



Texas Rice

Texas A&M University System Agricultural
Research and Extension Center
Beaumont, Texas

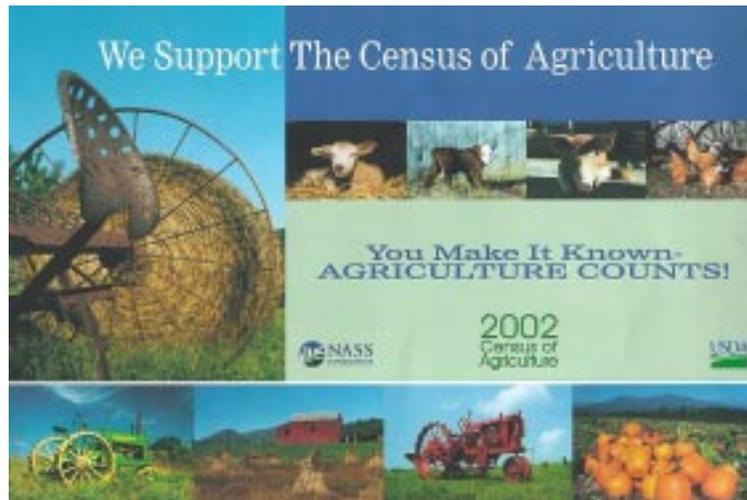
Winter 2002 Volume II Number 9

Texas Agricultural Statistics Service: Making Agriculture Count!

Brown who is the Ag Statistician working specifically in rice. In addition, Lorna works with over 225

Texas Agricultural Statistics Service (TASS) is the agency that provides the official data on agriculture for both the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Their mission is to serve Texas, its agriculture and its rural communities by providing meaningful, accurate, and objective statistical information and services. The office operates under a cooperative agreement between TDA and USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). They also have cooperative agreements for specific programs with universities and other agricultural industry entities here in Texas. According to TASS Director Robin Roark, these cooperative programs generate the statistical data and information as a joint program to avoid duplication of government activities, making the best use of taxpayer money.

"TASS issues around 400 reports annually," said Roark, "including data on crop acreage, yield, production, prices, livestock inventories, and production values." These reports cover most facets of



agriculture including field crops, fruits, vegetables, livestock, dairy, poultry, aquaculture and crop conditions as well as weather, prices, cash receipts, economic statistics, farm labor, and chemical use. In addition to the state level estimates, TASS also publishes county estimates for major commodities and produces an annual bulletin containing statistics from the previous year for most commodities. The Rice Crop Statistics Report published from the Beaumont Center is used extensively by TASS in their reports relating to rice.

Collecting, assimilating and distributing this volume of information requires a tremendous amount of manpower. The TASS office in Austin has 7 state employees and 27 USDA employees, including Lorna

Field and Phone Enumerators across Texas. According to Lorna, these people work directly with farmers and producers to gather the most accurate information available for the many reports compiled each year. "These are dedicated people," said Lorna, "who really care about the farmers. They understand that the best way to help our rural

communities is to make sure their contribution to the Texas economy is accurately documented." TASS field Enumerator Ann Golden is familiar to many Texas rice producers, as she has worked for the agency for almost 20 years in the Gulf Coast region. In visiting with Ann it was obvious that she views her role with TASS as more than just a job. "I really enjoy going into the field to work with producers," said Ann, "and I get a lot of satisfaction knowing I am helping the agricultural community get the representation they deserve."

This year is especially hectic for the field team because every five years the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service conducts the Census of Agriculture, and 2002 is

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From the Editor...



The 2002 season has been a tumultuous one for US agriculture and for US rice producers. We have had a record-breaking year, with yields exceeding 7000 lbs per acre for the main plus ratoon crop. Some of our Texas growers had crop yields exceeding 12,000 lbs/ac, with a few reaching the 13,000 lb mark. Had we not experienced frog-strangling ratoon crop rains, and in some cases floods, average yields would easily have been a hundred or so lbs per acre more.

