

WHOLE GRAIN



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2022 Website of the Year Awards

USA Rice

Progress Sifinity

2022 Website of the Year

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USA Rice is the global advocate for all segments of the U.S. rice industry with a mission to promote and protect the interests of producers, millers, merchants, and allied businesses.

USA Rice is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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FIRST CROP

DUTY CALLING

BY KIRK SATTERFIELD

BENOIT, MS — I've been reading the *Whole Grain* since the very first issue back in 2014, and while the content is always interesting and informative, I must admit, I didn't think I'd ever be writing the USA Rice chairman's greeting. But here we are.


My colleagues in the industry put their faith in me to help steer the organization and industry for the next two years. I am humbled, appreciative, and excited. I also acknowledge that I was handed the reins of an outstanding organization, known throughout Washington, DC, for "fighting above its weight class," and one that has been very well-managed. But as an industry, we are facing some dark days.

If you regularly read this newspaper, subscribe to the *USA Rice Daily*, listen to our podcast, *The Rice Stuff*, or attend some of our many meetings, you know full well what I'm talking about: out of control input costs, artificially depressed market prices, logistical and supply chain challenges, the uncertainty of war in Europe, and more, with no end in sight.

Now before you wonder if they tricked me into taking the job, remember, if you argue with a fool, make sure he isn't doing the same thing. I am more than happy to do my part to help this industry I love so much, an industry that has given so much to me, my family, and my community.

It's something I like to think about during National Rice Month – where we find ourselves right now. I know officially we are celebrating the harvest, but now more than ever, I think it's appropriate to step back and think about all the men and women working in this industry, the struggles they've encountered, the things they've overcome, and the things we will rise above together to keep America and the world fed.

That's what this job is about to me, and it's why I am so happy to get to work. There's no question, it's going to be a bumpy ride, but as one, we'll get there.

Happy National Rice Month, everyone! 

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I acknowledge that I was handed the reins of an outstanding organization, known throughout Washington, DC, for "fighting above its weight class"

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BACK IN PRINT

BY BETSY WARD

ARLINGTON, VA — I am thrilled to be writing to you in this full print edition of the *Whole Grain*! As you may know, last year, in an effort to cut costs, we only printed one edition of this newspaper – the Winter Issue that accompanies the USA Rice Outlook Conference.

We were able to reduce our expenses by not printing and mailing the paper, but I do think we lost something in the process. Even though in theory the digital edition of the paper had no limits on the number of people who could receive it, I'm not convinced we reached more people.

And when we launched this publication in 2014, the idea was to put rice news into the hands – literally – of the men and woman who make it all possible. We expected copies of the paper to accompany growers into the cab of their combines, or to sit in breakrooms in mills, or adorn the dashboard of big rigs shuttling rice from farm to mill or mill to store or port.

Call me old fashioned, but there's no substitute for holding paper in your hands and reading the news. The smell of the paper, the bits of ink on your fingers – it's authentic and it connects us all.

So, I was thrilled when the team here, working with the USA Rice Communications Committee and our vendors, found a way to put the *Whole Grain* back in print! Many thanks to the USA Rice Council and the USA Rice Board of Directors for supporting the effort.

We've packed a lot of information into this edition, but there's always more rice news happening. Hopefully you are staying up to date with our other more regular communications – the *USA Rice Daily* and *The Rice Stuff* podcast – they are where you can go every day while you wait for the next print edition of the *Whole Grain*.


Thank you for reading and for your support 



LEADERSHIP CHANGES KEEP USA RICE ON TRACK

BY MICHAEL KLEIN

ARLINGTON, VA — Key leadership positions at USA Rice changed hands as terms came to an end on July 31, 2022. Mississippi rice farmer Kirk Satterfield was elected to succeed Bobby Hanks as chair of USA Rice. The USA Rice Merchants Board of Directors elected Park Eldridge of Arkansas as chair, succeeding Ryan Carwell. Texas rice farmer Tim Gertson was elected to succeed David Petter as chair of The Rice Foundation, and Mississippi rice farmer Curtis Berry took over the reins at the USA Rice Farmers Board of Directors.

In June, the USA Rice Millers' Association elected Louisiana's Meryl Kennedy to succeed Keith Glover as chair of that organization. Kennedy becomes the first woman and the youngest person ever to chair that organization in its 123-year history. 

