



ARKANSAS PROMOTIONS **review**

A Special Publication from the Arkansas Rice Research and Promotion Board:
Highlighting Check-Off Promotions

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Getting the Word Out Gets Sales Up

USA Rice has been shouting about rice each September for 12 years now and people have been hearing us loud and clear. In September the retail trade now knows to promote rice, our members know to show their pride in the industry and shout about rice, foodservice operators know to menu more dishes made with rice and schools serve more and even teach more about rice. National Rice Month is working for Arkansas. National Rice Month provides a rallying point for the industry, and during a one-month period, focuses a spotlight on U.S.-grown rice.

Why a National Rice Month?

Because we all live rice. Whether we're growing it, marketing it or promoting it, we live rice. We talk about rice every day, but National Rice Month lets us shout about it. USA Rice programs that are funded by your check-off dollars are targeted to several market segments during September. This gets the message out to grocery store managers, supermarket chain key decision makers, commercial and non-commercial foodservice operators, newspaper and magazine editors and ultimately to consumers through various promotions taking place across the country.

Retail promotions gain exposure

Targeting the retail trade, one critical tactic for getting the message out about rice is securing the support of the retail industry to set rice aisle displays during September. Why is this a critical tactic? More and more often, time-starved consumers are looking for quick meal solutions. Minutes before dinnertime, a majority of adults are still asking, "What's for dinner?" We help consumers answer that question by getting displays in grocery stores across the country during September – displays that feature attractive rice recipe photography and quick-to-fix recipes. These point-of-sale displays are not only set in rice aisles, but appear throughout

stores in deli, meat, and even produce departments, reinforcing the concept that rice is an all-around partner in most meal solutions.

During the 2001 National Rice Month promotion, more than 6,500 displays were set in grocery stores across the country. To put that into perspective, a recent study published in *Grocery Headquarters* magazine contended that point-of-purchase displays are on par with print and broadcast advertising when it comes to capturing the attention of consumers. The study, which focused on supermarkets,

determined the average number of times that a consumer is exposed to a marketing message delivered by POP advertising. The potential reach averaged 5,916 consumers exposed to a marketing message via POP per week. Based on those figures, USA Rice National Rice Month retail programs exposed

38 million consumers to our rice message during each week of September.

National Rice Month foodservice promos

National Rice Month foodservice promotions made a bigger impact this year than ever before. USA Rice participated in a joint promotional effort with Taco Bell in September, tying in with the launch of the new rice-based Border Bowls product line. Popeyes Chicken & Biscuits restaurants promoted National Rice Month in 1,300 locations through point-of-sale merchandising materials. Foodservice promotions also took place in commercial and non-commercial foodservice operations nationwide.

The efforts of USA Rice producer and miller members in promoting rice during September go a long way towards getting the message out about rice. Rice-tasting luncheons, cook-off competitions, rice festivals, 5K rice runs and gubernatorial and mayoral proclamation signings all helped convey the importance of the rice industry to local

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Mexico Is A Market on the Move

Thanks to check-off funds to increase awareness and use of U.S. rice in the fast growing Mexican food-service sector, U.S. rice seminars and cooking contests are now required coursework for several of Mexico's leading culinary schools.

These schools prepare future chefs and food-service executives responsible for menus and food purchasing decisions across Mexico. Over the past three years USA Rice has sponsored many seminars and contests at the major culinary schools, training chefs about the versatile and creative ways to use U.S. rice.

According to Chef Daniel Joho, academic

director of the Colegio Superior de Gastronomía, "These USA Rice sponsored seminars and cooking contests have allowed our students and faculty to become more familiar with the different varieties of U.S. rice and their use in so many different ways. We were unfamiliar with so many dishes that could include rice, as rice is not traditionally used in so many ways in Mexico.

"Because of the great response by faculty and students, we now include these seminars and contests as part of our regular curriculum."

With Mexico's burgeoning tourism industry, Mexico offers significant growth prospects for U.S. rice.

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Dear Arkansas Rice Producer:

Arkansas Promotions Review is created to keep you informed of how the Arkansas Rice Research and Promotion Board is investing check-off dollars to promote our product.

While you're used to getting a report from us on research activities every year, we believed it was worthwhile to give you a quick overview of how rice promotions across the U.S. and around the world are helping the Arkansas rice industry.

In this issue, you'll see examples of how check-off funded programs are increasing sales and building demand for rice. These efforts have kept our product in the spotlight, and it's been quite a year. Arkansas rice has been featured on the pages of national magazines, television networks like NBC and CNN, and in food shows throughout the world.

