



## **USA RICE**

### **UNITED KINGDOM Marketing Representation for U.S. origin Wild Rice**

#### **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**

##### **I. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

###### **USA Rice**

USA Rice is a nonprofit trade association representing all segments of the U.S. rice industry, including but is not limited to producers, millers, exporters, and merchants, as well as other entities involved in the production and marketing of U.S. rice. The organization was founded in 1994 by the leadership of the industry's three national associations: the Rice Millers Association, USA Rice Council and the USA Rice Farmers (formerly known as US Rice Producers Group).

USA Rice's grower representation includes approximately 90% of the U.S. rice crop. The organization also represents virtually all U.S. rice millers and processors, as well as the nation's major rice exporters, which account for nearly 100% of U.S. rice supplies and exports. Furthermore, associate members of the USA Rice cover almost the entire marketing and distribution channels for U.S. rice.

USA Rice operates a domestic promotion program as well as export promotion programs in more than 20 countries. Programs are funded by both USA Rice members and through various public programs for which USA Rice competes annually.

USA Rice is headquartered in Arlington, Virginia, and has subsidiary offices in Arkansas, Louisiana and Germany. Consultants and agencies are used as appropriate, for a wide variety of projects, including domestic and international promotion programs.

USA Rice is an equal opportunity employer and prohibits discrimination in all programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or familial status.



## II. MARKET SITUATION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

### Market Access:

#### U.S. Wild Rice in International Markets

Currently, wild rice's primary use in the U.S., and other developed markets, is as an ingredient in other products, usually as a blend of grains. The most popular is the "white and wild" blend (wild rice blended with long-grain white rice). Typically, these blends contain 8-12% wild rice, with the balance being white rice. At times of high prices, food processors have the luxury of reducing the proportion of wild rice included in blended products, such as "white and wild" without having to re-label their product, and normally, there is little consumer "backlash" to the smaller percentage of wild rice. Over the past several years, however, consumer interest is growing in healthy grains and grain alternatives like quinoa, chia, and others. Pure wild rice products have great potential to benefit from this trend as a wholegrain, high protein, and gluten free alternative.

In calendar year 2021, we witnessed a 2% decrease in total U.S. wild rice exports worldwide, from 3,207 MT in 2020 to 3,145 MT in 2021; this, however, represented a 5% increase in value to \$14.9 million. The decrease in export volumes can be attributed to the continued tight supply and consequently relatively high prices, coupled with the continued negative economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic around the globe.

#### *United Kingdom*

The UK imported a total of 223 MT of U.S. wild rice in 2021 with a value of \$1.01 million, a decrease of 40% in volume and 38% in value; however, despite this reduction, the UK is still one of the single largest export markets for U.S. wild rice worldwide. Throughout 2021, wild rice was found in several ready-made food products, as well as on UK retail shelves and online. At least six online and offline retailers (Tesco, Amazon, Holland and Barret, Waitrose, Ocado, and Asda) continued to stock U.S. wild rice.

Under normal circumstances the wild rice market is driven by a growing consumer demand for low-fat and whole grain food options that are more health conscious. During the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 and continuing onto 2021, consumer habits shifted substantially because of the limitations imposed on free movement and on gatherings in and outside of homes. Lower GDP growth, reduced consumer purchasing power as a result of high inflation, coupled with high energy prices in 2022 continues to negatively impact consumer shopping confidence, directly impacting consumption habits and consumer spending on high value, higher priced specialty products like wild rice.

Based on the information we have gathered through trade servicing activities, the UK trade typically views U.S. wild rice as a high value, profit generating item. The majority of U.S. wild rice entering the UK is used in the foodservice and food manufacturing sector. UK consumers, however, are becoming more adventurous, seeking authentic, new, and healthy options, thus attributing to an increase in retail sales,



especially in mixes. Generally, U.S. wild rice is seen as an ‘innovation point’ to attract UK consumers to different types of rice varieties and derived products, providing an opportunity for growth in this market.

### **III. USA RICE OBJECTIVES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM**

USA Rice objectives in the United Kingdom include:

- A. Increasing both the value and volume of U.S. wild rice exports to the United Kingdom.
- B. Building long-lasting market awareness and preference for U.S. origin wild rice among consumers, foodservice professionals, media and trade.
- C. Providing rice consumers in the United Kingdom with the information to encourage increased U.S. origin wild rice purchases.
- D. Positioning the U.S. wild rice industry as a consistent trading partner for importers in the United Kingdom.

