PARTNERS FOR LIFE

THE UNTAPPED POTENTIAL OF PLANT MICROBIOMES IN AGRICULTURE

Washington, DC—November 9, 2015, for Immediate Release – Research on the potential of plant microbiomes in agriculture will be the subject of National C-FAR’s research seminar on Friday, November 13, offered at 10 a.m. in 328A Russell Senate Office Building and again at noon in Longworth House Office Building. The presenter is Dr. Jan Leach, Colorado State University.

“Discovering how to use the beneficial collaborations of plants and their microbiomes to promote sustainable and healthy food production in diverse environments is the next frontier for agricultural research,” says Leach.

“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: Plants and soils are associated with diverse assemblages of microbes that influence their health and productivity. These assemblages, called microbiomes, influence the responses of plants to pathogens, pests and environmental stresses (drought, heat and nutrient limitation), as well as the efficient use of scarce water resources and the long-term health of soils. Modern technologies, such as high-throughput sequencing, computational biology and many ‘-omics’ technologies, are enabling exploration of the composition, function, and activities of microbiomes. The application of these technologies has illustrated a vast potential for exploiting microbiomes to sustainably increase crop quality and production and agroecosystem health. Rapid advances and the realization of these benefits for agriculture will require investing in interdisciplinary research and training in plant microbiomes, particularly to capture and decipher complex data reflecting plant-microbe-environment interactions in diverse cropping systems. Given the technological and analytical advances resulting from the human microbiome efforts, the time is right to promote an understanding of plant microbiomes targeted at improving agriculture.

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.