



Texas Rice

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Young Farmers Offer Hope For the Rice Industry

"Let us not forget that the cultivation of the earth is the most important labor of man. When tillage begins, other arts will follow. The farmers, therefore, are the founders of civilization." — Daniel Webster

While the average age of farmers in Texas continues to rise, and may top 60 this year, our potential young farmers are not lacking in desire, but opportunity.

Even with all the pitfalls and incentives to pursue other careers outside of agriculture, there are many young people that are willing and eager to farm. In most cases, their parents insist on either college or trade school first.

Of the ten young adults interviewed for this story, ranging in age from 11 to 29 years old, some have already been farming a decade, while others are just bringing in their first crop.

Ben Anderson is an 11-year-old with a clear vision of his future. The oldest son of Rhonda and Andy Anderson, Ben has accompanied his dad to the fields since he was old enough to walk. Most mornings, he was the first one up, dressed and ready, making sure he didn't get left behind if dad left early. Since he was 9, Ben has helped with harvest by driving the auger truck, and has logged many hours on the tractor helping to pre-

pare the fields. Ben is an honor student, and has participated in 4-H since he was old enough to qualify. He is currently serving as a Chapter President.

The past two years, he brought home blue ribbons in the creative arts category. In his spare time he plays baseball and soccer, rides horses, cares for his black lab, Rex, plays the piano and follows the stock market with his dad. Ben wants to attend Baylor like his dad, to study business and economics. When Andy attended Baylor, his track team broke the school record in the relay race, and it has held for the past 15 years. Ben intends to remedy that, which is one of the many reasons he is looking forward to college. But when his education is complete, the self-assured young man plans to return home and farm rice with his dad. When I asked Ben what he thought his dad should be doing now that would make things better for him once he was ready to farm, he said "continue to make soil



Third generation rice farmer, Arthur Anderson, with four of his grandchildren: Ben, Will, Ashley and Allen.

improvements and get all the fields laser leveled." There you have it, he is already well on his way to being a top-notch farmer.

Grant Stoesser, younger son of Eileen and Ray, is a fourth generation farmer that has also been farming with his dad since he was just a toddler. This year, at 17, Grant brought in his first rice crop and cut a whopping 49 barrels to the acre! He also participated in the USA Rice Federation's promotional contest as part of National Rice Month this past September. After weeks of hard work giving lectures, doing in-store promos, visiting with local elected officials and giving radio interviews, Grant took top honors in the contest, landing him a \$2000 scholarship. He said he didn't do it for the money, as his intention was

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From the Editor...



The 2003 season is nearing its end and many of our rice producers are already in the midst of preparing land for the next crop. It is too early to accurately predict what the statewide yields were this season; however, discussions with producers suggest that average main & ratoon crop yields in Texas will be down somewhat from last year. On the good side, the lower yields have been offset by increased premiums.

Wouldn't it be good were we able to better predict crop performance? The very best way to improve our ability to predict crop performance is through continued learning, always watching and seeing how the plants respond to different soils, pests, nutrients, and weather conditions. There is no substitution for hard-learned knowledge. Part of the knowledge comes from growers and consultants working with their crops day in and day out. Part of the knowledge comes from researcher experiments specifically focused on unraveling what makes the rice plant tick the way it does. We are getting closer and closer to being able to predict rice crop performance for a wider range of environmental, nutrient, and pest conditions; but, we still have a ways to go before our tools can begin to greatly reduce some of the uncertainty associated with planting and growing a crop.

What if you had a crystal ball that would allow you to look into the future and determine next year's weather conditions? And what if this crystal ball allowed you to determine how fast and how high your pest pressures would develop? And, wouldn't this crystal ball be great if it could tell you future market prices? Together, this information would allow a rice producer to know when to plant, how much to budget for insect, weed, and disease control, and how much they could sock-away after selling next year's crop.

It is sometimes nice to dream, and as our knowledge of rice continues to improve, more and more of the guesswork will be taken out of the growing a crop. But you know, we don't always have to think about crystal balls and forecasts to get a sense of what the future will bring. Sometimes all we have to do is take

a look around us to see our future. A prime example of how we can do this is by taking a look at our young and up and coming rice farmers. They are our future. Most of us who have reached the half-century mark need look no further than our sons and daughters and in some cases grandchildren to get a good glimpse of our future leaders. As the cover story in this issue of *Texas Rice* presents, our children and grandchildren are our legacy and our future. Like seeds, the better we nourish and nurture them, the better they grown to become productive members of our society, with some maturing into our future farming leaders.

