FARM ANIMAL RESEARCH IN CRISIS
A Neglected Research Resource for Advancing Human Health and Animal Agriculture

Washington, DC—June 2, 2014, For Immediate Release – Farm animals as the only dual-purpose research models that benefit both human medicine and agriculture will be the focus of a National C-FAR research seminar on Friday, June 6 at Noon in 1300 Longworth House Office Building. The presenter is Dr. James Ireland, Professor in the Animal Science and Physiology Departments at Michigan State University (MSU).

“Near exclusive use of mice as translatable biomedical models for human diseases/disorders impedes the pace of discovery of new drugs and therapies to improve human health,” says Ireland. “Moreover, the very minor federal funding for competitive grants for farm animal research jeopardizes development of new methods to resolve the complex global challenges facing animal agriculture, which is critical to sustaining an abundant supply of high quality, safe and affordable meat, milk and eggs produced in the U.S.”

“These presentations provide excellent examples 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 and Agricultural Research (National C-FAR).

ABSTRACT: Seventeen Nobel Prize winners have used farm animals such as cattle, pigs, sheep, goats, horses and chickens as research models. Learn about the importance of farm animals as the only dual-purpose research models that benefit both human medicine and agriculture, and the consequences of losing farm animals as a research resource. In many cases farm animals make the best biomedical models for diverse human diseases and disorders because of their similarity in size, physiology, immune system and genetic makeup to humans. Nevertheless, mice have become the overwhelming translatable model of choice for biomedical research on complex human disorders at NIH. Farm animals are also underutilized for basic research in animal agriculture. In 2013, only $50 million of USDA’s $155 billion budget was made available by the USDA-NIFA-AFRI competitive grants program for farm animal research. Research using farm animals is clearly in jeopardy because of the near exclusive use of mice as translatable biomedical models and very minor federal funding for competitive grants for farm animal research.

The seminar is open to the public and the media.

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National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research (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 tenth 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.