

Major outreach promotes environmental benefits of California ricelands

Utilizing sound science and impactful promotions, the unparalleled wildlife benefits from California rice are being conveyed to legislators and other important audiences.

Essential components to help tell this important story include a report by Ducks Unlimited researchers, which has powerful new information about the value of ricelands for duck populations.

Utilizing data based on the food energy supply and

demand for ducks in the Sacramento Valley, the report concludes that, should the state's rice acreage be reduced in half, it would decrease the duck population in the region by approximately 1.2 million.

"The benefits to the region's waterfowl populations from California ricelands are tremendous," commented researcher, Dr. Mark Petrie. "The region's 500,000 acres of rice fields provide nearly 60 percent of all the food available to ducks and geese. In addition, about half of the

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2012 Farm Bill debate underway

The following article was submitted by Russell & Barron Inc., a Washington, D.C. government affairs firm specializing in food, agriculture and trade issues.

It's hard to believe that it has been just two years since the 2008 Farm Bill was enacted which reauthorized USDA's major programs, including the rice program, through 2012. But what's even more amazing is that discussion, debate and even Congressional hearings have already begun on the 2012 Farm Bill. You will recall the long process we went through in getting the 2008 Farm Bill finally enacted

— two Presidential vetoes and eventually an override veto vote in both the House and Senate. Given the budget and political environment, writing a new farm bill will be even more complex than what was experienced in 2008.

First, let's look at the political environment. Following the 2010 Congressional elections, it is expected that Republicans will pick up significant seats in the House and Senate greatly narrowing the Democrat's majority, and in the case of the House, even the prospect of Republicans taking control. If this were to occur, Frank Lucas

from Oklahoma would become Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee. Meanwhile in the Senate, the outcome of several key races could have a significant impact on the leadership of the Senate Agriculture Committee. Most importantly the current Chairman for the Senate Agriculture Committee, Senator Blanche Lincoln, is facing a very difficult reelection in Arkansas. Current polls show her running significantly behind several different Republican candidates in the general election. Depending upon the outcome of Senator

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Major outreach

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Sacramento Valley's wetlands rely upon tailwater from these rice fields, which is especially important since historic wetland acreage has been reduced by 95 percent."

The report updates the cost of wetlands restoration to offset any potential loss of California ricelands. The new estimate to create this amount of habitat currently provided by rice fields would exceed \$1.5 billion.

The CRC will utilize this report in its outreach to legislators, regulators, members of the media and other key audiences.

Meanwhile, a series of advertisements is also delivering beneficial information about California rice and wildlife.

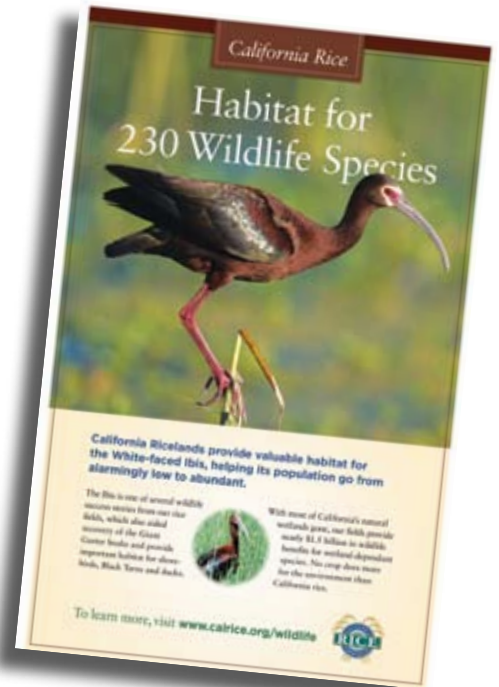
A series of four ads ran in *Capitol Weekly*, a newspaper distributed within the State Capitol and to state agencies. The full-page, color ads touted the enormous value California rice-

lands provide to 230 wildlife species, including the Long-billed Curlew, Red-tailed Hawk, White-faced Ibis and duck populations.

Another recent CRC-produced ad touting the strong relationship between the rice industry and conservation groups ran in late May as a full-page, color ad in the *Sacramento Bee* print edition. The ad also has a two-week run on the Bee's Web site this month. The number of people viewing this ad campaign totaled nearly 750,000.

All of the advertisements include a link to the CRC Web site, which has numerous additional resources regarding how rice fields benefit wildlife.

Outreach on the environmental benefits of California rice will continue to be a major CRC focus. Various new creative methods will be sought out to keep these facts before decision makers and opinion leaders.



