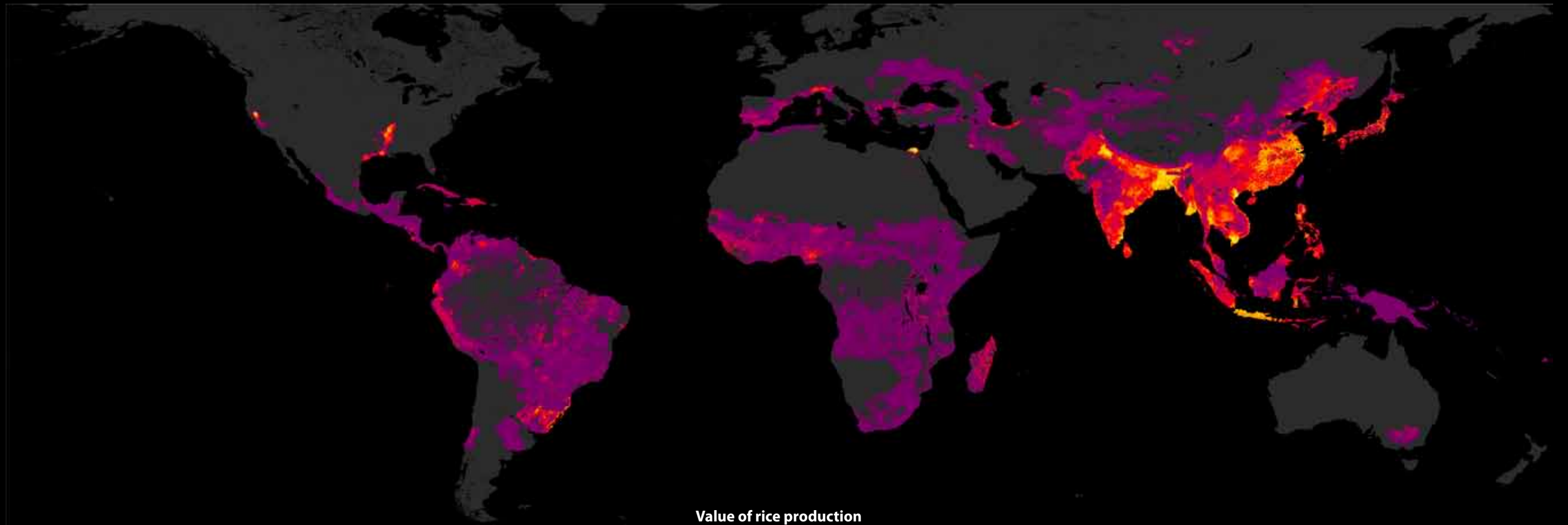


The value of rice

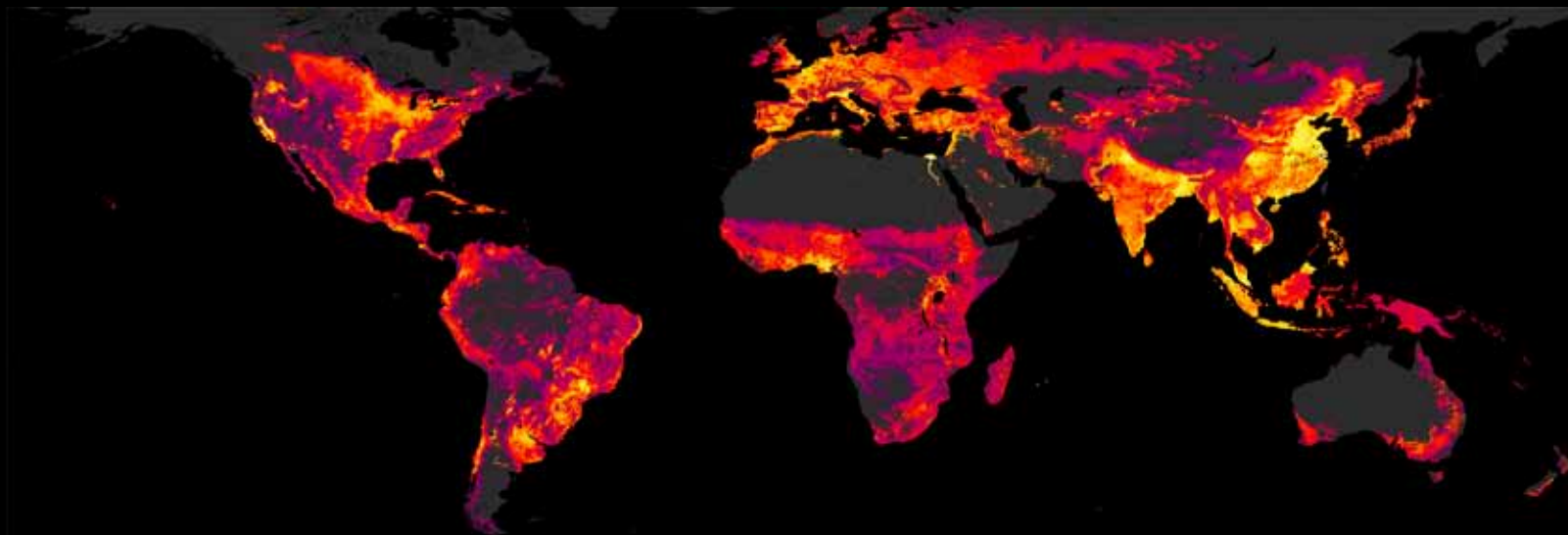
by Andrew Nelson

Rice agriculture has been described as the most important economic activity on Earth. Here, we map out the value of rice production (*top map*) and the total value of the world's crop production for 120 crops (*bottom left*) to visualize the economic significance of rice. The maps were created by multiplying the international commodity price (in US\$)¹ for each crop against the geographic distribution of production² (in tons per hectare) for each crop for the year 2005.³ In 2005, the value of the world's crop production reached \$919 billion—\$128 billion of which (14%) came from rice. But, as the