



ARKANSAS RICE GROWERS
A S S O C I A T I O N

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ARKANSAS RICE GROWERS ANNUAL MEETING VOTES TO REJECT "PHARMA RICE"

The annual meeting of the Arkansas Rice Growers Association (ARGA), held on January 25th in Brinkley, passed two resolutions dealing with issues of concern to rice farmers. First, the membership agreed to promote stronger enforcement of food safety laws, specifically pesticide, herbicide and fungicide residual levels in imported rice.

Jerry Lee Bogard, of Midland Rice in Stuttgart, spoke to the 200 assembled farmers about the need to encourage the federal government to enforce current regulations and ensure the safety of imported food. With 14% of the domestic use of rice filled by imports, Mr. Bogard also encouraged a change in direction for the rice research community, who should be focusing on developing varieties of aromatic rice to compete with imports.

Secondly, the membership approved legislative efforts to ban the production of pharmaceutical or industrial rice in Arkansas. Because of the imminent threat that "pharma" rice will be planted in the Missouri Bootheel this spring, the potential for domestic and export market disruption from even a small acreage of rice containing human genes is extremely serious, according to Greg Yielding, Executive Director of ARGA.

State Senator Jerry Taylor was presented with the first "Friend of the Rice Farmer" award for his service to Arkansas rice farmers (pictured).

The Arkansas Rice Growers Association is the only organization solely representing the views of the Arkansas rice farmer.



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