Texas rice producers continue to lead the nation in adapting new and improved production methods. A very large number have moved to limited tillage and no-till systems. This affords greater weed control and allows producers to seed their fields sooner. In general, earlier planted fields produce a greater amount of their growth during slightly cooler temperature, resulting in less loss of metabolites through respiration and greater grain set and yield.

The average seeding rate continues to drop, with some of our very best growers consistently producing tremendously high yields using 40-60 lbs of seed per acre. Low seeding rates have been made possible through improvements in planting equipment, and greater uniformity of land surface preparation. Greater uniformity of seeding depth and spacing results in a crop that matures more uniformly and plants that each contribute more evenly to yields.

The 2002 season also marked the start of the large-scale use of herbicide tolerant rice varieties. These varieties hold tremendous promise for improving yields and production efficiency in red-rice infested areas. For the first time, hybrid rice has begun to emerge with grain quality that is near the point where it may someday soon reach the level currently achieved with conventional rice varieties.

It is changes like these that have allowed our best growers to continue to be the best and what has served as a beacon for other producers to follow. Smart imitation is more than flattery; it makes good sense to be innovative and to keep our eyes open, particularly during tough economic times.

After much rankling and behind the doors politics, we finally ended up with a farm bill, which at least to a degree helps to protect our producers from inequitable foreign price supports and tariffs. Although it is far short of what is needed to secure our country's food, feed, and fiber production, the level of support does provide some help. However, we need to continually remind our members of Congress that a secure and affordable food supply should be a high priority for our nation and that they must effectively work to reduce foreign tariffs and price supports (average of 62%) to a level comparable to the 12% charged in the US.

US producers have long shown a willingness to take on the odds and fight the tough fight, as is evident by the above-mentioned price support and tariff inequities. But it certainly does not help when our own government delivers a farm bill that continues to allow a large amount of price support funds to be captured by non-farmers. Instead of worrying about WTO agreements that place limitations on tying price supports to production, we should instead use price supports as a mechanism to maintain parity with price supports and tariffs from other countries.

2003 will certainly be another exciting but challenging year. I look forward to working with all of you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "T. Wilson".

Ted Wilson

Professor and Center Director

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Texas Rice Industry Representatives Join Forces to Help Address Legislative Needs

On December 17th Jack Wendt hosted a Legislative Interpretive Event for the rice industry at his ranch near Kendleton in Fort Bend County. Legislators from four rice-producing districts were represented at the meeting.

Presentations by Ted Wilson, Anna McClung, Dale Fritz, Kelby Boldt and Rick Jahn focused on research activities and outreach efforts by Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, Texas Cooperative Extension and the United States Department of Agriculture to strengthen and enhance rice production in Texas.

Jobaid Kabir, with the Lower Colorado River Authority, presented information on water and environmental issues related to the rice industry, and discussed cooperative efforts underway between TAES and LCRA. Jim Stansel spoke about the Texas Rice Improvement Association, highlighting their support of rice research and the production of quality foundation seed.

A recurring theme throughout the presentations emphasized the longtime partnership between rice scientists and our growers. There is no other commodity in the state that can boast this type of partnership.

Speaking for the producers, Layton Raun gave an inspiring talk about the importance of these connections, and how research has benefitted the industry. Regarding the check off program Layton said, "Money spent on research is an investment in our future." And looking across at the legislators, it was obvious this statement had a profound impact, and should go a long way to insure government funding of the initiatives being considered that are vital for continued operation of the Experiment Stations.

Dr. Charlie Scifres presented information on the three initiatives that Texas A&M will be pushing in the next legislative session. The first is aimed at securing funding for infrastructure repairs to the 'off-campus' units, which includes the Beaumont Center. Many of you visiting the Center over the past year may have noticed the buckets and cans spread around to catch rainwater from our leaky roof. Without sequestering research monies, these repairs have long been neglected.

The second initiative is for the establishment of a

statewide Irrigation Technology Center for research and education to help insure adequate water supplies for Texas. As urban demand on water continues to increase, we must guarantee that farmers will continue to have the water needed to keep Texas a leader in agricultural production.

