



NATIONAL COALITION FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

Media Advisory

THE NEXT 40 YEARS

“The Challenge of Feeding 9.6 Billion”

Washington, DC – September 26, 2012, For Immediate Release – The challenge of investing in the research needed to enable agriculture to feed 9.6 billion people is the subject of National C-FAR’s 12th Research Hill Seminar of 2012. The Lunch-N-Learn seminar will be hosted by National C-FAR sponsor, the Alliance to Feed the Future, as a preview of Food Days in October and will be held Friday, September 28 at noon in 1302 Longworth House Office Building. The featured speaker is Dr. Robert L. Thompson, Visiting Scholar at Johns Hopkins University’s Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies in Washington, DC.

“With the projected growth in population, the world’s farmers will have to double food production by mid-century, primarily through utilizing technology to improve farming efficiency,” says Thompson. “It is going to take a significant increase in public and private investments in adaptive agricultural research just to sustain present productivity levels, not to mention achieve the needed doubling or more in land and water productivity.”

“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:

With the projected growth in population, the world’s farmers are being asked to produce enough more food to feed the equivalent of two more Chinas in the next 40 years. Add in the changes in diet from growing affluence and urbanization and some use of agricultural commodities as feedstocks in producing biofuels, and it is not hard to construe a scenario in which world agricultural production needs to double by mid-century. Where can this production come from? We could double the number of acres of land in crop production worldwide, but only at the cost of massive destruction of forests, with accompanying loss of wildlife habitat, biodiversity and carbon sequestration capacity—all unacceptable environmental outcomes. The only sustainable future is one in which we close to double the average productivity of land already in production worldwide. Moreover, the world’s farmers will need to more than double—perhaps triple—the average productivity of the fresh water they use as growing cities outbid them for available water. On top of these challenges, all agro-ecosystems will be shifting with climate change. It is going to take a significant increase in public and private investments in adaptive agricultural research just to sustain present productivity levels, not to mention achieve the needed doubling or more in land and water productivity. Malthus has been wrong for more than two centuries because he underestimated the power of agricultural research to increase productivity in agriculture faster than the demand for food has grown. There is no more excuse for him to be right in the 21st century than he was in the 19th or 20th, but he will continue to be wrong only if we redouble our commitment to investments in agricultural research.

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.

About the Alliance to Feed the Future

The mission of the Alliance to Feed the Future is to raise awareness and improve understanding of the benefits & necessity of modern food production and technology in order to meet global demand. For more information visit www.alliancetofeedthefuture.org.

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.