



Keeping you connected

# xtension cord

February 2020

U of A  
DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE  
RESEARCH & EXTENSION  
University of Arkansas System

No. 2

## Better Days Ahead in 2020 for Arkansas Rice

While 2019 was doom and gloom for rice producers, 2020 may be the year of the rebound for the state's largest agricultural export, with total rice acreage expected to increase 25 percent to nearly 1.5 million acres.

"We're expecting a sharp increase in total rice acres driven by long-grain rice, with a modest reduction in medium-grain acreage," Scott Stiles, extension economist for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, said.

Total rice acreage is projected to increase by 290,400 acres from about 1.2 million acres planted last year to about 1.4 million acres this year. Acreage for long-grain cultivars is expected to increase 32 percent from 950,000 acres last year to about 1.3 million acres this year. Medium-grain acreage is expected to decline 8 percent from 205,000 acres in 2019 to 188,600 acres this year, Stiles said.

Rain — and lots of it — plagued rice producers in 2019. Overall, 511,819 acres of rice were not planted due to flooding, putting Arkansas' share of 2019 U.S. rice production at 45 percent, down from 48 percent in 2018.

Despite a record year for prevent planting, yields remained good. Planting between March 21 and April 3 typically produces the best yields, Jarrod Hardke, extension



Rice being harvested in Prairie County.

rice agronomist for the Division of Agriculture, said, but those dates came and went last year, leaving rice producers with their slowest planting in 25 years.

"Our true summer happened in late August," he said. "The majority of what affects milling issues depends on what happens after heading. Usually the later the plant, the better the head rice yields. In 2018, we saw the opposite, but this year we had some phenomenal millage yields."

Currently, rice is grown in 40 of the state's 75 counties, primarily in the eastern half of Arkansas. Counties in northeastern Arkansas account for the majority of

### THE INSIDE STORIES

(See Rice, page 2)

Hot Spring County 4-H Spay/Neuter Clinic  
Cooperative Extension Loses 175 Years of Service  
Due to Retirements  
Message from Dr. Cartwright

Scholarship Donations  
March Birthdays  
Margie Jones Passes

**Don't Miss It! The 2020 Retiree Luncheon** is March 20, 2020 at the C.A. Vines AR 4-H Center. Registration begins at 10:30AM followed by lunch at noon. RSVP by March 11, 2020.

Program Highlights: 2020 CES Retiree Scholarship Winners • 40th Anniversary Celebration of the C.A. Vines AR 4-H Center • New Technology at UAEX

# 2

## Rice, cont.

production, with Poinsett, Jackson and Lawrence counties leading production.

Low production last year helped avert a long-grain rice price collapse — and may have been the silver lining in the cloud. In May, the U.S. Department of Agriculture forecast long-grain ending stocks to reach the highest level since the mid-1980s. At that time rice futures prices were trading near \$10 per cwt. By September, futures prices had climbed to \$12 per cwt.

Futures contracts are starting 2020 well above \$12 per cwt, with March 2020 rice futures currently trading at \$13.22 per cwt, Stiles said.

Regarding 2020 inputs, seed costs for rice have remained mostly unchanged over the past year, and fertilizer prices are below early 2019 levels.

“The fact we haven’t seen sharp increases in the largest drivers of input costs works in favor of rice acreage this year,” Stiles said. “Recent political events in Iraq and Iran moved

the energy markets significantly higher. How this will impact fuel costs is something we’re watching closely.”

So what — besides weather — could be a potential game changer for rice in 2020?

If the “Phase 1” trade agreement with China includes significant agriculture commodity purchases, particularly in the first quarter of this year ahead of planting, that could move competing crops like corn and soybean prices to more attractive levels, Stiles said.

Also, if dry conditions in parts of Argentina and Brazil persist and production estimates start to decline, corn and soybean prices would get a lift from that as well.

Soybean prices, however, will have to increase a lot to steal rice acres. The \$10 price level for soybeans would begin to get grower’s attention. November 2020 soybean futures have rallied over 50 cents in the past month and currently trade near \$9.70 per bushel. ☺

## To Our Extension Retirees



Welcome to February 2020, Yuck. I am glad it is almost over as the weather has not suited my attitude too well this month. But I am sure I am the only one?