Michael Klein is USA Rice's vice president of communications and domestic promotion and he took both these pictures with his phone!



Passing the torch: Bobby Hanks (left) to Kirk Satterfield, and Keith Glover (left) to Meryl Kennedy.



Kennedy becomes the first woman and the youngest person ever to chair the RMA in its 123-year history.

RICE STEWARDSHIP PARTNERSHIP SECURES \$7.85M PROJECT TO INCREASE IRRIGATION EFFICIENCY

BY EMILY WOODALL


LITTLE ROCK, AR — In 2013, forward-thinking member leaders of USA Rice had the foresight to formally establish the Rice Stewardship Partnership (RSP). This partnership, anchored by USA Rice and Ducks Unlimited, was a first-of-its-kind conservation delivery team focused on voluntary working lands conservation led by a farmer advisory committee with representatives in each rice-growing state.

Shortly thereafter, the 2014 Farm Bill introduced the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), and in 2015, the RSP secured its first \$10 million project. Now, seven years later, RSP has secured its fourteenth RCPP, surpassing the \$100 million milestone for working ricelands conservation funding.

“We thank USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service and our supply chain partners for the progress made to date,” said Jeff Durand, Louisiana rice farmer and co-chair of the RSP. “It is exciting to see the momentum continue as the RSP has proven success with economic and environmental impact. And never forget, what’s good for rice is good for ducks!”

The *Conjunctive Water Use* project was awarded \$7.85 million to be utilized in Arkansas, Mississippi, and Louisiana, and will assist producers in implementing practices and systems that increase the availability of surface water resources for irrigation while increasing efficiency, intending to reduce dependency on our mid-South aquifers.

“The RSP is honored to have been selected for one of the 41 locally-led conservation projects nationwide,” said USA Rice’s Josh Hankins, director of the RSP. “In this project, the participating partners will offer value-added contributions to amplify the impact of the RCPP funding, and we specifically appreciate the involvement of Entergy, a company that powers life for three million customers across our four-state mid-South rice regions, with roots in the Gulf South for more than a century.”

None of this progress would be possible without the generous financial support of Rice Stewardship funders, including the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Walmart Foundation, the Mosaic Company Foundation, Nestlé Purina PetCare, Chevron U.S.A., RiceTec, Entergy, Anheuser-Busch InBev, Freeport-McMoRan Foundation, Irene W. and C.B. Pennington Foundation, BASF, American Rice, Inc. – Riviana Foods, Inc., Joe W. and Dorothy Dorsett Brown Foundation, Delta Plastics, Riceland Foods, Corteva Agriscience, Valley Irrigation, Cargill, Wells Fargo, Farmers Rice Milling Company, Horizon Ag, Turner’s Creek & Bombay Hook Farms, MacDon Industries, Farm Credit Associations of Arkansas, Ben Link Farms, and Ducks Unlimited major sponsors. 

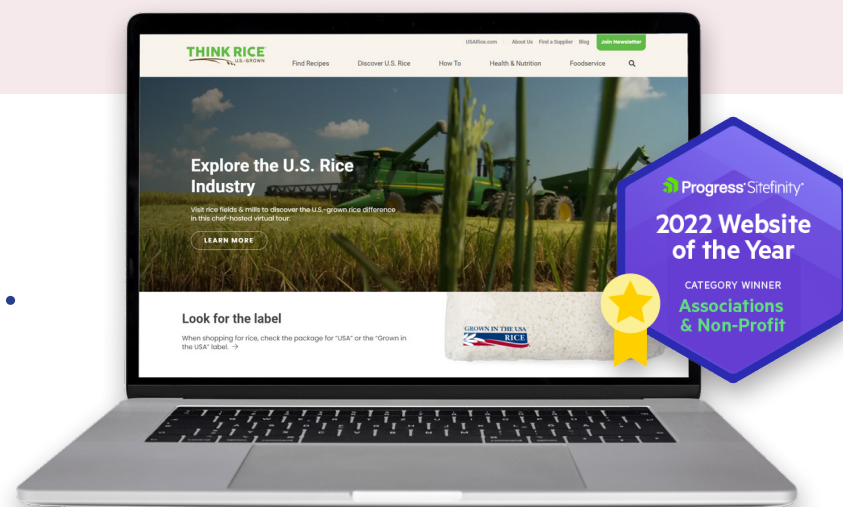
Emily Woodall is the USA Rice manager of rice conservation services.



