



NATIONAL COALITION FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

Media Advisory

OUT OF THE TRASH AND ONTO TRAYS

“Increasing Fruit & Vegetable Consumption in the School Lunch Program”

Washington, DC – September 10, 2012, For Immediate Release – How to persuade children to eat the fruits and vegetables provided in their school lunches is the subject of National C-FAR’s eleventh Research Hill Seminar in 2012 on Friday, September 14 at a ‘Lunch~N~Learn’ at noon in 1300 Longworth House Office Building. The featured speaker is Dr. David R. Just, Director of the Cornell Center for Behavioral Economics in Child Nutrition Programs.

“Research shows there are cost-effective approaches that can get our children to choose to eat the fruits and vegetables in their school lunches instead of throwing them into the trash,” says Just.

“This presentation provides an excellent example of the value of federally funded food and agricultural research, extension and education in producing the scientific outcomes and outreach needed to meet 21st century challenges and opportunities,” says Chuck Conner, President of the National Coalition for Food & Agricultural Research (National C-FAR).

Abstract: The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act introduced new guidelines for school lunch, including the requirement that lunch must include a fruit or vegetable serving to receive federal reimbursement. While it appears that this approach emphasizes nutrition, the majority of those fruits and vegetables actually end up in the trash! The fruits and vegetables are placed on a child’s tray by default, and the child can choose to discard those items. Research funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture shows that some of the fruits and vegetables are eaten, but the majority are thrown away, costing the school system thousands of dollars and doing nothing to improve child nutrition. Learn the unique aspects of food decision-making that may undermine default options such as this, and find out what approaches are much more cost-effective, impact the nutrition of a wider number of children, and ultimately revolutionize school lunch. Alternative approaches that emphasize student choice, paired with subtle nudges toward healthier choices, have large impacts on fruit and vegetable consumption at nearly no cost. From offering pre-cut fruit to optimizing placement of salad bars, food service directors and policymakers can implement no-cost and low-cost changes in lunchrooms that lead students to make smarter, healthier food decisions.

Seminar presentations are available at http://www.ncfar.org/Hill_Seminar_Series.asp. The seminar is open to the public and the media.

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 in its sixth year, regularly presents leading-edge researchers working to provide answers to pressing issues confronting the public and Congress. The Hill Seminar Series helps demonstrate the value of public investment in food and agricultural research—investment that returns 45 percent per year on average, and \$20 in economic benefit from every \$1 investment in food and ag research.

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.