



National C-FAR

National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research
Teaming Together For A Better Tomorrow

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National C-FAR August Update

Critical Time for Food and Agricultural Research: August vacations are over and the pace activity in Washington will pick up soon. Major legislative and budgetary decisions affecting the future of food and agriculture research are likely to be made in the next few weeks. The Bush Administration is assembling its recommendations for FY 2003 budget, and according to the August 31, 2001 *Wall Street Journal*, the shrinking budget surplus is prompting the Administration to re-examine USDA budgets and farm program spending and approach. In a recent Associated Press interview, Secretary of Agriculture Veneman stressed, "We need to look at the whole food system and the agriculture system much differently than we have in the past." Food and agricultural research, of course, is the prime tool to help us discover better solutions to existing problems and open new opportunities.

Both the House and Senate agriculture committees have been working on the farm bill, which authorizes several of the major food and agricultural research programs. Our hope is that the new 2003 budget of the President will include a significant increase in food and agricultural research and that Congress will include increased authorizations and authorities for food and agricultural research in the new farm bill.

Our Challenge: Telling the Story of Food and Agricultural Research. Achieving our goal of doubling food and agricultural research is not going to be a quick and easy task, nor is it for the faint hearted. It will take a lot of efforts by National C-FAR and our members to elevate food and agriculture research on the national agenda. We need to convey more effectively the many benefits of food and agriculture research to the entire society. Too many in Congress and the Administration still view food and agricultural research as being focused on farmers and farm production. While farm production research has had great success in the past, hybrid corn being just one outstanding example, and holds great promise in the future, such as more healthful and environmentally friendly crops, the benefits of food and agriculture research go way beyond the farm gate. The benefits include human nutrition, food safety, protection from exotic pests and diseases, natural resource conservation, forestry, renewable energy sources, rural development, wildlife and recreation, and expanded exports.

Success Stories Are Successful: One of the best ways to communicate the broad benefits of food and agriculture when visiting with a member of Congress or the Administration is to use specific examples of research and education successes. We have collected some success stories from our members and plan to have an area on our website (www.ncfar.org) where they and other examples can be accessed. Ideally, we would like to build into our website a search capability whereby you can key in a topic or commodity, location, etc. and quickly locate examples. For example, if you are interested in the economic benefits of biofuels to farmers and

consumers in the Midwest, you could key in the selections and find links to websites that have the information. In the meantime, you are encouraged to review and use the excellent examples of research successes at the Land Grants available on the Internet at www.reeusda.gov/success/impact.htm.

Learning from Our Sister Sciences: Federal funding of food and agricultural research has been flat for over 20 years. It has declined relative to all federal research and relative to agricultural research in the rest of the world. For example, federal funding of food and agricultural research in the USDA, measured in real (inflation-adjusted) dollars is less than it was in 1978. According to The National Science Foundation, the food and agriculture research share of the federal total has fallen from 4.2% to 2.5% from 1982 to 1998. This small and shrinking share contrasts with a 16% share of the income and employment of the food and agriculture sector of our U.S. economy.

Maybe we should see what tips we could learn from the recent funding successes in other fields of science. The May 4, 2001, *Science* magazine notes, "Science lobbyists are enjoying unprecedented success in Washington...." What are the keys to their success? According to the *Science* article, the basic rules of the influence game are: 1) Seek strength in numbers by working together so you can show force, share expertise and tap an extensive network of contacts; 2) Maintain strong ties outside Washington so that they hear from the folks back home; 3) Do not wait for a crisis, be proactive with newsletters, e-mail, tours of facilities, etc in educating your audience; and 4) Work both congress and the administration.

How do National C-FAR efforts to date stack up? We are gaining strength in numbers and are building relationships with others with common goals, such as the Food and Society Project. We have literally millions of grassroots members in our member organizations, but we need to find ways to be more proactive and engage the grassroots folks back home. Traditionally, those in food and agricultural research have spent more of their efforts with Congress, often on funding for specific projects at specific locations, than convincing the Administration, especially the powerful Office of Management and Budget, to support a major initiative and funding increases. Perhaps the "Food and Agricultural Research Summit" idea can be a means to raise the visibility in D.C.