chart on the bottom right shows, the percentage value and, hence, the importance of rice vary from region to region.

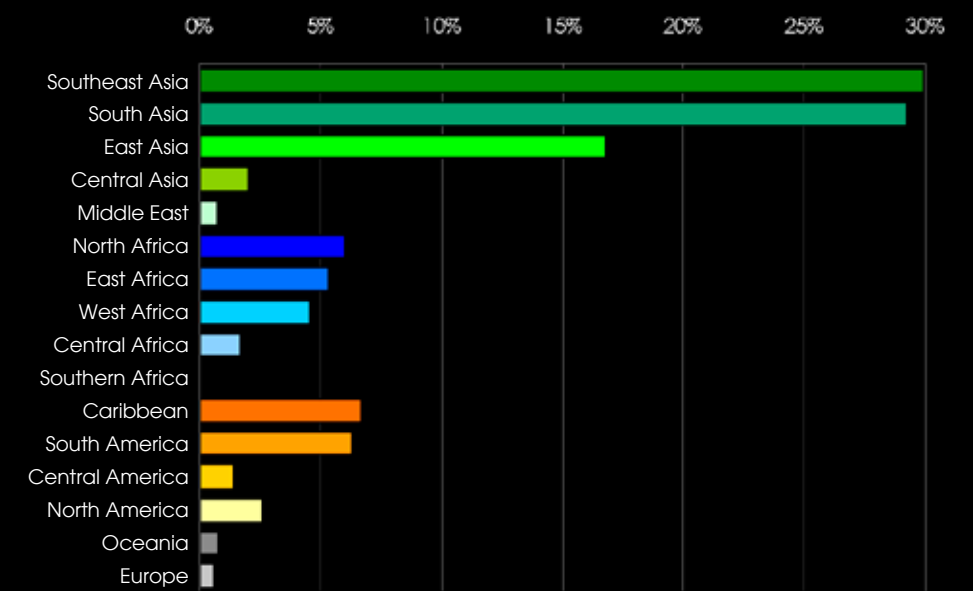


Value of rice production

Value of crop production in US\$ per hectare



Total value of crop production for 120 crops



Value of rice production as a percentage of all crops

¹ International commodity prices: <http://faostat.fao.org/site/339/default.aspx>.

² Crop production maps: based on Monfreda et al. 2008. Farming the planet: 2. Geographic distribution of crop areas, yields, physiological types, and net primary production in the year 2000. *Global Biogeochemical Cycles* 22.

³ Production figures for year: <http://faostat.fao.org/site/567/default.aspx#ancor>.