Competitors from around the globe are after our markets, so it's critical that we win the front line promotional battles to keep our rice as the favorite of consumers everywhere.

I want to thank you for taking time to read this publication. The Arkansas Rice Research and Promotion Board has a great responsibility to spend your check-off dollars in ways that you find beneficial, and we welcome your feedback. Please contact me, or any of our board members, if you have any comments or suggestions.

Sincerely,



Marvin Hare, Jr.
Chairman

Arkansas Rice Research and Promotion Board

Rice A Hit At ADA Conference

USA Rice hosted a tradeshow exhibit at the 85th annual American Dietetic Association convention in Philadelphia, Penn.

The tradeshow, attended by approximately 12,500 registered dietitians, is the largest trade show in the world targeting this audience. USA Rice distributed over 8,000 copies of the latest consumer and foodservice recipe brochures, and talked up the benefits of rice.

The USA Rice team answered questions regarding rice nutrition, preparation, usage, commodity rice in schools, and how to incorporate rice into various consumer education programs.

USA Rice Issues New Editorial Insert Targeted to Food Processors

“Ready, Set On-The-Go-Rice,” is the title of an eight-page free-standing insert developed by USA Rice for the October 2002 issue of *Food Product Design* magazine. The insert, targeted to 28,000 food scientists and product developers, is designed to encourage increased use of rice in the development of convenience products for the U.S. retail and foodservice industries.

Topics include: various uses of different types and forms of U.S.-grown rice in processed foods, food trends that are driving rice sales, such as ethnic meals and vegetarian fare, as well as practical considerations for using rice, such as cost, holding time and versatility. Fast food topics pertaining to rice include Taco Bell's new rice bowls and rice flour's role in French fries.

Food processors are creating more ready-to-use products for foodservice as restaurants become increasingly short on skilled help, preparation time and storage space for ingredients necessary for made-from-scratch recipes. As a result, processed foods used for foodservice is a growing market for rice, up eight percent since last year according to data from USA Rice's latest Rice Distribution Patterns Survey.

Consumers, too, continue to use more timesaving products when eating at home; meal preparation time presently hovers around 20-30 minutes according to industry data.

The back cover of the editorial insert features a USA Rice advertisement touting the benefits of U.S.-grown rice, and encourages readers to visit USA Rice's industrial Web site at www.riceprocessing.com.

National Rice Month Contest Winners Announced for 2002

Each September, USA Rice holds a contest for foodservice outlets in conjunction with National Rice Month.

A wide range of foodservice operations – from hotels to schools to health care facilities – entered the contest this year, showing their creative ideas for menuing and promoting rice.

The first prize of \$2,000 was awarded to Notre Dame University Food Services North Dining Hall in Notre Dame, Ind. General Manager John F. Glon spearheaded numerous promotions both educational and entertaining, including a “Great American Rice Race,” cooking classes and contests. During the month of September, the dining hall served 322,880 servings of rice, a 55 percent increase over the previous year.



Getting the word out

Continued from page 1

communities in September. The amount of exposure generated through in-store grocery displays; grassroots and foodservice promotions; and NRM publicity efforts to newspapers, consumer magazines, retail and foodservice trade publications, exposed hundreds of millions of consumers to our rice message during September, equating to a powerful national impact made by National Rice Month each year.

Direct mail postcard generates awareness

USA Rice developed a direct mail postcard that was delivered to 7,000 culinary professionals and extension agents across the country, with the goal of drawing attention to the U.S. rice industry and enticing culinary professionals to write stories or conduct promotional activities featuring U.S.-grown rice during National Rice Month. The attention-getting postcard offered USA Rice's latest recipe brochures and educational materials for use in educating consumers about U.S.-grown rice. USA Rice's direct mail postcards are designed to establish and maintain relationships with culinary professionals and keep rice top-of-mind among this very influential target audience.

Foodservice Sector Continues to Be Huge Growth Market for Rice

by Joe Mencer, President, Arkansas Rice Council

Arkansas rice checkoff dollars support the USA Rice Federation's domestic promotion programs which target American's foodservice sector. We're aiming for increased use of U.S. rice in fast food chains, restaurants, schools and universities.

Following are a few examples of recent accomplishments:

Rice Fast Food Operations

Americans spend a major percentage of their food dollars at fast food chains, and that percentage is growing. By leveraging our promotion budgets through partnerships with fast food chains, we're increasing the exposure of fast food customers to positive messages about U.S. rice in hopes they will order more fast food offerings that feature rice.

USA Rice and the Popeyes Chicken & Biscuits chain have a long-standing relationship which includes highlighting rice during National Rice Month. Popeyes' in-store signage in September used the theme "Eat The Rice Way." These pro-rice signs were viewed millions of times by Popeyes' customers.

