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Review: Current Status, Future Prospects, and Comparisons with Rice in Other Countries

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[Introduction]

Rice was introduced to the Korean peninsula from southern China in approximately 1500 BC. Over the several millennia of rice production in Korea, the status of rice has changed from a luxury foodstuff for the elite to undesirable surplus grain now being used as animal feed. Rice consumption in South Korea has continuously decreased over the past three decades as a result of changes in eating habits and government policies. Nevertheless, rice remains an integral component of the South Korean diet, and the preferences of South Korean consumers for certain rice characteristics have negligibly changed over time in contrast to those of consumers in other countries. In addition, South Korea has the potential to become a competitive rice exporter on a global scale. This paper presents a brief review of the trends and influencing factors of rice production and consumption in South Korea. It also provides suggestions for increasing rice consumption in the country.

[Conclusion & Suggestion]

Rice agriculture has existed in South Korea since the Bronze Age. The status of rice has undergone several transformations during its millennia-long cultivation in South Korea: from luxury food to animal feed. Rice consumption in South Korea has continuously decreased as a result of changes in South Korean culture and government policies. Nevertheless, rice remains an integral component of the South Korean diet. Currently, the South Korean government is promoting rice consumption to address the rice oversupply problem in the country. These efforts must target the preferences of South Korean consumers. As shown by several studies, South Korean consumers prefer glossy, soft, and sticky rice and that nutrition and health are now their main considerations. Thus, to promote rice consumption among South Koreans, rice-based food products with added nutritional value must be developed; the consumption of brown rice and traditional colored rice varieties must be promoted; and rice varieties targeting consumer preferences must be developed. Exports to other countries must be increased. The cultivation of non-japonica rice for export must be considered for South Korea to become a globally competitive rice exporter. Climate change is a future challenge to the rice self-sufficiency of South Korea, and measures must be taken in advance to ensure that climate change does not threaten rice production in the country

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