



NATIONAL COALITION FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

February 25, 2009

Dear National C-FAR Members & Supporters,

I present to you the 2008 National C-FAR Annual Report. The report's relative brevity belies the hard team work, actions and successes that occurred in 2008. National C-FAR implemented an action program focused in three areas: (1) laying the groundwork for longer term funding success through our highly successful Hill Seminar Series and Success Profiles; (2) participating in the farm bill reauthorization and start of the implementation process; and (3) calling for increased funding in FY09 budget and appropriations.

At our 2009 year-beginning meeting, the Board reaffirmed that National C-FAR's **unique, value-added role remains in education and outreach, specifically through the highly successful seminar initiative**. Other organizations may be better suited and more effective for advocacy. However, no other organization provides a common forum for the RE&E community and its customers or effectively showcases the value of federal funding in food and agricultural RE&E through education and outreach initiatives focused on hill staff. Thus, the Board directed staff to continue to focus National C-FAR's limited resources in 2009 on what the organization has proven to be more effective at and best suited for—the successful Hill Seminar Series—while remaining actively engaged and supportive as appropriate in advocacy.

National C-FAR's leadership decision to invest in education and outreach initiatives is a planned *means in support of the ultimate goal and National C-FAR's mission—To increase funding in food and agricultural RE&E*. Seminars and Success Profiles are intended to increase understanding and awareness among hill staff and other policy makers and stakeholders about the value of public investment in food and agricultural RE&E, *so that decisions about funding such programs in the future will be more informed, value-based decisions and hopefully thereby result in increased funding*. Presenters and the moderator at each seminar are tasked to highlight (1) the contribution of federal funding to the project, and (2) additional research and scientific outcomes, driven by identified or anticipated real-world challenges that need funding.

National C-FAR sent a [letter](#) in early 2009 to then President-elect Obama urging him to embrace a funding *action plan that increases funding by at least 25 percent in the coming year with a goal of doubling federal investment in food and agricultural RE&E within four years*.

Obama's commitment in his inaugural address to returning the nation to a course guided by sound science offers fresh hope. However, our task will not be easy. The non-results of our spirited but unsuccessful [efforts](#) to secure and retain RE&E funding in the stimulus package are instructive.

Hopefully, implementation of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and the Agriculture and Food Initiative (AFRI) will serve as effective platforms of change that make food and agricultural RE&E more competitive in the quest for increases in funding to the levels needed to provide the scientific outcomes our nation needs. I look forward to working with you in 2009.

Respectfully Submitted,

R. Thomas Van Arsdall, Executive Director

~EDUCATION & OUTREACH~

LAYING GROUNDWORK & MAKING CASE FOR FUTURE FUNDING INCREASES

'Lunch~N~Learn' Hill Seminars—500+ Attendees in 2009:

The objective of the seminars is to increase hill staff awareness of, and appreciation for, the value of food and agricultural REE and their important outcomes. This effort lays the necessary foundation of knowledge for maintaining existing funding levels, and for achieving future funding increases when the budget climate improves.

But you have to get them to attend to brief them! Those who have tried to host briefings and seminars for hill staff know it is a major challenge to get busy hill staff to attend. So when over 1,000 busy hill staff, agency officials and interested stakeholders look at their e-mail invitations to each NC-FAR seminar, here are examples of the first words they read:

"From Stump to Pump." "Blowin' in the Wind." "You Humans Think You're Thirsty? Try Life as a Plant!"

The Research Outreach Committee team selects eye-catching titles that will pique curiosity and motivate the recipient to look further at the abstract to learn what the heck the seminar is about, and hopefully decide to make time to attend. How well has it worked? Attendance by hill staff has been strong and growing, and feedback from key hill staff has been positive. The Research Outreach Committee (ROC) has sought feedback from hill staff, and the seminar series has evolved and improved by incorporating their good recommendations. The "brand identity" of the "Lunch~N~Learn" Hill Seminars is now well established and positive. Hill staff provide feedback that they really appreciate receiving the invitations and take away information that is useful in their own work.

