

# California Wild Rice Advisory Board Newsletter

## Marketing Update

The CWRAB has partnered with Jerry James Stone to execute a marketing campaign for the 2025–2026 fiscal year, and the results to date have been highly successful. As a strong “AG”-vocate for California agriculture, Jerry’s campaign focuses on recipe creation to showcase the versatility of wild rice across a variety of meals. In addition to this, he has expanded the campaign to include “how-to” content that further highlights the use and preparation of wild rice.

This strategic approach to content formatting has also improved how artificial intelligence platforms recognize and surface our materials. As a result, our YouTube video is now appearing as a top reference in Google search results. Please see the image below!!

ISSUE #23

JANUARY-  
MARCH 2026



## Gulfood- Dubai, UAE

In late January, California Wild Rice Advisory Board staff traveled to Dubai, UAE, to attend Gulfood, one of the world’s largest and most influential food trade shows. Leveraging federal grant funding, staff met with key importers, observed market trends, and conducted on-the-ground market visits across the region. The purpose of the trade mission was to assess opportunities for U.S. wild rice in the broader Middle East market.

The UAE, in particular, represents a high-value market where consumers often place a premium on quality over price. Given California’s strong reputation for producing premium wild rice, the visit provided an important opportunity to evaluate how that positioning may resonate with buyers and consumers in the region. The trip offered valuable insight into the competitive landscape, buyer expectations, and potential pathways for future market development efforts on behalf of the California wild rice industry. These insights will help guide targeted marketing strategies and support efforts to expand California wild rice’s presence in international markets.

## World Ag Expo- Tulare, CA

Staff had the opportunity to participate in the World Ag Expo in Tulare, where they hosted a booth on behalf of the California Wild

Rice Advisory Board. This provided a valuable opportunity to engage directly with growers, discussing current industry challenges, water management, emerging technologies, and the overall outlook for the industry. Staff also shared information about the advisory board’s work, encouraged greater grower participation, and highlighted the benefits of membership while promoting continued planting and investment in the crop. In addition, the team explored the trade show floor to observe the latest innovations and technologies that will help shape the future of agriculture.

### AI Overview

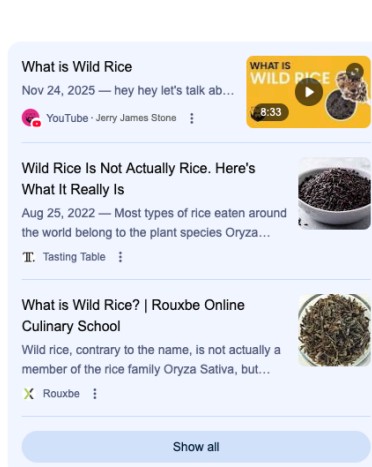
Wild rice (*Zizania palustris*) and conventional rice (*Oryza sativa*) are **distantly related**, sharing the same grass family (Poaceae) and tribe, but belonging to entirely different genera. Native to North America, wild rice is an aquatic grass seed, while conventional rice is “true rice” originally from Asia. They are similar in that both are grass-based grains that cook in water, but differ significantly in taste, texture, and origin.

#### Key Similarities and Differences:

- **Relationship:** They are often considered “cousins” in the botanical world, sharing a familial bond within the Poaceae family.
- **Origin:** Conventional rice (*Oryza sativa*) is native to Asia, while true wild rice is native to North America (Great Lakes region).
- **Botanical Difference:** Wild rice is the seed of a water-grass (*Zizania*), whereas conventional rice is *Oryza*.
- **Appearance & Taste:** Wild rice is long, dark brown/black, and has a chewy, nutty, and earthy flavor. Conventional rice is generally white or brown, softer, and milder in flavor.
- **Cultivation:** While wild rice is traditionally harvested in the wild, much of it is now farmed (paddy-grown).
- **Nutrition:** Wild rice is generally higher in protein, fiber, and essential minerals like zinc and magnesium compared to white rice.

While they are not directly related, they occupy similar roles in cooking, allowing for their comparison.

Dive deeper in AI Mode



## Research Update

### Land IQ Acreage and Ownership Identification:

Land IQ used satellite images and field data to measure how many acres of wild rice were planted in California in 2025. After comparing their maps with more than 1,400 field checks, they estimated 11,733 acres of wild rice were planted, mostly in Modoc, Shasta, and Yolo counties, with a 99.9% accuracy rate.

### Exploring Herbicide Options for Weed Management:

Dr. Whitney Brim DeForest and her team tested two new herbicides, Albaugh 2024 and Keenali GR, in a UC Davis greenhouse to see if they would harm wild rice plants. Both herbicides had a 100% survival rate and caused no significant damage, so the study concluded they are safe to move forward to outdoor field testing.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Mary McDonnell at [mmcdonnell@calwildrice.org](mailto:mmcdonnell@calwildrice.org).



## National Dietary Guidelines

In January 2026, the Trump Administration released the new dietary guidelines for Americans for 2025–2030. The key changes and recommendations include avoiding highly processed foods, prioritizing nutrient-dense options, and encouraging individuals to “eat a rainbow” of whole fruits and vegetables, while emphasizing balanced dietary patterns that support overall health and wellness. For more information, visit the [Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2025–2030](#).

**California Wild Rice Advisory Board**  
2565 Alluvial Ave. Ste 152, Clovis, CA 93611  
[www.calwildrice.org](http://www.calwildrice.org) | P: 559. 578.8073

## Sustainable Food Summit

Staff recently attended the Sustainable Food Summit, where industry leaders explored emerging trends shaping the future of food production and marketing. Key discussions focused on regenerative agriculture, sustainable packaging, water stewardship, evolving policy frameworks, and the growing role of artificial intelligence in strengthening supply chains and product development. Sessions also highlighted innovation in alternative ingredients, upcycled inputs, and new food technologies, alongside practical guidance on sustainability claims and consumer engagement. Overall, the summit underscored the increasing importance of measurable environmental impact, transparent sourcing, and strategic adaptation to regulatory and market shifts—issues that will continue to influence opportunities and competitiveness across California.



## Pesto Caprese Wild Rice Salad

- ¼ cup California wild rice
- 1 ½ cups mixed greens
- 1 tsp pesto
- ⅓ cup chopped cherry tomatoes
- ¼ cup fresh mozzarella pearls
- Basil leaves
- 1 tbsp pine nuts
- 1 tsp balsamic reduction

For full recipe visit: [USA Rice](#)

Find us on social media!



#californiawildrice



@calwildrice