In my mind, children are our reason for existing. Getting to occasionally meet and work with students at the Texas A&M campus is one of the main reasons that I don't mind my frequent 308 mile round trips to College Station to work with other Center Directors, Department Heads, and higher administration. Nothing stretches your vision and makes you think better than attempting to address a question by a child or young adult.

I hope you have enjoyed this issue of *Texas Rice*. This will be the last issue until the Winter Issue. Please keep your eyes and ears peeled for the Winter Issue. We will be bringing something very different as we highlight some of the joint activities going on between Texas and Louisiana. Until then, hope your crops did well and your market prices were good.

Please keep sending me your suggestions.

Sincerely,

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

L. T. Wilson

Professor and Center Director
Jack B. Wendt Endowed Chair
in Rice Research

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Farming Rice

a monthly guide for Texas growers

Providing useful and timely information to Texas rice growers, so that they may increase productivity and profitability on their farms.

Flameless Catalytic Infrared Drying

Catalytic Drying Technologies (CDT) of Independence, Kansas has developed a process for drying rough rice utilizing radiant heat. The process is termed *Flameless Catalytic Infrared (FCIR) Drying*, and has the potential to cut down on costs and improve the milling quality of rice.

Research conducted at Texas A&M University in the late 1950's showed dramatic improvement in rough rice drying efficiency using infrared radiation (IR) as the primary source of heat. IR is the bandwidth of wavelengths just longer than visible light but shorter than microwave and radio waves. It is the heat you feel from sunshine. By directing this energy spectrum at water containing products, evaporative energy is targeted to the water within the product. In the case of rough rice, the water within the kernel is heated, without heating surrounding air. The result is that rice is dried, in some sense, "from the inside out", and reduces the stress fractures that would normally occur with conventional drying. This has the potential to decrease drying time, while at the same time improving milling yield.

Research conducted in the 1960's at Louisiana State University (LSU) took the application a step further and showed that pre-heating rough rice with infrared energy prior to the first stage of column drying could reduce drying time while achieving higher head rice yields. Recent research by Terry Siebenmorgen at the University of Arkansas and at CDT's headquarters laboratory demonstrated that reduced drying times and higher head rice yields could be obtained with the

proper application of FCIR for pre-heating, as well as for the total drying operation.

A narrow band of IR wavelength, from approximately 3-7 microns in the "far infrared" range, is where water absorbs energy extremely efficiently. CDT has developed a system that makes this technology possible on a commercial scale. In their system, FCIR energy of the proper bandwidth is generated by catalyzing natural gas or propane with a proprietary enhanced platinum catalyst. The gas, when combined with air across the platinum catalyst, reacts by oxidation-reduction to yield the proper bandwidth of infrared energy and small amounts of CO₂ and water vapor.



Catalytic Drying Technology's pilot scale test dryer – 4 ft. x 30 ft

The company won an award from the Environmental Protection Agency in 2000 as part of that organization's Pollution Prevention Program. The company received the award in the category of "Environmentally Preferable Products."

Another application for the rice industry is the control of insects that infest rice bins. Insects, and their larvae and eggs have high water content. The FCIR energy "targets" the water within the insects. Rice is conveyed under the catalytic infrared elements as it is moved from bin to bin, or from bin to package in the case of brown or milled rice. Since the insects are higher in moisture content than the grain, flour, or dry products containing the infestation, the energy is absorbed rapidly by the organisms and thus, they quickly heat up and die. Confirmation studies leading to opti-

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Flameless Drying continued...

mized equipment configurations are underway by Dr. Terry Siebenmorgen at the University of Arkansas, and Dr. Frank Arthur at the USDA Post Harvest Facility at Kansas State University.

The cost comparison of an FCIR system to conventional systems that perform the same function depend on the specific application in question. In general though, equipment costs are on a par with conventional conveyor-type systems on a cost-per-conveyor area basis. However, since drying/heating times can be reduced using FCIR energy, CDT suggests that smaller equipment or more throughput (or both) can result from using a catalytic infrared system. For example, a typical forced-air conveyor dryer may have as much as 50 horsepower installed just to move heated air. FCIR energy is transferred directly to the moisture in the product without the requirement to heat large volumes of air. Therefore, horsepower requirements are greatly reduced. In comparable applications, CDT's system would use 12 - 25 horsepower to move the conveyor and operate the small recirculation and ventilation fans.

With regard to fuel use, FCIR energy systems efficiently transfer the energy directly to the moisture and have little waste heat. Studies show that rice can be dried using as little as 1,500 BTU per pound of water removed, compared to 1,800 to 3,000 BTU per pound of water removed for conventional systems. Initial research suggest that fuel costs can be reduced by as much as 30-50%.

Dr. Zhong Li Pan and Jim Tompson with the University of California, Davis, have been awarded a California Energy Commission grant to study the economics of rice drying with FCIR, using test equipment supplied by CDT.

