



National C-FAR

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

1101 W. Peabody Drive • Urbana, IL 61801
217/333-6575 • Fax: 217/244-8594 • E-mail: ejansen@uiuc.edu

November 6, 2001

National C-FAR October Update

National C-FAR remained active in October, despite the deep concerns and sadness of the September 11 tragedy that rightfully shifted the focus of the Bush Administration and Congress to terrorism and economic stimulus. The bioterrorism attacks using Anthrax put the public spotlight upon the safety and security of our food supply. Thanks to much research done on the past by agricultural researchers, there is a substantial base of information that has helped the early detection and containment of the Anthrax scourge. While we are fortunate that we had a base of knowledge to address the Anthrax attack, it also has become clear that we need to take a fresh look at ways we can safeguard the security of our entire food system - from the farm all the way to the consumers, be they domestic or foreign. The importance of food and agricultural research and education is heightened by these dastardly attacks. While we have the safest food system in the history of the world and while we do not want to alarm consumers, we do need to address the potential vulnerabilities in the food and agricultural system.

A Board conference call will be held on Thursday, November 8, 2001, at 10:00-11:30 a.m. Central Time. The main agenda items are updates from the Committee chairs and a discussion of plans for the next annual meeting of National C-FAR in Washington, DC in the first quarter of 2002. All board members are strongly encouraged to participate in the call by dialing 1-877-815-4133 and enter pass code 851256. Those who cannot participate are encouraged to have a representative participate in the call. The number of lines is limited, but those in the Washington, DC area can participate in the conference call by gathering at the ACPA (American Crop Protection Association) offices of Ray McAllister and use his conference calling facilities. Offices of ACPA are located at 1156 15th Street, NW, Suite 400.

Congress continues to work on the farm bill, despite the recommendations of the Bush Administration that the legislation be delayed until next year. The U.S. House of Representatives on October 5 passed its version of the farm bill by a vote of 291 to 120. The Senate Agriculture committee released on November 2 its initial draft of the farm bill and is hoping to complete the work and have it passed in November. Latest indications are that congress is not likely to windup the current session until after Thanksgiving. Many issues remain on the Congressional agenda, including passage of appropriations bills and the economic stimulus package. While most farm organizations are pushing for passage of the farm bill, along the lines of that passed by the House, many Washington observers doubt that a farm bill will pass this year. With respect to agriculture research and education, both the House and Senate bills extend most of the existing agricultural research programs that are slated to expire in 2002 and increase the mandatory funding of The Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems (IFAS). However, the research and education changes are quite modest and most of the focus and funding increases are for the commodity programs and conservation.

National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics (NAREEE) Advisory Board met October 30-November 2 in Washington, DC. Our President, Terry Wolf, provided the Board an update on National C-FAR. The NAREEE Board, chaired by Dean of Agriculture Vic Lechtenberg of Purdue University, is the top national advisory board for food and agricultural research and education to the Secretary of Agriculture. The Board is composed of a broad cross-section of distinguished members appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture. Several National C-FAR organizational members and representatives are on the NAREEE Board including Marc Curtis, Walt Armbruster, Vic Lechtenberg, Ron Warfield, Martin Massengale and Jeff Armstrong. The advisory had a full schedule of distinguished speakers addressing the issues of global trade.

Dr. Joe Jen, Under Secretary for Research, Extension, and Economics at USDA, presented his vision of food and agricultural research and education at the October 31, 2001, NAREEE board meeting. As reported in this monthly update following the two National C-FAR visits with Dr. Jen, he stressed his commitment to a balanced portfolio of research using the full variety of funding mechanisms. One of his initial priorities will be to secure full funding of the National Research Initiative (NRI) competitive grants program at its full \$500 million authorization rather than its present level of about \$100 million. Dr. Jen is working with the White House Office of Science and Technology (OSTP) to seek ways to boost funding of food and agricultural research and education. He is proposing the formation of an inter-agency taskforce with USDA as the lead agency to develop a domestic animal genome project, which will complement the existing human and plant genome projects.

Texas A&M University hosted a Regional Food and Agriculture Research Meeting on October 29 on campus in College Station, Texas. National C-FAR, the Food and Society Project and Texas A&M cosponsored this meeting. The 60 stakeholders in attendance discussed food and agricultural research and education priorities for the future. This meeting was similar to that held on August 21 at The Ohio State University. Board member Dwight Roberts, President and CEO of U.S. Rice Producers, and Joe Coffey were on the program on behalf of National C-FAR. The meeting clearly demonstrated the interest of stakeholders in participating in the formulation of food and agricultural research priority setting and the need to state the priorities in clear and broad terms that can be understood and supported by the general public and by congress. Additional regional meetings are being considered for California and the Northeast. Participation in these meetings has aided our Coalition to learn about the research and education priorities of stakeholders and strengthened our relationships with the land-grant colleges. We are indebted to Dr. Sam Smith, former dean of agriculture at Penn State and recently retired President of Washington State University and now the Executive Director of the Food and Society project, for his support and encouragement of National C-FAR's co-sponsorship of these meetings. The Food and Society leadership has been meeting with USDA, National Science Foundation, and the Office of Science and Technology to explore the creation of a multi-agency funding initiative for food and agricultural research and education.

Farmers support a broad based program of federally supported food and agricultural research, extension and education programs, according to a recently released survey entitled, "The 2002 Farm Bill: U.S. Producer Preferences for Agricultural, Food and Public Policy" (The study can be downloaded from the internet at www.farmfoundation.org). Three optional

**Please email ejansen@uiuc.edu with your current email address for future electronic mailings.
Thank you!**

questions related to food and agricultural research were posed to producers in selected states. The responses were uniform so they would appear to be representative of the national view of farmers. When asked if research and education programs should be targeted to the small producers, only 30% said yes. The vast majority of both large and small farmers, about 70%, felt that research, extension and education programs should be accessible to all. Similarly, about 70% of the surveyed farmers favored making the results of publicly supported research available in the public domain. Less than 10% favored reducing funding. Finally, the farmers surveyed favored maintaining a mix of both formula and competitively funded research. While a third favored increasing formula funds, only 10% favored shifting funds to competitive grants and less than 10% favored eliminating funding. These results are encouraging and supportive of our Coalition's mission. This survey confirms that the grass roots farmer members of our coalition's organizations strongly support continued federal funding and widespread dissemination of research and education from a mix of programs.

The National C-FAR Legislative Committee met from 10-noon on November 2, 2001, at the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives offices for its regular monthly meeting. The meeting focused on assessing progress during the initial year and developing a report to the Board that will be presented during the conference call on November 8.

The National C-FAR Research Committee also met on November 2 to review their progress and prepare recommendations for the Board. The committee has focused on two major areas, the first to develop a template for presenting research accomplishments in a clear, concise and convincing format. The other major area has been to compile estimates of food and agricultural research funding from the major federal agencies.

Membership increased to 114 during October. The three new members who joined in October are: 1. Colorado Agricultural Experiment Station (University Member); 2. Dr. Ken Lee (Individual Member); and 3. National Farmers Union (National Member). While we are pleased with our growth in membership, we need to step up our efforts to recruit major national organizations and corporations who have not yet joined. Recommendations from our present members are our best 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 (<http://www.ncfar.org/>) for brochures, membership forms, and a list of members.

Joe Coffey
Secretary/Treasurer
National C-FAR
3221 Regatta Pointe Court
Midlothian, VA 23112
Phone: (804) 744-1486
Fax: (804) 744-2192
Email: jdcoffey@home.com

**Please email ejansen@uiuc.edu with your current email address for future electronic mailings.
Thank you!**