



Social media helps convey California rice information

Getting information to target audiences in a swift and effective manner involves using the latest technology available. The California Rice Commission has joined the growing number of businesses utilizing social media sites to outreach our target audiences.

Following industry approval, the CRC in July set up Twitter and Facebook pages, which can be accessed via our home page at www.calrice.org. This follows the family rice farmer blogs, which began earlier this year and have enjoyed continual and steady growth. The CRC blog currently receives about 4,000 readers a month, and we are continuing to expand the number of contributors. Video reports, known as vlogs, are also included.



The CRC website in total receives about two million hits a year from about 40,000 unique visitors.

Information is now continually sent out, highlighting the positive contributions made by the California rice industry to the state's economy, environment, culture and cuisine.

The CRC social media pages have enjoyed steady growth, with more than 400 fans and followers regularly receiving this information. This list includes more than 170 members of the Legislature, Congress and media. Further analysis shows the list of CRC followers includes more than 40 members of the California Senate and Assembly, prominent news directors, several reporters from major publications and the Associated Press and several of the most popular television news anchors in Sacramento.

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Environmental value of rice delivered to California Legislature

The CRC recently met with more than 60 state legislators and members of the administration and provided them a copy of a just released environmental research paper completed by Ducks Unlimited. The conclusions in the study were stark – if rice acres were reduced by 50 percent for any reason, we could expect the loss of 1.2 million ducks. Impacts on other species

could be expected to be similar.

Heads nodded and we heard a lot of “I never knew” from staff and legislators. The environmental report had its biggest impact on urban legislators, many of who heard for the first time the intimate link between ricelands and the Pacific Flyway.

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CRC refines strategic plan and programs

Following six months work by committee members and the board of directors, the CRC has refocused its strategic plan on regulatory intervention and public education. Eliminated were domestic promotions and some international promotion programs.

“This is a reflection of increased focus on two key elements. What we do best and what is most important to the industry,” said CEO Tim Johnson.

In addition to realigning activities, the board agreed to present growers an opportunity in early 2011 to decide how best to manage compliance with the Irrigated Lands Program. Currently, the CRC is the only commission or trade association that manages this water quality program directly on behalf of its members. The cost of monitoring, reporting and the fees paid are all covered in the current assessment paid by growers and handlers. Producers of all other crops participate in watershed groups and pay additional fees ranging from \$1 to \$2 per acre.

The Irrigated Lands Program is being expanded to include groundwater, in addition to surface water, and the legislature has eliminated its portion of the funding for the program, thereby

Department of Pesticide Regulation tours California rice fields

The CRC provided an industry overview to the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) staff working in the regulatory areas of pesticide enforcement, environmental fate and pesticide registration. In addition to learning about cultural practices and water management, tour participants met with key members from the University of California Cooperative Extension and UC Davis rice team.

Following the farm tour, the group visited the Rice Experiment Station for presentations by Kent McKenzie and the CRC, with valuable support from Cass Mutters, Chris Greer, Luis Espino, Bruce Linquist, Jim Eckert and Jim Hill.

The personal connections made during the tour will be valuable as DPR moves forward in developing a rice water model.



Walt Trevethan and Cass Mutters describe rice cultural practices and the limitations facing rice growers using the currently registered pesticides.

increasing fees. Expectations are for the costs to at least double in the next several years.

We want to thank Laura Murphy who for eight years headed up our

foodservice programs and supported our international promotions activities. She and our outstanding administrative assistant, Diana Ciorega, provided great support for the industry and helped contribute to our success.



Conditional Rice Straw Burn Program Update

As part of the Conditional Rice Straw Burning Program, Sacramento Valley Agricultural Commissioners are required to generally assess the prevailing levels of qualifying rice diseases (stem rot, aggregate sheathspot, blast) once every five years to certify there are adequate disease levels to justify 25 percent burning. This is the first year that this new process will take place.

After the adoption of the program by the Sacramento Valley Basinwide Air Pollution Control Council in 2001, there were four consecutive years of intensive inspections - the first two years by trained growers and pest control advisors and the next two by agricultural commissioners. The findings from these inspections proved that there was sufficient disease to support 25 percent burning in all counties.

