



# National C-FAR

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

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March 29, 2001

## National C-FAR March Update

Dear Members and Friends of National C-FAR:

We are now officially a registered Illinois corporation and have presented our first Congressional testimony. Our challenge is continuing to build our membership and to spread the word about the compelling case for doubling food and ag research. This e-letter lists our latest activities and current plans.

### Activities:

- **Food & Society:** A conference phone call was held on March 13 with the leadership of the Food and Society Project. This project is funded by the Kellogg Foundation under the sponsorship of the university presidents in the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges (NASULGC). The Executive Director is Sam Smith, former Dean of Ag at Penn State and President of Washington State. Since this effort has similar objectives as our coalition and involves several of our members, we want to keep in close communication to avoid any confusion and capitalize upon any synergies. They have appointed Dr. Jim Stukel, President of the University of Illinois, to serve as a liaison with us.
- **Board Call:** The Board held a conference call on March 16. The board approved the Initial By-Laws and heard committee reports. At our next annual meeting, these initial by-laws will need to be approved by the membership. The draft minutes are attached.
- **Funding:** As of March 15, from the time we started our organizing efforts last summer, we have had income from membership dues and contributions of \$129,600 and expenses of \$56,270.63 leaving a balance of \$73,329.27. We need all your help in building our membership and financial support. We have printed pamphlets available for your recruiting. Please contact Ellen Jansen (ejansen@uiuc.edu) or (217) 333-6575 and she can assist you.
- **Senate Testimony:** Jon Caspers, a member of our National C-FAR Board, presented testimony on our behalf to the Senate Ag Committee on March 27. We were flattered to be the leadoff witnesses after the USDA presentation and even more pleased by the fact that Senator Lugar (R, IND) opened the hearing acknowledging the goal of “doubling food and ag research.” Senator Debbie Stabenow (D, MI) also mentioned the doubling. Several of the other witnesses also mentioned our Coalition and many at the hearing sought additional information and offered encouragement. Our testimony went through 5 drafts and benefited from the suggestions of several of our members. Jon did an effective job and it seemed to be well received. A copy of the testimony is attached and will eventually be on the Senate Ag Committee website.

· **Communications:** The Ag Communications staff at Purdue has offered to advise us about developing a member recruiting campaign and updating our website. We plan to use their suggestions to improve and expand our membership and communication efforts. We expect to be relocating our website from the National Cattlemen's site soon.

**Plans:**

· **April 5 Meeting:** The research committee will be meeting in Washington, DC, on April 5 from 1:00-3:00 pm at the offices of the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives. The meeting is open and participation is encouraged. For details contact Rob Hedberg (robhedberg@erols.com) or Barbara Glenn (bglenn@faseb.org). We are also hoping to hold a short legislative committee meeting on that same date and location.

· **Empty Chair:** Top positions at USDA are just now beginning to be announced. National C-FAR sent a letter to the Bush Transition Office and to Secretary Veneman on February 5, 2001, urging that they "appoint at the earliest possible date an experienced and highly qualified person as Under Secretary, Research, Education and Economics, US Department of Agriculture. This person should know and understand agricultural research and the food and agricultural system. We view this as a pivotal position that provides the national leadership for agricultural research and education." As of March 28, the position has not been appointed. We encourage members to emphasize to the Bush Administration the importance of a timely appointment of a qualified person. We need a strong leader in USDA of this \$2.2 billion program.

· **Dear Colleague:** It has been suggested that we consider asking key Congressional members to circulate a "Dear Colleague" letter conveying the compelling case for food and ag research and its doubling over the next 5 years and soliciting their signatures. Comparable efforts have been successful in getting National Institute of Health funding increased. Such a letter needs to be circulated in next couple of weeks in order to affect appropriations. No decisions have been made yet, but we are beginning to explore the pros and cons of such a letter and hope to discuss it with the legislative and research committees on April 5. We welcome your thoughts.

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