INVASIVE WEEDS AND BIOENERGY CROPS
“Economic Boon or Environmental Disaster?”

Washington, DC – March 4, For Immediate Release – The economic and environmental pros and cons of incentivizing fast growing invasive plants as biofuel feedstocks will be discussed at National C-FAR’s Lunch~N~Learn hill research seminar at noon on Thursday, March 7 in 1302 Longworth House Office Building. The seminar is being held in conjunction with National Invasive Species Awareness Week. The featured speaker is Dr. Jacob Barney, assistant professor at Virginia Tech in the Department of Plant Pathology, Physiology, and Weed Science.

“We need to be careful when selecting and growing bioenergy crops to avoid the unintended consequence of exacerbating our nation’s serious invasive species challenges,” says Barney.

“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:
Bioenergy crops are being selected for rapid growth rates, low input requirements, and tolerance of poor growing conditions—traits shared by many of our worst invasive plants—to meet federal renewable fuel mandates. To this end, the EPA is in the final approval stages that would allow two invasive grasses, giant reed (Arundo donax) and Napiergrass (Pennisetum purpureum), to qualify as advanced biofuel feedstocks under the nation’s renewable fuel standard, which may put native habitats at risk of invasion. This presentation will present the latest research on the economic and environmental pros and cons of incentivizing fast growing invasive plants as biofuel feedstocks.

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

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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.