In this issue of the Extension Cord, I found the article on rice and the one on youth interested in shadowing practicing veterinarians very interesting. As you may recall, I spent a lot of years working in rice and found the crop and the people associated with it equally challenging and enlightening. It is truly a unique plant and production system. And I spent my high school days going with the high school ag teacher on “vet” visits around the county and found the experience very educational. Mr. Ruel Richardson was one of the reasons I stayed in agriculture when I went to college and he inspired many in the county in those days to seek higher education in the ag sciences. These articles invoked great memories and I hope you enjoyed them.

With mixed emotions, I recognize the recent retirees listed in this issue. I really hate to see them go but recognize that service can continue in other ways and I know all recent retirees have plans for continued service to family, community and society. We wish all the best in retirement.

Sadly, I note the passing forward of Margie Jones in Little River County. While all of us struggle with the passing of colleagues, we certainly recognize her legacy in Cooperative Extension and in the community and her family. All our best thoughts and condolences to the family.

And sadly again, I note the passing forward of Earl Ramey Stiles Sr., long time cotton farmer, gin operator and community stalwart in Lee County. He was a lifelong friend and supporter of Cooperative Extension and the Division of Agriculture, and the father of Scott Stiles, one of our ag economists. We wish the Stiles family our sincere thoughts and condolences.

I hope all of you have a safe and happy rest of February and early March. ☺

## Cooperative Extension Loses 175 Years of Experience Due to Retirements

The following Extension employees have joined the ranks of the retirees:

**Ron Baker, Crop Soil & Environmental Sciences.** Ron began his Extension career with Extension in 2004 as a County Extension Agent in Clay County. He was serving as a Rice Verification Coordinator for the north delta at the time of his retirement. Ron had 15 years of service at retirement.

**Linda Bates, Garland County.** Linda began serving as the County Extension Agent – 4-H in Garland County in April of 2013. She retired with 6 years of service with Extension.

**Cindy Golden, Facilities (LRSO).** Cindy began serving as the Administrative Specialist for the Little Rock State Office Facilities Department in April of 2007. Cindy had 12 years of service at her retirement.

**Ron Matlock, Saline County (Ouachita District).** Ron began his career with Cooperative Extension as a County Extension Agent in September of 1987. His service included: Jefferson, Clark and Saline Counties. Ron had 32 years of service at his retirement.

**Susan Pickle, Benton County (Ozark District).** Susan began her career as a County Extension Agent in Johnson County. At her retirement, Susan was serving as the County Extension Agent- FCS in Benton County. Susan had 21 years of service at her retirement.

**Paula Seago, Crop, Soil & Environmental Sciences (LRSO).** Paula began her career with Cooperative Extension in November of 2005. She served as Administrative Specialist for the CSES Department at the LRSO at the time of her retirement. Paula had 13 years of service at her retirement.

**Sheila Whitely, Carroll County (Ozark District).** Sheila began her career with Cooperative Extension in 1985. She was serving as the Administrative Specialist for the Carroll County Office. Sheila had 34 year years of service at retirement.

**Louise Williams, Mississippi County (Delta District).** Louise began her career with Cooperative Extension in January of 1977. She was serving as the Administrative Specialist for the Mississippi County Office. Louise had 42 years of service at retirement. ©

## Hot Spring County 4-H Spay/Neuter Clinic

January 11th, Hot Spring County 4-H members had the opportunity to assist with over 50 surgeries, courtesy of Providence Veterinary Care.

4-H members worked to prepare their skills, working with Dr. Nelson and his staff, and becoming familiar with veterinary protocols. This clinic was open to the public to have their dogs and cats spayed and neutered at a discounted rate. Dr. Nelson says, “it is important for the veterinary science students to get hands on experience as well as the importance of serving the community.”

