

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Evolutionary Genomics and RiceTec to Collaborate on Rice Yield**

**Aurora, Colorado and Alvin, Texas** (September 28, 2004). Evolutionary Genomics of Aurora, CO and RiceTec, Inc. of Alvin, TX announced today that they have formed a collaboration to identify the natural genes controlling yield in rice.

To feed the growing world population and achieve greater efficiency with the shrinking acreage of agricultural land, there is a critical need to increase the yield of crops such as rice. The most common scientific approach has been to introduce genes from other organisms into crop plants, creating genetically modified (GM) crops that make new, foreign proteins not usually made by the particular species. This approach has raised concerns about health implications, (such as allergic reactions), as well as possible negative, environmental effects

Evolutionary Genomics and RiceTec are taking a decidedly different approach to increasing rice yields, by using Evolutionary Genomics' patented technology to identify the natural genes in rice that control yield. Ancient agriculturalists were able to achieve significant yield increases by tirelessly selecting the best yielding plants. "Adaptations that resulted in higher yield became widespread in domesticated rice through selection by farmers thousands of years ago." Evolutionary Genomics' Chief Technology Officer, Dr. Walter Messier said. "These adaptations have stood the test of time, regarding health, environmental effects and improved rice cultivars."

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Under the terms of the collaboration, Evolutionary Genomics will identify genes that have undergone adaptive evolution in domesticated rice (*Oryza sativa*) when compared with the rice ancestor (*Oryza rufipogon*). The companies will work together to establish connections between these adapted genes and control of rice yield. “Without resorting to moving genes across species boundaries, we can build on the work of early domesticators to increase yield in rice by identifying the rice genes that control yield.” said Ginny Orndorff, President & CEO of Evolutionary Genomics. .

RiceTec will have exclusive rights to use the project discoveries in its hybrid breeding program to develop naturally high-yielding, hybrid rice seed. John Nelsen, RiceTec Executive Vice President and General Manager Seed Business said “We are looking forward to quickly putting the results of this project to work, and accelerating grain yield improvements for the US rice farmer”.

Financial terms of the arrangement were not disclosed.

RiceTec, Inc. is an integrated rice company specializing in the breeding, development, production and marketing of high value rice products. Headquartered in Alvin Texas, the company operates the primary rice research center for RiceTec AG, an international rice technology venture. RiceTec, Inc. is the first company to commercialize hybrid rice seed in the United States. It is also a leading producer, miller and marketer of specialty consumer rice products which are sold in over 20,000 supermarkets in North America. The company has 180 employees.

Evolutionary Genomics is an early-stage biotechnology company specializing in cost-effective identification and validation of a relatively small number of adapted genes with very significant commercial value. The work we are doing will have important impacts in agricultural markets as well as human pharmaceuticals markets. The Company’s business model is to partner with strategic players in our targeted industries.