

John Hatty: Helping feed the world



Sarah Gillespie, Angus Hatty,
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Tocumwal Public School



Creative Catchment Kids

Creative Catchment Kids is an initiative of the Murray Darling Association and Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre. It aims to improve engagement between the Local Land Services and school students by providing opportunities for positive and authentic ventures that encourage students to develop creative solutions to agriculture and natural resource management issues.

Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre

The Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre is located in Burrumbuttock, north of Albury in southern NSW. Since 1995, the centre, which is adjacent to Burrumbuttock Public School, has provided opportunities for discovery and learning about the natural environment, the ecology of the local woodlands and the beauty of native plants. www.wirraminna.org

Murray Darling Association

The Murray Darling Association has membership of over 100 Local Government councils in the Murray-Darling Basin, as well as community groups, businesses and individuals with an interest in ensuring that the Basin continues as a valuable asset for all Australians. Since 1950, the Association has initiated various school and community education programs on managing the Basin's land and water resources. www.mda.asn.au



Enviro-Stories is an innovative literacy education program that inspires learning about natural resource and catchment management issues. Developed by PeeKdesigns, this program provides students with an opportunity to publish their own stories that have been written for other kids to support learning about their local area. www.envirostories.com.au

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Authors: Sarah Gillespie, Angus Hatty, Elizabeth Riley and Decklin Smithers

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School: Tocumwal Public School

Local Land Heroes

In 2014, students involved in the **Creative Catchment Kids** program researched and wrote stories about 'Local Land Heroes' - people, businesses or industries who contribute to productive agriculture and healthy environments along the Murray and Murrumbidgee rivers. The program was generously funded by Murray Local Land Services and Riverina Local Land Services.

Local Land Heroes acknowledges the United Nations 2014 International Year of Family Farming.
www.fao.org/family-farming-2014/en/



Local Land Heroes is part of Enviro-Stories, a Peekdesigns education program.



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Our local land hero is John Hatty. He is a rice farmer in the Finley-Tocumwal district of NSW. His family has been growing rice for 33 years. Did you know Australia has a thriving rice industry? It is a very important industry and this book will explain it to you and how our local land hero contributes to it.



Did you know that rice seeds were first brought to Australia by the Chinese in 1850? Now, John is one of 1,500 farm businesses growing rice in southern NSW and northern Victoria. The rice industry employs thousands of people across the Riverina and contributes to keeping regional communities thriving. John's farm has two full time workers and two seasonal workers.



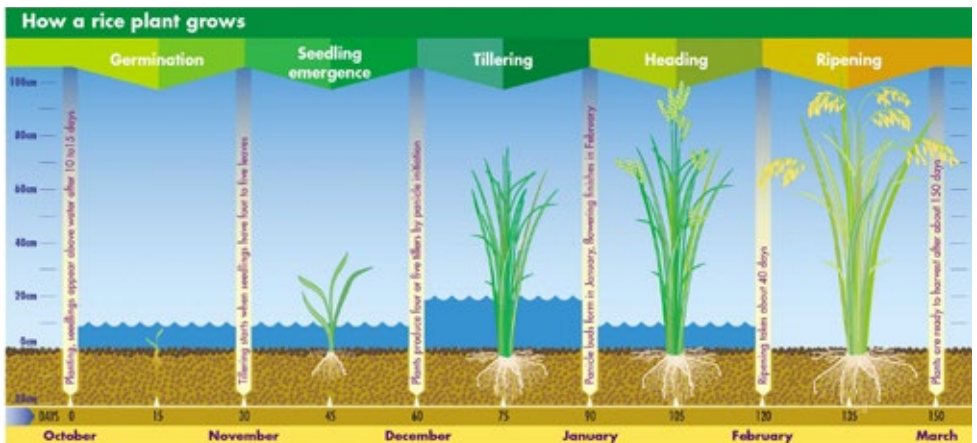
The best place to grow rice in Australia is the Riverina in southern NSW. John lives and grows rice near Tocumwal. The rice is grown in this area due to the flat land, clay based soils and the availability of irrigation water. All the storage and milling infrastructure that is needed has also been established.



Rice is a summer cereal crop so John starts planting in October. He can use various methods to sow the rice. One way is to plant it into the dry soil with an airseeder then apply the water afterwards. The second way is to use aeroplanes to drop the pre-germinated seeds into the bays that already contain water.



The rice crop grows in 5-20cm of water, depending on the plants growth stage. The bays are topped up with water when it is needed. When the rice is almost ripe, no more water is added, the plants use the water up and the soil dries out. John usually starts harvesting his rice in March.





Did you know that there are thousands of different varieties of rice, but we only grow eleven in Australia?

John grows two of the medium grain varieties, Sherpa and Reiziq. They have been specifically bred to suit Australia's climate. Researchers are constantly working to develop new rice varieties which are more water efficient.



Rice has been grown commercially in Australia since the 1920's. In that time there has been a large change in technology. Instead of cutting the rice by hand John uses a header which has all the modern technology available, such as GPS and auto steer. This technology makes sowing and harvesting quicker and easier for John.





