

# Nestlé Purina, Ducks Unlimited partnering to ensure future of working wetlands

Purina's \$2-million commitment supports working ricelands, water and wetland wildlife



*© Jerry Holden | Ducks Unlimited*

MEMPHIS, Tenn. – Oct. 24, 2017 – Nestlé Purina PetCare Company, a global leader in pet care, is the newest corporate sponsor of the USA Rice/Ducks Unlimited (DU) Rice Stewardship Partnership. Through a \$2 million commitment over four years, Nestlé Purina's investment will help keep working ricelands healthy, preserve wetlands and create habitat for waterfowl and other wildlife.

"Farmers, their dogs and waterfowl have long been part of our conservation heritage," said Dale Hall, CEO, Ducks Unlimited. "Purina is already a great partner of Ducks Unlimited, and we're proud that they are joining us in our rice industry support and conservation mission."

This commitment is part of Purina's long-term sustainability strategy to add value to the agricultural supply chain and ensure food for people and high-quality ingredients for pets are available well into the future.

"Supporting rice stewardship is consistent with Nestlé Purina's purpose and values," said Joe Sivewright, CEO, Nestlé Purina. "We exist as a company to create richer lives for pets and the people who love them, and this includes stewarding natural resources for future generations."

In addition to rice being a critical dietary staple upon which billions depend, working ricelands are also a critical habitat for waterfowl and other wildlife. Winter-flooded rice fields provide an average of 35 percent of the food available to dabbling ducks, like mallards, pintails and teal, in key wintering areas like the Gulf Coast, the Mississippi Alluvial Valley and California's Central Valley.

Purina's investment will help fund strategies to protect working ricelands, including conservation planning, irrigation efficiencies, nutrient management and education of decision-makers on water, agriculture and wildlife and fisheries connections. The project will also help to improve air quality, conserve energy and support the rice producer's bottom line. Great strides have been made to date with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and

the Regional Conservation Partnership Program providing a solid foundation.

The USA Rice/DU Rice Stewardship Partnership is an officially registered sustainability project with Field to Market: The Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture. Participating farmers utilize Field to Market's Fieldprint® Platform to measure key environmental factors on their farms and track progress to better understand how land improvements and management choices affect overall sustainability performance and operational efficiency.

Purina's contribution will also support the next generation of rice farmers. Currently, less than 10 percent of rice farm operators are under the age of 35.

"We know training and empowering the next generation of rice farmers is critical. With support from Nestlé Purina, we can take Rice Stewardship to a new, more impactful level with these young farmers," said Scott Manley, DU's director of conservation programs.

Purina joins other committed financial sponsors in support of the Rice Stewardship Program, including the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Walmart Foundation, the Mosaic Company Foundation, Chevron U.S.A., Freeport-McMoRan Foundation, Irene W. and C.B. Pennington Foundation, RiceTec, BASF, American Rice, Inc. – Riviana Foods, Inc., Delta Plastics, Wells Fargo, Farmers Rice Milling Company, Horizon Ag, Turner's Creek & Bombay Hook Farms, MacDon Industries, Dow AgroSciences and DU major sponsors.

"At Purina we believe that a healthy environment grows healthy ingredients for healthy pets," said Jack Scott, Head of Sustainability, Nestlé Purina. "Rice is a natural grain that helps fuel energy and supports digestibility. It's one of the key ingredients in a variety of our pet food recipes, so how it's grown is important to us. We're proud to partner with Ducks Unlimited and their many collaborators to achieve important sustainability objectives and improve working wetlands and agricultural landscapes."

In addition to supporting Rice Stewardship, Purina's Pro Plan brand is also the official performance dog food of Ducks Unlimited.

## **About Ducks Unlimited**

Ducks Unlimited Inc. is the world's largest nonprofit organization dedicated to conserving North America's continually disappearing waterfowl habitats. Established in 1937, Ducks Unlimited has conserved more than 14 million acres thanks to contributions from more than a million supporters across the continent. Guided by science and dedicated to program efficiency, DU works toward the vision of wetlands sufficient to fill the skies with waterfowl today, tomorrow and forever. For more information on our work, visit [www.ducks.org](http://www.ducks.org).

## **About Nestlé Purina PetCare**

Nestlé Purina PetCare promotes responsible pet care, community involvement and the

positive bond between people and their pets. A premiere global manufacturer of pet products, Nestlé Purina PetCare is part of Swiss-based Nestlé S.A., a global leader in nutrition, health and wellness.

For further information: Matt Coffey 901-758-3764 [mcoffey@ducks.org](mailto:mcoffey@ducks.org) @DUSouthernNews

---