### **IV. SCOPE OF WORK**

USA Rice seeks a qualified individual or agency to serve as the trade and promotional representative in the United Kingdom, and to accomplish the following scope of work:

- a. Develop generic digital and in-person activities that promote the benefits of consuming U.S. wild rice including but not limited to material development, digital and print media placements, social media, in-store promotions, and restaurant promotions.
- b. Create campaigns that bring awareness to targeted consumers about the economic, nutritional and versatility of U.S. wild rice, as well as stimulate increased sales
- c. Monitor, report and assist with consumer or market trends and developments related to rice in the United Kingdom.
- d. Assist with arrangements and accompany USA Rice staff and/or members on consumer insight development trips to the United Kingdom.
- e. Represent USA Rice at conferences, trade shows, USG events and other functions conducted by and for the rice trade in/for the United Kingdom.
- f. Keep USA Rice members and staff apprised of market opportunities via the submission of regular communications. A monthly written report will be required and should include an outline of projected activities for the next month as well as a report on all activities conducted during the reporting month.
- g. Develop and conduct promotional activities that will create awareness of local brands that utilize US origin wild rice, as well as increase the sale and consumption of US wild rice in targeted market segments in the United Kingdom



- h. Develop relationships and work together with local U.S. wild rice importers to develop promotional activities to support sales of these identified U.S. wild rice brands as appropriate.

The firm or consultant shall successfully complete the above scope of work from January 1, 2023-December 31, 2023. The firm will work directly with Eszter Somogyi, Director for Europe, Middle East and Africa at USA Rice. The agency or individual selected to conduct activities will contract with USA Rice and will be subject to the regulations applicable to the Market Access Program (MAP) as administered by the Foreign Agricultural Service of the United States Department of Agriculture.

## **V. PROPOSALS**

USA Rice requests that you include the following components in discussing your capabilities:

- A. Describe how you/your agency will achieve the Objectives outlined in Section III and the Scope of Work outlined in Section IV.
- B. Explain why your qualifications and background make you the best individual/agency to represent the USA Rice in the United Kingdom.
- C. Provide information regarding your past work, especially related to representing U.S. agricultural commodities in the United Kingdom.
- D. Please detail which of your staff members will make-up the USA Rice team and explain their roles and experience.
- E. Include a monthly retainer of all costs necessary to complete this scope of work including staff fees, third party expenses, administrative overhead, travel, and other direct/indirect costs needed to support your program.
- F. Include any additional information that demonstrates the ability to perform the functions outlined in this Request for Proposal.

## **VI. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Potential conflicts of interest relative to this program are as follows: agency representation of another entity that is directly competitive to rice, e.g., pasta, tortillas, potatoes; or a firm of record for any U.S., or other rice company. Please disclose any conflicts of interest.

Additionally, no USA Rice employee, officer, board member, or agent thereof will participate in the review, selection, award, or administration of a contract if a real or



apparent conflict of interest would arise. Such a conflict would arise when an employee, official, board member, agent, or the employee's, officer's, board member's, or agent's family, partners, or an organization that employs or is about to employ any of these parties or their affiliates has a financial or other interest in the contract.

USA Rice officers, employees, board members, and agents thereof shall neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from contractors or subcontractors. Procedures shall also provide for disciplinary actions to be applied for violations of such standards by officers, employees, board members, or agents thereof.

## **VII. SELECTION CRITERIA**

USA Rice reserves the right to award the contract to the individual/agency with the best combination of attributes and ability to successfully serve as the organization's marketing representative in the United Kingdom, not necessarily the lowest bid.

## **VIII. ADMINISTRATION**

The individual or agency selected for the position will report directly to Director Europe, Middle East and Africa, with further oversight by the Vice President, International.

## **IX. FINANCIAL**

The total budget for all aspects of this scope of work, including all fees, overhead, third party expenses, travel and other expenses is \$70,000-\$75,000. Submitted proposals should reflect this budget. Funds for this project come from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Market Access Program (MAP) and are subject to the annual availability of funds in that program.

## **X. PROPOSAL DUE DATE / PROJECT TIMING**

Proposals are due by close of business on 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2022. For the individual or agency selected to complete this scope of work, the contract will run for one year commencing in January 2023 and ending on December 31, 2023. If mutually acceptable, the contract may be renewed at the end of the fiscal year at the option of USA Rice .



## **XI. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS**

Individuals / agencies are invited to submit proposals to USA Rice by close of business 6 PM (Greenwich Mean Time). Please direct your proposal to the following email address: [esomogyi@usarice.com](mailto:esomogyi@usarice.com)