

# Rice Outlook

## Trade Tops List Of Goals At USA Rice Outlook Conference

**BETTY VALLE GEGG-NAEGER**

MidAmerica Farmer Grower

### NEW ORLEANS, LA.

**J**ames Warsaw, chairman of the USA Rice Federation, just completed his first year of a two-year term as chairman, and said his first goals are the farm bill and trade. He made the comments in an interview at the USA Rice Outlook Conference recently in New Orleans.

"Trade is big on our agenda and I think unifying this industry is very important to us," he said. "We know there's challenges out there. Cap and Trade, the 2012 farm bill, there are all kinds of issues that face us. The more people that are involved in the industry who will work together, the better we will be going forward."

He said he sees a good possibility that there will be forward movement on the free trade agreements with Columbia. However the agenda issues, health care, cap and trade, will have to be resolved first. He also sees a lot of momentum on trade with Cuba.

"Again, we have a road block in Washington dealing with issues that they see as more important than agriculture," Warsaw said.

While he's hopeful, he doesn't see much progress on the Cuba issue or free trade agreements, although there's a lot of momentum

claiming the southern border of the U.S. export market.

"So in the future we'll find ourselves competing with a lot of the countries in the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico and other markets down there," he added. "I wouldn't say it's a threat, but it's becoming competition for the United States."

Still, Warsaw has good feelings about the rice industry in the United States.

"We have a very resilient grower group, rice seems to fair well, it seems to have great market acceptance," he expounded the good news. "It'll take a lot of work to keep us viable, healthy and profitable, but the land is suited for rice production, population growth, everything points in a positive direction. Moving forward won't be easy, but I think it's something that we will accomplish."

The educational program and trade show drew hundreds of participants. Speaker for the opening general session was Mike Strain, commissioner of the Department of Agriculture and Forestry. He urged rice producers and industry members to get involved in the political process to block rules and regulations that will affect the profitability of rice farmers.

"Most Americans are three or four generations removed from the farm," Strain said. This lack of understanding of the importance of production agriculture is leading Washington bureaucrats to advance legislative and regulatory policies that will have a negative impact on agricultural producers, including cap and trade legislation, he continued.

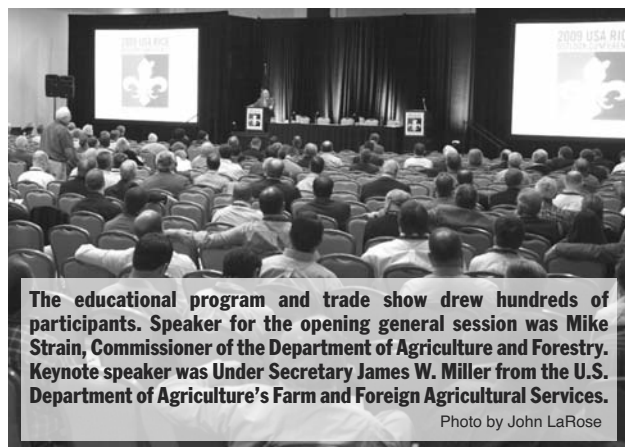
Keynote speaker was Under Secretary James W. Miller from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services. Miller provided an overview of the Obama administration's domestic and international priorities and USDA's farm policy efforts.

The program included sessions on the outlook for U.S. rice in Latin America, the rice industry's sustainability program, and state and national rice research reports.

Sessions on the economic outlook, state production reports and other issues affecting the U.S. rice industry also were held. The USA Rice Outlook Conference is an educational service of the USA Rice Federation.

The 2009 Rice Award winners were recognized as follows: Mississippi producer Curtis Berry was named farmer of the year; USA Rice Federation Director Johnny Broussard received the industry member of the year award; and Rice-land Foods Senior VP of Marketing Carl Brothers was given the lifetime achievement award. Δ

*BETTY VALLE GEGG-NAEGER: Senior Staff Writer, MidAmerica Farmer Grower*



The educational program and trade show drew hundreds of participants. Speaker for the opening general session was Mike Strain, Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture and Forestry. Keynote speaker was Under Secretary James W. Miller from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services.

Photo by John LaRose

there. There's also some possibilities of trade with Peru.

"Again, possibilities. It's a market that's emerging for the US rice industry. We feel good about it. Time will tell," he said. "Brazil is always a country we keep our eye on also. Brazil has a great need for rice. They are self sufficient, but there are years that weather problems create a need for rice and, traditionally, they turn to the United States and it's traditionally very good for us."

Most South American countries that are capable are moving into the export industry and

**APACHE** by **ET**  
The #1 mechanical drive sprayer.

Link Directly To: **APACHE**

**syngenta**

Link Directly To: **SYNGENTA**