BANKING SEEDS FOR FUTURE NEEDS

Washington, DC—February 7, 2018, for Immediate Release – Seed banking’s importance to agriculture will be the subject of NCFAR’s seminar on Monday, February 12, at noon in 1302 Longworth House Office Building. The presenter is Dr. Colin Khoury, USDA Agricultural Research Service, Ft. Collins, Colorado.

“That food security starts with good seeds is something that our Founding Fathers knew well, as many of them actively supported the collection of and experimentation with diverse crops,” says Khoury. “The work to safeguard crop diversity, explore its potential, and make it available to plant breeders and thus to farmers across the nation and the world is as important today as it ever was.”

“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 Andy LaVigne, President of the National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research (NCFAR).

Highlights: Crop genetic diversity is a critically important natural resource, underpinning food and nutrition security and the contributing to the productivity that sustains vibrant agricultural economies. The degree to which plant breeders are able to make use of this diversity to improve agricultural crops is dependent on how well the seeds and information about them are safeguarded and made available, primarily via genebanks. The public national and international genebank system provides these services, with a number of opportunities for further development. Dr. Khoury will provide an overview of the importance of the crop genetic diversity that underpins agriculture and of the genebank systems that conserve and provide access to this natural resource. He will discuss opportunities to strengthen the systems with the aim of improving rural economies, food security, agricultural production resilience, and nutrition.

The seminar is open to the public and the media.

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The National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research (NCFAR) 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. NCFAR’s Hill Seminar Series, now in its fourteenth 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 NCFAR President Andy LaVigne 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.