



NATIONAL COALITION FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

January 03, 2012

Dear National C-FAR Members & Supporters,

I am pleased to present the 2011 National C-FAR Annual Report. National C-FAR's basic mission *is to sustain and increase federal funding in food and agricultural RE&E*. Our unique role is to provide a common forum and a unified voice, bringing together stakeholders in the research, extension and education (RE&E) community and entities representing research '**customers**'—e.g., the diverse array of *stakeholders who need and benefit from research outcomes*. As a customer-led coalition, National C-FAR seeks to *complement* the efforts of allied groups, such as APLU, CAST and the AFRI Coalition. The actions and outcomes highlighted in this report are made possible through the ownership involvement of Members and Sponsors, with limited funding leveraged through collaborative efforts.

Two basic premises help guide the National C-FAR [Board of Directors](#) in shaping the program of action: 1) There is significant value when research 'customers' play a more prominent role in making the "ask" for federal funding, and 2) It is important to focus limited available resources where National C-FAR can contribute *maximum value* to the larger overall effort. National C-FAR continued to focus on the following areas in 2011:

- 1) **Education, with a Purpose**—Laying the groundwork for longer term funding success through our highly successful '[Lunch~N~Learn' Hill Seminar Series](#). Limited resources were leveraged to inform **nearly 1,100 attendees** through 12 seminars in 2011—more than 3,600 attendees over 7 years—about the value of federal funding in food and agricultural RE&E through a mosaic of leading-edge presenters and topics and that also provided timely information that help staff do their jobs. The longer term objective is more informed and positive recommendations by hill staff to Members of Congress about funding for food and agricultural RE&E.
- 2) **Targeted Advocacy**—Providing opportunities to give a greater voice to 'customers' and other stakeholders in support of sustaining and increasing funding in the budget and appropriations process; facilitating stakeholder dialogs with key leaders; and serving as a vehicle continuing input to the ongoing farm bill implementation and oversight process related to funding for USDA's RE&E mission.

In looking forward, 2012 presents fresh challenges, including possible farm bill reauthorization and sobering budgetary realities. Quoting a Member, "*It's a new day, and we need to do things differently [to be successful].*"

Thanks to the increased involvement and support of National C-FAR [Members and Sponsors](#), your organization is better positioned to take on these critical challenges and opportunities. 100% of 2010 Members-Sponsors renewed or increased their commitment in 2011 (*second straight year!*). In 2011 we welcomed 8 new Members and 6 new Sponsors [*one existing Sponsor doubled contribution!*]. The budget year ended with a positive bottom line, with 9+ months' reserves. Efforts will continue to build the Member-Sponsor base and budget in 2012 to a more sustainable level.

I look forward to working with you in 2012. Your suggestions and involvement are welcome and appreciated.



