1. Historical

Rice forms the principal food of more than half of the population of the world. The actual date of its first cultivation is not known, nor is its place of origin, though botanical and linguistic evidence (7) indicates this to be in South-East Asia, and there are records of rice growing in China as early as 2,500 B.C. (16). There is no trace of rice as a native plant in the early histories of Egypt, Persia, Greece or Rome. It is not mentioned in the Bible but there is proof of its culture in the Euphrates Valley and in Syria 400 years before Christ (35).

The introduction of rice into South and Central America appears to have been relatively recent — at the beginning of the Seventeenth Century (17).

Although the crop has been an important food for hundreds of years it was not until about 1840 that any large export trade began and only from this date has the crop become of major commercial importance.

Machine milling, is of even more recent origin, and it's development has created a demand for more uniformity in type of grain and hence the modern developments in breeding new varieties and in marketing and grading systems.

2. Nomenclature

Rice *Oryza sativa* L. belongs to the tribe *Oryzeae* of the Gramineae. The term rice is the name of the plant and it's product. "Paddy" is the term used in India, Burma, Thailand and Ceylon for rice, before the hull or husk of the grain is removed. It is in this sense, that the word will be used in this survey. In Japan, Korea and most of the Western Hemisphere, paddy is termed 'rough rice'.

'Hulled rice' or 'brown rice' is rice from which the hull only, has been removed. In Thailand and Indo-China such rice is known as 'Cargo Rice' and in Burma as 'Loonzain'.

'Milled rice' is rice which has had the hulls, embryo and bran layers partially or wholly removed.