



2008 Rice Statistics

THE National Agricultural Statistics Service reports 2.9 million acres of rice harvested in the U.S. during 2008, up 6.5% from 2007. In CA, harvested area in 2008 went down 3% from 2007 to 517 thousand acres. All other rice producing states had a moderate increase, due most likely to expected good rice prices. In CA, uncertainty about water availability may have caused the reduced acreage.

Average yield nationwide is estimated at 6,846 lbs/acre. CA and TX were the only states with an average yield increase. CA went from 8200 lbs/acre in 2007 to 8320 lbs/acre in 2008.

Last year's lower yields in the southern U.S. are most likely due to

hurricane damage and delayed plantings caused by unusual cool temperatures. CA had a dry spring that allowed good seedbed preparation and early plantings. Summer temperatures were mild and in general good for rice growth. In some areas we had a thick cover of smoke for a few weeks towards the middle of the season, due to wildfires. The effect of the smoke cover on rice yield and quality is unclear.

The Economic Research Service estimates the 2008/2009 U.S. all-rice season average price at a record \$16.50-\$17.10 per cwt. Medium and short grain average price is projected at \$21.20-\$22.50 per cwt. (see inside for a discussion on the reasons for the price increase).

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Global rice prices have been decreasing since the beginning of the 2008/2009 market year; however, the rate of the reduction is smaller than expected.

The 2009 growing season is upon us. The UCCE team wishes you a great season and reminds you that we are here to help you. Have a successful season!

2008 Rice Variety Trials Results

EVERY YEAR variety trials are established throughout California's rice producing areas. These trials are evaluated by Rice Experiment Station (RES) breeders to determine production potential and adaptability of new materials for local conditions, as well as the response of commercial varieties to local weather, soil and agronomic practices.

These trials are conducted under grower conditions and varieties are grouped by maturity. Maturity

groups are classified according to the number of days from planting to 50% heading for a variety grown at the RES (Biggs), and they are very early (<90 days to 50% heading), early (90-97 days to 50% heading) and intermediate/late (>97 days to 50% heading).

During 2008, rice varieties were grown in plots 200 square feet within commercial fields and managed by cooperating growers in the same manner as the rest of the field. Plots

were harvested using a research plot combine, and yields then converted to lbs/acre at 14% moisture. Tables 1, 2 and 3 on the next page show grain yields, seedling vigor and days to 50% heading for varieties grown in Colusa, Glenn and Yolo Counties.

Remember that the trials are conducted in small areas; therefore, yields are a relative indication on how a variety will perform under commercial conditions.

2008 Rice Variety Trials Results continued

Table 1. Early rice variety test, Colusa County, 2008

Variety	Grain type	Grain yield at 14% moisture (lbs/acre)	Seedling vigor	Days to 50% heading
M-202	M	9950	5.0	96
M-205	M	10080	5.0	102
M-206	M	10080	5.0	93
M-208	M	9780	5.0	97
S-102	S	9870	5.0	86
L-205	L, R	9140	4.8	94
L-206	L	9730	5.0	92

Legend

S = short grain
M = medium grain
L = long grain
PQ = premium quality
R = Newrex

Table 2. Intermediate/late rice variety test, Glenn County, 2008

Variety	Grain type	Grain yield at 14% moisture (lbs/acre)	Seedling vigor	Days to 50% heading
M-202	M	8300	5.0	91
M-205	M	8440	4.9	101
M-402	M, PQ	7240	5.0	110
L-205	L, R	8820	4.6	96
L-206	L	8710	5.0	87

Table 3. Very early rice variety test, Yolo County, 2008

Variety	Grain type	Grain yield at 14% moisture (lbs/acre)	Seedling vigor	Days to 50% heading
M-104	M	9930	5.0	85
M-202	M	10140	5.0	92
M-206	M	10480	5.0	88
S-102	S	10340	5.0	86
L-205	L, R	9590	5.0	92
L-206	L	10210	4.7	90

A complete report (including results from trials in other areas of CA) can be found at
<http://www.plantsciences.ucdavis.edu/uccerice/>
or
<http://cecolusa.ucdavis.edu/rice/>

CA Rice On The Internet

IF YOU have access to the internet, you can access a lot of information about rice. However, it can be difficult to determine what information is relevant or reliable.

