Aquiles Chaves called, “Aquiles in your Kitchen” where he live streamed cooking sessions with winners of online contests reaching more than 550,000 consumers across Instagram and Facebook.

Central America

- Participated in the SABOR USA Costa Rica WINES EXPO together with FAS Costa Rica, with a delicious paella paired with various US wine selections for professionals of the Hotels, Restaurants and Supermarkets sectors.
- Exhibited as a Diamond sponsor in the International Rice Expo Convention in San Pedro Sula, Honduras hosted by FECARROZ, during which USA Rice facilitated a session on rice quality in Central America and US crop update by University of Arkansas agricultural economist Dr. Alvaro Durand-Morat.
- Launched the Think Rice Campaign in 350 supermarkets, as well as the digital campaign collaborating with 366 micro-influencers that have reached more than 2.1 million consumers, received 42,900 interactions, and created 831 unique pieces of content created in Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Costa Rica and Nicaragua.



South America

- Participated in the USDA sponsored Agricultural Trade Mission led by Undersecretary Alexis Taylor to Bogota, Colombia where delegates received market briefings, conducted business to business meetings with the trade and visited feed mills where corn, soy and rice were main products.
- Showcased US rice at the Alimentec Trade Show in Bogota, Colombia with about 30,000 attendees this year. Alimentec has solidified its reputation as the premier platform for the food, beverage, and hospitality industry in the Andean Region, the Caribbean, and Latin America.
- Exhibited in the USA Pavilion at the Espacio Food and Service trade show in Santiago, Chile where USA Rice staff conducted trade meetings to explore export partnerships and educated attendees on the virtues and characteristics of US rice.



Canada

- Hosted industry night at Trinity Market with Chef Ambassador Matt Dean Pettit where several members of the trade including chefs, influencers, food writers and HRI professionals gathered to learn about collaboration opportunities with USA Rice and enjoyed a three-course menu with beverage pairings featuring US rice.
- Published an online article in Globe and Mail, a newspaper for western and central Canada, highlighting the sustainability of US rice which garnered a total of 1,859,000 impressions, exceeding the initial projection by nearly 33%.
- Created a digital advertising strategy around the theme, "Hand me a cup of rice & I'll give you..." which encompasses Google AdWords, Google Display banner campaigns, and targeted social media promotions across Facebook, Pinterest and Instagram. It directs users to the recipe pages online, for a total of 7.28M impressions and over 64.2K clicks on the website to date.



Haiti

- Co-sponsored the Goute'M street food competition with Mega brand rice to showcase Haitian cuisine and highlight US rice in Port-au-Prince. Co-sponsors contributed 25% of the total budget with cash, materials, and rice donations.
- Conducted a joint soccer promotion with BONGU rice during the Copa America and the Europe Cup in partnership with Scoop Radio and Scoop TV with a 50/ 50 cost share, which included advertising spots, unlimited mentions during goals, scrolling banners on the TV and interactive guessing games for both tournaments. The average viewership of these games was 250,000 and 150,000 radio listeners.



Europe / Africa / Middle East

Jordan

- Continued to post regularly on the @usaricejo Facebook and Instagram accounts, increasing our number of followers to 27,850 and 3,600 respectively. Content includes U.S. rice recipes and nutritional information, recipe videos, as well as competitions.
- Executed an outdoor media campaign in cooperation with a local U.S. rice brand which kicked-off mid-June, relying on 30 outdoor high-definition LED screens in the capital city Amman, 60 billboards nationwide, 10 static billboards in Amman, and 25 additional billboards in the city of Irbid, with an overall reach exceeding 3 million.
- Organized a trade seminar in Amman on August 14th inviting local rice importers, representatives of the Jordanian government and Jordan Food and Drug Administration as well as traders from the West Bank. Topics covered included an update on the US supply situation as well as sharing rice fumigation and storage practices.
- Started the production of 4 animated videos in cooperation with a second local brand, for usage on social media and as a communication tool.