CDT equipment is custom built for the specific application. For more information regarding a specific on-farm or in-factory application, contact Virgil Macaluso, President, Catalytic Drying Technologies LLC at 800-835-0557 or email virgil@cat-group.com. Regarding research being conducted at the University of Arkansas, contact Dr. Terry Siebenmorgen at 479-575-2841 or email tsiebenm@uark.edu. For more information on rice applications, processes, quality and yield improvement potential using FCIR, contact Al Brooks at 281-381-3721 or email albrooks@albrooksconsulting.com. *

Getting Kids Involved in Agriculture

Ag in the Classroom



October 8th and 9th, the Wharton County Farm Bureau presented *Ag in the Classroom* at the Wharton County Youth Fairgrounds. In it's 3rd year, the event is a school outreach project that introduces children to career opportunities in agriculture. Fourth graders from across the county heard presentations on dairy, biotech, wildlife, aquaculture, horticulture, beef, horses, poultry, rice, and row crops. Pictured above is Stephen Gertson, a 4th generation rice farmer from Lissie who served as event Chairman for 2003.

Youth Rice Contest



In conjunction with the 2003 Texas Rice Festival, held in Winnie, Beaumont Center Entomologist Dr. Mo Way, with Co-chairman Cynthia Tribble, organized the Youth Rice Contest. Students in FFA programs from 5 highschools in the Texas Rice Belt participated. The kids identified insect pests, weeds and disease problems in rice. The first place team from Hamshire-Fannett is pictured above. *L to R*: Greg Viator, Dylan Summers, Marcie Broussard and Jud Lagrone.

Grower Profile...

Billy and Glenn Hefner

Billy Hefner is a third generation rice farmer with a clear understanding of what makes our industry tick. We talked about the future of rice farming in Texas, and how water rights, landlord-tenant issues and government programs will affect our future.

Billy's maternal grandfather was W.A. Stallman, a cattleman and row crop farmer prior to the early 1940's. After the Lehrer family expanded the Garwood Irrigation Company to serve all of the Garwood Prairie, Billy's grandfather began farming rice. He was good friends with W.K Lehrer, and later Billy's dad, W.A. Hefner Jr., farmed on halves with the Lehrer family of L-7 Ranch. Billy still farms on a portion of their land today.

With a degree in math and science from Sam Houston State University, Billy taught high school from 1965 to 1975. He farmed some on the side, but it wasn't until 1975 that he quit teaching and bought up enough allotments to farm full time.

Billy and his wife Jessye have one daughter and two sons. Their daughter, Michaelanne, and her husband Russell raise cattle, pecans and row crops in the Weimer area. They have one daughter, named Jessye after her grandmother, who is the apple of her granddad's eye. She often insists that Billy take her to school and, as much as time allows, granddad is more than happy to accommodate his only grandchild.

Billy's youngest son, Bill, is a graduate of the University of Texas, and currently serves as Business Manager for the Rice School District. He also farms rice part time in Colorado County. The Hefner's oldest son, Glenn, got his marketing degree from Texas A&M and has been farming full time since 1991. Glenn's wife, Kathy, graduated from the University of Ohio and is an accountant in Houston.

While Billy and Glenn farm as two separate entities, they often pool their efforts and resources to get the job done. Together they account for 750 acres of rice and approximately 150 head of cattle in Colorado County. The two practice a 3-year rotation, when the rice comes out the cattle move in. This helps keep red rice down to a minimum, but Billy said there is one field infested heavily enough to justify using the



Billy Hefner with his son, Glenn, who has farmed since 1991.

Clearfield lines. They tried CL141 and CL161 this past season, and found the red rice control good, but the yields disappointing. In all the other fields they have gone with Cocodrie for the past several years.

The Hefners use the Garwood canal system for their water, as do 90% of the rice farmers on the Garwood Prairie. Billy is very involved in water issues, and serves as Chairman of the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) Advisory Committee, Garwood Division. The committee meets with LCRA officials 4 times a year to provide input and receive updates on critical water issues. Billy said the Garwood canal system can serve 21,000 acres of rice land, but currently only 13,000 acres of rice is being grown on the Garwood Prairie. This makes it very difficult for the LCRA to maintain low water rates, as the entire system must be maintained. Prices haven't gone up in the past few years, though, as Bill Lehrer stipulated that the price of water would be locked in for five years after his family sold the irrigation company to LCRA. The five year period will end with the 2004 season. With high demand for water from urban centers, farmers will likely pay more and more for their water as time goes on. For the foreseeable future, balancing the needs of agriculture and cities will continue to be the main challenge for the LCRA and other water providers.

