



### Rice Variety: Labanya

The scope for export and ability to capture the black rice market, an effort was made at the Regional Agricultural Research Station, Assam Agricultural University, Titabor to develop a high yielding black rice variety with similar quality traits as the traditional black rice while eliminating there as on which make it unsuitable for the consumers. An advance generation high yielding black rice line, AAU-TTB-Dhan41 (Labanya) has been successfully developed from a cross involving Bahadur/Manikimadhuri//Black Rice, having the similar nutritional quality of the traditional black rice germplasm.

The newly developed variety is a high yielder with a yield level of 4.5-5.0 t/ha (realized at farmersfield) with a lower Glycemic Index (GI) and aroma. Further, the variety is easy to cook, can be cooked just like the rice we use for regular consumption. Moreover, amylose content of Labanya is around 18 percent and head rice recovery is around 60 percent. The Labanya is having higher antioxidants and flavonoids, phenolic compounds, essential amino acids and minerals, protein, fiber content compared to normal rice. It may be a variety that benefits all stakeholders in the supply chain, proving it to be ideal rice for marketing.

The variety was tested in the farmers' field during Kharif 2021 at Titabar and Merapani locality. The Farmers achieved a yield of around 5.0 ton per hectare compared to around 2.0 ton per hectare of the traditional black rice variety. Due to the higher market price of the black rice, farmer can easily sell their produce at the rate of Rs 30-40 per kilogram of the paddy as against Rs 10-20 per kilogram of regular paddy. This ensures a better source of income to the farmers and makes the rice cultivation a profitable venture.

In contrast to traditional black rice varieties, which were only used for the preparation of particular value added items such as *Kheer* and few Assamese traditional items such as *pitha* because of their long cooking times and sticky nature, the newly produced rice variety can be used for everyday consumption. The variety however can also be used to produce a range of value-added products, like wine, also including bakery products such as bread, cookies, apart from preparing *kheer*, and Assamese delicacies like *Pitha*. The flour is gluten free which is yet another important aspect which brings on high value to the rice.

AAU is now marketing the variety, and it will be available on e-commerce platforms very soon. On the occasion of the Farmers' Fair at Sugarcane Research Station, Buralikson, Hon'ble Minister, GoA, Sjt. Atul Borah launched this product for sale in the presence of the Vice Chancellor, AAU, and other dignitaries from AAU.