DOMESTIC PROMOTION

AND THE AWARD GOES TO ... THINKRICE.COM!

BY DEBORAH WILLENBORG



ARLINGTON, VA — The USA Rice consumer-facing website, thinkrice.com, was the winner in the “Associations & Non-Profit” category of the 2022 Sitefinity Website of the Year Awards. Since its inception in 2011, the Sitefinity Awards have recognized websites powered by Progress Sitefinity for the exceptional digital experiences they deliver to visitors.

This year, a panel of Sitefinity product experts evaluated more than 120 submissions against six criteria – visual design, content, layout and navigation, complexity, innovation, and significance – and shortlisted the three best websites per category. After narrowing the field, the doors were opened for public voting to help determine the “Best of the Best.” And with more than 6,200 votes cast, thinkrice.com emerged as one of sixteen category winners.

“Thank you to Sitefinity and everyone who voted for our website – it’s a tremendous honor to be a recipient of this award knowing we were in competition with other industries such as medical and fine arts, not just ag,” said Katie Maher, USA Rice director of strategic initiatives. “This award affirms all the hard work we put into updating our website to better support our promotional efforts and ensure that visitors have a positive experience on the site.”

In January 2021, USA Rice debuted the new and improved thinkrice.com, where visitors come to find rice recipes, cooking tips, nutrition information, foodservice resources, and much more. One of the major goals in revamping the website was to improve the user experience through design, content, and functionality enhancements.

Since the launch of the revamped website, there has been a steady improvement in web analytics, including a 19 percent increase in traffic from search engines and a 36 percent increase in page views – this means more people are finding the site and viewing multiple pages during their visit.

“We’re really proud of the redesign and performance of thinkrice.com, but the cherry on top is receiving this prestigious award,” said Cameron Jacobs, USA Rice director of domestic promotion. “This recognition will certainly generate new traffic to the site where people can learn more about the industry and see what makes U.S.-grown rice so special.” [WGB](#)

As USA Rice director of communications, Deborah Willenborg appreciates that thinkrice.com has the most up-to-date information on U.S.-grown rice, all just a click away.

DOMESTIC DIGITAL PROGRAMS DELIVER HISTORIC RESULTS

BY CAMERON JACOBS

ARLINGTON, VA — Digital promotion is a big hit with our domestic audience!

Over the past several years, USA Rice has collaborated with a team of Registered Dietitian (RD) bloggers and *thefeedfeed*, curators of the largest digital food & influencer community, to keep domestic rice prominently positioned in the online food and culinary space through recipe development, content creation, and message sharing.

A team of six RDs, chosen for their nutritional expertise and focus on recipe creation, developed blog and social media posts for trendy nutrition-focused recipes that included USA Rice messaging and featured a range of domestic rice varieties from aromatics and whole grain options to sprouted rice.

Each recipe was posted on the influencer’s individual platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest. The created content also was amplified on USA Rice social media accounts. In total, the 2021-2022 RD blogger program created 21 new rice recipes with photography and videos that generated 10.9 million impressions and more than 326,000 direct engagements across 163 placements.

Last year’s partnership with *thefeedfeed* and four of their hand-picked influencers produced twenty new rice recipes that generated 52.7 million consumer impressions and 5.65 million direct engagements in promotion of U.S.-grown rice.

“These results clearly show consumers are very receptive to USA Rice’s content and messaging,” said Michael Klein, USA Rice vice president of communications and domestic promotion. “The historic metrics demonstrate the progress domestic rice is making in the digital space and the strong inroads being established with consumer audiences as we continue to educate and keep U.S. rice relevant throughout the year in the industry’s largest market.”

In addition to the immediate impact of these online campaigns, USA Rice retains the right to use and distribute all created recipes, videos, and photos. The entire 2021-2022 recipe collection can be accessed and downloaded at www.usarice.com/thinkrice/find-recipes. [WGB](#)



Cameron Jacobs is director of domestic promotion for USA Rice, and all-time featured guest on the USA Rice podcast, The Rice Stuff. Listen to him talk more about rice at www.thericestuffpodcast.com.



NATIONAL RICE MONTH

SCHOLARSHIP VIDEO CONTEST

RICE CAMERA ACTION!

Help us promote U.S.-grown rice, National Rice Month, and the importance of rice to your state via video — and earn scholarship money in the process!