The dramatic decline in rice acreage seen in the Garwood area is reflected throughout the state. Billy lost 300 acres this last year because the landowner decided to take the government payment rather than lease the land to farm rice. This landowner/tenant issue is a sore spot for many farmers in Texas. Billy had

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Grower Profile continued...



When there are no fields to work or rice to harvest, there's always the chore of mending fences.

a neighbor who farmed rice on leased land for nearly 20 years, building up the base and yield over time. He died unexpectedly of a heart attack, and his 55 year old widow was left with nothing. Because of the way the program is structured, the payments are tied to the land, and so the person (or family) that builds up the rice base doesn't necessarily receive the payments. In some cases, because of long-standing relationships between families, the landowners recognize that the person who built up the rice base is the one who should get the payments, but these cases are the exception rather than the rule.

According to Billy, these obstacles are the reason many of our young people, raised in farming families, are choosing other careers. His son Glenn is 36 years old, and one of the few young farmers in their area. Of course, Glenn completed his college degree before going into farming full time, to insure that he would be able to provide for his family. The problem in producing any crop, is that the farmer must invest a set amount of money throughout the season, and then is at the mercy of the environment and the market to receive a return on the investment. Heavy rains or winds can drastically reduce yield, and even if the weather cooperates completely, farmers can bring in a bumper crop only to find that the price offered at the end of the season may not cover the cost of production.

Still, Billy is determined to continue in the lifestyle

he loves. He has taken an active involvement in improving the rice industry. Besides the Chairmanship of the LCRA Advisory Committee, Billy also serves on the Texas Rice Research Foundation Board, the Texas Rice Legislative Committee, and is the Chairman of the FSA Committee in Colorado County. While all these obligations take up valuable time, Billy is determined to do what he can to improve the situation for himself, his children and all his friends and farmers that make up the Texas rice industry. *

Young Farmers continued...

to promote and benefit the industry he loves. To further promote rice awareness, he used his National Rice Month speeches as a starting point and developed a computer illustrated speech for 4-H competitions, winning region and district, and placing fifth in the state. Grant doesn't see farming as a job, but more of a lifestyle, an ordained calling. He cannot imagine doing anything else, and enjoys standing in the rice fields and feeling a closeness to God that is indescribable. Grant's faith, and a strong work ethic instilled by his parents, allows him to get a tremendous amount of satisfaction from working hard, and seeing the *seeds* of that labor harvested.



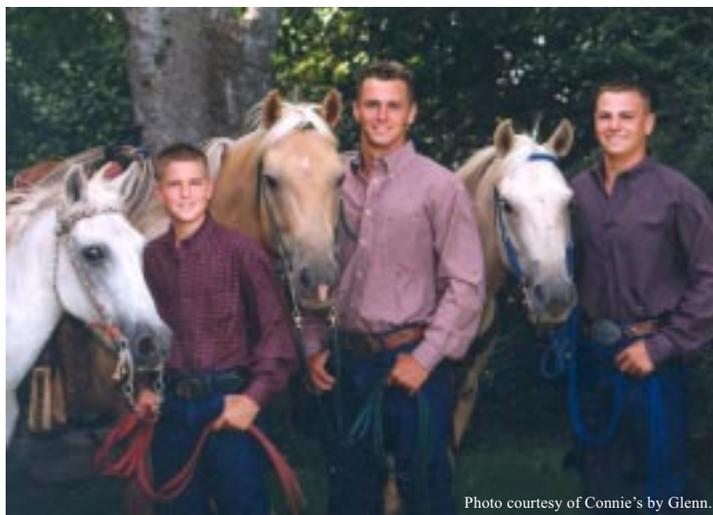
Grant Stoesser preparing to harvest his first rice crop. His 32-acre field of CL 161 brought in 49 barrels per acre.

Janice and Lynn Cox of El Campo have been blessed with three sons who are already well on their way to success. Aaron, the oldest at 21, completed 2

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Young Farmers continued...