And finally, the third initiative addresses the need for countermeasures against food and agricultural bioterrorism, a threat to our rural and urban communities alike. We must be able to respond quickly and contain any menace that threatens our food security.

Please contact your legislators and encourage them to support these important initiatives. *



TRIA Board Finalizes Plans for 2003 Crop Year



The TRIA Board met on December 12th to finalize plans for the 2003 crop year. Topping the agenda was setting prices for the foundation seed being offered this year. Most producers should have received the order form by now, but a copy is printed on the back page of the newsletter for your convenience. All orders must be postmarked by 12:00 pm, January 20, 2003 and must be accompanied by a full payment. Seed allocations will be made on February 10, 2003.

Other items on the agenda included expansion of the organic rice field demonstrations for 2003. TRIA will continue to work with NatureSafe, evaluating performance of their organic fertilizer on large-scale field production. TRIA will be growing organic Bengal, Saber and one other long grain to be decided next month.

The TRIA Board also approved plans and budget for expanding 2004 seed offerings for specialty rices (including organic.) This could prove to be a lucrative endeavor as the new USDA rules for organic production require that a producer purchase organic seed, if it available on the market.

Those interested in 2004 organic seed need to contact TRIA about varieties needed so seed production can be increased in the 2003 season. Please make your 2004 variety organic seed requests by February 10, 2003 so your variety preferences can be included in the 2003 plantings. *

*For more information contact Jim Stansel
at 409-752-2741 ext 2258.*

Caroline and William N. Lehrer Distinguished Chair in Water Engineering

Water is the most limiting resource in Texas. The vulnerability of water resources in Texas to the forces of nature has been clearly demonstrated by the droughts of 1996, 1998 and 2000. Population and industry growth are placing increasing pressures on the limited water supplies of the state. Water use for recreation, fish and wildlife, and environmental demands are also becoming increasingly important factors in water management policies.

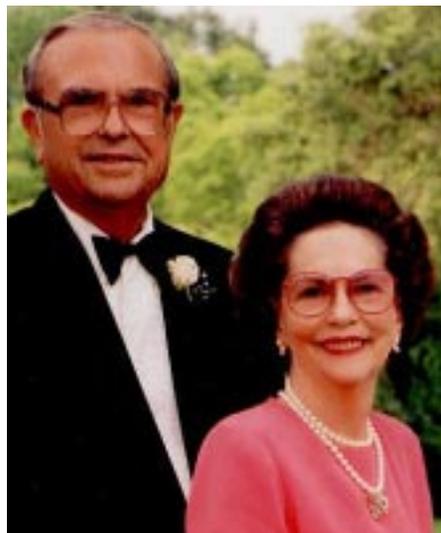
Further complicating the problem, Texas is highly diverse and water issues are dramatically different across regions and water supply sources. Aquifers in some regions of the state are being mined, and the long term outlook is a transition to dryland agriculture. There are other regions where urban and industries look to agriculture for their future water supplies. In other areas of the state, water quality issues related to contamination, non-point source pollution, water reuse and salinity are critical.

Effectively addressing the water resource needs of Texas must include a broad array of plans and strategies including urban and agricultural efficient water management, advanced technology evaluation, water marketing, drought management, and the application of state-of-the-art technologies in informatics.

To continue this strong partnership with a commitment to the multiple water users of the State, and help meet the needs of Texas, Texas A&M University, The Agriculture Program and the Agricultural Engineering Department are establishing the Caroline and William N. Lehrer Distinguished Chair in Water Engineering.

This endowed Chair will provide unbiased research-based information to this crucial area. In this partnership, Texas A&M University will provide \$1,000,000 in matching funds, while organizations and individuals representing water users have also contributed \$1,000,000 - funding a \$2,000,000 endowment. Income from the Chair will be used to support a faculty member in the field of water engineering to perform research, education, and Extension activities for the benefit of all citizens of the State.