Saudi Arabia

- Posted 12 posts per month on @usaricesa Facebook and Instagram accounts, with a fresher, colorful look targeting the younger generation in Saudi Arabia, increasing our number of followers to more than 12,100 on Facebook and 12,260 on Instagram.
- On the first weekend of October kicked off an in-store activation campaign with cooked rice sampling in cooperation with a local U.S. rice brand in 9 different stores from 3 hypermarket chains in Jeddah including Danube, Panda and Othaim. Further activations are on-going until mid-November covering Jeddah, Riyadh and Dammam.
- In cooperation with another local U.S. rice brand, developed a in-store POS branding campaign in Jeddah and the southern region for one month in 18 hypermarkets including Panda, Danube, Othaim and Lulu.
- USA Rice collaborated with four local influencers to develop recipe videos featuring US long and medium grain rice. These are published as joint content on the influencers’ site as well as USA Rice Saudi handles to generate traffic and interaction throughout November and December.



Middle East Area and Iraq

- Commencing earlier this year, there were changes imposed on private banks in Iraq restricting their ability to access USD through Fed wires. As a result, Al Awees noted that they were pausing the MOU given the lack of availability of USD. USA Rice worked with the highest levels of the U.S. government, including the White House, Federal Reserve, Department of State, USTR and the Department of Treasury to help the Iraqis come to a solution that would enable them to purchase U.S. rice again. Al Awees purchased 44,000 MT in August and another 44,000 MT in November via a temporary financial solution using Euros. The company K2 is continuing to conduct their audits on both Al Awees and Al Janoob. We are hopeful that following a positive outcome of the Al Awees audit, USD will be used in future purchases of U.S. rice.

West Bank

- USA Rice continued promotional activities in cooperation with local importers in the West Bank, despite regional unrest. One new importer joined the program, a local supermarket chain promoting its newly launched U.S. rice brand. Promotions cover billboards and LED screens in major cities, radio advertising as well as in-store promotions and giveaway production.



European Union

- In cooperation with a local U.S. rice importer in Norway conducted POS display promotions in sushi shops in major Norwegian cities.
- USA Rice participated as an exhibitor on the SIAL Tradeshow in Paris, collecting over 100 trade leads during the show. Activities included a cooking demo featuring US long, medium and wild rice in the US Pavilion Demo Kitchen. USA Rice also hosted a reception that welcomed over 50 attendees including potential buyers, FAS officials, and other industry partners. USA Rice members presented on the current crop, export potential, and the rice industry’s sustainability efforts.

Wonder Rose California Calrose Ris er perfekt for Asiatisk mat

Høyeste kvalitet, bærekraftig Produsert av familiedrevne bedrifter i California

United Kingdom

- USA Rice conducted media activities in cooperation with local U.S. rice brands including TV, radio and print advertising in Afro Caribbean targeted media. In November and December, rice promotions will be applied to the rear of 100 buses; the new media artwork will be seen on 75 buses in and around London, 15 in Birmingham and 10 in Manchester City Centers during November and December.
- To coincide with this year's Dragon Boat Festival and remaining in stores for the duration of the Mooncake Festival, USA Rice worked with several local U.S. rice brands targeting the Chinese ethnic sector through secondary placements, POS materials and LED Tower End
- Targeting mainstream UK retail and wholesale trade launched digital banner ads on selected media websites in support of local medium grain rice brand.
- During National Rice week in September, USA Rice supported trade day events attracting thousands of customers who intend to take advantage of the many deals and offers.
- In cooperation with local US long grain brand placed full pallet end cap displays in 31 Costco stores including 1 in Sweden and 1 in Iceland.
- In collaboration with Hungry Panda, a digital platform targeting Chinese students and local US medium grain brand, launched a promo campaign featuring banners on the Hungry Panda digital app as well as live sampling events at university sites and London Chinatown. In addition, influencers promote US rice on the leading Chinese social media platform, Little Red Book with over 450 million subscribers. All app-based communication is in Chinese language, targeting Chinese consumers.



Africa

- Using RAPP funds, USA Rice conducted a bidding process to select an appropriate consultant to undertake a market assessment in Senegal and Cote d'Ivoire. From eight qualified offers a Nigeria-based research company was selected to do the market assessment, with work commencing in September 2024 and a report on results expected in December 2024. The field work covers 24 trade interviews, 500 wholesale/retail interviews and 756 consumer questionnaires covering topics including the local rice market, rice usage and competition, rice consumption habits etc. This assessment will allow industry to decide how to best proceed in expanding its presence in the region.

