Washington, DC—April 27, for Immediate Release – Research on industrial hemp production will be the subject of National C-FAR’s research seminar on Friday, April 29, at 10 AM in 328A Russell Senate Office Building, and again at noon in 1300 Longworth House Office Building. The presenters are Dr. Ronald Turco and Dr. Janna Beckerman, Purdue University.

“Research is needed on-the-farm and throughout the supply chain planning process to ensure sustainable hemp production for food and fiber,” states Turco.

“Our research and extension efforts will help commercial hemp growers effectively and sustainably identify genetic (disease resistance) resources and manage pests while protecting the environment,” says Beckerman.

“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 and Agricultural Research (National C-FAR).

Highlights: Industrial hemp has been bred based upon traits such as fiber strength, yield and oil quality and is distinct from marijuana in that the THC concentration (the principal psychoactive agent) is less than 0.3% on a dry weight basis. Approximately 75% of the world’s supply of hemp for fiber originates in China, while a large portion of hemp used for seed and oil is imported from Canada. U.S. hemp imports exceeded $38.5 million in 2013. The value of all hemp-based products (food, body products, auto parts, clothing etc.,) exceeds nearly $581 million annually in the U.S. The Farm Bill of 2014 as amended in 2015 provided that research institutions and state departments of agriculture can grow industrial hemp, as part of an agricultural pilot program, if the program is allowed under state laws where the institutions are located. The past legal status of hemp and difficulties in obtaining certified seed have resulted in a knowledge gap on agricultural production practices. The changing legal environment could lead to new industries and spur economic development in rural areas, but research is needed on the farm and throughout the supply chain planning process to ensure sustainable production. We will cover our experiences with the entire process from obtaining the seed to considerations of final products and outline our perspectives on needs in terms of the future of hemp production.

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.