Therefore, the program was amended to eliminate the need for annual sampling but requires Sacramento Valley Agricultural Commissioners, commencing this year, to “generally assess” the levels of disease every five years to confirm that no significant reductions in those levels have occurred. The pro-

gram left open the details of what the future protocol would require.

To best address this issue, the CRC suggested hosting a meeting to enable Sacramento Valley Agricultural Commissioners to consult with University of California, Davis, Extension Rice Farm Advisors about their general observations of the prevalence of qualifying rice diseases. The Basinwide Council accepted this approach.

Each of the Rice Farm Advisors expressed that they were unaware of any evidence that would lead them to conclude that the prevailing levels of rice diseases have decreased over the past five years. In fact, they believe that levels are probably higher. They provided several facts in the course of the meeting to support their position. As a result, all of the Sacramento Valley Agricultural Commissioners were satisfied with the consultative process and did not feel that additional sampling was necessary. Therefore, all counties may use this 2010 consultation to qualify all rice fields for the 25 percent burning through 2015.

Rice Leadership Development Program Applications Available

Applications for the Rice Leadership Development Program are due October 2, 2010. Those interested in applying need to submit a completed application form accompanied by two letters of recommendation. Apply online, or download the application and recommendation forms from the following website: www.usarice.com/leadership_program.

The John Deere Company, Syngenta Crop Protection, Inc. and RiceTec Hybrid Seed provide funding for the Rice Leadership Development Program through grants to the Rice Foundation. The USA Rice Federation develops and manages the program on behalf of the Rice Foundation.

For more information about the Rice Leadership Development Program, or to receive brochures and forms, please contact Chuck Wilson at 870/673-7541, cwilson@usarice.com, or the CRC's Roberta Firoved at 916/387-2264, rfiroved@calrice.org.

Legislature

Continued from cover

The meetings followed a set of similar discussions with legislators last year, months prior to the package of water bills moved through the Capitol.

“Our purpose is to get into offices and talk about the issues that matter to them and to do it in a way that makes a connection to what our growers do on their farms,” noted CRC President Tim Johnson. “Often that is best done outside the timeline of a bill moving through the Capitol. This is really foundational education.”



Assemblywoman Alyson Huber visits with CRC President & CEO Tim Johnson.

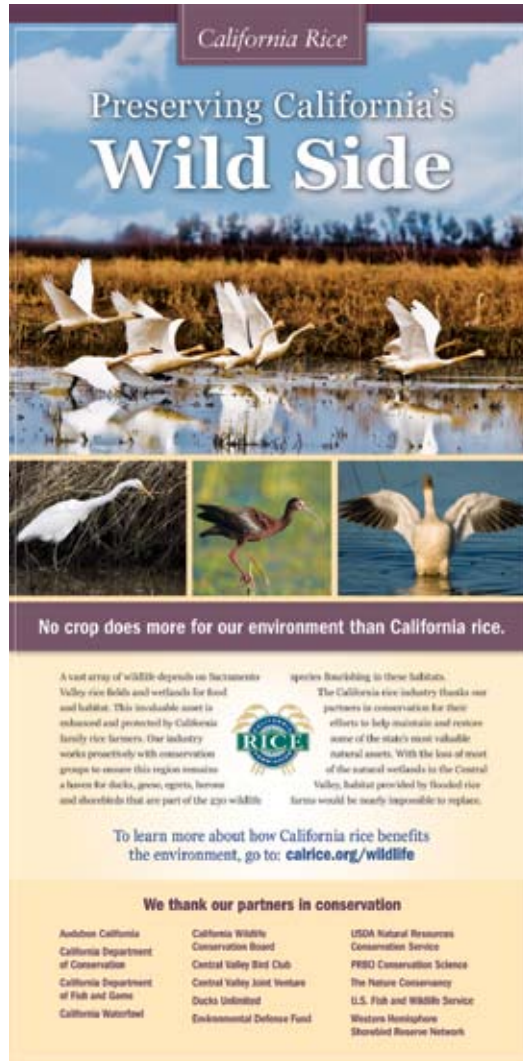
Rice and conservation partnership highlighted

A large advertisement with broad reach is among the latest outreach in a continual effort to promote the strong environmental efforts of California rice farmers.

“Preserving California’s Wild Side” appeared as a full-page, full-color advertisement in the *Sacramento Bee* edition on May 26. An electronic ad with a link back to the CRC website also ran for two weeks in June, bringing the total audience reached to more than 750,000 people.