One of four ads published in *Capitol Weekly*, touting the environmental benefits of California rice.



Tour participants included (left to right) USDA NRCS Deputy Conservationist Gayle Norman, NRCS Chief Dave White, the CRC's Paul Buttner and Rob Paschoal of Farmers' Rice Cooperative.

NRCS Chief visits California rice

Recently, the rice industry was honored to have a visit from the new Natural Resources Conservation Service Chief, Dave White. While visiting California, primarily to learn more about challenges with Delta restoration, White took the time to visit with representatives from the CRC and Farmers' Rice Cooperative.

The tour helped White better understand California rice's global reach and our efforts to be proactive on important environmental issues such as conservation, air quality and water quality issues.

Rice cuisine highlighted in electronic newsletter

The CRC's inaugural California Rice Culinary News, a promotional e-newsletter, was distributed in May via E-mail to prominent chefs and culinary instructors.

The newsletter was developed through the Domestic Marketing and Promotion Committee with goals to increase overall awareness of California rice usage as well as touch upon key industry brand messages.

The first edition featured Chef Paul Muller of Paul Martin's American Bistro and one of his signature recipes that featured California rice. In addition, this newsletter enlightened readers about the process of aerial seeding of rice fields and of the valuable role rice fields play in providing wildlife habitat.

Another section included "Rice Undercover," that will educate chefs on processing uses of rice in other products Sake was selected in this edition. To increase awareness of rice brands and farming perspectives, we also provided hyperlinks to our brand sheet and our California rice farmer blog that can be found on the CRC Web site at www.calrice.org.

To keep this fresh and informative, we will provide seasonal updates on what's happening in the rice fields to inspire future chef recipes as well as develop a deeper understanding of agriculture through people who live



it every day. In the future, we are planning to add a subscribe button on the CRC Web site to widen our distribution and readership in the culinary world and beyond.

Board of Directors Elections underway

The election cycle has begun for the 2010/11 California Rice Commission Board elections.

This month, growers will have an opportunity to nominate individuals to serve on the CRC board for three-year terms. Nomination forms and information on the seats open in each district will be mailed to every grower by June 15.

Nomination forms must be returned or postmarked by July 16, 2010.

Please note, if you do not receive information for nominating board members shortly after June 15, contact the CRC office immediately at (916) 387-2264, so we can ensure that a ballot is mailed to you.

New Waste Grain Study in 2010

U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) researchers and other Central Valley Joint Venture partners will be conducting a post-harvest field sampling project this fall to quantify waste rice seed density. This information is important because it informs biologists about the food supplies for wintering waterfowl in rice fields. Updated estimates are needed to guide Central Valley Joint Venture waterfowl habitat planning.

The CRC supports updating our knowledge of waste grain amounts in rice fields. Researchers will be contacting rice growers soon to ask permission to collect one or two samples per farm this fall. The sampling needs to occur within a few days after harvest and before straw management activities. Researchers are looking for growers who are willing to participate. If interested, please contact Dr. Joe Fleskes from the Dixon USGS Field Station at (707) 678-0682, extension 628.

2010 Legislative Day brings spotlight on California rice in the Capitol

A series of meetings with legislators and an exciting sushi rolling competition were among the highlights of the CRC's Legislative Day on March 2.

The day began with individual meetings between the California rice delegation and Senators Leland Yee, Gloria Negrete McCleod, Gil Cedillo and Jim Nielsen.

Growers spoke candidly to the lawmakers about key rice issues, including water use in rice, wildlife benefits from ricelands and concern over the potential of increased fees from the state.

The Sheraton Grand Sacramento provided the elegant location for the Circle of Life Reception. The nearly 120 attendees included a diverse group of legislators, our conservation partners, media and the rice industry. All of the main dishes served featured California rice, including sushi and an original risotto creation from Russell Michel, Executive Chef of Morgan's



Senator Gil Cedillo meets with the rice delegation.

Central Valley Bistro at the hotel.

For the second straight year, a prominent Sacramento television newscaster guided the festivities. KCRA 3 Reports Anchor Gulstan Dart served as emcee, a year after Co-Anchor Edie Lambert presided over the event.

Also at the reception, the CRC awarded its Circle of Life Award to conservation groups in the Migratory

Bird Conservation Partnership. The partnership, comprised of Audubon California, PRBO Conservation Science and The Nature Conservancy, seeks to protect, restore and enhance lands that support bird populations in California.