MAKE
— A —
VIDEO

Feature rice production, healthy eating, sustainability, the versatility of rice ... the list goes on! You can also conduct rice promotion activities in your community and showcase your work.

IT'S EASY TO PARTICIPATE!

- 1 Create an original, short (3 minutes or less) video about U.S.-grown rice
- 2 Upload your video to YouTube or Vimeo
- 3 Submit your entry at

www.ReelRiceContest.com



THREE SCHOLARSHIP PRIZES AWARDED!

GRAND PRIZE

\$5,000 Scholarship

SECOND PLACE

\$3,000 Scholarship

THIRD PLACE

\$2,000 Scholarship

Entry Deadline is October 31, 2022

Brought to you by



Visit www.ReelRiceContest.com for more information, ideas to get started, and to enter your creative video!

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DROUGHT AND INPUT COSTS PUT RICE FARMERS IN DANGER

BY JAMISON CRUCE

ARLINGTON, VA — U.S. rice farmers continue facing very difficult situations this year. In the southern rice-producing states, stagnant prices coupled with input costs are financially squeezing those farmers, while in California, drought has cut acreage in half. Ultimately, U.S. rice acreage has dropped to less than 2.2 million planted acres for 2022 according to the USDA Farm Service Agency, the lowest acreage seen by our industry in nearly half a century.

Unlike other major crops, rice has not seen an adequate recovery in prices this year. While the U.S. rice industry recognizes that all in agriculture are experiencing skyrocketing input costs, rice has a vastly higher cost of production than other crops. If you combine the two, these conditions are threatening financial viability for most U.S. rice farmers.

The Agricultural and Food Policy Center (AFPC) at Texas A&M University released a study in May that shows a \$442 per acre loss in net cash farm income from 2021 to 2022 for rice farms, with many farms expected to post a loss this year, which in the credit-heavy farm economy, is not sustainable.

Rural communities that are often so dependent on agriculture are at risk across the country. A contracting or disappearing rice industry will mean job losses across the spectrum of the rice ecosystem including in rice mills, dryers, elevators, trucking companies, seed and equipment dealers, laborers, and thousands of other related

businesses dependent on a healthy agriculture economy. Once lost, these businesses, employees, and skills will leave, not to return, further devastating economic stability and opportunity in these communities.

Export markets that the rice industry has spent decades developing are also at risk. The U.S. is the world's fifth largest rice exporter – shipping half of what is produced every year to more than 120 countries and providing millions of servings of enriched rice through international food aid programs.

“Rice country is facing a dire situation right now. 2022 has been a difficult year, and the situation only continues to grow worse,” said Kirk Satterfield, Mississippi rice farmer and chair of USA Rice. “Direct assistance for rice farmers is paramount and needed sooner rather than later to keep the basis of our industry afloat.”

That is why back in February, USA Rice made an urgent appeal to USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack requesting a minimum of \$400 million in assistance for acres planted to rice in 2022.

USA Rice continues to work with the Administration and Congress towards securing this assistance in time to alleviate pressure ahead of decision making for the 2023 crop year. [WG](#)

Jamison Cruce is the USA Rice senior director of government affairs.

FBI WARNS OF RANSOMWARE ATTACKS ON AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES

BY DEBORAH WILLENBORG

WASHINGTON, DC — This spring, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), put farmers and ag cooperatives on high alert as cyber criminals were threatening to attack the industry during planting and harvesting seasons, “disrupting operations, causing financial loss, and negatively impacting the food supply chain.”

Hackers perceive cooperatives as lucrative targets with a willingness to pay due to the time-sensitive role they play in agricultural production.

Although ransomware attacks against the entire farm-to-table spectrum occur on a regular basis, the number of cyberattacks against agricultural cooperatives during key seasons is notable, including reported attacks against six grain cooperatives during the fall 2021 harvest and two attacks in early 2022 that had the potential to impact the planting season by disrupting the supply of seeds and fertilizer.

USA Rice covered this important topic at the Outlook Conference last December, hosting a panel of experts who shared the devastating effects of computer hacking and what businesses can do to ward off “the bad guys.”

Greg Beck, senior vice president at Consolidated Grain and Barge Company (CGB), recounted the story of how cyber criminals infected their system and rendered many facilities inoperable, causing CGB to implement a system wide shut down.

