



NATIONAL COALITION FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

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National C-FAR—October 2002 Update

Our Roadmap: National C-FAR has engaged DITTUS Communications of Washington, DC to help us develop a roadmap of education strategy. Once the roadmap is prepared, they will assist in building a consensus for a national media event that communicates the value of enhanced food and agricultural research. We have been exploring a national forum or summit idea for the past year but have decided we need to step back and think it through more carefully. We do not just want to hold another meeting where we talk to ourselves; we want to capture the attention of the nation with a compelling case for doubling food and agricultural research and education.

DITTUS's first step, which is already underway, is to conduct individual visits with National C-FAR members to build a base of thoughts and ideas. They also have requested that each Legislative Committee member send them 1) their ideas regarding the five greatest challenges or opportunities for the food and agriculture industry, 2) the key players for each of the challenges or opportunities, and 3) a listing of the national and international champions for food and agriculture research. Finally, DITTUS has asked us to assemble a steering committee that can meet with them on an ongoing basis. If you are contacted by DITTUS, please respond to their requests and share with them your ideas and suggestions.

Please Pay Your Dues: Reminders have been sent out, and members of the Membership Committee are calling those who have not yet paid. We now have 92 members. So far 25 members have not renewed for 2002. We need your continuing support, participation, and help in recruiting new members.

Congratulations to David Graves, National C-FAR Vice President and President of the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives for being appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture to the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics (NAREEE) Advisory Board. Other appointees to the Board are Tonya Antle, Associate at Tanimura & Antle and Head of Operations at Natural Selection Foods, San Juan Bautista, California; Ronald W. Hardy, Director, Hagerman Fish Culture Experiment Station, University of Idaho, Hagerman, Idaho; Phillip E. Nelson, Head, Department of Food Science, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana; John W. Suttie, Professor, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin; Tom Fretz, Dean and Director, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland; Ghassem Asrar, Associate Administrator for Earth Sciences, NASA, Washington, DC; Gilbert Leveille, Vice President of Technology and Food Systems Design at Cargill, Inc. and President of the Riley Memorial Foundation, Wayzata, Minnesota; Homer L. Wilkes, State Conservationist, National Resources Conservation Service, USDA, Jackson, Mississippi; Clifford Gabriel, Deputy Associate Director for Science, Office of Science and

Technology Policy, Executive Office of the President, Washington, DC; and Krishna Rao Dronamraju, President of the Foundation for Genetic Research, Houston, Texas.

The NAREEE Advisory Board meeting will be held October 28-30 at The Capital Hilton, 16th and K Streets, N.W., Washington, DC. Major agenda items include National Agriculture Library Interagency Task Force Report; Update on ARS National Programs' Peer Review Process; USDA's Interagency Task Force for 2002 Farm Bill; Workforce Development for the Food, Agriculture, and Natural Resources System; and the Economic Research Service's (ERS) Programs. The meeting is open to the public, and there will be opportunities for public comment. Members of National C-FAR are encouraged to attend this meeting and bring any of the concerns and suggestions to the attention of the Board. The Board has been very supportive of National C-FAR and has afforded us several opportunities to present our views.

Vic Lechtenberg, Dean of Agriculture at Purdue and Chair of the NAREEE Advisory Board since the 1995 Food Security Act created it, will no longer be on the Board. His strong leadership has been very instrumental in developing the advisory positions presented to the Secretary of Agriculture. Vic was one of the early advocates and supporters of the creation of National C-FAR. He helped scrape together some seed money and has been a respected member of our advisory committee. We know that Vic will certainly remain active in the advocacy of food and agricultural research, and we plan to continue to seek his sage advice.

Ag Research Funding in Limbo: Agricultural appropriations are not completed for FY2003, which began on October 1. The Appropriations Committee staff hint that it may be February before Congress either passes several omnibus spending bills or maintains the current continuing resolution at the FY 2002 levels. The President's FY 2003 budget for Research, Education, and Economics in the USDA, the main program area for food and ag research and education, was for \$2.329 billion, less than the \$2.529 billion in FY 2002 and \$2.405 billion in 2001. The portion of this budget that funds extension, research, and education at Land-Grant universities (CSREES) accounts for about one-half of these funds. The Agricultural Research Service (ARS) accounts for most of the rest. For the 2003 CSREES budget, the President proposed \$1.029 billion compared with \$1.041 billion for 2002. Currently, the House committee action is for \$1.074 billion, and the Senate action is for \$1.188 billion. Based on these levels, it looks as if the food and ag research budget for 2003 will be flat or increased slightly, which is a far from meeting our doubling goal. The goal requires an increase of 15% annually for the next five years.

States' Ill Fate: Our support of food and ag research and education funding is becoming even more critical in light of the appropriation limo in Washington and the deep and widespread cuts in state food and ag research and education budgets. In Virginia, for example, the early retirement of faculty and extension is eviscerating core programs. Many other states are suffering the same fate. The continuing decrease in the percentage of funding for research and extension coming from federal sources makes the impacts of state budget cuts even more devastating. This dramatizes the importance of greatly increasing federal funding to help support the research so important to the long-term competitiveness of U.S. agriculture, the viability of rural communities, the health and safety of our food supply, and the sustainability of the environment and natural resources. Our challenge grows each day.

