

Rice Congress Of The Americas Attracts Worldwide Attention

HOUSTON, TEXAS

The 2nd Annual Rice Congress of the Americas turned out truly to be a worldwide rice conference as representatives from numerous countries from outside of the Western Hemisphere traveled to Porto Alegre, Brazil last week in an effort to gain a better understanding of the current world rice market. The conference, organized and supported by the US Rice Producers Association, The Rice Trader Publication and IBCAsia, attracted visitors from such places as Indonesia, Egypt, Pakistan, Russia, England, Switzerland, Austria, Mauritius, South Africa, Thailand, Singapore, Mozambique, Italy, Senegal, Ireland and Gambia. Along with participants from throughout the Western Hemisphere, some 37 countries were represented at the conference amid global concern of food supply crises in many areas with rice in the center of the debate. CONMASUR, the rice milling association of the Mercosur trade block was also an important supporter of the event.

While market outlooks were the main topics of the conference, presentations were also given on individual countries in the region, the expectations and trends in the marketplace, growing currency concerns, challenges in promoting rice consumption in the Americas, the idea of a rice futures market in Brazil, the changing dynamics and opportunities in agri-business, potential ethanol & biofuel choices for Brazil, the Caribbean rice market, as well as the WTO & trade in the Americas. Dwight Roberts, Presi-

dent & CEO of the US Rice Producers Association was impressed with the energy of the congress stating, "This was an amazing display of animation and tension as a result of the daily twists and turns of the current marketplace as industries and governments attempt to get a handle on supplies and price." World statistics on stocks, acreage, crop production estimates, yields, growing conditions were stretched in every direction in an effort by the trade to predict short, medium and long term trends," added Roberts.

While some participants did not agree, it was evident that the market is headed for even higher levels assuming there is rice available. Current growing conditions in the largest rice producing state in the U.S., Arkansas is a daily concern due to continued flooding that is putting planting far behind schedule. The 3rd Annual Rice Congress of the Americas 2009 is currently being planned for Miami, Florida. "The US Rice Producers Association applauds the The Rice Trader Publication and IBC-Asia who make this important event a reality and we are proud to be a partner in the years ahead. I suggest that everyone mark their calendars for next year," said Roberts. The US Rice Producers Association, representing rice farmers in Mississippi, Missouri, Texas, California, Arkansas and Louisiana, is the only organization solely representing the views of the U.S. rice farmers.

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