Asia & Turkey

Japan

- Conducted more than 130 in-store demonstrations at Costco's 33 outlets. Over 86,000 consumers tasted U.S. medium grain rice with very positive feedback, indicating U.S. rice tastes good and can be used for various menus similar to Japanese rice.
- Hosted the annual U.S. Medium Grain Menu Idea Contest with a total of 105 entries in the professional chef category and 271 entries in the student category of cooking/nutritional schools. An award ceremony was held on November 13 with media & food influencers in attendance.



- Exhibited at the Mitsumoto Coffee trade show in Hokkaido and offered taste-testing samples of rice salad and rice tart using U.S. medium grain, with a risotto demonstration by KEITA. As this was the first exhibition in Hokkaido for USA Rice, many show visitors had never tried U.S. medium grain before, and most were interested in the rice's new texture and new menus. Approximately 700 tasting samples were distributed during the two-day show.
- Conducted a recipe contest on the Kurashiru website, a major recipe and cooking platform with 5.8 million users and 1.1 million social media followers.
- Promoting gumbo using U.S. medium grain rice with several restaurants and food trucks in Tokyo, as the word "gumbo" has been frequently searched on the USA Rice Japan website.



South Korea

- Supported the development of a new Makgeolli product using U.S.-produced rice. This collaboration marks the first time U.S. rice has been integrated into the company's production process, demonstrating a new avenue for U.S. rice in the traditional Korean beverage market.
- Working with Super Kitchen, a leading Korean ready-to-eat dish chain with 128 stores nationwide, to create innovative rice-base menu items being tailored for single-person households. This initiative will also include a collaboration with Shyvana, an American Southern home-style restaurant with eight locations in Korea. Shyvana will introduce a retail package of Shyvana Jambalaya Fried Rice menu made by Super Kitchen incorporating U.S. processing rice to be promoted through various distribution channels, including the major premium online grocery, Market Kurly.
- Collaborated with Coupang, the biggest e-commerce platform in Korea, to promote U.S. rice in Home Meal Replacement (HMR) products. The campaign included a banner ad that directs to a special promotion webpage and available U.S. Rice products in the market. Additionally, those that order the products receive educational leaflets on the benefits of U.S. rice.
- Developed a new partnership with Chunilhyang, a popular Chinese restaurant franchise, regarding Home Meal Replacement (HMR) fried rice products featuring U.S. rice. This collaboration aims to offer consumers high-quality, convenient meal solutions without compromising on taste or nutrition.



Taiwan

- Participated in the new dish presentation dinner held by Taiwan Junior Chefs Association(TJCA) hosting 350 professional chefs, restaurant procurements, importers, and food processors. A booth was set up to showcase 4 rice varieties including short, medium and long grain rice from California and the Southern states. The key messages delivered to visitors include the positive image of the U.S. rice growing environment, diversification of rice varieties,

and cuisine applications. In-depth communication with 50 foodservice stakeholders also took place while 20 new databases were collected.

- Conducted online promotions at the two largest e-commerce platforms, MOMO and PC Home. The theme of the activity was to celebrate July 4th and new key visuals were designed for exposure at these two platforms as well as placed ads in the U.S. Rice social media account. The incremental sales were 253% as compared to the non-promotion period.
- Conducted in-store promotions in PX Mart, the leading supermarket chain in Taiwan. Information about U.S. rice is shared on PX Mart's online platform along with prominent display shelves in stores.
- Cooperated with food manufacturers to develop 4 microwave food products targeting small household families. The 4 new products utilized 4 different rice varieties, which were all packed for 1-2 people portions in frozen type.