A highlight of recent fast food news has been Taco Bell's "Border Bowls," rice-based dishes that include vegetables, chicken or beef, and other ingredients. Taco Bell is investing millions of dollars promoting these products that use U.S. rice – moving Taco Bell's rice usage from 130,000 pounds per week to 390,000 per week – that's more than 20 million pounds of U.S. rice per year. Taco Bell spent \$35 million on a 12-week television campaign supporting Border Bowls with rice playing an important part in the television commercial.

The timing of the advertising campaign overlaps National Rice Month, so we seized the opportunity to ride Taco Bell's coattails in getting National Rice Month symbols on advertising materials as well as issuing a press release about U.S. rice where we were able to quote Taco Bell executives about their positive view about U.S. rice.

Taco Bell in-store signage used the theme "Rice Makes It Great," and includes symbolic references to National Rice Month. We estimate the signs were seen more than 142 million times (referred to as consumer impressions).

The cooperation between USA Rice Federation and fast food chains ensures that we're maximizing a positive message about U.S. rice to America's fast food consumers, one of the top foodservice sectors in the United States today. Through getting the National Rice Month insignia on Popeye's and Taco Bell's materials, we have been able to extend the reach of the NRM message beyond our traditional

areas of supermarkets, school foodservice, dieticians and grassroots activities in local communities.

Rice in the Foodservice Classroom

A new teaching curriculum, targeted to instructors in U.S. culinary schools, has been very well received by the industry. This new effort provided programming that recognizes the importance of reaching the future decision makers (menu planners, cooks/chefs, unit managers) entering the foodservice market, which has an employee turnover rate in excess of 115 percent. The goal is to ensure this new talent is "rice smart" to help ensure rice's presence on foodservice menus.

The curriculum provides a teaching guide to ensure that the USA Rice key message points about the history of American-grown rice (features, advantages and benefits) as well as best methods for prep, holding and serving are all taught in a manner conducive to growing the market for our product. It included types and forms of rice, history of rice in the United States, menuing, prep techniques, profitability, food safety, versatility, popularity, holding, etc.

Rice in School Foodservice

USA Rice distributed a survey at the American School Foodservice Association's 56th Annual National Conference in Minneapolis, Minn. The objectives of the survey were: (1) to gather information from this influential audience to help drive USA Rice's programming and materials development; (2) to act as a booth draw for participants; (3) to provide data for use in public relations materials; and (4) to provide insight on school foodservice to USA Rice members.

Initial results of the survey show that our long-term goal of having rice served as a component of an entrée has been taking hold. When rice is offered as a component part of the meal, we know students are being introduced to new, exciting and nutritious ways of consuming rice.

ASFSA show attendees are among the most influential foodservice personnel in the school foodservice segment, which serves lunch to nearly 29 million children in more than 94,000 schools every day. School meals represent an important introduction of rice dishes to young people, many of whom may not ever be introduced to rice through home-prepared meals. Rice is important to school foodservice directors for its operational benefits (easy to prepare, serve and store, good plate coverage and popularity).

We're working closely with USDA at national and state levels to improve procedures used by school foodservice personnel ordering rice for school use.

Waldrip Named Miss Arkansas Rice

Allison Waldrip, 17, from Lee County was named Miss Arkansas Rice at the state contest in Little Rock in 2002. She is the daughter of Mark and Angela Waldrip of Moro.

Contestants were judged on rice promotion, culinary skills and overall knowledge of the rice industry. Waldrip's winning recipe entry was Allison's Rice Salad. As Miss Arkansas Rice, Waldrip will represent the rice industry at various functions throughout the year.

Paige Lisko of Prairie County was named first runner-up and Mary Elizabeth Thompson of Cross County was second runner-up. Other finalists included Jana Rawson of Arkansas County, Laura Black of Chicot County, Meghan Cureton of Craighead County, Danielle Howard of Monroe County and Lauren Collier of St. Francis County. Erin Brawner of Wynne, Ark., (Cross County) was last year's winner and was present to crown Waldrip.

The annual contest is sponsored by the Arkansas Rice Council and the USA Rice Council, (a charter member of the USA Rice Federation), in cooperation with the Arkansas Farm Bureau and the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service.

Taiwanese Market Growing

Check-off dollars have helped fund promotional activities in Taiwan in anticipation of Taiwan's accession to the World Trade Organization earlier this year, and with it the start of rice imports.

As a result of intensive trade servicing, food trade shows, trade seminars, in-store promotions, media and trade delegations to visit the U.S. rice industry, plus coordinated interaction with USDA and USTR, U.S. rice has thus far captured a 69 percent share of the combined government and private rice imports by Taiwan.

