

# USA Rice Staff Reports To Louisiana Rice Growers And Wider Industry

**CROWLEY, LA.**

**U**SA Rice Federation President and CEO Betsy Ward talked last week about USA Rice efforts under way to educate the new Congress and the Obama administration about issues of importance to the Louisiana rice industry. The timing of the USA Rice Government Affairs Conference Feb. 9-12 in Washington “couldn’t be better,” she said, because it offers the opportunity for rice growers, millers and merchants to have an impact early in the legislative cycle and with the new political appointees.

Ward, who spoke to an audience of nearly 200 at the joint annual meeting of the Louisiana Rice Council and Louisiana Rice Growers Association, also discussed farm bill implementa-

tion, USA Rice domestic promotion work, re-opening trade with Cuba, and a range of other topics.

Any change in the status of trade with Cuba would not be immediate, but might be achieved in steps, she said, first through administrative changes that would ease Treasury Department restrictions imposed by the Bush administration in 2005, followed by action in Congress to ease travel restrictions before wider trade restrictions are lifted.

USA Rice VP for International Promotion Jim Guinn continued the discussion of USA Rice work to promote rice worldwide. Guinn talked about the challenges associated with gaining entry for rice in the European Union, but highlighted progress made in the United Kingdom. Δ



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