FBI Special Agent Patrick Bellamy also participated on the Outlook panel and offered recommendations on how to mitigate the threat of cyberattacks. He said strong passwords are vital and should include numbers, letters, and symbols. Passwords shouldn't be used for more than one account and should be changed regularly.



“USA Rice is urging all of our members to take these ongoing threats seriously,” said USA Rice President & CEO Betsy Ward. “Criminals have turned their attention to agriculture and we have to be prepared. It’s easy to think it will happen to someone else, until it happens to you.”

Additional information is available on the FBI’s Internet Crime Complaint Center at www.ic3.gov. [WG](#)

GET OUT AND VOTE — IT'S THE *RICE* THING TO DO!

BY JOSIE MCLAURIN

WASHINGTON, DC — It's hard to believe that the 2022 General Election is just weeks away.


This year looks to be a consequential election year, with primary season already behind us, midterm elections just ahead, and Farm Bill discussions well underway, all eyes will be on the House and Senate toss up races.

The slim Democrat majorities in both the House and Senate mean that both chambers are in play for Republicans this year. Many political pollsters are projecting that Republicans will gain control of the House of Representatives while the Senate is too close to call. However, the elections aren't over until they're over and a new Congress is seated in January 2023.

With such high stakes, it is important that you get out and vote this November. You can cast your ballot early in person, on election day (November 8th), or by mail. Whatever your preference, be sure to do your civic duty and vote.

The USA Rice PAC has been hard at work and has supported 87 Members of Congress so far this cycle, providing more than \$305,000 in assistance to a bipartisan slate of candidates since January 2021. The USA Rice PAC supports candidates of all parties that support the interests of U.S. agriculture and the U.S. rice industry.

As of August 31, 2022, USA Rice PAC provided 74 percent of their contributions to Republican candidates and 26 percent to Democrat candidates this cycle.

This November is your chance to do your part. If you are not sure whether you're registered to vote or need information about your local polling places or other methods of casting your ballot, please visit www.vote.org. You'll find available polling places, early voting locations, and more. 

Josie McLaurin is manager of government affairs at USA Rice and is in charge of the USA Rice PAC, the organization's primary tool for interacting with Members of Congress.

The slim Democrat majorities in both the House and Senate mean that both chambers are in play for Republicans this year.




RICE FARM BILL POLICY PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT WELL UNDERWAY

WASHINGTON, DC — The USA Rice Farmers' Farm Policy Task Force has been working throughout the year to craft U.S. rice industry policy priorities for the upcoming Farm Bill. The group consists of three members and one alternate from each of the six major rice-producing states and has worked towards consensus on general policy principles that fall within the Farm Bill's Commodity, Conservation, and Crop Insurance Titles.

Throughout this fall, the Task Force will further refine specific recommendations that will be presented to the full USA Rice Farmers Board of Directors in December for adoption. These principles and recommendations will serve as the basis of USA Rice's 2023 Farm Bill advocacy. The 2018 Farm Bill is set to expire next year.

The Task Force was also charged with overseeing USA Rice's request to the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Biden Administration for direct financial assistance for rice farmers to help offset increasing costs of production paired with stagnant rice market prices.

Members of the task force are: Chair Curtis Berry, Daniel Berglund, Dow Brantley, Tom Butler, Nolen Canon, Rance Daniels, Kenneth Danklefs, Richard Fontenot, Scott Franklin, David Gairhan, Blake Gerard, Jennifer James, Jackie Loewer, David Martin, Charley Mathews, L.G. Raun, Gibb Steele, and Nicole Van Vleck. 



SHOT IN THE ARM FOR THE INDUSTRY: MOU WITH IRAQ = 200,000 MT OF SALES

BY SARAH MORAN



ARLINGTON, VA — Rice is a staple in Iraq and is considered essential to the Iraqi diet. Most Iraqis consume rice daily and per capita consumption is over 90 pounds annual.

The Iraqi government supplies an amount of staple goods to its citizens on a regular basis, and this distribution includes 3 kg of rice that is often imported as local production only covers less than 20 percent of total demand.

In May 2021, Iraq's Council of Ministers moved the procurement of rice from the Grain Board of Iraq to the FoodStuff division of the Ministry of Trade and hired a private company to manage the rice purchases.

