



Photo: Dennis Carman, WRID

U.S. SUSTAINABLE RICE INITIATIVE

U.S. rice producers are global leaders in sustainable production methods, already adhering to strict environmental, health, safety and labor regulations, and innovating additional, voluntary, sustainable practices.

Since 2012, Winrock has been working with U.S. rice farmers in the Mid-South and California to demonstrate the impacts of sustainable rice production practices and technologies to significantly reduce water use, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, fertilizer use and energy use while enhancing habitat.

U.S. rice farmers are now seeking recognition for their environmental stewardship. With the support from a USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Conservation Innovation Grant, project partners are now piloting a U.S. sustainable rice initiative to demonstrate the global leadership of U.S. farmers in sustainable rice production and to increase adoption of sustainable practices through access to new markets for U.S. rice farmers.

FUNDERS: U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) NRCS, Entergy Corporation and partner contributions

PARTNERS: Mid-South rice growers, White River

Irrigation District, Winrock International through its Environmental Resources Trust and American Carbon Registry (ACR), Environmental Defense Fund, Carbon Credit Solutions, University of Arkansas, Mississippi State University and Arkansas State University, Entergy Corporation and the USDA Agriculture Research Service.

START DATE: January 2016

END DATE: October 2019

Sustainable Rice Standard

A key outcome of the initiative is the development of

FAST FACTS

PRACTICES IN THE US-SRP:

- IMPROVE WATER EFFICIENCY THROUGH PRECISION LEVELING, ALTERNATE WETTING AND DRYING (AWD) AND INTENSIVE WATER MANAGEMENT
- IMPROVE WATER AND SOIL QUALITY THROUGH EFFICIENT FERTILIZER WITH GRID-BASED SAMPLING AND SMART-RICE CULTIVARS, AND NO-TILL PRACTICES
- REDUCE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS THROUGH AWD (METHANE), EFFICIENT FERTILIZER USE (N₂O) AND REDUCED FUEL USE (CO₂)

CAN RESULT IN UP TO:



an independent, credible, rigorous sustainability certification standard for U.S. rice to respond to increasing demands from rice buyers to meet sustainable sourcing requirements as well as consumer demands for food safety.

Rather than re-create the wheel, project partners reviewed options for adapting existing sustainability standards for U.S. rice production. Ultimately, the partners selected the Sustainable Rice Platform (SRP, <http://www.sustainableice.org>), a global standard for rice production co-convened by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI).

The SRP was identified as a good fit for adaptation for the U.S. because it is science-based, is focused specifically on rice, is supported by a range of international rice buyers and NGOs, and will allow for the comparison of the environmental performance of U.S. rice growers with rice growers from other regions globally.

Initiative partners established a Steering Committee of key industry stakeholder representatives to provide and facilitate industry and other interested party input into the adaptation of the SRP for the U.S. Steering Committee members include:

Bob Zeigler, Director General Emeritus IRRI
Cynthia Edwards, Arkansas Department of Agriculture
Dr. Michele Reba, USDA

“THIS WORK WILL SERVE AS A
ROADMAP TO THE SRP FOR
ACHIEVING NATIONAL ADAPTATIONS
ACROSS THE GLOBE, WHICH WILL
BE PARAMOUNT TO THEIR VISION
OF ONE MILLION GROWERS
IMPLEMENTING SUSTAINABLE BEST
PRACTICES IN RICE PRODUCTION.”

- DR. BOB ZEIGLER

Scott Manley, Ducks Unlimited
Jim Whitaker, Whitaker Grain
Mark Isbell, Isbell Farms
Brian Otis, RiceTec
Dennis Carman, White River Irrigation District
Jody Pagan, Five Oaks Farms
Mary Grady, Winrock / ACR
Lydia Holmes, USA Rice

Partners have collaborated with rice growers, USA Rice Federation, through its sustainability committee, and the SRP Secretariat and SRP members in the adaptation of the SRP to reflect U.S. policy and regulatory frameworks, government incentive programs and local production situations.

Progress & Next Steps

Version 1.0 of the US-SRP was completed and open for public comment between December 15, 2017 and February 15, 2018, garnering extensive feedback from key U.S. stakeholders. Winrock then undertook a major revision of the US-SRP to address the comments received and to prepare it for submittal for approval by the SRP Secretariat in 2019. Were the US-SRP Standard approved as a national interpretation, it would allow full use of SRP claims and logos for U.S. producers that complete the US-SRP Standard and meet the required thresholds.

A number of U.S. growers are currently piloting with US-SRP and providing key data and feedback that will allow for even further finetuning before submittal to the SRP Secretariat and ensuring a more comprehensive roll-out effort when approved.



QUESTIONS?

Contact our team
sustainableice@winrock.org

Photo: Dennis Carman, WRID



2101 Riverfront Drive | Little Rock, Arkansas 72202
+1 501 280 3000 | winrock.org

2121 Crystal Drive, Suite 500 | Arlington, Virginia 22202
+1 703 302 6500 | winrock.org