Under the supervision of Dr. Nelson and his staff, 4-Hers had the opportunity to learn how to prepare the pet for anesthesia, administer vaccines, draw blood, assist with surgery, monitor post operation, and work with clients. One 4-Her said she “learned more about the responsibilities of a veterinary assistant. [She] enjoys working with animals and having a part in helping them live a healthier life.”

Many youth would not have the unique opportunity to learn many of the skills this clinic offers. Dr. Nelson says, “4-H allows our kids to be involved in the agricultural process. Without that kind of opportunity most kids would never understand the importance of agriculture to our livelihood.” ©



Courtney Ray, CVT, Jack Berryhill, and Savannah Saunders assist Emma Kyzer with inserting an IV catheter.

## March Birthdays

Peter Faison - March 1

Ralph Tyler Jr. - March 1

Lynn Whitlock - March 1

Carolyn Hester - March 2

Janet Hill - March 3

Glenda McLaughlin Rushing - March 5

Sandra Schlinker - March 5

Danny McCarter - March 8

Barbara Tompkins - March 9

Bobbie Floyd - March 10

Jessica Bates - March 10

Bonita Mueller - March 10

Dorothy Rodgers - March 12

John Baker Jr. - March 13

Danny Allen - March 14

Sue Seevers - March 14

Judy Drewrey - March 14

Dorene Wills - March 16

Lydia Guffey - March 16

Doris Markle - March 17

Chris Russell - March 18

Larry Pitman - March 19

Nina Boston - March 19

Danny Walker - March 21

Steven Seideman - March 22

Charlie Parsons - March 23

John Robinson - March 24

Ronnie Bateman - March 24

Kathy Rawlingson - March 25

Ocsie Barnes - March 26

Thomas Moody - March 27

Debbie Henry - March 28

Eddie Hubbell - March 29

Celia Shireman - March 29

Patsy Hall - March 29

Shelly Johnson - March 30

Karen Fite - March 31

## Scholarship Donations

The following gifts were recently received to support professional development opportunities for faculty and staff of the Cooperative Extension Service. These gifts will be used to support professional development opportunities for faculty and staff of the Cooperative Extension Service.

### CES Retiree Scholarship Fund

**Dorothy Hall**

*In honor of Mrs. Donna Rothberg*

**Eddie Hubbell**

*In memory of Mr. Howard Young*

**Martha May**

Honorary or memorial donations should be forwarded to the Development Office, ATTN: Brian Helms, Cooperative Extension Service, 2301 South University Ave., Little Rock, AR 72204. If joint recognition is desired, please indicate. To ensure proper notification is sent, please also include in whose honor or memory the gift is made and the mailing address of the person to receive the notification. ©

Yes, I will subscribe to the *Extension Cord*.

	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Amount Enclosed</b>
Extension Cord	\$18.00	_____

Please make check payable to **UA CES** and mail to Martha Thorpe, Communications Department, 2301 South University Avenue, Little Rock, AR 72204-4940.

**NOTE:** Please do not combine payment for an Extension Cord subscription and a scholarship donation in one check. Payment for the **Extension Cord** should be made to **UA CES**. Payment for **scholarship donations** should be made to the **UA FOUNDATION**. If you include payment for an Extension Cord subscription in a check made payable to the UA Foundation, the entire amount will go to the UA Foundation.

Yes, I want to support the fundraising initiative in support of the Cooperative Extension Service Retiree Scholarship.

Enclosed is my gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_. My gift is in honor / in memory of \_\_\_\_\_.

Name/Address for notification of honorary and memorial gifts:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable to the **UA Foundation** and mail to Brian Helms, Development Office, 2301 South University Avenue, Little Rock AR 72204-4940.

## Margie Jones Passes

Margie Maxine Lummus Jones, age 96, of Ashdown passed away on December 17, 2019. Margie worked in the Little River County Office for 23 years until her retirement in 1994. Margie is the mother of current Little River County Administrative Specialist Roxie Jones. A memorial service was held Saturday, February 1, 2020 at First Baptist Church in Ogden, Arkansas. ©

## Follow UAEX on Social Media!



@UAEX.edu on Facebook



@UAEX\_edu on Twitter



@uaex\_edu on Instagram