

## **Take and Teach** **Four Louisiana Foods for Health**

**Goal:** To increase knowledge about healthful Louisiana commodity foods

**Objective(s):**

The learner will:

- Learn the definition of commodity and what some Louisiana commodities are.
- Learn the health benefits of four Louisiana commodities - rice, soybeans, sweet potatoes, and crawfish.

**GLE(s):**

(required for youth in schools; not required for adult audiences)

1-H-2 identify the causes, symptoms, treatment and prevention of various diseases and disorders (e.g., cardiovascular diseases, STDs, eating disorders)

**Delivery Mode:** Group meeting

**Time Allotted:** 35-40 minutes

**Materials Need for the Lesson:**

Chalkboard/poster

Chalk/markers

Plastic cups for sampling

Plastic forks and spoons

Serving spoons

For rice discussion:

“Why Eat Rice” poster

Rice food model – ½ cup

Dinner plate

Rice display box

Bowl of cooked brown rice

Bowl of cooked jasmine rice

Rice brochures

For soybean discussion:

“Soybeans” poster

Soy milk

Soy yogurt

Soy nuts

Soybean brochures

For sweet potato discussion:

“Why Eat Sweet Potatoes” poster

Cooked frozen or canned sweet  
potatoes

Sweet potato brochures

For crawfish discussion:

“Crawfish” poster

Crawfish brochures

**Number of Grade/Age of Participants:** 5-30 participants (adults or youth), youth grades 9-12

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**Lesson Procedure:**

**Say:** “Today we are going to talk about some of the agricultural commodities found right here in Louisiana. A commodity is a product or material that is valuable or useful which can be bought and sold. Some Louisiana commodities include rice, cotton, poultry, crawfish, timber, strawberries, sweet potatoes, soybeans, dairy, catfish, and beef. We are going to talk about four of these commodities today: rice, soybeans, sweet potatoes, and crawfish. We’ll start with rice. What are some ways that you serve rice? Do you eat it with gravy, with beans, plain, or maybe in a salad?”

**Do:** Have some of the participants say how they serve rice.

**Say:** “I’d like each person tell me something that you know about rice.”

**Do:** Write down each person’s response on the chalkboard/poster. Review the responses with the audience.

**Say:** “Besides those things that you mentioned, did you know that rice is a great food that can help keep our body healthy. So let’s talk about some of the health benefits of rice.

- It’s an excellent source of complex carbohydrates, which gives us energy.
- It’s low in sugar and salt.
- It’s low in fat and has no trans fats or saturated fats that can clog our arteries.
- It has no cholesterol, additives, and preservatives.
- It’s rich in vitamins and minerals like folic acid, calcium, iron, phosphorus, zinc and the B vitamins – thiamin and niacin.
- Rice is a good source of insoluble fiber, which helps to move waste through your digestive system.
- For those who are sensitive to gluten, rice contains no gluten.”

“Rice is also rich in antioxidants. Antioxidants are substances in our food that help protect our cells against damage that comes from smoking, poor diet, and exposure to unhealthful things in the environment.”

“Other benefits of rice are that it is economical and can enhance any meal. It is easily digested and can be tolerated by those who suffer from digestion problems. Rice is also suitable for vegetarians and vegans and can compliment legumes to make a good quality source of protein.”

“According to MyPyramid, ½ cup of cooked rice is equal to one serving and is about 100 calories. Of course, if you eat twice or three times this amount, you will get twice or three times the amount of calories. Even though rice is a healthful food, we have to keep in mind the amount of calories we consume in a day.”

### Activity 1

**Do:** Demonstrate what one serving of rice looks like on a dinner using the rice food model and the dinner plate.

**Say:** This is what ½ cup or one serving of cooked rice looks like on a dinner plate. Do you eat more, the same amount, or less than this?”

**Do:** Have the participants compare the amount of rice they typically eat to the recommended serving.

**Say:** “We are all familiar with white rice. What are some other varieties of rice?”

**Do:** Write down on the participants’ responses on the chalkboard. Then review the list with them.

### Activity 2

**Say:** “There are several varieties of rice. White rice comes in short, medium, and long-grain. There is brown rice, which has a nutty flavor and takes a little longer to cook than white rice because it still contains the outer coat. There is also parboiled rice that takes less time to cook than white rice because it is precooked. There is also fragrant rice like jasmine rice.”

**Do:** As you instruct the class on the different varieties of rice, show them examples of each variety using the rice display box. Pass the box around so that each participant can view the examples. Also, provide each participant a sample of prepared jasmine and brown rice. Have them taste each sample of rice one at a time. Get their feedback on how they liked the brown rice and the jasmine rice.

**Say:** “The difference between white rice and brown rice is not just color and flavor. Only the outermost layer, or the hull, is removed on brown rice. The rest of the grain is preserved and so is most of the nutritional value. Brown rice also contains plant compounds, called phytoestrogens that are beneficial to blood cholesterol levels. Brown rice is further milled to remove the bran and the germ layer to make white rice. With the removal of the bran and germ, most of the nutritional value is lost too. Some, but not all, of the vitamins and minerals lost in processing are added back to white rice through enrichment. This makes brown rice a more nutritious choice than white rice. The powdery substance on white rice is the substance that contains the vitamins and minerals that are added back. So it’s important not to wash white rice before you cook it.”

