

# U.S. RICE

## A GLOBAL LEADER IN SUSTAINABILITY

### In Brief:

- The U.S. rice industry has shown outstanding accomplishments in the past 36 years across the three pillars of sustainability (environmental, economic, and social) including key environmental resource markers: land use and soil conservation; water use and quality; energy use and air quality; and biodiversity.
- Each year, over 9 billion kilograms (20 billion pounds) of rice is grown and harvested by local farmers on 2.7 million acres (1.1 million hectares) of sustainably managed farmland in the states of Arkansas, California, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Texas. Rice conservation practices continue to advance and evolve, and the goal remains the same: produce more rice while using less water and less energy; improve water quality, air quality, and soil conservation; and enhance wildlife habitats to support biodiversity. All without the use of genetically modified organisms (GMO's).

### Environmental Stewardship: A commitment to continuous improvement

- Advances in farming practices and innovation help farmers grow more food using less water and fewer acres of land. Over the past 36 years American rice farmers have increased rice yields by 62% while at the same time increasing land use efficiency by 39% and decreasing energy use by 34% and water use by 52%, as determined by Field to Market in the 2016 National Indicators Report.
- In 1980, total rice production was 146 million hundredweights compared to 193 million hundredweights of rice produced in 2015 - a 32% increase.
- U.S. rice farmers are committed to being good stewards of their resources, all while providing critical habitat for migrating waterfowl. They provide 35% of the food resources needed each year for migrating waterfowl in critical flyways in the U.S.
- Sustainability and conservation may begin at the farm, but these important values continue at the mill and down the food supply chain.



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## Social Responsibility: A commitment to future generations

- All segments of the U.S. rice industry are invested in sustainable production and milling practices because it is personal – rice farmers often live on the land they work, and rice mills are important economic drivers in their communities. Together they provide tens of thousands of jobs and inject billions of dollars into the economy – all while standing on a strong record of environmental stewardship.
- The U.S. rice industry not only provides jobs in rural areas throughout the U.S. but also cultivates its role as good stewards of the land to ensure that it is viable for future generations to produce food and fiber.
- 96% of all U.S. rice farms are family owned and operated, and rice farmers take care of the land to invest in the future for the next generation
- Rice provides an economical source of carbohydrates and key nutrients for families across the globe. Rice includes more than 15 vitamins and minerals, and beneficial antioxidants while reducing the risk of heart disease, diabetes and certain cancers.
- U.S. rice farmers share the bounty of the harvest with their communities through donations to local food banks as well as initiatives to provide rice for school lunch programs.
- In partnership with USDA, U.S. farmers contribute 100,000 tonnes of rice for international food aid each year.



## Economic Profitability: A commitment to long-term viability

- In 2015, the value of U.S. rice production was \$2.4 billion. Farming alone was estimated to have a total output effect on the U.S. economy of \$5.65 billion, providing more than 31,700 jobs. In addition, rice milling operations constitute a significant sector of the U.S. rice industry, and economic contributions of rice milling were estimated to be \$9.34 billion in 2016 in total output value.
- Innovative techniques and improvements in rice production have reduced the time spent in fields to just seven man-hours per acre compared to the 300 hours often required in less developed countries. At the same time, rice farms and mills comply with laws and regulations ensuring the safety of their workers and environmental compliance.
- Each U.S. rice farm contributes about €863,000 (\$1 million) to its local economy.
- 85% of the rice that is consumed in the United States is grown by U.S. rice farmers, while 50% of rice produced in the U.S. is exported to more than 120 countries all over the globe.

## Sources

*Field to Market. Environmental and Socioeconomic Indicators for Measuring Outcomes of On-Farm Agricultural Production in the United States. December 2016.*

*Economic Contributions of the U.S. Rice Industry to the U.S. Economy. Agricultural and Food Policy Center, Texas A&M University. February 2017.*



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