

# Florida Rice Operations Overview

---

Daniel Cavazos



# Rice and the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA)

---

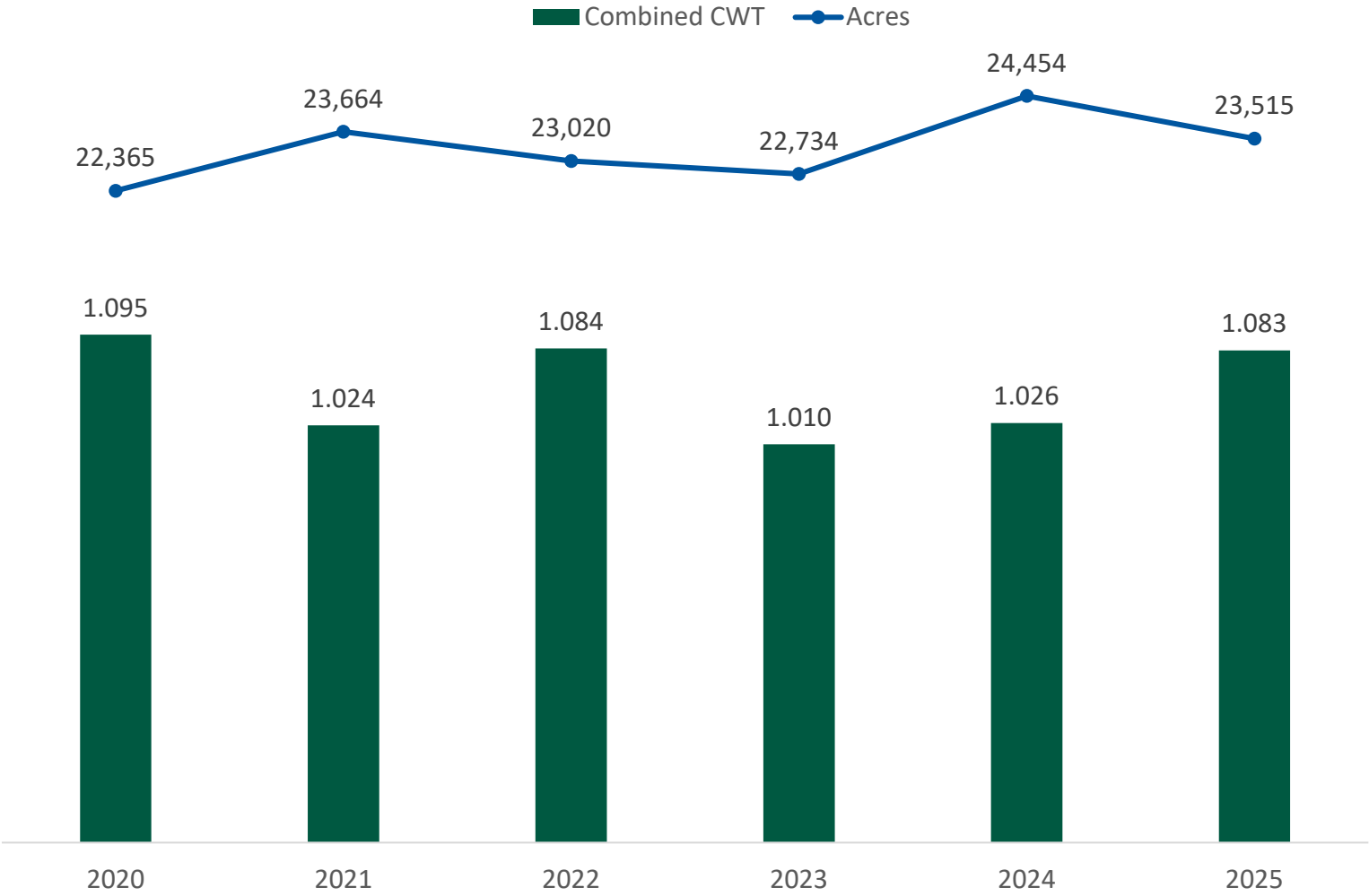
In the EAA, rice is grown in rotation with sugarcane during the summer months on land that would otherwise be fallow.