Goals of the Lehrer Distinguished Chair in Water Engineering include:



Caroline and William Lehrer. Before his death in 1994, William was very active in the rice industry, both nationally and internationally. The family farmed rice in Garwood, and also owned a rice dryer and irrigation company.

- Provide for the continuation of leading edge research, teaching and Extension programs in a broad array of water engineering topics including surface water and groundwater hydrology, irrigation engineering and water management, urban water resource management, reuse of municipal wastewater, water quality, drought and climate forecasting, wildlife habitat management, pollution management, water quality remediation, and water conservation.
- Expand the efforts in technology transfer through public education.
- Conduct nationally recognized training and educational programs for professional development of water users and professionals, both agricultural, industrial and municipal.
- Sponsor public education programs regarding water conservation and efficient utilization.
- Train qualified people to enter the field of water engineering by strengthening the undergraduate and graduate education programs in this field.

Within the next few months representatives from the major contributors to the fund and other municipal, agricultural, industrial, or governmental organizations will be invited by the Agricultural Engineering Department to serve on an advisory board. This advisory board will assist in reviewing potential candidates for the Chair, will advise the department in defining the highest research priorities for the Chair on an annual basis, and will assist the department and the Chair in selection of project funding. Rice farmers serving on the initial Steering Committee include Steve Balas and L.G. Raun, Jr. *

*For more information contact Dr. Warren Evans
at 979-845-4740*

Texas Agricultural Statistics Service continued...



TASS Director Robin Roark had 22 years experience with the National Ag Statistics Service before coming home to Texas.

participate in the Census of Agriculture to ensure that all operations, large and small, are properly counted and represented. The Census is the most comprehensive source of statistics portraying our Nation's agriculture. It is the only source of uniform agricultural data for every county in the United States. The information is used by producer organizations, local governments, university researchers and many others to support agricultural policy and development, promote agricultural products, aid production, and much more.

Because of the importance of the census, response is required by law (P.L. 105-113, the Census of Agriculture Act of 1997, also documented in Title 7, U.S. Code). Producers uncomfortable with disclosing personal financial records should also be aware that, by law (U.S. Code, Title 7), individual reports to NASS are kept strictly confidential. They are only used in statistical summaries and no individual reports are ever released to anyone outside of NASS. The agency cannot and will not share its list of names, or any individual data with any other organization - public or private.

a census year. The Census was mailed to nearly 3 million producers across the country in mid-December, with over 300,000 forms sent in Texas. All producers of any agricultural product should partici-

participate in the Census of Agriculture to ensure that all operations, large and small, are properly counted and represented. The Census is the most comprehensive source of statistics portraying our Nation's agriculture. It is the only source of uniform agricultural data for every county in the United States. The information is used by producer organizations, local governments, university researchers and many others to support agricultural policy and development, promote agricultural products, aid production, and much more.

According to Roark, rice is a very important commodity to the agricultural census. "U.S. farmers grow over 80% of the rice eaten in the United States. The exact amount of acreage that is in the United States and the amount of rice produced from that acreage is something that the rice industry needs and wants."

It's important that every producer, large or small, complete their form and make it known - agriculture counts!

One issue that could affect the Texas rice statistics in the census is acreage being double counted, once by the grower and once by the landlord. It is important to understand that the Census is surveying the operators of the land for what they grew in 2002. All TASS needs from the landlord is the number of acres rented out to others in 2002, not the crops grown on the land that has been rented out. Of course, if the landlord also has land that they actually farm, then those crops should be reported in the landlord's census forms. If this issue is addressed carefully it will prevent any double counts on acreage and insure Census accuracy.

Any producer who does not receive a Census form by the first week of January, or needs assistance in filling out the form, should call the Ag Census toll-free number 1-888-4AG-STAT (1-888-424-7828). Also, to get a speaker for a gathering of farmers or ranchers, please contact the Texas Agricultural Statistics Service at 1-800-626-3142.

