This year marks the 44th Anniversary of one of Louisiana’s largest and oldest festivals, the International Rice Festival. Since the inauguration of the first festival on October 5, 1937, over five million people have attended the annual affair. The celebration serves to call attention to the importance of rice as a food and emphasize its place in the world’s economic picture. The Festival takes place in the downtown area of Crowley and is one of the few festivals held on Friday and Saturday. Last year’s attendance was over 150,000 people. The following is the agenda of the festivals entire activities.

On October 16, 1980 the International Rice Festival honors the festival honoree, rice farmer of the year, and junior rice farmer of the year. It is held annually the night before the two day event starts at the International Rice Festival building in Crowley. A special cocktail party honoring this year’s honoree, Winston “Skee” Atteberry, sponsored by the rice industry, will be held immediately after the banquet at the Bayou Bend Country Club.

October 17, the first day of the International Rice Festival is recognized by many as “Children’s Day”. Special events include the official opening of the festival by the president, crowning of the Junior King and Queen that morning, presentation of the candidates for the International Rice Festival Queen, the crowning of the Queen, and the children’s parade. The livestock show begins with the judging of the livestock in the morning at the rice festival livestock barn. The day is brought to a close with the annual Queen’s Ball held at the International Rice Festival building.

On October 18, special highlights of the day include the second annual International Rice Festival 10,000 meter run, starting at the main platform, the cowchip throwing contest, street dances at night, acadian accordion contest, fiddler’s contest, rice and boudin eating contests, the Rayne Lions Club frog derby, and in the afternoon, the grandest of them all, the grand parade.

Miss Beth Meaux, 1979 International Rice Festival Queen, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Meaux, Eunice, Louisiana.