"We couldn't be more pleased that they see the value of California rice fields and that they have engaged us to find solutions that work for farmers and migratory birds," remarked CRC President & CEO Tim Johnson in announcing the award winners.

On display was the 2010 rice box artwork; a stunning fabric collage entitled California Ricelands by prominent Sacramento artist Merle Axelrad Serlin. The original art is on display in the office of Assembly Member Fiona Ma. Boxes depicting the art were provided to the Legislature and other target audiences.

The Circle of Life reception was covered by the Sacramento Bee, KFBK NewsTalk 1530, Capitol Weekly and Capitol Television News Service, which included broadcast on the five o'clock news on KABC-TV in Los Angeles. Stories of this event highlighting California rice reached more than 500,000 viewers, listeners and readers.



Circle of Life winners (left to right) Catherine Hickey of PRBO Conservation Science, Graham Chisholm of Audubon California and Dawit Zeleke of The Nature Conservancy.

Capitol Roller competition puts rice on center stage



Capitol Roller contestants learn from a true SushiMaster, Kru Chef Billy Ngo.

Three legislators took time off from budget wrangling to roll sushi, in the action-packed Capitol Roller Competition during 2010 Legislative Day.

In what has turned into an anticipated event for those in the Capitol, this year's amateur sushi makers included Assembly Member Fiona Ma of San Francisco, Southern California Senator

Dennis Hollingsworth and Susan Kennedy, Governor Schwarzenegger's Chief of Staff.

Following expert assistance from Kru Owner/Executive Chef Billy Ngo, the trio put their creativity into action in making California Rolls.

This year marked the first tie in the competition, between Assembly



Member Ma and Chief of Staff Kennedy. The coveted Capitol Roller Award, a framed Samurai sword, currently resides in Kennedy's portion of the Governor's office and is expected to be on display in Ma's office later this year.

Both victors said they appreciated the real message behind the competition: to promote the value of California rice.

"I grew up eating rice," said the Assembly Member, who has recently toured local rice fields. "It has been an important staple in my household. Going out and seeing how it's grown and harvested really makes me appreciate rice."

"The rice industry is one of the most important agricultural products California produces," said Kennedy. "It's not just about the farmers growing it, it's about the culture of California. I'm very proud to be here to support the rice industry."



Competition winners (left to right), the Governor's Chief of Staff Susan Kennedy and Assembly Member Fiona Ma.

Farm Bill debate

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Lincoln's election, next in line for Agriculture Committee Chair, seniority wise, would be Senator Debbie Stabenow from Michigan, assuming other Senators on the Committee decline to give up their current Committee Chairmanship roles (Harkin – Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, Leahy – Judiciary, Conrad – Budget, Baucus – Finance). Furthermore, in 2012 with President Obama running for reelection, the political stakes will create an even more politically charged environment for writing a new farm bill.

Second, the budget environment is going to seriously complicate the process of writing a new farm bill with the Congressional Budget Office projecting annual deficits of \$1 trillion per year over the next 10 years. With our accumulated debt expected to rise to more than \$20 trillion during this period, Congress and the Administration will be forced to take decisive action to address this issue. All federal programs will be examined, as well as new revenue sources, in an effort to reduce the federal government's growing annual and total debt.

When you look at the last two farm bills going back to 2002, it is interesting to note the significant growth in the expenditures for the nutrition programs including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly known as the Food Stamp Program), the School Lunch Program, and the School Breakfast Program. Today these programs account for nearly 75 percent of USDA's overall budget. Meanwhile, farm programs account for about 10 percent of USDA's mandatory spending. The rice program has experienced a significant decline in



cost over the same period from a high of \$1.2 billion in 2002 to a projected \$400 million per year during the life of the 2008 Farm Bill. This two-thirds reduction in costs are due to the fact that no counter cyclical payments or marketing loan payments are expected to be made – with only direct payments being made to producers.

House Agriculture Committee Chairman Collin Peterson (D-MN) continues to hold various Farm Bill field hearings across farm country. On May 3rd, Chairman Peterson hosted a hearing in Fresno, where rice farmer Frank Rehmann testified before the Committee along with two panels of California fruit, vegetable, dairy and livestock producer witnesses. During the hearing, Rehmann highlighted key principles that are guiding the rice industry in preparation for the 2012 Farm Bill. Some of the highlights included:

- Maintenance of a strong, effective safety net that includes marketing loans, counter-cyclical programs and direct payments.
- Recognition that conservation and environmental practices currently undertaken on rice farms pay a large public dividend.