This advertisement centered on the strong relationship between the California rice industry and more than a dozen conservation groups in preserving the 230 wildlife species that live in California ricelands.

As a new fiscal year begins, we plan to launch additional promotions stressing the unparalleled habitat provided by family rice farmers in this state.



CRC and CWA work to head off damaging changes to grain standards

The USDA is proposing changes to the Uniform Grain and Rice Storage Agreement (UGRSA) that, if implemented, would put growers and handlers at increased risk from reduced services. To combat this proposal, the CRC and California Warehouse Association (CWA) are working together to inform USDA of the severe impact on the industry.

The USDA announced in June that it intended to make changes in the UGRSA that would significantly reduce the financial and insurance requirements for warehouses holding rice under loan. In addition, they proposed eliminating USDA inventory inspections and eliminating the record-keeping requirements.

After learning of the proposal, we engaged Russell and Barron and the USA Rice Federation to weigh in and make sure the changes were not implemented until industry members had an opportunity to comment. The CWA engaged the National Feed Grain Association and together we have sent joint letters requesting that inspections continue, financial requirements be maintained, bonding levels increased and record-keeping maintained.

“If these changes go into effect, the risk to the industry goes way up whether you are a grower or handler,” commented CRC Chairman Mark Kimmelshue.

FSA has committed to making no changes until the industry is consulted. We expect a response to our letter and the second round of discussions in the next month.

GROWER ELECTION RESULTS COMPLETED

Congratulations to the growers elected to the 2010/11 CRC Board of Directors. Listed below are tabulated election results by district, based on votes compiled by the California Department of Food and Agriculture.

District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5
(Butte)	(Colusa)	(Glenn, Tehama)	(Yuba, Sutter)	(Sac, Placer, Yolo, SJV)
No open seats	<i>Alternate</i> Jim Campbell	<i>Member</i> Ronald M. Withrow <i>Alternate</i> David Schmidt Vacant seat	<i>Member</i> Robert Van Dyke Walter P. Trevethan <i>Alternate</i> Bert Manuel Chris Capaul Vacant seat	<i>Member</i> Sean Doherty Ronald D. Phelps Mike DeWit <i>Alternate</i> Vacant seat Vacant seat Vacant seat

Acclaimed artist will capture California ricelands on canvas

The captivating Sacramento Valley rice fields will be the next project for Melissa Chandon, the celebrated artist selected to help promote the California rice industry.

Chandon has been commissioned by the CRC for a painting that will debut at the 2011 Legislative Day reception in Sacramento next March. She becomes the latest in a distinguished list of artists who have participated, including Gregory Kondos, Joseph Bellacera, Gil Amavisca, Richard Satava and last year's artist Merle Axelrad Serlin.

As with prior years, the new artwork will be displayed in the State Capitol as a reminder of the importance and beauty of California ricelands. It will also be reproduced as a label on the wooden rice boxes often seen in many offices of the Legislature. Her work



will be chronicled through social media stories, including blogs and videos.

The Yolo County resident is a self-described abstract realist painter and says the artists who influenced her the most include Wayne Thiebaud and Edward Hopper.

Chandon will base her work on information obtained during a tour of several farm sites in the Sacramento Valley last month. Her painting will feature a rice field in Live Oak with the Sutter Buttes as the backdrop.

"My field excursion was so informative for me," Chandon commented. "It was beneficial not only from the standpoint of an artist seeing the beauty, but informative in the knowledge I gained

about rice production, the low water usage due to new varieties of rice plants and how the rice fields provide natural habitat for many species of wildlife."

This art project will be part of the industries social media outreach, including blogs and videos that will be available on the CRC website at www.calrice.org.

Chandon says she hopes the painting will help broaden the understanding of the value of rice in California.

"I feel this is a great project as an artist, in that hopefully I will be able to communicate some of this knowledge to others – who might not know about what the rice growers are contributing environmentally," she said.



Artist Melissa Chandon visits with rice farmer Keith Davis at his farm near Marysville.

Social Media

Continued from cover

The CRC is also working with the California Agricultural Communications Coalition on the Know a California Farmer website, which debuted this month at www.knowacaliforniafarmer.com. The site features photos, blogs and videos of California family rice farmers, including messages of importance to this industry.