Rice was introduced in the EAA in 1977 and since then has progressively gained more importance and attention with Florida Crystals and with local growers.

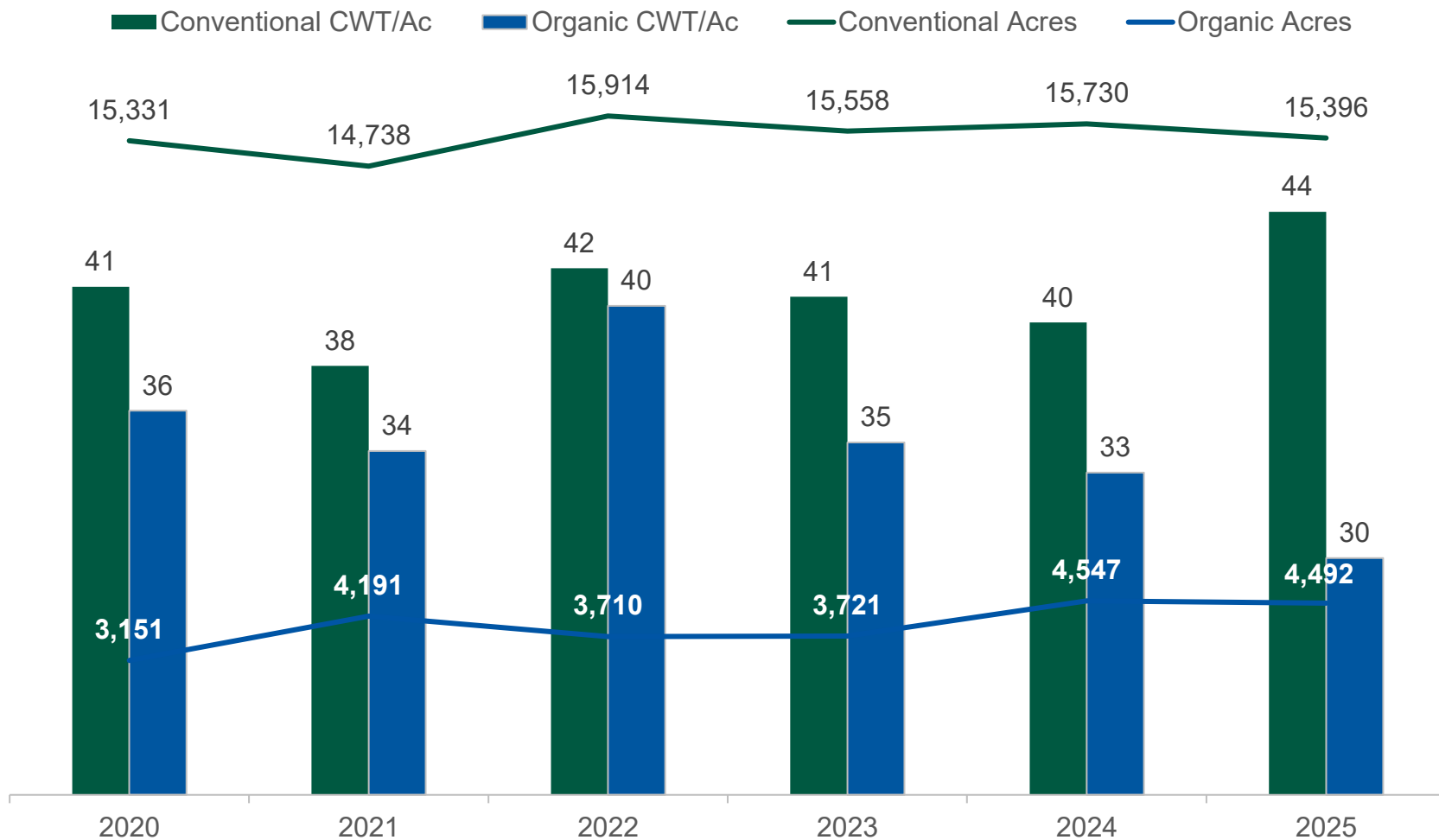
Nowadays, in the EAA, there is a thriving rice industry with 24,000 acres of rice planted (in 2023) and with the only fully functional rice mill in Florida, owned by Florida Crystals.