- Understanding that risk management tools such as Federal Crop insurance, ACRE and SURE are not effective for U.S. rice farmers, as currently written in the 2008 Farm Bill.

Chairman Peterson will continue hosting 2012 Farm Bill listening sessions throughout the spring and summer across the country. Meanwhile it appears the Senate Agriculture Committee will wait until next year to begin farm bill hearings

In preparation for the 2012 Farm Bill, the CRC has worked extensively with the California Congressional delegation – including Members who represent rural, suburban and urban districts – sharing several positive messages including the environmental and conservation benefits California rice producers provide the citizens of California as well as the rest of the country. Building upon this, the CRC will work closely with the U.S.A. Rice Federation in an effort to ensure that the 2012 Farm Bill contains a strong and effective safety net for the California and U.S. rice industry.

Rice booth a popular stop at California agriculture celebration



The Governor receives a rice snack from the CRC's Diana Ciorega.

The west steps of the State Capitol came alive with colorful displays of food, fiber and flowers during the annual California Agriculture Day celebration held on March 23.

Visitors to the California Rice Commission booth were provided with industry information, recipes and nearly 2,000 Rice Krispies Treats.

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger visited the CRC booth, sampling one of the Rice Krispies Treats and engaging in a brief conversation about California's rice industry.

Ag Day provided an opportunity to educate legislators, key state officials and the public about the value of California rice.

CRC meets with Audubon President

The CRC President & CEO Tim Johnson and Environmental Affairs Manager Paul Buttner traveled to Washington, D.C. in May to meet with the National Audubon Society's Interim President Dr. Frank Gill. This effort was part of our current initiative to develop relationships at the highest levels of key conservation groups that we have worked with for years. Given that our work with Audubon, in particular, has stepped up significantly in recent years, we viewed a trip to meet with its president on his home turf as an important effort.

We appreciated our introduction to Frank by our longtime Audubon California colleague Glenn Olson. Glenn has been involved in activities in the Sacramento Valley for many years while serving as Executive Director of Audubon California. We congratulate him on his recent selection by Audubon as the Donal O'Brien Chair in Bird Conservation through Advocacy and Public Policy. Glenn's former position of Executive Director is now held by Graham Chisholm, with whom the CRC is already collaborating

on projects in rice as part of Audubon's partnership with PRBO Conservation Science.

Frank served as Audubon's Chief Scientist until his retirement in 2005 and has been a long-time member of Audubon's national board of directors. A past president of the American Ornithologist's Union, Frank also served for 25 years at the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia. He spends his summers in the Adirondacks with his wife, Sally, and their bird dogs Birch, Merlin and Raven. Frank and his wife are avid world birders, hunters, and enjoy fly-fishing.

Among his many accomplishments, he championed the nationwide Important Bird Areas (IBAs) initiative at Audubon in partnership with BirdLife International. The Sacramento Valley has been identified as an IBA. This and other important IBAs can be viewed at www.audubon.org/bird/IBA.

It was our pleasure to get to know Frank and become more familiar with his view of the role of working agricultural lands to help provide habitat in world IBAs such as the Sacramento Valley. His commitment to partnership with private landowners was very evident. We hope to get him out to California rice country first hand to enjoy a day in the field with our growers.



Meeting participants (left to right) CRC President Tim Johnson, Glenn Olson of Audubon California, Audubon President Frank Gill, CRC Environmental Affairs Manager Paul Buttner and CRC Chairman Mark Kimmelshue.

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Ricelands wildlife featured at the 40th Wildfowl Art Classic

As we have done for many years now, the CRC will be hosting two carving competitions during the upcoming 40th Anniversary of the Pacific Flyway Decoy Association's Wildfowl Art Classic at the DoubleTree Hotel in Sacramento on July 10 and 11, 2010.

Skilled carvers are currently busy carving their best renditions of two birds known to use rice fields. One is a wading bird called a Green Heron and the other a shorebird called a Wilson's Snipe. Carvers will be entering their rice waterbird artwork in pursuit of the blue ribbon award from the judges.

This wildlife art forum has proven to be a perfect place to remind environmental art enthusiasts of the deep connection between the Central Valley's wildlife and rice fields. Many of the species that will be on display at this event are among some 230 species that are known to use California rice fields.

As part of our partnership with the Pacific Flyway Decoy Association, CRC members are encouraged to attend free of charge. Members may simply cut out the coupon on the right or call the CRC office at (916) 387-2264 to request passes to be mailed them.



40th Annual Wildlife Art Festival

July 10th and 11th, 2010

9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

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