

Growers and agriculture officials in Arkansas are preparing to meet and discuss the state's top agricultural export. The annual Arkansas Rice Meeting and trade show is set for tomorrow (Tuesday) in Stuttgart. Scientists and chairs of the state House and Senate Agriculture committees will discuss issues related to the business of growing rice, for which Arkansas ranks first in the nation. Arkansas Rice Federation Executive Director Lauren Waldrip Ward says it's a chance to catch growers up on the events of the past year, such as working to open up the Chinese market for Arkansas rice exports.

News03

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"...rice labeling bill."

Arkansas farmers plant an average of 1.3 million acres of rice each year, producing more than 9 billion pounds annually. The Arkansas Farm Bureau estimates rice contributes more than \$4 billion dollars to the state's economy per year, and accounts for more than 25-thousand jobs.

The Delta region of Arkansas remains the nation's top producer of rice, and farmers, agriculture officials and scientists are meeting Tuesday (Jan 8<sup>th</sup>) to discuss the crop. As KUAR's Daniel Breen reports, there are a lot of issues to discuss.

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Progress toward opening the Chinese market for U-S rice exports cast a promising light over the looming trade war between the two countries. New state labeling laws could affect the business of Arkansas's top agriculture export in the coming legislative session. And the passage of a Farm Bill at the federal level gave growers new standards for irrigation, safety and conservation. Now growers and agriculture officials will meet to look back on the year in rice in the delta town of Stuttgart, the unofficial "Rice and Duck Capital of the World." Arkansas Rice Federation Executive Director Lauren Waldrip Ward says the past year wasn't without setbacks. (News05) The Arkansas Farm Bureau estimates more than 27-hundred rice farms in Arkansas produce more than 9 billion pounds of rice per year, adding more than \$4-billion dollars to the state's economy annually. DJB, KUAR News.