China

- Introduced U.S. rice ingredients at 2024 Pet Fair Asia Trade Show in Shanghai with totally 124,000 professional visitors from 91 countries/regions. "Non-GMO" is a good selling point for pet food applications and an advantage for U.S. rice.
- Presented at a ATO Guangzhou workshop about "U.S. Ingredient Showcase & Tasting for Pre-Prepared Food Producers" to 37 managers and chefs from restaurants, as well as pre-prepared food manufacturers. U.S. rice samples were showcased at the show, including white, red, purple and tri-color rice. U.S. Rice trade brochures were also handed out to guests during this event. A consulting team also developed 14 recipes suitable for pre-prepared food in which U.S. rice was featured in 2 recipes.
- Exhibited at the China International Import Expo (CIIE) and FHC China Global Food Trade Show. Both trade shows are topline events showcasing imported goods and versatile food products.



Hong Kong

- Joined the AEON USA Food Promotion in July with 4 participating stores, 2 brands and 5 SKUs for a two-week long promotion. USA Rice Hong Kong Facebook was utilized to post contents aiming to enhance consumer awareness of this particular promotion. ATO also posted relating contents on its "Delicious USA" Facebook & Instagram accounts to help amplify this activity.



Singapore

- Participated in a “Social Makers Campaign” aiming to increase awareness and educate consumers about USA Rice. By leveraging word-of-mouth and generating buzz, the campaign seeks to encourage the consumption of U.S. rice through strategic KOL partnerships. 9 influencers, aged 25-45, who embody diverse lifestyles ranging from multi-tasking achievers to homemakers and food enthusiasts, were carefully selected reaching 154,700 followers to offer varied perspectives. These influencers showcase the PaddyKing and Okome brands featuring US Calrose rice.
- Provided a rice toolkit developed by Elev8 Foods to importers and their sales teams with the knowledge and resources necessary for effective customer communication. By highlighting a unique selling point on U.S. Calrose rice, the toolkit will help salespeople position it in the market, emphasizing its versatility beyond traditional Japanese and Korean cuisines. This toolkit will also offer guidance on efficient cooking methods, optimizing kitchen operations. Furthermore, the toolkit will empower the USA Rice team to engage with foodservice operators for potential collaborations. The project is expected to be completed by the end of October.
- Collaborated with Dr. Leslie Tay of iEatiShootiPost, a prominent Singaporean food blogger with 166,000 IG followers. His content not only features reviews of Singaporean cuisine, but also includes cooking recipe videos and tips, making him one of the few bloggers who covers both food reviews and cooking tutorials. He promoted U.S. rice in popular local dishes such as chicken rice balls, sushi, and Dim Sum Style Pork Ribs on Rice.



Turkey

- For the period from July to December 2024, USA Rice activities focused on a combination of media outreach, trade servicing, and engagement through Turkey-specific social media channels. Coverage was secured in 180 media publications, reaching over 220 million consumers with messages about U.S. rice. Additionally, our social media presence continues to grow, with 53,000 followers on Facebook and 19,820 followers on Instagram.
- USA Rice in cooperation with FAS post in Ankara organized a week-long reverse trade mission for five high ranking TMO officials to California early October. The aim of the visit was to share information on US rice crop and availability, in an effort to revitalize government tender opportunities.



Southeast Asia

- USA Rice contracted with a company to conduct a market assessment for key markets in Southeast Asia including the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia to determine demand and feasibility of U.S. rice establishing a sustainable presence in these markets. The final report is expected by the end of the calendar year.



Food Aid

- In FY24, food aid shipments totaled 161,000 MT, the highest volume in nearly 15 years. This tonnage was spread across the three traditional US government international food assistance programs – USDA McGovern-Dole Food for Education, USDA Food for Progress, and USAID Title II Emergency Feeding – as well as under the newly implemented commodity purchasing program using CCC funds.
- Fortified rice continues to be the staple for McGovern-Dole. All McGovern-Dole projects in FY24 that called for rice used fortified rice. USAID has also significantly increased the percentage of rice in their programs that is fortified, supporting their commitment to eventually use fortified rice exclusively.
- In November, USA Rice food aid consultant Stephanie Grunenfelder attended the Michigan State University Food Aid Sustainable Packaging Solutions Workshop where topics of discussion included infestation prevention, nutrient retention, and packaging recyclability.



