

Rice Farming on the Texas Coastal Plains: *More than Rice*

Benefits of the Rice Industry

➤ **Economic**

- Texas is the 5th-largest rice-producing state in the United States
- Rice farmers contribute more than \$1 billion annually to the state economy
- Rice farming generates thousands of jobs
- U.S.-grown rice provides a secure source of safe and reliable food



➤ **Environmental**



- **Waterfowl:** rice ecosystem supports over 2 million waterfowl and 100 species of birds
- **Environmental flows:** rice water runoff increases environmental flows to the Colorado, Bernard and Lavaca rivers and Matagorda Bay

- **Wetlands Purification:**

- Rice fields are man-made wetlands that replace natural wetlands lost each year to development and natural and man-made disasters
- Rice fields purify water from the Colorado as it runs over the rice fields (the “lagooning effect”)

➤ **Cultural**

- The rice industry has created a farming tradition and rural landscape on the Texas Coastal Plains for 5 generations



Water for Rice

- Rice needs water to control weeds and avoid the need for chemicals
- Texas rice farmers have cut water usage by half in the past 40 years
- LCRA supplies about 60% of the water used by farmers in Colorado, Wharton and Matagorda counties
- Competition for LCRA water is growing
- Water for agriculture is supplied on an interruptible basis – it can be curtailed during times of drought
- Adequate water supplies for rice = adequate supplies for economy, environment and rural heritage



What You Can Do to Help

- Conserve water
- Support sustainable growth
- Elect lawmakers and officials who support water efficiency and smart growth
- Encourage LCRA to implement water conservation and develop water initiatives that ensure adequate supplies for all users