R. Thomas Van Arsdall

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Executive Director



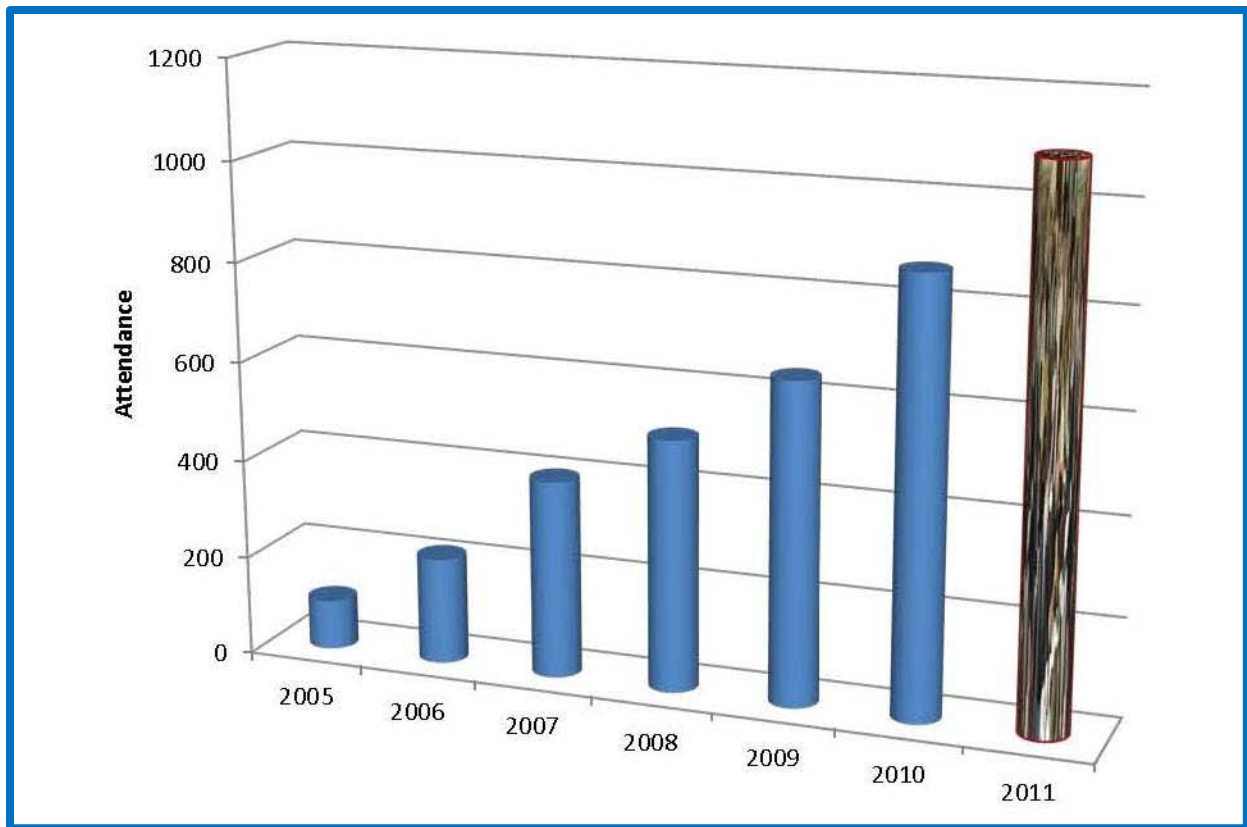
NATIONAL C-FAR 2011 ANNUAL REPORT

[Click Here](#) for a PowerPoint presentation by Board member and ROC Chair Barb Glenn (CropLife America) that provides an overview of National C-FAR’s 2011 action program.

OUTREACH—EDUCATION WITH A PURPOSE

‘Lunch~N~Learn’ Hill Seminars—12 Seminars with 1,089 Attendees in 2011:

The hill seminar series is *education with a purpose*. We are working to increase hill staff awareness of, and appreciation for, the value of food and agricultural RE&E 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. The National C-FAR moderator and guest presenter at each hill seminar are tasked to ensure the seminars stay “on message” by highlighting (1) the contribution of federal funding to the project, and (2) additional research and scientific outcomes that need additional funding, driven by identified or anticipated real-world challenges. In keeping with National C-FAR’s mission to advocate funding for ALL food and agricultural RE&E, a mix of intra-mural and extramural speakers and projects is selected.



Attendance by hill staff has been strong and growing, and feedback from key hill staff has been positive. Over the past 7 years, National C-FAR has hosted a total of 62 seminars—12 in 2011 alone. There have been over 3,600 attendees—nearly 1,100 in 2011. Leading researchers representing a variety of disciplines from over 50 institutions and agencies across the nation have presented research related to timely topics of interest to hill staff, agency officials and interested stakeholders. [Click Here](#) for more seminar series highlights.

National C-FAR is the only organization to execute this approach to hill staff outreach on a consistently effective basis, with a demonstrated track record of success. Hill staff and policy makers are targeted 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.

Others who have tried to host briefings and seminars for hill staff know it is a major challenge to get busy hill staff to attend. We are literally competing for their time and attention. The ROC team selects eye-catching titles for timely and substantive research topics 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 deciding to make time to attend. So when about 2,000 busy hill staff, agency officials and interested stakeholders in the contacts database we work diligently to maintain looked at their e-mail invitations and reminders to each National C-FAR seminar in 2011, here are examples of the first words they saw:

**Clearing the Air on Greenhouse Gases—Can Ag Help?
Agriculture—Science for All Americans
Providing for Tomorrow’s Food Days
The Air We Breathe
Mapping for the Future of Our Food
i-Trees Food Fraud
Eating Out & Overeating
We Reap What We Sow
Waging War on Invasive Grasses
The Public Research Agenda for Agriculture
Guess What’s Coming to Dinner?**

The Research Outreach Committee (ROC) has sought feedback from hill staff, and the seminar series has evolved and improved by listening carefully and incorporating their good recommendations. The “brand identity” of the “Lunch~N~Learn” Hill Seminars is well established. Hill staff provided feedback that they appreciate receiving the invitations and take away information that is useful in their own work.

