CHOICES

Improving Nutrition Among Low Income and Food Insecure Individuals

Washington, DC—October 28, 2015, for Immediate Release – Research on the role of behavioral research in improving nutrition will be the subject of National C-FAR’s research seminar on Thursday, November 5, offered at 10 a.m. in 188 Russell Senate Office Building and again at noon in 1300 Longworth House Office Building. The presenter is Dr. David Just, Cornell University.

“When we see that people on food assistance suffer from obesity at higher rates, our natural response is to suggest restrictions on the assistance. That can be counterproductive and demeaning,” says Just. “Simple and cheap changes, like placing vegetable displays at waist level instead of on the ground, can have a huge impact on the nutrition of food pantry patrons without making them feel patronized. It keeps the decision in their hands.”

“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).

Highlights: Stronger measures are being suggested, and in some cases taken, in an effort to curb the costs of childhood and adult obesity. Economic research has shown that these measures can sometimes have counterintuitive impacts on populations that are food insecure. Recent evidence suggests that low-income populations are subject to greater stress and distraction, potentially leading to poor nutritional decisions. However, cognitive stress can also cause individuals to be more receptive to indirect suggestions about nutritionally beneficial food choices. Research from food insecure populations served at food pantries shows evidence of healthy eating behaviors in the presence of interventions including positive reinforcement of nutritional food choices. These results show promise for implementation of the framework behind the ‘Smarter Lunchrooms’ research in a variety of food decision contexts.

The seminar is open to the public and the media.

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The 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.