semesters at Wharton Junior College before deciding to farm full time with his dad. Aaron says a farmer has to be more than an accomplished grower; he has to understand the futures market, the government programs and global economics. The family farms on the Wearden land in Jackson County, and have 650 acres of rice and 400 head of cattle. All three sons have been very active in the farming and ranching with their dad since they were old enough to see over the wheel of a tractor. They are involved in the daily decisions of the farm, and closely monitor the rice market. Lynn has instilled in them a respect for the land, and they understand that many factors make farming a gamble. But the young men have farming in their blood, and are determined to make it their livelihood. Aaron is a fourth generation rice farmer, and has been an excellent role model for his younger brothers, who are all fiercely competitive. The next in line is Nathan, who is 19 and attending Wharton Junior College to get his basics. He plans to transfer to Texas A&M and get his degree in Veterinary Science. He wants to specialize in large animals, and return to his hometown to practice, as there is a shortage of equine vets in their area. All the boys are accomplished riders, and help their dad work with the cattle. Nathan completed a Basic Farrier Science course at the Hill Country Horse Shoeing School in Bandera, a talent well used on the Cox farm. Once he completes his degree, he will partner in the family business and practice veterinary medicine. Justin is the youngest, at 15, and will not be out done by his brothers. He plays football on the freshman team, and is also very involved in 4-H. He got a Jersey calf his first year in FFA through the merit program, and has shown her every year in different divisions. The boys have all raised animals for show and sale, earning money for college and other expenses, and they have all participated in the livestock judging teams. Justin enjoys



L to R: Justin, Aaron and Nathan Cox, with their horses they depend on to work the cattle. All three young men are accomplished riders.



Gerald Bauer with his father Jack, who farm rice in Chambers County. Gerald brought in his first crop at 18 years old.

hunting and fishing, like his brothers, and all three are accomplished bow hunters. Because their mom is a music teacher, they have all learned to play the guitar quite well. Again, competition is strong between the brothers, and Aaron has made sure the benchmark is high.

Gerald Bauer is a fourth generation rice farmer, who put in his first crop when he was 18 years old. He farms with his father Jack and grandfather Robert. This year, he was honored at the Texas Rice Festival with the Young Farmer of the Year award. Gerald enjoys the farming lifestyle and the independence it brings. He remembers spending long hours in the fields at a very young age, and always knew that he would follow in his family's farming tradition. He said the hard work involved in farming may put some people off,

but he has become accustomed to the long hours, and can't imagine living any other way.

At one time, Michael Skalicky was the youngest rice farmer in Jackson County, and his grandfather Rudolph was the oldest. He has worked on the farm since he was a toddler, and put in his first crop at 18. Michael completed a Business degree at Victoria County Junior College and began farm-

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Young Farmers continued...

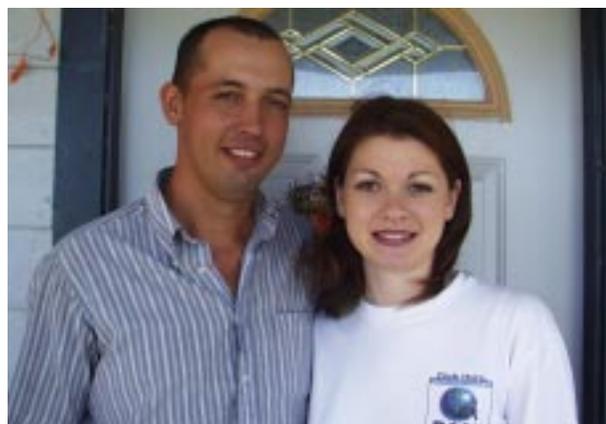


Michael Skalicky with his daughter, Mikaela, and wife, Kristin.

ing full time immediately afterwards. He entertained the idea of becoming an airline pilot, but decided that would entail too much time away from his wife Kristin and their daughter Mikaela. Michael leases the land his grandfather owned and equipment from his dad, and says that is the most cost effective way to make it. He has friends that would like to get into farming, but the start-up costs are just too high. Grandfather Rudolph made the Texas A&M research site at Ganado possible by committing the land and the water. He told Michael the researchers could use it indefinitely, as long as he didn't see any of us loafing! After his grandfather passed away, Michael took on the responsibility of furnishing water at the research site. This year he had 400 acres of rice, and has experimented with no-till milo and soybeans the last two years. One of the problems that Michael sees for young farmers is that it's expensive to learn from mistakes, and the older farmers, who are the best teachers, are becoming scarce. He also thinks the government programs need to be restructured so that payments are directed to smaller farmers, who need them the most. And opening more markets, such as Cuba and Iran, would help farmers see a higher return on their efforts.

Tim Lapham farms in Chesterville with his father, Ira, and has been working on the farm since he was a small child. He graduated from Texas A&M in 1998 with a degree in Business Administration, before he began working full time with his dad. This year they had 925 acres in rice and 400 cows with many feeder calves. Around 300 of those acres have been in back-to-back rice for 3 years. It seems to be going fine, ex-