USA Rice reached out to this company, Al-Awees, to stress the importance of the Iraqi market to the U.S. rice industry and developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in July 2021. This MOU between USA Rice and Al-Awees calls for annual purchases of 200,000 tons of U.S. rice. Additionally, it allows bulk rice shipments, which Iraq does not permit from any other country.

Following the implementation of the USA Rice MOU, sales of 120,000 tons of U.S. rice were made to Al Awees, the first sales to Iraq in two years. The remaining 80,000 tons was purchased by Al Awees in July and August 2022, thereby completing the 200,000 tons for the 2021-2022 year.

“We are very pleased to see the terms of this first year of the MOU completed,” said USA Rice President & CEO Betsy Ward. “Iraqis value the quality of U.S. rice and in turn, Iraq is a vital market to our farmers here in the U.S. This is a win-win scenario for everyone.”

Discussions continue between U.S. rice exporters, Al-Awees, and USA Rice to ensure the annual commitment is made. [WG](#)

Sarah Moran, USA Rice vice president of international, has a goal of reading 45 books this year, including “Late for Tea at the Deer Palace: The Lost Dreams of my Iraqi Family.”

INDIA DRAWS IRE AT WTO FROM U.S. AND ALLIES ON RICE SUBSIDIES

BY PETER BACHMANN

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND — This summer, the United States and other World Trade Organization (WTO) Members initiated an unprecedented path of action following public announcement of consultations with India on their trade-distorting rice subsidies at a June WTO Committee on Agriculture meeting.

“India makes up half of global rice trade and much of its exported rice benefits from the government-established floor price, and it's then exported at low prices, distorting trade,” said Bobby Hanks, rice miller and chair of the USA Rice International Trade Policy Committee. “USA Rice applauds the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) and their colleagues at the USDA for starting this process of technical engagement with India regarding its rice support and egregious WTO violations. This announcement is just one of many actions the U.S. government can take to engage India at the WTO regarding its rice subsidies and we are hopeful they will soon pivot to take more actions in this direction.”

Based on India's WTO-reported values of production in 2022 for the 2021 year, \$45.6 billion, their support level was 15.14 percent, exceeding the 10 percent de minimis limit. However, actual support is likely much higher – more than 80 percent – because India only includes actual procurement, not total production, in its calculations, contrary to WTO rules and precedent.

India agrees they exceeded their de minimis limits for rice subsidies over the last three years that they have notified their support to the WTO, and unsurprisingly, they have claimed shelter from a WTO dispute settlement challenge under the ‘Bali Peace Clause.’ It is important to clarify that these consultations are targeted towards India's use of the Bali Peace Clause which gives them the ability to build government stocks of food, however, it stipulates that WTO Members cannot export those subsidized government stocks to the extent that it distorts global trade. These early consultations are not the initiation of formal consultations for a WTO dispute settlement case.

The U.S. was not alone in pursuing transparency improvements for India, but

was joined by the governments of Australia, Canada, Japan, Paraguay, Thailand, and Uruguay in initiating the Bali consultations. All of those governments have expressed concerns regarding the impacts of the Indian government's public stockholding programs for rice, wheat, and other commodities on global agricultural markets and seek to receive additional information from India.

“At June's WTO ministerial, we witnessed India's renewed attempts to force WTO Members to remove the limited constraints of this peace clause and write new rules that would give India practically unlimited room to dump subsidized rice on global markets,” Hanks said. “Fortunately, this was a bridge too far for the WTO membership, and we encourage the governments engaged in these consultations, especially the United States, to soon advance to the next logical step and initiate a formal dispute settlement case.”

The U.S. rice industry has been significantly impacted over the last decade as India has nearly tripled their export volume, flooding the world rice market with cheap, subsidized rice and made the U.S. and other rice exporters less competitive both within our domestic markets and in the global marketplace. USA Rice continues to advocate for the U.S. government to address India's WTO domestic support violations through a dispute settlement case that would push India to curb their rice subsidies, prevent consolidation across world rice production, and increase the prices received by farmers. Over the last year, a record price spread has emerged for long grain originating in the U.S. versus Southeast Asia, further exacerbating the financial difficulty facing America's rice farmers this crop year.

Since December 2021, nearly 50 Members of Congress have called on the Biden Administration to pursue a formal WTO case against India's rice and wheat subsidies through letters and public hearings. [WG](#)

Peter Bachmann is the USA Rice vice president of policy and government affairs.