Growers are encouraged to participate in this worthy effort and can contact

CRC Communications Manager Jim Morris for more information.

Skilled carvers pay tribute to California rice wildlife

Viewing some of the 230 wildlife species in California ricelands can be a thrilling experience, a subject that makes a perfect medium for artwork.

The best renditions from expert wildlife carvers were enjoyed by the thousands in attendance at the 40th annual Pacific Flyway Decoy Association Wildlife Art show in Sacramento in July. For the seventh consecutive year,



the California Rice Commission was a sponsor, helping ensure that wildlife and waterfowl habitat provided by Sacramento Valley ricelands remains a central focus.

Artist Jim Burcio of Antioch fashioned the winning entries in both CRC-sponsored categories, for his lifelike carvings of a Green Heron and Wilson's Snipe.

"I have a particular interest in shorebirds and waders," Burcio said. "I carved ducks for the first 20 years of my carving career but now spend more time on other birds."

The artist said he appreciates a chance at continuing a long and spectacular legacy.

"The unique thing about bird carving is in one sense you are carrying on an American heritage that started with the hand carved decoy, and in another sense you are connecting our wonderful Northern California bird population with art and the outdoor experience," Burcio said.

The winning carvings are retained by the CRC and utilized to help convey the industries environmental messages.



The prestigious judging panel of the wildlife art.

Conservation groups and rice growers test alternative management practices to aid shorebirds

Submitted by Audubon California and PRBO Conservation Science

The Sacramento Valley is a critically important wintering and migratory stopover area for millions of waterbirds moving through the Pacific Flyway. Central to this region's importance are the more than 350,000 acres of winter flooded rice farms, which make up more than 80% of the flooded habitat available to waterbirds in the Sacramento Valley. Of the many waterbirds that migrate through and winter in the Sacramento Valley, shorebirds are among the most numerous but require water depths that are shallower than what is typical of many winter flooded rice fields. Recognizing the importance of winter flooded rice fields as waterbird habitat, the Migratory Bird Conservation Partnership (MBCP) is working with the CRC and individual rice growers to test alternative management prac-

tices that may further enhance the habitat value of rice fields for waterbirds.

The MBCP is an innovative collaboration between Audubon California, The Nature Conservancy, and PRBO Conservation Science to pursue a shared ten-year vision to protect, restore and enhance priority conservation areas in California important to migratory birds, including the Sacramento Valley. Last winter, the MBCP conducted the first year of a two-year study examining the effectiveness of replacing boards in rice boxes of non-flooded rice fields post-harvest to create shallow-water shorebird habitat. They recorded water depths and shorebird numbers in non-flooded rice fields with boards replaced and non-flooded rice fields with boards left out between November 2009 and March 2010 on five rice farms in Yolo, Sutter and Colusa Counties. A total of 19 waterbird species, including four shore-

birds, were recorded during 10 winter surveys. Preliminary results indicate that the rice fields with boards left in supported more shorebirds on average than did the other rice fields. This result suggests that the practice may be a low-cost means of creating more shorebird habitat in the Sacramento Valley. However, these differences were weather dependent and occurred primarily following the heavy rains in January. January rainfall was well above average and the effectiveness of this practice in normal rainfall years remains to be determined. By repeating this study next winter the MBCP will gain a better understanding of the utility of this management practice in providing shorebird habitat.

The CRC helped facilitate this research at Montna Farms, Conaway Preservation Group, Sutter Basin Corporation, Bransford Farms and Davis Home Ranch.



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National coverage for California rice

Videographer Pat Kuske shoots footage of Bill Warnock and rice field draining at Montna Farms for an upcoming History Channel episode of the show "Modern Marvels," covering innovations in the rice industry. Shooting for this project will continue at farm and mill locations this fall.

Grower participation needed for accurate statistical reports

Farmers are encouraged to participate in surveys conducted by federal analysts, to determine the California rice acreage and production.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service (USDA-NASS) has long gathered data from growers and used it to formulate production and acreage estimates.

Concerns were expressed early this year about the accuracy of the acreage estimate for this year's rice crop. Farmers and handlers are encouraged to fill out and promptly return surveys that are part of this effort, to help gauge the most accurate information.

The USDA-NASS will be surveying growers each month through the fall and will provide additional updates on estimated production. The final production report for this season's crop will be released in January.