INTERNATIONAL TRADE POLICY

World Trade Organization (WTO) Engagement

India Violations

India is the world's largest rice exporter, shipping roughly 17.8 million MT in 2023 despite export curbs on parboiled rice, an export ban on broken rice extending from 2022 and the imposition of a non-basmati rice export ban in July 2023, followed by a floor price for basmati exports. At USA Rice's insistence, the U.S. government filed its second and third WTO counter-notification against India's rice and wheat supports in April 2023 and November 2024, respectively. In the second counter-notification, there were five other cosponsors: Australia, Canada, Paraguay, Thailand, and Ukraine, while in the third, there were four others: Argentina, Australia, Canada, and Ukraine. Both counter-notifications cited that India subsidizes their cost of production for rice well beyond their committed ten percent and as much as 94 percent, allowing for their export prices to be insulated and artificially low. The Indian government takes huge losses to keep their rice production profitable. The subsidies could arguably be legal if they didn't also export their rice and distort world trade.

India's 2022 and more serious 2023 export restrictions were imposed to help fight inflation and address domestic food security concerns. However, these export curbs hit many of India's customers hard, resulting in price hikes for the neediest countries in Africa and parts of Asia. In July of 2023, India reacted to the late arrival of monsoon rains and out of an abundance of caution, banned the export of non-basmati white rice in addition to broken. Shortly thereafter, India imposed further export curbs on parboiled rice and basmati. By the end of September 2024, the Indian government resumed non-basmati white rice exports. The approval came on the heels of the elimination of the minimum floor price for basmati rice exports earlier in the month. While a minimum floor price of \$490 per metric ton (MT) was introduced with the September announcement, it was subsequently eliminated by October 2024. The export tariff of 20 percent for both non-basmati and basmati rice exports were also eliminated, while the export tariff on parboiled rice was halved to 10 percent.

USA Rice has been pressing USTR to take a WTO case against India since the Obama Administration. The industry has made it clear to this Administration that a case is warranted, presented economic studies, and brought the joint support of the U.S. Wheat industry and a significant subset of Congress. But because they aren't focused on trade policy, it's so far been to no avail. The latest November 2024 counter-notification was an important next step towards the U.S. taking a formal dispute against India.

USA Rice continues to execute part of a strategic plan to draw attention toward India's behavior and policies. The plan includes a number of meetings and actions over the last two years to ensure the issue stays top of mind for policy and lawmakers. USA Rice has highlighted the issue through *The Rice Stuff* podcast, *USA Rice Daily*, *Whole Grain*, and various print and web agriculture media publications.

USA Rice is hopeful these comprehensive actions will lead to an inevitable filing of a dispute settlement case against India's rice and possibly wheat subsidies.

WTO Reform Coalition

Because rice is one of the world's most government-manipulated commodities and the industry has long pressed the U.S. government to help level the global playing field, the rice industry has extra incentive for a functioning WTO. Frustrations with the WTO process and lack of U.S. engagement led to USA Rice forming the 'Aggies for WTO Reform' Coalition in March of 2021. The Coalition proactively approached the U.S. government with ideas for discussions for the WTO ministerial in June of 2022 and has also worked with a number of other WTO delegations.

In November 2023, USA Rice helped to lead the Coalition in sending a letter to the Administration requesting that the U.S. make a proactive proposal on market access as part of the negotiations, putting the U.S. on the offensive rather than defensive.

In February 2024, USA Rice International Trade Policy Chairman, Bobby Hanks, testified to the U.S. House Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Trade ahead of the WTO's 13th Ministerial Conference (MC13) to emphasize the importance of ensuring India will not be allowed to backslide on agriculture commitments at the MC13. USA Rice participated in MC13 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates as an accredited non-governmental organization and provided industry support to the U.S. government. USA Rice was joined by four other members of the Coalition. Similar to MC12, no significant outcomes were reached in agriculture. However, the U.S. government along with allied governments successfully blocked India's attempts to broaden their subsidies rice and wheat at the insistence of the WTO Reform Coalition. USA Rice continues to pursue discussions with officials in Geneva including a visit in October 2024 meeting with developed and developing countries' delegations to better understand negotiating details and positions.

Research

In June 2024, USA Rice subcontracted with DTB AgriTrade to conduct a study examining how Indian non-Basmati rice exports work in practice in conjunction with market price support, public stockholding schemes, and other relevant policies. The final report is aiming to be finalized by the end of the year or the first quarter of 2025.

