

U.S. HOUSE REPRESENTATIVES PASS THE OCEAN SHIPPING REFORM ACT OF 2021

On December 8, 2021, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Ocean Shipping Reform Act (OSRA) of 2021 with a 364-40 vote. OSRA aims to crack down on unreasonable practices by container shipping lines, bolster U.S. enforcement against uncompetitive carrier practices, and improve transparency for exporters. The CWRAB has been monitoring the Ocean Shipping Reform Act and the status of Congress reaching a solution to the ongoing supply chain issues. Recently the bill passed in the House, and the CWRAB will continue to monitor the bill as it makes its way through the Senate. If you have any questions on the passage of OSRA, please do not hesitate to contact the CWRAB office.

2021 ASSESSMENT UPDATE

2021 Assessment Invoices were sent out in October and were based on the reported number of planted acres as stated on 2021 Acreage Reports. The first half of the total amount stated on your invoice was due by November 15, 2021. The remaining amount is due by February 15, 2022. If you did not harvest all of your planted acreage, this fact must be verified by a member or alternate member of the CWRAB from the district in which you grow wild rice. If a field is ninety percent (90%) harvested, it is to be considered completely harvested. Please reach out to Program Supervisor, Elise Oliver, eoliver@calwildrice.org if you did not harvest all of your planted acreage or have any questions regarding assessments.

CDPH REQUIRES MASKING FOR ALL PUBLIC INDOOR SETTINGS

California Department of Public Health (CDPH) continues to monitor COVID-19 data in order to protect the health and well-being of all Californians. Since Thanksgiving, the statewide seven-day average case rate has increased by almost half (47%) and hospitalizations have increased by 14%. In response to the increase in cases and hospitalizations, and to slow the spread of both Delta and the highly transmissible Omicron variant, CDPH has issued updated guidance to curb the spread of COVID-19 and its variants.

Beginning December 15, CDPH will require masks to be worn in all indoor public settings irrespective of vaccine status through January 15, 2022, at which point California will make further recommendations as needed in response to the pandemic.

On January 5, 2022 the CDPH announced that the mask requirements have been extended and are now required to be worn indoors until February 15, 2022.

Additionally, CDPH updated requirements for attending mega events, like concerts and sporting events. Prior to attending an event, attendees will now require either proof of vaccination, a negative antigen COVID-19 test within one day of the event, or a negative PCR test within two days of the event.

CDPH also issued a new travel advisory effective immediately to recommend that all travelers arriving in California test for COVID-19 within three to five days after arrival, regardless of their vaccination status.

CALIFORNIA OVERTIME CHANGES

As of January 1, 2022 California law requires employers with 26 or more employees to pay overtime wages to agricultural workers after an eight hour day or 40 hours per week. Additionally, employers with 26 or more employees must double the rate of pay after a 12 hour work day. Beginning January 1, 2022 employers with 25 or fewer employees must compensate for overtime after 9.5 hours a day or 55 hours a week. Employers with 25 or fewer employees are exempt from the double rate of pay changes until January 1, 2025. The CWRAB would encourage growers to reach out to their Farm Labor Contractor (FLC) about specifics regarding changes to commission rates on the sixth work day, unemployment insurance rates, and worker compensation rates. Since these rates differ between FLC's, growers and FLCs need to communicate these rates and make clear how invoicing is to be done.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- **OFFICE CLOSED - MLK Day**
 - January 17, 2022

Some events are being held virtually. Please contact the CWRAB office for more information.

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CALIFORNIA
WILD RICE

California Wild Rice

2565 Alluvial Ave., Ste. 152

Clovis, CA 93611

PH: (559) 578-8073

FAX: (559) 456-9099

www.calwildrice.org

RECIPE CORNER

California Wild Rice Stuffing

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cups California wild rice blend
- 3 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 1 1/2 cups, plus 2 tablespoons vegetable broth divided
- 2 large shallots, minced small
- 2 celery ribs chopped
- 8 ounces baby portabella mushrooms, sliced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh thyme
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh sage
- 1/2 cup toasted pecans, roughly chopped
- 1/2 cup whole, pitted, California black olives, halved
- 1/2 cup whole, pitted, California green olives, halved
- Kosher salt and black pepper to taste
- zest and juice of 1 lemon

Instructions

- First, cook the rice. You can cook it on the stove or in an Instant Pot.
 - To cook on the stove: Add 1 1/2 cups California wild rice blend, 2 1/4 cups vegetable broth (or water), and a pinch of salt to a medium saucepan then bring to a boil. Place a lid on top of the pan and turn the heat down to low. Simmer for 40 45 minutes or until rice is al dente. Remove the pan from the heat and let sit for 5 minutes with the lid on. Remove the lid and fluff the rice with a fork.
 - To cook in the Instant Pot: Add 1 1/2 cups California wild rice blend, 1 1/2 cups vegetable broth, 1 teaspoon olive oil, and a pinch of salt to the Instant Pot. Place the lid on the Instant Pot and turn until it locks, making sure to seal the vent. Set to manual high pressure and cook for 15 minutes. When the Instant Pot beeps, natural pressure release for 10 minutes and then carefully vent the remaining steam. Open the lid and fluff the rice with a fork
- In a large skillet, heat the remaining olive oil over medium high heat. Add the shallots and celery and sauté for 3 to 5 minutes, or until tender. Add the sliced mushrooms, garlic, herbs and the remaining 2 tablespoons broth and cook until vegetables are softened. Add the cooked rice to the skillet and stir to combine. Remove from the heat.
- Add the olives, pecans, lemon zest and juice to the wild rice mixture then season liberally with salt and pepper, to taste.