cept this year they noticed more red rice, so they will probably use one of the Clearfield lines in some fields next season. A prompt, pre-emerge shot of Command and aggressive weed control will allow the entire 925 acres to be planted this coming year. Tim said one of the reasons more people his age are not farming is because they grew up in the '80s, when times were really tough for farmers and other occupations seemed more profitable. Along with that, the start-up costs are too overwhelming, unless you can get help from family. Tim said, "Years back, local farmers would work together to prepare the ground and harvest crops. Larger machinery has done away with the need to work together, which is what many younger farmers depended on to get their start." His two youngest brothers are attending college and help out on the farm on days between classes. His other brother works in ag and commercial real estate appraisal. Pride in ownership and a job well done are values he has learned from his family. Tim's father tried to persuade him to find an easier, more profitable occupation. But Tim says, "I've always been proud to say my father was a farmer and rancher. If I am that well-respected at his age, then I have made the right choice." In addition to all the farming responsibilities, Tim serves as Captain of the Cat Spring Volunteer Fire Department. I asked him what his wife, Regina, thinks about that. He said she mostly thinks it's a good thing, except when he is in the fields all day, then at a fire or EMS call all night!



Tim Lapham and his wife, Regina, just married in 2001.

Dustin Guthman is a third generation farmer, but like many of the others, he completed his Associates degree in Diesel Mechanics before going into farming

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full time. In his third year, Dustin cut 44 barrels per acre on 71 acres of CL 161. He was pleased with the yield, as that was in the high end for this variety in his area. Dustin pays cash rent for the land, and leases his equipment from his dad and uncle, who are in partnership. He credits his father with his knowledge of rice farming and still depends on his advice when problems arise. Dustin echoed the sentiments of many others when he said that many young people choose not to farm because it is extremely hard work, and there are easier jobs with more pay. He feels very satisfied in his career, though, and gets a lot of satisfaction from the work he has chosen.

In Nada, Lisa and Thierry Hoffman's son, Kevin, is a senior at Texas A&M and will graduate with a degree in Agronomy this May. Kevin is a fourth generation farmer, with 340 acres of corn, milo, and cotton on land leased from his grandfather, Kenneth Mahalitic. It has been impossible to farm rice with his 'back and forth' schedule, but he plans to do so once he graduates and can be home full time. His dad and granddad both farm rice, and his maternal grandfather is a row crop farmer. Kevin started driving a tractor when he was in the 2nd grade, and he always knew he would be a farmer. He likes the freedom and flexibility it offers, and says every day is a new adventure. He likes to experiment with different varieties and planting schemes, to get the most out of the land that is available to him. He leases some equipment from his grandfather, but has already purchased his own tractor and other implements. Kevin's roommates for the past two years are close friends and provide peer support. They want to farm also and are thinking of joining together once they graduate. Kevin understands the economies of scale and believes they will have a greater chance of success together rather than separate.

After completing the interviews, it is very encouraging to see the caliber of intelligence and the dedication these young men exhibit. It gives hope that the next generation of farmers in Texas will help our industry grow stronger and overcome the obstacles that lie ahead. *

In the coming season, we would like to recognize other young farmers in the Texas rice industry. If you would like to be included in a future article, or know someone who would, please contact Jay Cockrell at 409-752-2741 ext. 2272 or email j-cockrell@aesrg.tamu.edu

Rice In The CAFTA Negotiations

Central America is second only to Mexico as a market for U.S. long grain rice. The rapid growth of this market is due to unique cooperation between Central American rice farmers and millers and their governments, and is threatened by the negotiation of the Central American Free Trade Agreement. How could this be? Today, the region purchases one hundred percent of its annual import requirement of 500,000 metric tons from the U.S., primarily as rough (paddy) rice. Because millers and producers have united, Central American governments have established Tariff Rate Quotas (TRQ) which protect their local rice industries. In Guatemala, for example, the rice industry is permitted to "call" the import quota, but only after guaranteeing that the local crop has been purchased at a price in excess of world market levels. All of those imports, to make up the shortfall in domestic production, have come from the U.S. and have been imported free of duty (this not true for all countries in the region). An out-of-quota duty has served to keep rice from other origins unattractively priced, largely because demand is filled with the combination of local paddy rice and imports from the U.S. The problems begin if this close but delicate relationship is disturbed.

Under a free trade agreement with the U.S., Central American millers will lose the nearly exclusive control they now enjoy over the distribution chain. Non-processor competitors will emerge, and milled rice will be imported from the U.S. or Asia. To preserve their business, millers will also import milled rice in an effort to remain competitive. Mills will eventually go idle, as it will no longer make economic sense to import U.S. paddy rice or mill high-value local paddy rice. While U.S. rice mills gain a temporary short-term advantage, forcing the market to switch to imported milled rice leaves all the players at the mercy of price, and the U.S. will lose. Instead of benefiting from 100% of the TRQ market (served by paddy rice sales), U.S. shipments to the region may fall to 10% or less of the total milled market. U.S. rice farmers would bear the full cost of such a development, as the market for their output shrinks by 400,000 tons or more. The membership of the USRPA does not want this to happen. *

Article by Dwight Roberts, President and CEO, USRPA.