**Say:** “Are there any questions so far on rice?”

**Do:** Answer any questions the participants may have about rice. Distribute the rice brochures to each participant.

**Say:** “So we’ve talked about one Louisiana commodity - rice. Let’s talk about another Louisiana commodity - soybeans. What are some products made from soybeans or soy?”

**Do:** Have participants name some soy products. Write them on the chalkboard/poster. Look for products such as

- soy milk and other beverages
- edamame (young, green-shelled, edible bean)
- soy nuts
- cheese, burgers, hot dogs
- tofu
- protein bars
- soy flour
- soy sauce
- soy nut butter
- vegetable oil
- miso (soybean paste)
- yogurt
- tempeh (meat substitute).

**Say:** “Soy is used as an ingredient in many vegetarian dishes and foods. They can also be eaten whole after being boiled or roasted as with soy nuts. Vegetable oil is made from soybeans. Some baby formulas are soy-based since cow’s milk can be hard on a baby’s digestive system. Soy flour is used in baked goods, frozen desserts, and pasta. What kind of soy products have you tried?”

**Do:** Have participants say what kind of soy products they eat or have tried?

**Say:** “There are many health benefits from eating soy products. Soy foods add taste and variety to meals and snacks. They also pack a punch when it comes to nutrient content. Soy contains high-quality protein equal to the protein found in animal foods but low in artery-clogging saturated fat. It is a good source of B-vitamins and fiber. Soy also contains heart-healthy unsaturated fats (about 82%), including some omega-3s. Plant chemicals found in soy (isoflavones) may help lower risks of breast and prostate cancer, osteoporosis (bone-thinning disease), and heart disease. Research has shown that eating 25 grams of soy protein a day can lower LDL (bad) cholesterol without lowering the HDL (good) cholesterol. In 1999, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved a health claim for foods that contain at least 6.25 grams of soy protein. The claim states that these foods may reduce the risk of heart disease as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol. Many soy products now carry the health claim on their labels. So I’ll let you try some soy products.”

### Activity 3

**Do:** Have the participants taste soy milk, soy yogurt, and soy nuts. Give them an opportunity to share how they liked each product.

**Say:** “Does anyone have any questions about soybeans or soy foods?”

**Do:** Answer any questions the participants may have about soybeans. Distribute the soybean brochures to each participant.

**Say:** “Now we will talk about sweet potatoes. Here in the U.S. use the word “yam” interchangeably with “sweet potato.” There are slight differences between the two: the sweet potato is smooth with a thin skin and are short, blocky with tapered ends. The yam has a rough, scaly skin and is long, cylinder-shaped and some have “toes.” Sweet potatoes are moist and sweet and are grown in the U.S., and the yam is dry and starchy and is imported from the Caribbean.”

“Sweet potatoes are quite nutritious and economical. One baked sweet potato (3 ½ ounce serving) provides about twice the recommended daily allowance of vitamin A and only about 140 calories. It is also an excellent source of vitamin C, vitamin B6, dietary fiber and potassium and a good source of folic acid, iron, and other vitamins and minerals. Sweet potatoes are low in sodium and are fat-free and cholesterol free. The orange color means that it is high in beta carotene which may help in reducing the risk of certain types of cancer. They are considered to be a complex carbohydrate which means that as it is digested, there is only a gradual rise in blood sugar. This makes us feel full longer.”

“When choosing fresh sweet potatoes, pick those that are firm and do not have any cracks, bruises, or soft spots. They should not be stored in the refrigerator. Store them in a cool, dark, well-ventilated place. So let’s taste some sweet potatoes.”

#### **Activity 4**

**Do:** Have the participants sample some sweet potatoes. Give them an opportunity to share their thoughts on how they liked them.

**Say:** “Does anyone have any questions about sweet potatoes?”

**Do:** Answer any questions the participants may have about sweet potatoes. Distribute the sweet potato brochures to each participant.

**Say:** “The last Louisiana commodity that I would like to talk to you about today is crawfish. Crawfish comes in season around February or March, and they are usually in full season around April and May. All of us have probably gone to crawfish boils here in Louisiana. We gather around the picnic table and enjoy the nice, spring weather and a pot of boiled crawfish with potatoes, corn, and onions. But did you know that crawfish are a healthful food? Crawfish are an excellent source of high-quality protein – similar quality as other animal foods (i.e. meat, fish, etc.). They are a very good source of vitamin B12, zinc, and many other vitamins and minerals. They are low in calories, fat and saturated fat. They are higher in cholesterol than most other shellfish. A 3 ½ ounce serving provides about half of the daily

recommended allowance for cholesterol. Eating seafood, in general, has shown to reduce the incidence of Alzheimer's (disease that causes a decline in memory over time), heart disease, asthma, and cancer.

“Does anyone have any questions about crawfish?”

- Do:** Answer any questions the participants may have about crawfish. Distribute the crawfish brochures to each participant.
- Say:** To recap, we've learned about four Louisiana food commodities – rice, soybeans, sweet potatoes, and crawfish, and we learned about the health benefits of each. Can some of you share what you learned today? How can you use something you learned today in the future?
- Do:** Wait for responses after each question.