On February 5, 2024, at the urging of USA Rice, the U.S. House Committee on Ways and Means Chair Jason Smith (R-MO) requested the U.S. International Trade Commission (USITC) to update a 2015 Section 332 study, The Global Competitiveness of the U.S. Rice Industry, to reflect changing world politics, trade flows, and increased subsidies by India and other major exporters. On April 30, USA Rice Chairman, Kirk Satterfield, and CEO, Peter Bachmann, testified before the USITC in a public hearing on the global competitiveness and impacts on trade of the U.S. rice industry. Kirk Satterfield summarized the impacts of foreign government intervention in the global rice market at the farm level and Peter Bachmann highlighted the global impact and anti-competitive barriers to export. USITC staff traveled internationally and across the United States this summer as part of their fact-finding phase of the investigation; they are currently in the drafting phase. The USITC has until March 2025 to update the study that will help justify the use of additional trade remedies and other actions to address the unlevel playing field for U.S. rice farmers.

Haiti

Haiti remains the most important market for U.S. milled long grain rice. The country remains politically unstable, and exports have wavered over the last two years due to spikes in violence. Another issue is the ability to source U.S. currency for Haitian businesses has been problematic, despite having local currency on hand, this has led to delays in payments and to competitive edge to other origins, such as Pakistan. In recent months, attacks by gangs in the capital Port-au-Prince have effectively closed all functions of both the air and seaports. U.S. rice is seeing some exports to the Cap Haitien port.

In September 2023, the UN approved access to Haiti for 1,000 Kenyan National Police to help secure the country and combat the gang violence. The police force arrived in June 2024, more than two years after the former President was assassinated. In April 2024, Haiti formally established a Transitional Council to fill the Prime Minister position after former Prime Minister Ariel Henry stepped down earlier in the year. On May 28, the Transitional Council appointed former Prime Minister Garry Conille to return to the position during the government's transition period to appoint a cabinet and lead to a Presidential election. Unfortunately, the police force has not been successful diminishing the gang's stronghold in Port au Prince controlling up to 80 percent of the capital. On September 30, 2024, the UN Security Council extended the mandate of the Kenyan forces through September 2025 encouraging voluntary financial contributions of UN member states to continue supporting the mission. In further despair, on November 11, 2024, the Transitional Council removed Prime Minister Conille from office, intensifying civil unrest.

In February 2024, the University of Michigan published an article titled "US Rice exported to Haiti may be harmful to health". The false claims presented in the article specifically highlights rice from the United States, however, the data points given in the article show that all 'foreign rice' samples have higher heavy metal levels than the local Haitian rice. The article also references a dataset that solely reflects total arsenic rather than speciating between inorganic/organic.

So far, general consumer purchasing trends have not changed regarding U.S. origin rice. With the ongoing security concerns, the news coverage has subsided.

Latin American Protectionist Measures

Four CAFTA-DR countries (El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua) moved to duty-free, quota-free trade with the U.S. in January 2023. The remaining countries (Costa Rica and Dominican Republic) will move to duty-free, quota-free in January 2025. Likewise, Panama will move to duty-free, quota-free in 2031. As part of this transition and in conjunction with increased inflation rates, several of these markets have made adjustments to their importing protocols in ways that have resulted in loss of U.S. market share.

Panama

In 2021, after protests from Panamanian rice farmers, the government adjusted the agreed upon import quota to convert the milled rice that could enter duty-free to rough rice. This violation of the U.S. free trade agreement with Panama was repeated in 2023, which still resulted in quota fills but prevented the entry of value-added exports. Panama is also considering a number of new import regulations, such as bagging of paddy rice, fortification requirements, as well as phytosanitary requirements for only certain U.S. states. USA Rice formally submitted comments sharing opposition to these measures. However, in November 2024, in a shift away from the previous administration, the Mulino administration announced the 2025 U.S. rice quota including the full volumes for both milled and rough rice.

