Scientists have successfully bred a rice variety that is salt-tolerant, which could enable farmers to reclaim coastal areas rendered useless by sea water, a Philippine-based institute said Tuesday.

"They hope to have the new variety available to farmers to grow within 4-5 years," IRRI said in a statement.

The new variety was bred by crossing an exotic wild rice species found in brackish water with one cultivated at the institute.

The result is a "new rice line that can expel salt it takes from the soil into the air through salt glands it has on its leaves," the statement said.