Texas Rice Festival 2003 Farmer of the Year Ronny Kolander

Ronnie Kolander was born to Yvonne and James Kolander in 1957 in Beaumont, and raised in the China, Nome and Sour Lake area. He is a fourth generation rice farmer. As a graduate of Hardin-Jefferson High School in 1975, he had already worked five summers for area farmers. He attended two years at Lamar University and four years of trade school. He began as a crop duster in 1980, and flew for 21 seasons in this area.

With his wife Carolyn, and four daughters: Sommer, Natasha, Morgan and Mallory, they began farming full time in 1997. His father and grandfather had already retired at this time. From his flying, he found and bought old, used machinery that he saw abandoned in weeds to get started farming. Along with family members who worked with him on the farm and a cow/calf operation, they have been blessed with great success. "The total success of our farming is due to God's blessings," says Kolander. They attend First Baptist Church in Nome.

"I deeply appreciate this great honor, but I feel it should belong to all area farmers because I borrowed ideas from many of them," says Kolander. *

Mary Bauer Honored as Senior Citizen of the Year

Seniors are one of our most important assets. It is often because they are retired that they are able to give more of their time and talents for the improvements of the community. It is with pride that for the year 2003, Mary Bauer has been selected as the recipient of the Young at Heart Senior Citizen of the Year Award for Winnie and the surrounding areas.

Mary is a charter member of the Hope Lutheran Church in Winnie. She has served as Sunday School Superintendent, Vacation Bible School Director, teacher, and on the Evangelism Committee. Mary also serves on the Altar Guild and is Lutheran Womens Missionary League (LWML) Secretary of Hope Circle. She has held many offices in the Golden Triangle Zone of the LWML.



Ronnie Kolander, a fourth generation rice farmer, was honored as the 2003 Texas Rice Festival Farmer of the Year.

By her membership in the Concordia Guild, and as a member of the Concordia Council of Concordia Lutheran College, she received the Dedicated Servant Award in 1991. She has also served as the Jefferson County 4-H Club leader and 4-H Home Economics Sewing Leader for Chambers County.

Mary is currently a member of the Winnie Area Chamber of Commerce. She and her husband, Robert, have been instrumental in the restoration of the Santa Fe Depot Museum. She volunteers her time with the East Chambers Agricultural and Historical

Society and serves on the Board of Directors. And now Mary works with the Young at Heart committee planning programs, meals and helping decorate.

In spite of a setback with her own health, Mary has not stopped. She telephones people who need a kind voice, and she volunteers at the Arboretum several times a week. While Mary is around, you know you are not alone in the world. She remains an inspiration to all who know her.

Mary has been married to Robert Bauer, a lifetime farmer and rancher in the Winnie area, since 1949. They are the parents of five children (one daughter deceased), 15 grandchildren and 1 great-grandchild. *



Mary Bauer, with her husband, Robert, in a picture taken at the 2002 Texas A&M Rice Field Day, when Robert was recognized for his many years of outstanding service to the Texas rice industry.

State, National and International News...

RiceTec Offers New Seed Packaging To Eliminate the Guesswork

MEMPHIS, Tenn. – RiceTec, Inc., the company that brought hybridization to the U.S. rice industry, now plans to offer rice growers another first for their industry – standardized packaging with a set number of seeds per bag.

In a meeting with agricultural editors prior to a company field day, RiceTec officials said they intend to change the company's packaging from 45-pound bags to bags that contain a standard 900,000 seeds.

"Historically, people have talked about the seeding rate for rice in terms of pounds per acre," said Federico Cuevas, Vice-President of Development and Technical Services for RiceTec. "While this recommendation is easy to communicate, it fails to take into account the wide range of seed sizes that exist between different hybrids and varieties. Even the same hybrid or variety can have a wide range of seed sizes. We have seen as much as a 20 percent difference within the same product, produced in the same year." This difference can represent a 20 percent swing in seeding rates and cost per acre to farmers who plant their seed based on pounds per acre without making adjustments for size.

"RiceTec's new 900,000-seed packaging will eliminate seed-size variables from the planting and pricing equations, enhancing growers' planning and management accuracy," he says. "The packaging change and new seeding recommendation will ensure that customers clearly understand how best to optimize the performance of RiceTec hybrids," according to Jim Thompson, Seed Sales and Marketing Manager.

For more information, please visit the company's website at www.ricetec.com.

Bell Urges Maximum Rice Payment

WASHINGTON - Richard E. Bell, Riceland Foods Inc. CEO and former Undersecretary of Agriculture, has urged Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman to make available to farmers as soon as possible the maximum initial payment of the 2003-crop counter-cyclical payment for rice.