A National Institute for Ag Research? In view of the flat and shrinking budgets for food and agriculture research and education, Section 7404 was slipped into the Farm Bill to explore whether we need a new institutional structure, such as an institute comparable with the National Health Institute. The Secretary of Agriculture has received 28 nominations for the eight-member

Task Force created in the Farm Bill to address the question: Should a National Institute for Agricultural Research be established? The Task Force's duties are to conduct a review of the purpose, efficiency, effectiveness, and impact on agricultural research of the Agricultural Research Service and to conduct a review and evaluation of the merits of establishing one or more National Institutes (such as National Institutes for Plant and Agricultural Sciences) and recommendations on the structure, multi-state location, and funding. If you want more information on the task force, contact Marshall Tarkington at 202-720-3173 (e-mail: MTarkington@ARS.USDA.gov) and review the postings at www.ars.usda.gov/newla/ree_task.html.

Send Us Your Success Stories and Suggestions, Please: Rob Hedberg, Chair of our Research Committee, is soliciting your success stories and suggestions for future topics of contributions to food and agricultural research and education. The National C-FAR Board of Directors has allocated to the Research Committee \$10,000 to continue producing and distributing one-page success stories that document the benefits of publicly funded food, agriculture, and conservation research. National C-FAR members are encouraged to suggest topics or submit drafts of a one-pager. To suggest a topic, provide the Research Committee a summary of up to 25 words and one to four pages of source material (less is better than more). Send these drafts or topics as well as names of suggested Congressional staff and administration officials who should be included on our mailing list to receive these stories on a monthly basis to Rob (robhedberg@erols.com or 202-408-5388).

Guidelines for Research Accomplishment One-Page Success Stories

The Objective: To develop eye-catching materials that will be read quickly and leave a favorable impression about public investment in food and agricultural research. These success stories will be distributed to Congressional offices and other policy makers to illustrate benefits from the full range of federally funded food, agriculture, and conservation research.

The Product: Each success story will be a one-page, one-sided document similar to a full-page magazine ad. The format will include a title, a subtitle, two to three paragraphs of text describing the research AND ITS BENEFITS, and a closing sentence on the payback, either for the particular research effort or on research in general. A final text block will include the National C-FAR logo and an appropriate phrase extolling the value of research.

To the extent practical, it will be desirable to mention the specific state or facility where the research was conducted and/or the region where benefits will be strongly felt. Information about the costs and benefits of the research is also desirable. Emphasis should be placed on the current benefits rather than past benefits that may no longer be fully appreciated. Brief mention of promising opportunities for related ongoing research would be appropriate, but not mandatory.

Each success story should include an appropriate photo or possibly a colorful graphic and a contact person for more details. The contact person should be the policy liaison with the organization that has suggested the topic, one who is familiar with the National C-FAR effort. Readily available literature may also be cited.

The Process: The Research Committee plans to produce 12 one-page success stories in the coming year. Topics already completed include Eradicating Witch Weed, Producing Penicillin, Combating Anthrax, and Using Biotechnology to Overcome Bovine Mastitis. In the coming quarter, we plan to produce one-pagers on Eliminating Food Allergens, Health-Promoting Phyto-

Chemicals, and Growth of the Wine Industry Through Research and Research-Based Standards that Spawn the Frozen Food Industry.

Selection of topics for subsequent quarters will be made at meetings in December, March, and June. Once a topic is selected, we will work with our professional writer to draft or refine the story. The writer will work interactively with a contact from the group that proposed the topic, the Research Committee, and DITTUS Communications to deliver a final product that is acceptable to everyone. To review the style and content of the current prototype one-pagers visit www.NCFAR.org. At the top of the page, click on “What Are We Doing” and scroll down to “Research Committee Documents.”

Feast or Famine: We either seem to eat too much food or have too little food to eat. A report in the October 9 *Journal of the American Medical Association* noted that 30.5% of Americans are obese compared with 22.9% a decade ago. Two-thirds of us are overweight. Fat is not necessarily happy. Obesity is linked to heart disease, cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure, and lung disease and accounts for some 300,000 deaths annually. But excess is much the lesser of the evil of starvation, which faces millions in sub-Saharan Africa today. Listen to the blunt assessment by Dr. Ephraim Kabaija, Rwandan Minister of Agriculture, made at a recent meeting in Kigali, Rwanda on September 30.

Hunger remains a major peril and has become an ever-increasing threat. It is a threat to Rwanda's population, and the number of malnourished children grows by the day—about 30% of the population continues to starve. Over the next decade, several million people may go hungry.

There is the need to act rather than go round in circles, lamenting about the same things and come up with no solution. The hungry population is not bothered about technology and modernity but is bothered about food. The empty bellies of African children are not yelling organic or inorganic, genetically or not genetically modified. What they need is food! In addition, the degradation of the environment poses a great threat to farming practices in Rwanda, and this has a significant impact on the harvest; gradually, the food basket shrinks, yet well being depends on agriculture.

By Joe Coffey
Secretary/Treasurer
National C-FAR