



NATIONAL COALITION FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

Media Advisory

“LOCAL FOODS ACROSS THE COUNTRY AND CLOSE TO HOME” *The Economics of Local Foods Supply Chains*

Washington, D.C. — The eighth National C-FAR “Lunch~N~Learn” Hill Seminar of 2010 will be **Monday, June 21**, from 12:00–12:55 p.m. in 1300 Longworth House Office Building. The featured speaker is Dr. Robert King, Department of Applied Economics, University of Minnesota, who will discuss the results of a team research project funded by the USDA Economic Research Service on the economics of local foods supply chains.

“The local food movement has captured the attention of American consumers, producers, food marketers, and policymakers,” said King, a co-author of the study report. “It has helped many to gain a better appreciation of where their food comes from and has strengthened consumers’ sense of connection with those who produce our food.”

“We are pleased to help facilitate the necessary discussions about how multidisciplinary research and education can help attain long-term solutions for pressing agricultural issues,” said Chuck Conner, President of the National Coalition for Food & Agricultural Research (National C-FAR). “This presentation is an excellent example of how federally funded food and agriculture research and extension can produce the scientific outcomes and outreach needed to meet 21st century challenges and opportunities.”

Speaker: Dr. Robert King, Department of Applied Economics, University of Minnesota.

The seminar is open to the public and the media.

Abstract: Local foods are increasingly available to consumers through a variety of outlets. A series of case studies describes how local foods reach consumers, and compares local food supply chains with mainstream food supply chains. These studies indicate how the structure and size of local food supply chains is related to key measures of performance, such as local economic impacts and transportation fuel use. Results suggest that local food supply chains currently account for a small percentage of consumer demand, but that local products move through a variety of local and mainstream supply chains. Almost all economic activity in the local supply chains accrues locally, but mainstream food supply chains also make significant contributions to local economies. Product aggregation that reduces per unit costs is an important determinant of transportation fuel efficiency, and can outweigh differences in proximity to consumers. This research points to the importance of available processing capacity for entrepreneurial farms producing animal products, and to the growing importance of third-party certification of agricultural practices for fruit and vegetable producers.

NATIONAL C-FAR is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, consensus-based, and *customer-led* coalition that brings food, agriculture, nutrition, conservation, and natural resource stakeholders together with the food and agriculture research and extension community, serving as a forum and a unified voice in support of sustaining and increasing public investment at the national level in food and agricultural research, extension, and education. National C-FAR’s Hill Seminar Series, now entering its fifth year, regularly presents leading-edge researchers working to provide answers to pressing issues confronting the public and Congress. The Hill Seminar Series and Success Profiles help demonstrate the value of public investment in food and agricultural research—investment that returns 45 percent per year on average. Go to http://www.ncfar.org/Hill_Seminar_Series.asp for more information about the seminar series and past topics. Interviews with National C-FAR President Chuck Conner are available by request. For additional information, go to www.ncfar.org; or contact Tom Van Arsdall, Executive Director, at tom@vanarsdall.com or (703) 509-4746.