The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of

2002 allows the secretary to provide an initial payment of up to 35 percent of the projected counter-cyclical payment for a program crop after Oct. 1. The maximum counter-cyclical payment for rice is \$1.65 per hundredweight, and the maximum initial partial payment of 35 percent is 57.75 cents per cwt.

Bell said that the U.S. Department of Agriculture's supply/demand estimate for rice, released Sep. 11, projects the 2003-04 average price received by farmers to be in the range of \$6.25 to \$6.75 per cwt.

"Since the mid-point of the range is the same as the \$6.50 per cwt. loan rate for rice, a maximum 2003-crop counter-cyclical payment is anticipated, and a maximum initial partial payment is justified," Bell said.

Bell said that issuing the maximum initial partial payment of the 2003-crop counter-cyclical payment as soon as possible would benefit rice farmers as they pay for seed, fertilizer, fuel, crop protectants, aviation services and equipment parts that were needed to produce and harvest the 2003 rice crop.

WTO Dispute Panel Sought On Rice

WASHINGTON - The U.S. government will request the establishment of a WTO dispute settlement panel to rule on whether Mexico's imposition of anti-dumping duties on shipments of long grain milled rice from the United States violates free trade rules.

The move follows actions by USA Rice Federation members and rice-state members of Congress urging the administration to counter Mexico's anti-dumping duties. Bilateral talks last month between the two countries failed to address U.S. concerns. Now the WTO complaint officially enters the legal stage.

"This step is very good news for the U.S. rice industry," said USA Rice Federation Chairman Gary Sebree, a producer from Stuttgart, Ark. "It emphasizes the fact our government leaders believe we have a legitimate case that has a good chance of winning."

Sebree praised the work of U.S. Trade Ambassador Robert Zoellick and the USTR's Chief Agriculture Negotiator, Ambassador Allen Johnson. "They've been working hard on the resolution of this issue, and we'll support them in any way we can," Sebree said. "These duties violate WTO rules and obviously go against the spirit of the NAFTA agreement."

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Corporate Windfalls or Lifeline for Farmers?

World Trade Organization talks in Cancun, Mexico, collapsed last month, but not before launching yet another controversy over farm subsidies. Farmers in developing nations insist agricultural subsidies given in the U.S., Japan and Europe are preventing them from competing in a global economy. American farmers, who pay higher wages to workers and have other elevated production costs, say they wouldn't be in business without subsidies.

Adding more fuel to the fire is a new report from the Environmental Working Group (EWG), a Washington-based organization that tracks USDA payments on its Web site. The group's study of government records found that the largest 10 percent of eligible applicants ate up about two-thirds of subsidy money last year. "We are not suggesting big is bad... (but) there ought to be a limit on how much those operations get," said Ken Cook, of EWG.

Beaumont area rice farmers Mike Doguet and Bill Dishman said there is definitely room for improvement in the government's various subsidy programs, but that they believe the EWG's report is somewhat misleading and promotes the misconception that some farmers are getting rich off the subsidies.

"It's a misconception that farmers are getting all of this money and going on vacation," Doguet said, "when really there is no way in the world you could farm without the subsidy." Payments are given to owners of farmland, and are not based on income or need, which has aggravated many small farmers. Among other past years' subsidy recipients listed on the EWG site are some unlikely Fortune 500 companies, such as Caterpillar, Chevron and DuPont.

Dishman, who is President of the Texas Rice Council, said the various subsidy programs are complex, but that problems come into play because some subsidies are tied to the land itself. "I do know there are some corporations that are not farming that are receiving payments. Do I think they should? No. From a producers standpoint, I think subsidies should be tied to true production," he said.

Dishman said the issue of subsidies involving tenant farmers and landowners has been one that has affected farmers in Texas in particular. Rice, one of the few crops that will grow in the (Gulf Coast) Texas climate, has a higher production cost and brings in a higher subsidy because rice prices have been historically low over the years.

"For most commodities it hasn't been a problem. But in the rice belt, the rice payments are higher and landowners didn't have to farm to get that payment," he said. "A lot of (tenant) farmers are disappointed because many of the landowners said 'Heck, I could get more money taking the payments (and not bother with farming the land)'. Many farmers lost leases on their farms that way. The payment was intended for *farmers* to subsidize their incomes, not landowners."

Dishman says he expects that subsidies will eventually be phased out, but he hopes that change will be gradual. "No one around here could survive it if it happened overnight," he said. "We are not sitting here crying and complaining with our hands out. We are working with all types of crops, putting our money up for research and development for our economic future. We have a lot of pride in what we do as a group, and we want people to know that."

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