Successful Regional Food and Agriculture Research Meeting Held at Ohio State

University: National C-FAR, the Food and Society Project and The Ohio State University sponsored a joint meeting with stakeholder groups on The Ohio State University Campus in Columbus on August 21. About 90 persons from Ohio and 7 Midwest states attended. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an overview the Food and Society Project, which is sponsored by the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Additional regional meetings are being planned. The next meeting is scheduled for Texas A&M University for October 29. We will be notifying our members of the details for the Texas A&M meeting and other regional meetings as soon as they are available. As we did with the Ohio State meeting, we will be participating and encouraging current and potential National C-FAR members to participate.

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Thank you!**

Fall Board Meeting Scheduled and Summit Being Planned: A Board Conference call was held on Monday, August 13. The purpose of the conference call was to provide a brief update of recent activities and to discuss a potential fall "Food and Ag Research Summit" meeting in DC and a board meeting. The major decisions made were: 1) **Hold a fall board meeting in Washington, DC which has since been scheduled for November 8.** The major agenda item is developing our long range plan. Details of the specific location and agenda will be forthcoming soon; 2) An agreement with Federation of Animal Science Societies (FASS) to support our website was approved. FASS is located near the National C-FAR office in Champaign and now operates several websites for scientific societies. They will provide National C-FAR general maintenance, post documents, and create secondary pages as necessary; 3) The idea of holding a "Food and Ag Research Summit" was discussed and endorsed. It was suggested that planning get underway to develop a very high-level and high profile meeting. The Summit timing should be such that we can get commitments from key congressional committee chairs and cabinet officials to not only participate, but perhaps co-sponsor; and 4) Joe Coffey gave a brief Treasurer's Report. For the 2000-01 fiscal year which ended June 30, 2001, National C-FAR had revenues of \$164,000 and expenses of \$90,000, leaving a balance of \$74,000. For the new 2001-02 fiscal year which began July 1, revenues as of August 13 have been \$4,400 and expenses \$5,848. The cash balance as of August 13, 2001 was \$77,385.

Persons participating in the call were: Sam Minor, David Reid, Marc Curtis, David Graves, Esther Myers, Andy Jordan, and Joe Coffey. Terry Wolf had an illness in the family and was not able to participate.

House Agriculture Committee completed its version of the 2001 Farm Bill on July 27: The Ag Committee bill, known as "The Farm Security Act of 2001", H.R. 2646, next goes to the full House. This House bill is a comprehensive bill that includes provisions on the basic commodity programs, conservation, rural development, and research. The bill continues the Research Initiative for Future Agricultural Systems at a program level of \$145 million per year for fiscal years 2004 through 2011, reauthorizes existing research programs and improves on programs to include priority research items such as pest detection and exclusion, energy efficiency, value-added agricultural production and marketing.

The Senate Agriculture committee is still working on their version of the farm bill and may not complete their work this year. The farm bill does not expire until next year, so it would not be too surprising if the bill is not passed and sent to the President until next year.

Membership increased to 108 during August: The seven new members who joined in August and their representatives and class of membership are: 1) Northeast Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors (Mr. David MacKenzie) – University; 2) University of California, Davis (Dr. Neal Van Alfen) – University; 3) USA Rice Federation (John Denison) – National; 4) Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station (J. Ian Gray) – University; 5) Utah Agricultural Experiment Station (H. Paul Rasmussen) – University; 6) University of Delaware (Dr. Robin W. Morgan) – University; and 7) University of Wyoming Agriculture Experiment Station (Dr. Jim Jacobs) – University. The breakdown of the 108 members is 29 National Members; 45 University (Affiliate) Members; 3 Corporate (Affiliate) Members; 30 Affiliate Members; and 1 Honorary Member. While we are pleased with our growth in membership, we need step up our efforts to recruit major national organizations and corporations who have not yet joined. Recommendations from our present members are our best

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Thank you!**

way to recruit. Please encourage groups you know to join. Please contact Ellen Jansen, ejansen@uiuc.edu or 217-333-6575 or view our website (www.ncfar.org) for brochures, membership forms, and a list of members.

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