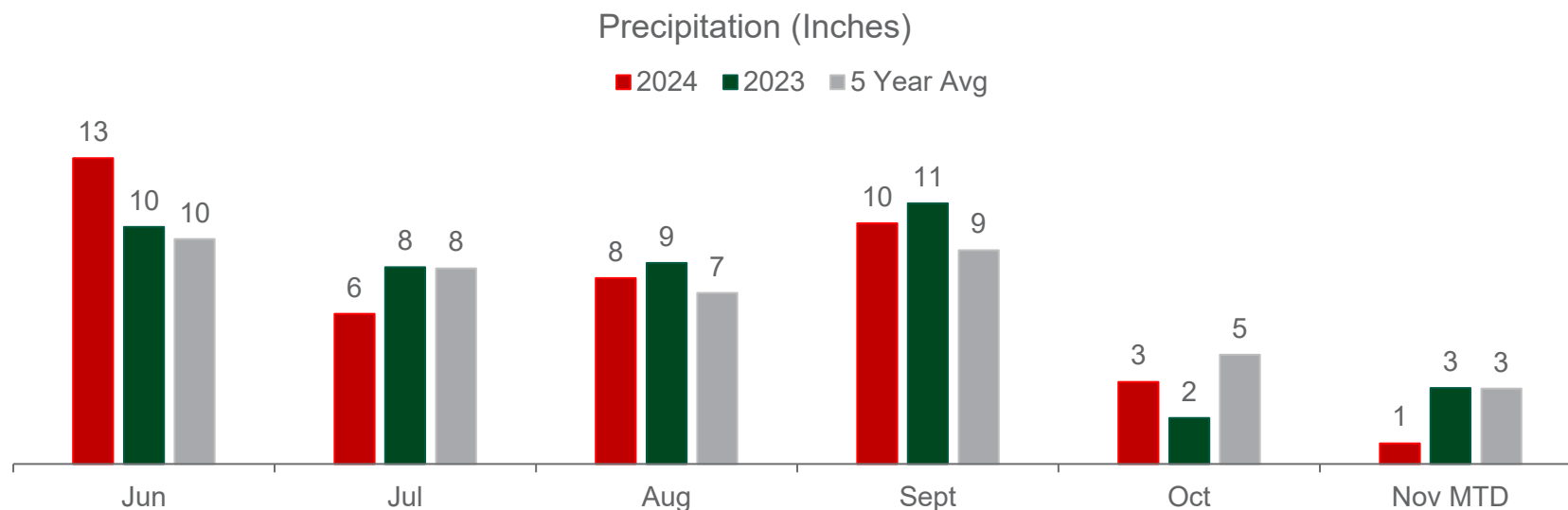
# FCC and Growers: Acres Harvested & Production



# FCC Conventional vs Organic 1<sup>st</sup> Cut Production



# Cumulative Precipitation by Month *(Inches)*



Growing Cycle:  
 Jun. 1<sup>st</sup> – Nov. 16<sup>th</sup>

Crop	Inches
<b>2024</b>	<b>41.6</b>
<b>2023</b>	<b>43.0</b>
<b>5 Yr. Avg</b>	<b>41.8</b>