About the Staff

Robin Roark was born and raised in New Braunfels where his family ran a cow-calf operation. He attended Texas A&M University where he received a BS in Animal Science and a MS in Agricultural Economics. Robin has worked with the National Agricultural Sta-



Taken at the 2002 Texas Rice Festival in Winnie, TASS staff members Ann Golden, Charmaine Arrington, Lorna Brown and Cathy Reagan.

continued on next page

TASS continued...

tistics Service for 22 years. He worked in the NASS offices in New Mexico, Washington, Maryland, Washington D.C. and in Canada as part of a USDA exchange program. Mr. Roark has been the Director of the Texas Agricultural Statistics Service for the past four years. According to Robin, his favorite part of the job is working directly with producers. He attends meetings across the state and often makes 'house calls' to visit with producers on their farms.

Lorna Brown is a native of New Mexico, and has been involved in agriculture since she was a child. She participated in 4-H raising animals, was a 4-H State Ambassador during high school, and held numerous leadership positions in agricultural organizations throughout college. Lorna received her BS in Agricultural Business and Agricultural Economics from New Mexico State University, and was an intern at the NASS office there for 2 years before she was offered the job in Texas. She started with TASS in July of 2002 as an Ag Statistician, with specific duties in rice. Lorna assists the field team and helps out at training schools offered throughout the year. She also is responsible for evaluating data sent in by producers and uses this information for assimilation into the many reports published annually by TASS. *

2002 Youth Rice Contest

Pictured are winners of the Texas Rice Festival Youth Rice Contest from Hamshire Fannett, coached by Rueben Stringer and Mike Broussard. Beaumont Center Entomologist Mo Way and Cynthia Tribble, Administrative Assistant, coordinated the exam. Awards were donated by Syngenta, Agriland Farm Credit, Texas Rice Festival and TCE/TAES. *



L to R: John Wyble, James Carleton, Travis Blankenship and Katie Spencer

New Rice Breeder Joins TAES

The much-anticipated arrival of our new state breeder was finally realized this month as Dr. Rodante E. Tabien joined the staff of the Beaumont/Eagle Lake Center. Dr. Tabien comes to us from the International Rice Research Institute where he has worked for the past 6 years in rice breeding and development.



Celia, Kevin, Dan and Rodante Tabien.

Dr. Tabien acquired both his BS and Masters degrees from the University of the Philippines at Los Banos, both in plant breeding. In 1996 he completed his Doctor of Philosophy in Plant Breeding at Texas A&M University. Many might remember Dr. Tabien from the time he spent working as a Rockefeller Foundation Fellow at Texas A&M in College Station. During that six years, he spent quite a bit of time at the Beaumont Center. He worked with Dr. Jim Stansel and others investigating the recombinant inbred lines of a Lemont x Teqing cross and identified five major genes for blast resistance.

Dr. Tabien was born in Quezon, a Province in Luzon, the Philippines' largest island. He was the second to youngest in a large family of 10 children. Growing up, his father farmed upland rice, sugarcane and coconuts. Dante met his wife Celia while both were attending the University of the Philippines in Los Banos. Celia acquired her Masters degree in Development Management. They have two children, Dan (16) and Kevin (14). The boys will enroll at Hardin-Jefferson High School at the start of the spring semester in January. Although Dan already had enough credits to graduate, he will 're-do' his senior year, taking mostly advanced placement classes, before beginning college in the fall of 2004.

Please join the faculty and staff of the Beaumont/Eagle Lake Center in welcoming Dr. Tabien and his family to Texas. *

State, National and International News...

ERS ANALYSIS OF FARM BILL

The Economic Research Service examines what the 2002 Farm Act may mean for commodity markets in a new analysis now available on the ERS website <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/aib778/>

A side-by-side comparison of the 2002 Farm Act is also available on the ERS website: <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Features/FarmBill/>

Additional ERS analyses on this legislation will be forthcoming. You can be notified via email when these studies are completed and published. To sign up for a subscription to this notification service, go to: <http://www.ers.usda.gov/updates/>

DOMESTIC RICE CONSUMPTION CONCERNS FARMERS

USRPA - The U S Rice Producers Association reports the good news is that both total and per capita U.S. rice consumption continues to rise, but the bad news is that imports account for a growing share of the domestic consumption. And according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) imports are projected to continue increasing at a slightly faster pace than overall consumption. This is not the kind of news that rice farmers want to hear.