A preliminary analysis of available information about seminar attendees in 2011 reveals that:

- House:
 - 420 different House staff attended.
 - 200 attended 2 or more seminars—12 were regular attendees (7+).
 - An estimated ¾ were professional staff (from chief of staff down to legislative correspondent) in Member offices and staff on the Agriculture Committee.
- Senate:
 - Nearly 200 registered attendees across the 12 seminars.
 - The Senate Ag Committee was well represented.
 - Member staff attending came from over 1/3 of the Senate offices.
- Off the Hill:
 - Agencies: Professional staff from 20 different agencies attended (not including speakers).
 - Universities: Representatives of 15 different universities attended (not including speakers).
 - National C-FAR Members and Supporters: Representatives of over 50 different organizations attended (not including National C-FAR representatives as moderators).
 - Media: Limited attendance.
- Some seminar topics noticeably broadened the universe, drawing hill staffers, agency officials and interested stakeholders beyond traditional agriculture, such as nutrition, bioenergy and food safety.

The active involvement of members and supporters remains crucial to success. Members and supporters are responsive to requests for speaker-topic nominations. We work hard to leverage limited funds through collaborative efforts—including generous sponsorships, speaker travel costs underwritten by institutions and national trade associations, and partnering efforts such as with CAST.

In 2011 we also learned that selecting topics and dates *in concert with other major events*, such as National Invasive Species Awareness Week, National Ag Day and World Food Day create synergies and elevate the profile of research as part of the dialog surrounding such events. Liaisons for the key research agencies in USDA have served as a valuable resource in the ROC by helping to identify outstanding seminar speakers and timely topics.

Based on the principle that busy hill staff are more likely to respond when they receive invitations from people they know, an action request is sent in advance of each seminar to National C-FAR members and supporters, providing an easy way to support the outreach effort by sending a personalized invitation to their own hill staff contacts. A media advisory is also sent out for each seminar.

Bottom line, how well has this *“education with a purpose”* worked? Unfortunately, we do not have a way of measuring the impact on the seminar series on hill staff recommendations to Members of Congress regarding funding. At a minimum hill staff are generally more aware and informed about federal research funding provides, laying the groundwork for more positive outcomes when advocacy actions and contacts are made.

TARGETED ADVOCACY ACTIONS

“Making a Better Case” Webinar:

In an effort to help lay the groundwork for more effective advocacy efforts in 2012, a task force of ROC members put together a webinar with the charge of *“Making a More Compelling Case for Public Funding of Food and Agricultural Research and Education,”* as part of the 2011 year-end Board meeting program. A panel was moderated by Dr. Kitty Smith (AFT):

- Smith [Presentation](#), **“Public Agricultural Research Funding is Decreasing”**
- Dr. Wendelyn Jones (DuPont Pioneer) [Presentation](#), **“Partnering and Collaborating”**
- Tom Sell (Combest, Sell & Assoc) Presentation, **“Ag Producer Perspectives”**
- Dr. Martin Apple (CSSP), [Respondent Presentation](#), **“Stay Ahead of the Waves of Change”**

USDA Under Secretary and Chief Scientist followed the panel with a [Presentation](#), **“The Challenges Facing Public Agricultural Research Today.”**

NC-FAR President Chuck Conner (NCFC) discussed the need to better engage ag business leaders in making the case for federal funding for food and agricultural research and education, and presented a “Leadership Impact Proposal,” with actions including a proposed “brainstorming” dinner with selected ag business leaders, with possible follow up actions such as a request to OSTP/USDA to convene an industry summit on ag research and laying the groundwork to recruit Congressional Champion(s). Additional highlights are provided in the December 15 Board [minutes](#).

Key points and rationale from the webinar and subsequent thoughtful exchanges are being evaluated as part of efforts to strengthen NC-FAR’s advocacy position and strategy in 2012.

“We need to look at this in a new way. We advocated for NIFA to have a billion dollars of new money for ag research to rival that of NIH. We are all disappointed and circumstances defy business as usual. We can’t be successful in getting more dollars or finding champions until we have our act together. We need to prioritize. We need to stop coming with questions and come with answers. Our umbrella of stakeholders is big and encompasses many silos. We need a list of research priorities that are grand challenges that we can coalesce around and bring to congress and the public as necessary goals that the federal government needs to support. This means we have to have a business plan and the ability to articulate the urgency. Then we can identify how much it will cost, who can champion, and action steps to get all stakeholders involved and moving in somewhat the same direction.” Pam Johnson, NCGA Representative on National C-FAR Board.

Targeted Advocacy ACTIONS in 2011:

“..... the nation has a serious food and agricultural research, extension and education deficit, just as the nation has a budget deficit. This food and agricultural science funding deficit is serious, long running and unsustainable. Failure to address this research deficit will have real negative consequences, not just to the agriculture and food system but to the entire nation and U.S. economy.”