# Why Grow Rice?

---

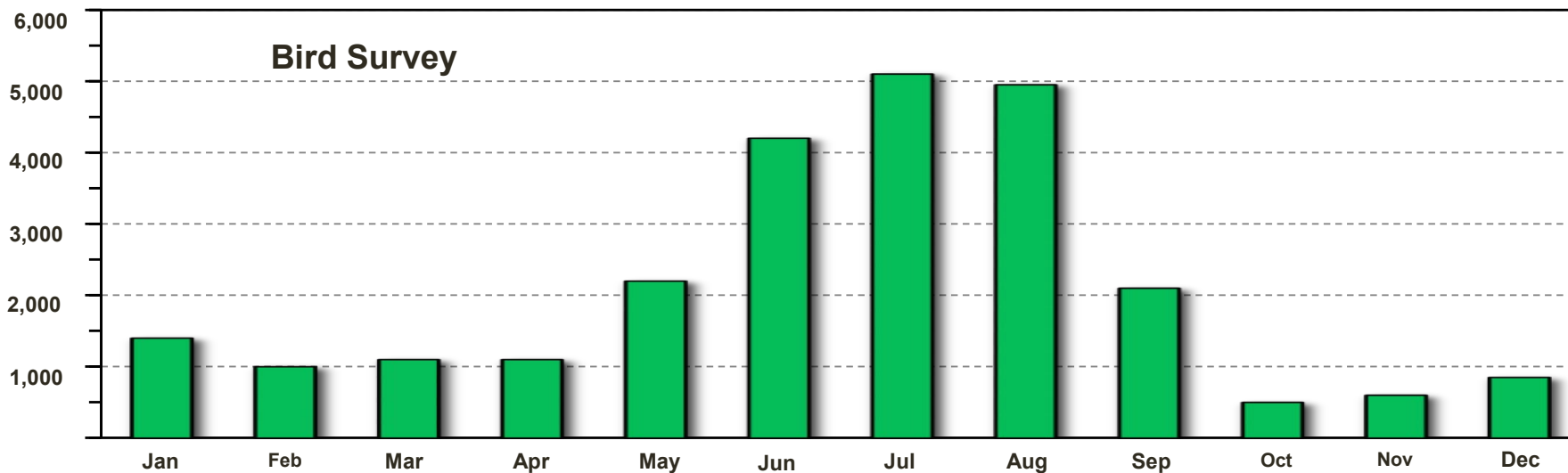
## **Rice is very beneficial:**

- Rice improves sugarcane yields
- Rice continuous flooding kills noxious soil insects, controls weeds and lowers soil pH, improving macro and micro elements availability
- Rice is a low-cost and low-input crop: limited usage of fertilizers, herbicides, insecticides and fungicides

## **EAA environment impact:**

- Rice extracts P from water (up to 45% vs BMP mandatory 25% P reduction)
- Rice paddies increase south Florida's water storage capacity
- Rice keeps water in the farm when there is an excess of water in the EAA
- Rice reduces P and N mineralization
- Rice limits soil erosion & Oxidation
- Rice is an ideal habitat for a large number of birds and fish

# Rice as Bird Habitat



## NESTING BIRD SPECIES

- Common Moorhen
- Black-necked Stilt
- Purple Gallinule
- Least Bittern
- Boat-tailed Grackle
- Yellow-crowned Night Heron
- Green Heron
- Mottled Duck
- Tricolored Heron
- King Rail
- Marsh Wren
- Mourning Dove





# Rice and Market Trends

---

Consumers are seeking healthier products:

- Low Calorie
- Gluten Free
- Non-GMO
- Locally Farmed and Produced
- Vegan
- Allergy-free





# Overview of FCC Rice Business

---

Rice rotation: 4 - 6 years with cane, depending on farm's location

Rice type: long grain, 95%, medium grain, 5%

Rice category: organic, 25%, conventional, 75%

Rice crop: after cane 70%, after vegetables, sweet corn 30%, two cuts, 40%

Planting: 02/25 – 06/15



Harvest: 06/27 – 10/31