This translates into approximately \$28 million so far this year.

The U.S. industry faces strong competition from nearby Australia, which has also been promoting its rice in Taiwan for several years.

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**denotes Arkansas representatives to the USA Rice Council Board*

Meeting the Needs of Local Growers

Chuck Wilson, the USA Rice Federation's Director of Grower Relations, welcomes your input on rice promotion activities. Located in Stuttgart, Ark., he can be reached at (870) 673-7541 or cwilson@usarice.com.

USA Rice Council Annual Budget

For the Fiscal Year Ending July 31, 2003

USA Rice Council programs are funded through grower investments from Arkansas, Louisiana and California, as well as mill and other industry investments from all six of the rice-growing states. USA Rice Federation staff manages programs and operations. The USA Rice Council's board of directors approved the following budgeted numbers.

	USA RICE COUNCIL CONTRIBUTION	ARKANSAS PORTION
DOMESTIC PROMOTION	\$1,536,837	\$823,023
Includes advertising, public relations/promotion, research and other activities designed to help increase awareness and thus use of U.S. rice among key target audiences in the United States: foodservice operators, food processors and consumers.		
INTERNATIONAL PROMOTION	1,477,839	791,428
Includes advertising, public relations/promotion, research, and other activities designed to help increase awareness and thus use of U.S. rice among key target audiences in more than 30 countries overseas. These overseas target audiences include importers, millers, traders, packers, consumers and foodservice operators.		
MEMBERSHIP/COMMUNICATIONS	1,222,122	654,483
Includes membership services and educational programs, meetings, conferences and industry communications.		
BIOTECHNOLOGY	4,619	2,474
Enhances educational efforts about the benefits of biotechnology, promotes the use of sound-based regulatory decisions, and supports the right of consumers to choose the appropriate product.		
FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION	208,228	111,512
GRAND TOTAL	\$4,449,645	\$2,382,920

FAS Matching Funds

Industry dollars together with USA Rice's successful track record of promotion activities leveraged more than \$4.4 million this year from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service, which goes to help fund USA Rice's export promotion activities in more than 30 countries around the world.

Check-off Dollars Open Doors To Cuba

Following its re-introduction into the Cuban marketplace less than a year ago, U.S. rice is on a roll with the Caribbean country's 11 million consumers thanks to check-off funded promotions.

Shipments to Cuba have topped 165 million pounds in the last nine months, making the island nation one of the fastest-growing export destinations for U.S. rice. Heading into last fall's U.S. Food and Agribusiness show in Havana, at which the USA Rice Federation participated, U.S. rice industry hopes to keep the momentum going.

"Cubans not only eat a lot of rice, but prefer U.S. varieties and quality," said Marvin Lehrer, director of Latin America promotion programs. "We have a tremendous marketing opportunity in Cuba, and our industry wants to make the most of it."

In addition to its participation at the show, USA Rice sponsored a cooking contest with Cuban chefs, as well as a "Rice Goes to School" project where grade school children learned about nutrition and U.S. rice through fun classroom activities.

"These were the first such activities sponsored by a commodity group to take place in Cuba," said John Mentis, vice president of

domestic and international promotion for USA Rice. "In just nine months, member-funded promotion efforts have resulted in 75,000 metric tons of sales. We think that number could jump to 600,000 if trade restrictions are eased."

Chain Now Features U.S. Rice

Over the past three years, USA Rice has conducted promotions with TOKS, a family-style restaurant chain in Mexico, where several new dishes featuring U.S. rice were put on a promotional menu. As a result of great acceptance by the consumers during the promotion, the restaurant chain decided this year to include two new rice dishes as part of their regular menu.

The chain has approximately 40 outlets nationwide and serves 20,000 people daily.

Because rice is generally not part of the regular Mexican diet, the decision by TOKS is significant.

"We're pleased to be working with the USA Federation for the third year and we're looking forward to a long relationship. We are joining forces to bring to our customers the message that rice has multiple benefits and is delicious, especially how we serve it at TOKS. We recognize the importance of U.S. rice as a key item which we will continue to promote," said TOKS executive Juan Carlos Alverde.

With a population of 100 million people, growing at 2 percent annually, Mexico offers significant growth prospects for U.S. rice. This is especially true since Mexico grows very little rice and relies on imports to meet its growing demand.

**Learn more about your
check-off dollars at
work at the next
USA Rice Outlook
Conference:**

December 7-9, 2003

Biloxi, Mississippi

**Arkansas Rice Research and Promotion Board
P.O. Box 31
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