

California Rice Research Board

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Rice Specialist

The RRB, after careful deliberation, has elected to support a UCCE Specialist position. This is the position currently held by Jim Hill. I would like to give you a perspective on how we got here.

Jim let us know several years in advance that he was planning to retire and that positions in UCCE were becoming increasingly difficult to refill. This has been a real advantage since it gave the RRB time to consider how to retain his position.

Now this may seem counterintuitive. There is presently a position so why would that change? It is because budget reductions over the past decade have meant that many UCCE specialist and farm advisor positions have not been refilled. As an example there were 138 position requests in 2011 and only five were initially released for recruitment. This figure eventually grew to 13 positions. The competition for the many open positions is so large that it would likely take many years to refill all of the high priority positions. What the Board considered was the limited possibility that the rice industry would capture one of the few available positions even in the next few years.

Through a lot of negotiation with UCCE a new option was developed that allowed commodity boards to bypass the competitive list. Thus a

In Short

- The RRB will be funding a Rice Specialist position to replace Jim Hill
- Total cost \$1,272,000 spread over six years
- UCCE/RRB guarantees the position funding (9yr/6yr) for 15 years minimum
- The RRB will also establish a one million dollar endowment to support the position

Board like the RRB can greatly accelerate filling a position by providing upfront funding when they see a need

rather than hoping they win the position lottery. This is what your Board has chosen to do.

What does the Specialist position involve? Research and outreach in California rice is the core of this position. The person selected would do research either independently or in collaboration with other rice scientists. Work would likely encompass three major areas:

- 1) Cultural practices related to increasing rice productivity and environmental sustainability, such as fertilizer use efficiency, water use efficiency and irrigation practices, pest management related to crop management, and practices related to rice.

- 2) Conducting the Statewide rice variety trials in collaboration with the Rice Experiment Station breeders.



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Research Board

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3) Outreach and extension activities, such as developing timely grower fact sheets and other traditional materials, electronic formats for information delivery and diagnostics for your phone or computer.

The basis of the agreement is as follows. Over the next six years the RRB has agreed to pay \$212,000 per year to the UCCE. This amount covers the cost of the position and overhead for that time period. During the early part of that time the position should be filled. At the beginning of the 7th year, the UCCE takes over the full funding of the position.

History shows that the typical retention time for a UCCE position holder is 30 years.

Of course we all know that things can happen, so to protect your investment, the RRB has obtained an agreement that if the position is vacated during the first 15 years, UCCE will refill it. This refilling would be without further cost to the RRB. After the 15th year, if the position is vacated, it would go back to the regular position pool or the RRB would need to step up again.

Another unique problem of a Specialist position is the lack of support funding. In the past there were funds to support research personnel, vehicles, etc. Now, the UCCE provides a small amount, but only enough to support secretarial and accounting staff. Thus, the RRB Board chose to create a one million dollar endowment fund out of its reserves to provide support for the position. This endowment will provide

about \$40,000 per year to the position in support of its research and extension activities.

So we are spending a lot of money on this position, why not just hire someone ourselves? This question was asked and debated in Board meetings. The Board believes that having someone on campus at UCD allows them to develop relationships with a wide range of professors. When an industry problem comes up, this Specialist can then direct efforts to obtain the best scientists for the problem. Because the Specialist is attached to a department on campus, they also have access to lab space and grad students that would be unavailable elsewhere. They are also able to help coordinate county and campus resources. Further, the person in this position is in an excellent position to compete for large grants, thus leveraging the Board's funding; and lastly, the results of the research are viewed as independent and unbiased which is especially important in addressing regulatory battles.

Interviews for the position

are in progress with the hope that the position can be filled by Spring. Subsequent newsletters will keep you informed.

The Board believes that the Specialist position is a valuable one that should be retained. The path they have chosen will assure that this position will be a part of the rice industry for many years to come.

Rice Contribution to Greenhouse Gas Production

By Luis Espino

I recently read an interesting article that forecasts the production of greenhouse gases (GHG) from ricelands by the end of the 21st century¹. The authors used data from 63 studies conducted in 30 different locations in 8 different countries.

This article prompted me to try to put rice-related global and local GHG emissions into context. In other words, what are the estimated contributions of ricelands in general and California rice-

lands more specifically to global GHG emissions? This information is not easy to find, so I thought it would be good to share it here. I compiled estimates from two sources, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (global data, 2005) and the California Air Resources Board (California data, 2009). There are probably other estimates out there, but I think the ones I present here are reliable.

As you can see, worldwide ricelands account for 1.3% of all GHG emissions. California agriculture and forestry account for 0.06%, and California ricelands contribute a minute amount to GHG emissions on a global basis. Even when considered on a statewide basis, ricelands emissions are only 0.1% of California's total GHG inventory.

¹ Van Groenigen, K. J., C. van Kessel, and B. Hungate. 2012. Increased greenhouse gas intensity of rice production under future atmospheric conditions. *Nature Climate Change* (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1038/nclimate1712>)

Source	Million tonnes of CO ₂ Equivalents/year	% of global GHG emissions
Global (all sectors)	51,000	---
Global agriculture	6,100	12.0
Global rice production	671	1.3
CA total (all sectors)	530	1.0
CA agriculture & forestry	30	0.06
CA rice production	0.6	0.001