Honduras

USA Rice helped to organize a trip for USDA FGIS officials and financed a private contractor to travel to Honduras in March 2023 to conduct an audit at Port Cortes regarding theft of rice and other grains from storage silos. While the theft has diminished following the audit, Honduras reimposed a form of domestic purchasing requirements for importers without reporting it to the WTO. A USA Rice consultant traveled to Honduras in October 2023 to meet with officials regarding both issues. USA Rice is working with USTR and USDA to ensure concerns are addressed through bilateral discussions.

It would not be surprising if additional markets in Latin America impose similar temporary or permanent measures to support efforts in curbing inflation and food prices and protecting domestic rice producers and processors. Unfortunately, despite the U.S. logistical advantages for much of Latin America, in recent years, U.S. exporters have lost considerable market share to South American, and now Thai, shipments in Mexico and other key Central American markets. That will hopefully change with a good crop year and poor water situations in Brazil, effectively cutting it out of the market for U.S. rice to be price competitive. U.S. rice exports are up over 33 percent by volume in Central American markets so far this year (January-July).

USA Rice staff and five member companies joined industry leaders in San Pedro Sula, Honduras at the inaugural International Rice Expo-Convention, hosted by the Central American Rice Federation (FECARROZ). USA Rice represented as diamond sponsors of the event which brought together over 200 participants from across the Western Hemisphere.

Dominican Republic

In November 2024, USA Rice was made aware of proposed legislation in the Dominican Republic's congress to protect sensitive products, including rice. USDA FAS believes the Dominican Republic will sign this proposal into law by the end of the year, which would erode the liberalized market access gained on January 1, 2025. USA Rice is working with USTR and USDA to identify next steps to address industry concerns.

Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs)

USA Rice is working collectively with other agricultural commodity groups through a USDA-sponsored initiative to address the growing threat of MRLs as non-tariff barriers. USA Rice is also working with a regulatory consultant and the California Rice Commission to proactively address MRL barriers as they appear on the horizon.

USA Rice is continuing to work with Syngenta to develop a Codex MRL for propiconazole on rice, to prevent further restrictions in other global markets outside of Europe, which took place in September 2023. The industry is also continuing to work with chemical registrants and the California Rice Commission to develop residue data for Piperonyl Butoxide, a fumigant used on stored rice, to submit tolerance applications to Korea and Taiwan and prevent further rejection of shipments. Similarly, the industry is working with Central Life Sciences to develop new residue data for Deltamethrin, another fumigant used on stored grain in conjunction with Piperonyl Butoxide. Once developed, applications will be submitted to Taiwan and Japan. Applications are likely to be ready to submit by the end of this year or the beginning of 2025.

Trade Advocacy

In September 2023, a group of 10 bipartisan U.S. House Members and 5 U.S. Senators introduced the Prioritizing Offensive Agricultural Disputes and Enforcement Act. The bill establishes a joint USTR/USDA task force on agricultural trade enforcement. The goal here is to signal that USTR should consult closely with USDA, Congress, and the private sector on WTO dispute settlement priorities. This essentially formalizes an existing process when ag disputes are being developed, however, it reinforces the message that Congress wants to be on the offensive for more ag disputes and signals to USDA that they should devote more resources to developing them. These potential disputes would benefit all of U.S. agriculture, including livestock, row crops, and specialty crops. On May 24, the House Agriculture Committee passed their version of 2024 Farm Bill which included language establishing the joint USTR/USDA task force on agricultural trade enforcement. The bill will still need to be passed by the full House and by the Senate.

Most importantly for rice, it directs action on India. It doesn't explicitly require a case to be filed, but there is strong encouragement. It focuses on price supports generally and mentions India's self-admitted excess subsidies on rice, wheat, cotton, peanuts, pulses, etc.

Türkiye

On May 8, USA Rice joined the Almond Alliance of California, California Walnut Commission, and the Distilled Spirits Council sending a letter to Commerce Secretary Raimondo requesting the USG continue dialogue with Türkiye towards eliminating the Section 232 retaliatory tariffs. President Biden and President Erdogan were scheduled to meet in early May following bilateral government to government meetings, but the meeting was postponed. In October 2024, USA Rice hosted a reverse trade mission with the Turkish Grain Board officials in California, including hosting a meeting on the technical aspects of trade.

