



ESTABLISHING A RICE CULTIVATION BUSINESS MODEL IN THE MILWAUKEE AREA

SUMMARY

Perform student centric research and development to establish commercial rice cultivation in Wisconsin.

DESCRIPTION

The main objectives for this proposal are: (1) to build and maintain the necessary infrastructure for student centric research on cold tolerant Asian rice varieties; (2) to develop best rice cultivation practices suitable to generate revenues for reinvestment into student research; (3) to develop a business plan and training workshops that can be marketed to prospective rice farmers in the greater Milwaukee area; and (4) to become self-sufficient after three years.

MILESTONES

Fall - Winter 2016

Lay the foundation to build two half-acre paddies at the Fondy farm.

Spring - Summer 2017

Plant different rice varieties and collect agricultural data.

Fall 2017 - Spring 2018

Analyze the data to identify best rice varieties and cultivation practices.

Summer - Fall 2018

Grow first commercial batch of brown rice and market it to local stores.

Winter 2018 - Summer 2019

Develop rice cultivation business plans and training workshops and begin selling brown rice at farmers markets and local grocery stores.



ABOUT OUR TEAM

- Dr. Michael Schläppi**, project director
- Dr. Richard Marklim**, mechanical engineering consultant
- Stephen Petro**, Fondy Food Center farm manager
- Jennifer Casey**, Fondy Food Center executive director
- Venice Williams**, Alice's Garden executive director

Michael Schläppi is a plant molecular biologist and geneticist and has a long standing interest in understanding the genetic basis of abiotic stress tolerance in plants. Michael also believes that cold tolerant rice could be grown in wet agricultural areas in Wisconsin that are not suitable for other crops. He envisions that a partnership of Marquette student interns with Stephen Petro and Jennifer Casey from the Fondy Food Center farm and Venice Williams from the urban farm Alice's Garden will be instrumental to establish commercial rice cultivation in Wisconsin and to bring a healthy staple crop to urban farmers markets.

BEYOND BOUNDARIES

The project will advance Marquette as a highly ranked destination University by attracting students interested in environmental studies; it will advance our commitment to research and scholarship by promoting interdisciplinary student centric research; it will distinguish us for our ethics, service, and promotion of justice through community outreach and training services; and it will define the Marquette experience as personally transformative and grounded in the practice of Jesuit spirituality and pedagogy by providing interdisciplinary study tools for students to examine their own lives in the context of the needs of the local community and the world.