“**Publicly financed REE** is a *necessary complement to private sector research*, focusing in areas where the private sector does not have an incentive to invest, when 1) the pay-off is over a long term; 2) the potential market is more speculative; 3) the effort is during the pre-technology stage; and 4) where the benefits are widely diffused. Public research, extension and education help provide oversight and measure long-term progress.”

National C-FAR as a ‘customer-led’ coalition took advocacy action on a number of fronts in support of federal funding for food and agricultural RE&E. Examples and selected excerpts:

- [Comments](#) on December 6 to OSTP on the National Bioeconomy Blueprint.

“The bottom line is simple—commit to increased federal funding for food and agricultural science and education. The National Bioeconomy Blueprint must include as one of its core components a true commitment to significant increases in federal investments for food and agricultural research and education to have a realistic chance of being effective in achieving its goals.”

- [Statement](#) on October 19 to Congressional Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction.

“...Place a high priority on funding for food and agricultural research as you carry out your important charge and develop overall budget proposals for the future.”

- Letters on September 9 to Rep. [Nunes](#) and September 13 to Sens. [Stabenow-Thune](#) (and original cosponsors) in support of introduction of Charitable Agricultural Research Act legislation.

“National C-FAR supports the creation of an Agricultural Research Organization (ARO), a new type of charitable organization devoted to food and agricultural research with an IRS tax structure similar to the medical research organizations. Funding for agricultural research through ARO’s is not a substitute for needed increases in federal funding for food and agricultural research, extension and education.”

- [Comments](#) on July 19 to House Ag Research Subcommittee for Farm Bill Research Title Audit hearing record.

“The Research Title of the Farm Bill represents the nation’s signature federal investment in the future of the food and agricultural sector. Other Farm Bill titles depend heavily upon the Research Title for tools to help achieve their stated objectives.”

- [Comments](#) on April 29 to USDA providing input on Draft REE Roadmap.

“.....funding is the fuel that will fuel the RE&E engine and determine how effectively the roadmap will be implemented. If USDA’s RE&E mission continues to be starved for funds, any roadmap is destined to fall short of not only its potential but of leading to the outcomes this nation needs for the food and agricultural system to remain successful.”

- [Letter](#) on March 15 to House Ag Appropriations Subcommittee in support of FY12 funding for food and ag RE&E.
 - Similar letter sent to Senate Ag Appropriations Subcommittee.
- Presentation and [Statement](#) on January 7 to President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST).

“If congressionally directed spending for food and agricultural REE is cut by the Congress, National C-FAR urges the Subcommittee and the Congress to recapture congressionally directed spending for food and agricultural REE and retain this funding in USDA’s REE mission.”

“National C-FAR urges PCAST to support necessary increases in funding for food and agricultural research, extension and education (RE&E), and to help craft innovative funding approaches.”

National C-FAR played a role in facilitating group statements, sending out action alerts about opportunities where stakeholders could add their voices in support of federal funding for food and agricultural RE&E:

- [Group Letter](#) on October 19 to Congressional Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction signed by 1,200 organizations, companies, institutions and individuals.
 - National C-FAR participated in an ad hoc group effort which was an action that came out of a stakeholder meeting with Dr. Roger Beachy in late August.
- Joint Letters on May 13 to [House](#) and May 24 to [Senate](#) Ag Appropriations leadership urging that top-line budgets of ARS and NIFA be restored in FY12.
- [Group Letter](#) to Members of Congress on March 8 in support of FY11 funding for USDA RE&E mission area at level passed by the Senate.

Where deemed appropriate, National C-FAR joined as a signatory to letters being circulated by allied groups in support of increased funding. As an active member of the [AFRI Coalition](#), National C-FAR contributed to that coalition’s development of positions and signed on to group statements in support of AFRI funding. For Example:

- [Group Letter](#) on November 4 to Ag Appropriations Conferees in support of \$266 million in AFRI Funding for FY12.
- [Group Letter](#) on September 26 to Ag Appropriations Conferees in support of \$266 in AFRI Funding for FY12.
- [Group Letter](#) on March 8 to Congress in support of \$280 million in AFRI Funding in FY11 Spending.

“It’s a different world, and we need to do things differently!”
Dr. Diane Bellis, USB Representative on ROC.

Risking a peek ahead, what’s next? We certainly can’t afford to stand still in our approach to making the case for federal funding for food and agricultural RE&E in this highly competitive and constantly changing policy arena.

We look forward to your growing ownership involvement and support in 2012.

R. Thomas Van Arsdall
 Executive Director