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**CORNUCOPIA IN THE CITIES**

**GROWING URBAN AGRICULTURE WITH TREES**

**Washington, DC**—July 22, 2014. For Immediate Release – An integrated approach to development of food products that deliver nutrition from “farm to cell” will be the focus of a National C-FAR research seminar, held twice, at 10 am in 337 Russell Senate Office Building, and again at a noon luncheon, on Friday, July 28 in 1300 Longworth House Office Building. The presenter is Gary Bentrup, MLA, a US Forest Service research landscape planner with the USDA National Agroforestry Center (NAC) located on the campus of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

“Advances in research are showing how incorporating trees in urban landscapes contribute to diverse sustainable systems for growing food in cities that will increase food security,” Bentrup said.

“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).

**Background:** In the United States, over 80 percent of our population now lives in metropolitan area. As our urban population has grown, so too has the complexity of how to feed people who are far removed from the actual production of foods. Growing food in urban and peri-urban areas can be an important component in our nation’s agricultural production portfolio. Urban agriculture can provide a local source of fresh healthy food, create jobs, promote physical activity, increase community connections, create biologically diverse habitats, and raise surrounding property values. Accomplishing these interrelated goals can be enhanced by incorporating trees and shrubs into the fabric of urban and peri-urban agriculture. Woody species benefit urban agriculture by adding nutritionally-rich nuts and fruits into the mix of food products that can be grown while creating favorable microclimates for vegetable crops. Supporting ecosystem services including pollination, biological pest control, air quality, and increased resiliency to climate change are enhanced by these perennial plants. Urban trees have been shown to strengthen sense of ownership, community well-being, and aesthetics; value-added features for urban food plots. Contaminated soils in cities are often a barrier to growing food safely and fast growing species like poplar trees can aid in cleaning up the soil so sites are suitable for food production while also providing a biofeedstock for generating energy in combined heat and power systems. Advances in research are laying the groundwork for developing diverse sustainable systems for growing food in cities that will increase food security.

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](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](http://www.ncfar.org); or contact Tom Van Arsdall, Executive Director, at [tom@vanarsdall.com](mailto:tom@vanarsdall.com) or (703) 509-4746.