The consumption of rice has been on an increase in the United States since the late 1970s and for 2002/03 the per capita consumption is projected by the USDA to reach a record 26.3 pounds. According to

the USDA, the domestic consumption figure includes not only table rice but usage in processed foods, breakfast cereals, beer manufacturing, pet foods and foreign imported rice.

For American rice farmers who contribute hard earned check-off dollars in promotional efforts, the importation of rice from the foreign marketplace is of serious concern.

“As I talk to rice farmers in Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri and California there is a consistent concern in regards to the effective use of check-off dollars that are designed to increase the consumption of American grown rice,” stated Dwight Roberts, President & CEO of the US Rice Producers Association. “The time has come for the rice industry to re-evaluate how check-off dollars are used in the domestic marketplace and we owe it to our farmers to make the necessary changes if we are going to participate in the expected expansion in domestic usage,” finalized Roberts.

HYBRID RICE EXCELS IN FIELD

Delta Farm Press. — Hybrid rice with resistance to Newpath herbicide proved to be a dynamic combination for several rice producers who tested the product in 2002. But can growers offset the anticipated higher cost of two premium technologies with more yield and reduced weed control costs? That’s the question many growers, including Rich Hillman of Carlisle, AR are asking. In 2002, Hillman raised 10 acres of Clearfield XL-8,

RiceTec’s XL-8 hybrid combined with Clearfield’s Newpath resistance.

“The rice really yielded well,” Hillman said. “The milling yields of hybrids had been keeping me away from them. But there has been some improvement (with XL-8). It’s not up to a Cocodrie or a Wells, but it’s close.”

Hillman says he plans on raising the Clearfield XL-8 again next year “in fields where I have a red rice problem. I haven’t heard what the initial seed costs are going to be. If it’s too expensive, I won’t be able to use it.”

At the time of this writing, a pricing plan for Clearfield hybrids had not been determined, according to John Nelson, executive vice president and general manager of RiceTec, which markets the hybrid rice. But the company is working on it.

“As with any new technology, we are certainly very cognizant that the farmer needs to recognize an economic benefit from these new technologies. We’re going to stay very sensitive to that,” says Nelson.

Rice lines with the combined technology will be available in limited supplies in 2003, marketed as Clearfield XL-8. The focus of the limited release will be on current hybrid rice producers, according to Thompson. “We will target innovative growers to receive volume so we can get a broad market entry.”

The 2002 Rice Crop Statistics Report published from the Beaumont Center and funded by the TRRF Board is now available. Call 409-752-2741 ext. 2220 to receive your copy.

Standard Treated

Seed Includes:

Vitavax, Zinc, Release and Apron

Icon applied @ 0.0375 lb.

ai per 60 lb. seeding rate.



MAIL SEED ORDER TO:

Texas Rice Improvement
Association
1509 Aggie Dr.
Beaumont, TX 77713
Attn: Brenda

RICE VARIETY	PRICE/CWT STD. TRT. & NON TRT. SEED	PRICE/CWT STD. TRT. W/ICON	ORDER CWT.	AMOUNT ENCLOSED
<i>SIERRA</i> New Release	<i>\$60</i>	<i>\$20</i>		
<i>SABER</i>	<i>\$60</i>	<i>\$20</i>		
JEFFERSON	\$60	\$20		
DELLA	\$80	\$20		
COCODRIE	\$60	\$20		
CYPRESS	\$60	\$20		
DIXIEBELLE	\$60	\$20		
JASMINE 85	\$60	\$20		

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

Full Payment Must Accompany Seed Order. Make checks payable to: *Texas Rice Improvement Association.*

All orders must be postmarked by 12:00 noon, January 20, 2003.

Allocations will be made Feb. 10, 2003. If you have any questions call 409-752-2741 ext. 2230

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