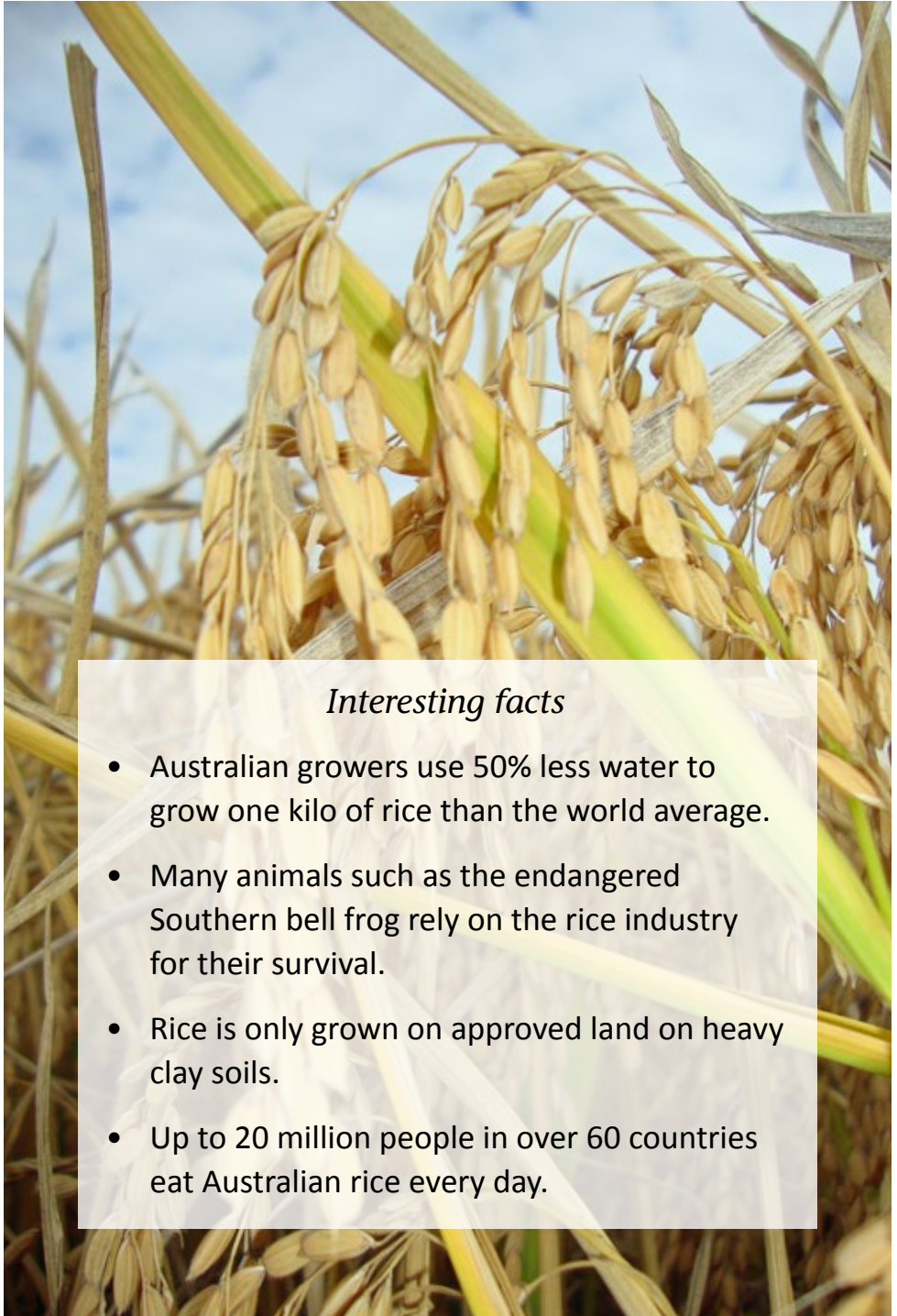
Irrigation is essential to grow rice. Rice growers are continually developing their land so that they only use as much water as they need. John and other rice growers understand the importance of sharing the water with the environment and having a sustainable rice industry for the future. John reuses his rice water to irrigate pasture for his cattle.



John, like all rice farmers, tries to keep water usage to a minimum. But water is a valuable resource so some people ask why it should be used on flooding rice bays. John's rice contributes to feeding millions of people all around the world. Australia exports rice to over 60 countries, including Japan, which generates millions of dollars of revenue.



John Hatty is our local land hero because he is a rice farmer. He is part of an industry that provides food for the world, supports local towns and employs thousands of people. John and other rice farmers conserve water and minimise their impact on the environment so there is a future industry for generations to come.



Interesting facts

- Australian growers use 50% less water to grow one kilo of rice than the world average.
- Many animals such as the endangered Southern bell frog rely on the rice industry for their survival.
- Rice is only grown on approved land on heavy clay soils.
- Up to 20 million people in over 60 countries eat Australian rice every day.

John Hatty – rice grower and local land hero.

John and other rice growers in the Riverina are helping to feed the world.

We would like to thank the Ricegrowers' Association of Australia Inc. for their assistance, and acknowledge the use of photos and information from rga.org.au



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