



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **USDA Confirms China has Signed the Rice Protocol**

HOUSTON, Texas (July 20, 2017)- After years of delays, the agreement permitting US rice exports to China has been signed. USDA announced this morning that the protocol was signed yesterday (July 19) during bi-lateral trade meetings being held this week in Washington DC.

As we understand, the next step will be an inspection of US rice mills and packaging facilities by the Chinese phytosanitary authorities. This process will delay the first exports to China for several months, but the agreement is likely to provide a boost to new crop sales.

We are reminded that this process began in 2006 when USRPA applied for funding under the Department's Emerging Markets Program. The majority of the industry ranked the possibility of US rice exports to China very low, but the grant from USDA allowed USRPA to travel to China and determine that in fact there was a market for US rice in China. In the intervening years, USRPA conducted additional consumer sampling and research, accompanied Chinese food inspection officials on a tour of U.S. rice farms and mills, and hosted large supermarket buyers in the US in preparation for this day.

This is an example of tax payer money spent wisely. The return on investment will be huge. Opening meaningful access for U.S. rice to China dates back to the original Nixon-era trade negotiations with China. USRPA is pleased that the hard work and persistence of USDA and USTR have paid off.

Access to the Chinese market will provide relief to U.S. rice producers facing historically low commodity prices. USRPA applauds this development and looks forward to working with U.S. rice producers and the respective government authorities in preparation for selling rice to China.

The US Rice Producers Association, representing rice producers in Arkansas, California, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri and Texas, is the only national rice producers' organization comprised by producers, elected by producers and representing producers in all six rice-producing states.

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