Iraq

Commencing earlier this year, there were changes imposed on private banks in Iraq restricting their ability to access USD through Fed wires. As a result, Al Awees noted that they were pausing the MOU given the lack of availability of USD. USA Rice worked with the highest levels of the U.S. government, including the White House, Federal Reserve, Department of State, USTR and the Department of Treasury to help the Iraqis come to a solution that would enable them to purchase U.S. rice again. Al Awees purchased 44,000 MT in August and another 44,000 MT in November via a temporary financial solution using Euros. The company K2 is continuing to conduct their audits on both Al Awees and Al Janoob. We are hopeful that following a positive outcome of the Al Awees audit, USD will be used in future purchases of U.S. rice.

MEETINGS & MEMBER SERVICES

Outlook Conference

The 2024 conference will be held Dec. 8-10, 2024, in Little Rock, Arkansas. This year's conference will be held at the Statehouse Convention Center while utilizing the Marriot Little Rock and Double Tree Hotels. This year's conference features a general session, an awards luncheon, and exhibitor luncheon, three stages in the exhibit hall with educational session and the U.S. Rice Quality Symposium. As of November 12, there are 454 pre-registered attendees and 54 booths.

Membership

In the coming weeks, four new member applications will be shared for review and approval by the USA Rice Millers' Association Board of Directors. This includes

Mill Member (2)

- Heritage Rice Company
- Diversified Ingredients

RMA Associate Member (2)

- Veers Plastics
- SSA Marine

MARS no longer has a rice mill, so they changed membership from an RMA Mill Member to USA Rice Enterprise Partner.

Staff Activities

Advancing the Value of USA Rice

- Actively supported meetings and events, at the state and local level, through sponsorships, presentations, materials, as well as staff support and coordination.
- Provided field services support in the development and implementation of in-state and USA Rice activities.

Supporting State Activities

- USA Rice, along with Ducks Unlimited, hosted multiple Climate-Smart grant informational and sign-up meetings for growers seeking opportunities within their state.
- Took part in hosting multiple Congressional delegates, USDA & EPA staff, and international guests through various aspects of the U.S. rice industry. Staff also attended and/or presented at 20 other state and local events with in-person meetings taking place for various rice grower associations.
- USA Rice Staff sponsored and attended multiple events, field days and National Rice Month (NRM) Activities. These included the grand opening of the Northeast Arkansas Rice Research and Extension Center (NERREC), University of Arkansas Rice Research and Extension Field Day, NERREC Field Day, California Rice Experiment Station Field Day, LSU Rice Field Day, Eagle Lake Field Day, and Beaumont Field Day, RiceTec Arkansas Field Day, Horizon Ag Arkansas Field Day, Horizon Ag Louisiana Field Day, Missouri Rice Research and Merchandising Council Field Day, Fisher Delta Research Center Field Day, 4th Delta Rice Festival, 2nd LA Food & Wine Festival, 87th International Rice Festival, and 16th Yellow Rails & Rice Festival.
- NRM events, including student cooking contest, media promotion of US Grown rice, and a record donation of more than 300,000 pounds of rice to food banks.



The Rice Foundation

Provided staff management and administrative services for The Rice Foundation.

Rice Leadership Development Program

- Conducted Session III in California (2023 Class) in September. The session included farm and mills visits, an aerial tour of California rice and vegetable production regions, a visit to the Rice Experiment Station, irrigation system tours and a full day session with the California Rice Commission. The group also was able to enjoy the annual alumni leadership dinner.
- The 2024 International Alumni Leadership Session visited the rice producing regions in Thailand in October. The group visited with FAS officials, numerous Thai rice scientists, several rice markets, production areas including deep-water rice, aquaculture production facilities, sustainable rice projects and seed production facilities.
- The Leadership Development Program also added a fourth sponsor when Supreme Rice joined the current sponsors – American Commodity Company, John Deere and RiceTec.

Funds and Grants

- Continued efforts to increase support for The Rice Foundation, including efforts to increase funding from state rice research boards, corporate sponsors, and government and NGO funding agencies. The foundation is also very appreciative of the additional financial support from the USA Millers' Association, the USA Rice Merchants' association and the USA Rice Council.