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FOOD EDITORS RELEASE

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ANCIENT GRAINS MAKING A COMEBACK

“Wild Rice: Both an Ancient Grain and a Whole Grain” Now in Grain Science Library

St. Paul, MN – By its description, one might think ‘ancient grains’ would be something most likely viewed under glass at a museum. While consumers are familiar with grains like wheat and corn, ancient grains like wild rice and quinoa are becoming more widely available on grocer’s shelves. Their comeback can be attributed to their variety of tastes, textures, nutrients, and the fact that they are often gluten-free.

Wild rice, an ancient grain and the only cereal grain native to North America, has long been considered a highly nutritious whole grain, rich in protein and essential nutrients, and a great source of dietary fiber. This notion was confirmed in a newly published literature review titled, *“Wild Rice: Both an Ancient Grain and a Whole Grain,”* authored by Dr. Joanne Slavin and Dr. Derek Timm of the University of Minnesota’s Department of Food Science and Nutrition.

Published in the 2014 May/June issue of *Cereal Chemistry Journal* and the *Grain Science Online Library* of American Association of Cereal Chemists International (AACCI), *Wild Rice: Both an Ancient Grain and a Whole Grain* is a comprehensive review of wild rice literature which examines the nutritional composition of wild rice, including its carbohydrate profile; glycemic index; fiber, protein, and lipid content; antioxidant activity; phytochemical content; and overall health benefits. The AACCI Grain Science Online Library is a large collection of premier grain science resources that connects scientists and professionals in the grain industry to cereal science content.

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“This review reinforces what many nutritionists have known for years, that wild rice is an exceptionally nutritious staple food,” said Dr. Slavin, who holds a Ph.D. degree in Nutritional Sciences and is a registered dietitian. “Its antioxidant activity, fatty acid profile, and overall nutrient composition make wild rice a healthy addition to any diet.”

Some of the more noteworthy items revealed in the study include:

- Wild rice is recognized as a whole grain. The 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends people consume 48 grams of whole grains a day – a ½ cup serving of wild rice provides 30 grams.
- Wild rice typically contains 74% starch, 6.8% dietary fiber, and a whopping 14% protein (nearly double that of white rice).
- The antioxidant activity of wild rice is between 10-15 times higher than white rice.
- Broken down by essential fatty acids, wild rice has between 20-31% omega-3 compared to only 1.7% in brown rice.
- Wild rice is considered gluten-free.

AACCI is a non-profit organization of members who are specialists in the use of cereal grains in foods. The Association has been an innovative leader in gathering and disseminating scientific and technical information to professionals in the grain-based foods industry worldwide for nearly 100 years.

Wild Rice: Both an Ancient Grain and a Whole Grain can be viewed in its entirety on the Minnesota Cultivated Wild Rice Council’s website at www.mnwildrice.org.