To make it a little bit easier, here are some good websites about rice production in California:

UC Rice Research and Information Program
<http://www.plantsciences.ucdavis.edu/uccerice/>
CA Rice Research Board Reports
<http://www.carrb.com/>
CA Rice Commission
<http://www.calrice.org/>
UCCE Colusa County Rice Program
<http://cecolusa.ucdavis.edu/rice/>

Bookmark these pages and you'll save some time!

Red Rice Survey

RED RICE is a common weed in many rice growing areas around the world. It is a very difficult weed to manage because it is biochemically identical to commercially grown rice; therefore, herbicides that kill red rice also kill cultivated rice. Red rice has kernels with a red pericarp that contaminate rice grain during harvest, severely reducing grain quality. Additionally, red rice competes with cultivated rice for nutrients, water and space, reducing rice yields.

Red rice is widely spread in the southern U. S. rice producing states. In California, red rice has been identified in a few fields in Colusa and Glenn Counties since 2003. The establishment of this weed in California constitutes a serious risk for the rice industry. Steps have been taken to eradicate this weed from infested fields; however, the true distribution of red rice in California is unknown.

To address this issue, a survey of fields surrounding infested fields in Glenn County was conducted during 2008. The objectives of this survey were:

- To delimitate the areas infested with red rice and estimate its expansion during the past few years.
- To collect plant material for genetic and phenotypic characterization.
- To select fields where management/eradication plans can be evaluated.

During September 2008, two scouts trained in red rice identification surveyed commercial rice fields surrounding known infested fields in Glenn County. Suspected red rice plants were transported to the Rice Experiment Station in Biggs for identification. During transport, plants

were covered with plastic bags to avoid seed dispersal.

Survey results: The total area surveyed was approximately 14,500 acres. Only one field was positively identified as infested with red rice. Two other fields are suspected to be infested. Genetic analyses of the samples taken are needed to correctly identify them as red rice. Suspected samples taken in other four sites were identified as off-type rice plants.

The 2008 red rice survey showed that weedy rice is still present in Glenn County. However, its distribution within the surveyed area is limited and expansion seems to be reduced. Managers of infested fields are making significant efforts to eliminate infestations. Another survey is planned for the 2009 rice season in Glenn and Colusa Counties.

What Is The Real Cause Of High Rice Prices?

THE PRICE of rice experienced a substantial increase during 2008. Some countries suffered food riots, and here at home the media covered the rationing of rice in some grocery chains. For growers, the increase on the price of rice was good news.

The Economic Research Service (ERS) has recently estimated the U.S. season average rough rice price for 2008/2009 at \$16.50-\$17.50 per cwt, up 25% from 2007/2008. Medium and short grain average price is projected at a record \$21.50-\$22.50 per cwt. The ERS explains that high medium grain prices are explained by Egypt's export ban, the lack of exportable supplies in Australia and a smaller U.S crop in 2008/2009.

But what caused the sudden increase in rice price last year? In a

recent article, Brian Wright, professor in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics at UC Berkeley, explores some of the possible causes.

In the media's coverage of the price increase, many reasons were mentioned. The drought in Australia, increased demand in China and India, increased production of corn and soybeans for biofuels, and just plain speculation. Wright explains that all these events may have had very little effect, if any, in the price increase. On the other hand, he points to the decision by the Indian government in October 9, 2007, to ban rice exports, as the starting point of the crisis. Soon, due to production problems in some countries, other exporters, such as Egypt and Vietnam, decided to ban exports too. This created much anxiety in the rice market, and prices soured as importers

tried to secure their supplies. The crisis was somewhat resolved late last summer when rice production estimates predicted a good harvest. According to Wright, a poor 2008 harvest would have caused a market collapse and severe consequences for poor importing countries. It seems that, when available rice stocks are low or uncertain, the price of rice becomes very sensitive to fluctuations in excess supply.

Predicting what the price of rice is going to be next season is almost impossible. However, if we understand what happened last year we may get a better idea of what the future has in store. You can read Brian Wright's article in the Nov/Dec issue of the Agricultural and Resource Economics Update, available at www.agecon.ucdavis.edu/extension/update.



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