Over the past 4 years, National C-FAR has hosted a total of 29 seminars—9 in 2008 alone. Over 1,000 hill staff have attended the seminar in the past 4 years—more than 500 in 2008. Leading presenters from 35 institutions across the nation from a variety of disciplines have served as a resource on timely topics to hill staff, agency officials and interested stakeholders. [Click Here](#) for more highlights.

The active involvement of members and supporters remains crucial to success. We work hard to leverage limited funds through collaborative efforts—including generous sponsorships, speaker travel costs underwritten by their organizations, and partnering efforts with CAST and the Farm Foundation. Liaisons for the key research agencies have served as a resource in the ROC by helping to identify outstanding seminar speakers and topics.

Success Profiles Demonstrate Proven Value of Past Research Successes:

Success Profiles distributed to the Hill through the end of 2008 include: "Reducing the Cost of Drought," "Living Laboratories," "Anthrax;" "Mastitis;" "Penicillin;" "Witchweed;" "Making Wine;" "Fighting Pollution;" "Fighting Allergens;" and "Harnessing Phytochemicals." The Success Profile 1-pagers complement the Hill Seminars by featuring past research successes and their demonstrated value to society. Each final Success Profile is a one-page, one-sided document similar to full-page magazine ads. The format includes a 2-5 word title, an explanatory sub-title, two to three paragraphs of easy-to-read text describing the research AND ITS BENEFIT, plus a photo or graphic.

National C-FAR is the only organization to produce these types of outreach on a consistent basis, targeting hill staff with a steady, ongoing drumbeat throughout each year that remains on message in the overall effort to make the case for increasing federal investments in food and agricultural RE&E, and does so effectively.

POLICY ADVOCACY ACTIONS IN 2008

National C-FAR's Role in Farm Bill Reauthorization & Implementation:

National C-FAR remained actively engaged in the Farm Bill reauthorization debate through final enactment, as well as the first round of implementation actions in 2008, most notably commenting on the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI). All decisions and actions were premised by our mission to sustain and enhance funding in food and agricultural RE&E. The input of National C-FAR members was sought at critical junctures, and members were provided with periodic updates. National C-FAR's position established in 2007 in support of a National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) was maintained through final enactment. National C-FAR consistently stated that funding for NIFA should supplement and strengthen—not replace—existing programs at USDA.

National C-FAR worked to stay “on message” concerning our stated mission of increasing RE&E funding in every statement, letter and comment. An example is this excerpt from comments submitted to USDA concerning implementation of AFRI:

- The success of literally every other mission area in USDA—of every other Title in the Farm Bill—is dependent in large part on RE&E outcomes from USDA's research mission area and programs, like AFRI.
- National C-FAR's support for a National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA), the creation of AFRI and other reforms in USDA's mission in the recently enacted Farm Bill was largely motivated by the hope that such reforms would help result in increased funding.
- It is incumbent to find the will and a way to increase investments in this vital mission area and turn our shared hope into an operational reality. This quest starts with identifying and making a compelling case for increased funding.

Here are some examples of National C-FAR comments, letters and action updates and action requests related to farm bill reauthorization and the first round of implementation:

- [Letter](#) to Farm Bill Conferees, January 30
- [Letter](#) to Farm Bill Conferees re Mandatory RE&E Funding, March 31
- [Group Letter](#) Facilitated by National C-FAR to Conferees re Mandatory RE&E Funding, April 2
- AFRI Letters [Congressional Ag Leaders](#) & [CSREES](#) and Group Letters facilitated by National C-FAR to [Congressional Ag Leaders](#) & [Secretary Schafer](#), September 23-25

Through action alerts and requests, National C-FAR endeavored to provide members and supporters with timely opportunities to add their voices to the process.

Budget & Appropriations:

National C-FAR filed comments on FY 2009 ag appropriations and 302(b) budget allocations. Modest but important increases in research for targeted needs, including bioenergy and specialty crops, were included by appropriators. However, the normal appropriations process fell short of completion, and the ag budget was rolled into a Continuing Resolution, with research funding at FY08 levels, until the new Congress in 2009.

[Click Here](#) for additional examples of National C-FAR in action.