International Rice Festival
Has Something for Everyone

The International Rice Festival takes pride in presenting a variety of events to offer all age groups a good time. In addition to the usual parades, livestock show and recognition of agricultural leadership, there are rice cooking and eating contests, a bonfire eating contest, contests for fiddlers and Acadian accordion players.

**Marathon**

The International Rice Festival marathon is a recent addition to the program which has gained in popularity so quickly that it has become the seventh largest marathon in the U.S. For this year's fifth annual run entrants are already registered from every state in the union and several foreign countries. Over 1,200 are pre-registered and the total is expected in the neighborhood of 1,500 when they leave the beginning point Oct. 20 in Lafayette for the 26 miles plus run to the Rice Festival platform in downtown Crowley.

Barry Brown of Florida, the 1977 winner, is expected back for the AAU certified, point to point course. The Rice marathon had the distinction of qualifying more runners for the 1976 Olympic marathon trials than any other race. The race sponsors try to make the conditions as ideal as possible with a runners clinic the night before the race; timers every mile, fluids available every two miles; awards for open, women, and age groups; t-shirts to every entrant; trophy to every finisher, regardless of time or place; giant Governor's trophy to the winner; awards banquet for runners and guests; immediate posting of results after every finisher; police escort in Crowley to finish line for all runners; 10,000 meter race in addition to main event.

To take care of all the contests related to the festival, Bill Williams festival chairman, says they have provided some 50 judges, 25 of these for food contests alone.

**Visiting Queens**

There will be at least 29 visiting queens in the festival parades, including queens from rice festivals in Louisiana, Texas and Arkansas. Almost 40 contestants are expected to be vying for the title of queen of the 1978 rice festival.

Over 20 bands from area schools and colleges will roll up the parades. These are the children's parade, at 1:30 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 20, and the grand parade with the 1978 queen at 4 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 21.

A new event this year, the fiddler's contest, is scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 21 at 2:45 p.m. at the festival platform in front of the Acadia Parish Courthouse.

**Harvesting Rice**

Court. Person of any age are eligible. Prizes will be awarded as follows: first place, $200 and plaque; second, $100 and plaque; third, $50 and plaque.

Judges will be three well-known personalities of southwest Louisiana.

The third annual Acadian accordion contest will be held Saturday, Oct. 21 at 12:45 p.m. at the festival platform. Persons of 15 years or older are invited to enter. They will be required to play a Cajun waltz and two-step. First place winner will receive $200 and a plaque; second place, $100 and plaque; third $50 and plaque. Judges will be three well-known personalities of southwest Louisiana.

On Saturday morning, Oct. 21, the children's grease pig and tug-of-war contests will be held at 9 a.m. at the Old Millier stadium on West Mill Street. A new contest inaugurated this year will be a cow chip throwing contest, also scheduled for Saturday morning at the Old Millier stadium.

**National Recognition**

The International Rice Festival is one of two Louisiana festivals mentioned in a recent national publication, Anita Borgesos's "Foods From Harvest Festivals." The other Louisiana event included is the Jambalaya Festival at Gonzales.

Ms. Borgesos writes about rice in southwest Louisiana:

"According to an old Chinese myth, a handful of rice was once thrown into a well belonging to a poor but unselfish woman, and it turned the water into an endless supply of wine, making the old woman quite rich, and allowing her to live happily ever after. Rice, of course, doesn't cause water to turn into wine in Louisiana, unless, of course, a chance Japanese visitor should decide to brew a barrel of sake, but it has provided very prosperous livelihoods for many people and has become a large part of the state's economic picture. It follows that lots of people are living happily ever after in Acadia Parish (county) in southwest Louisiana, where the rice grows tall, full and abundantly."

In addition to a description of the rice festival, she also includes recipes for dishes with rice.