BIOTECH REGS—SMALL BUSINESSES AND UNIVERSITIES

Regulatory Barriers to the Development of Innovative Agricultural Biotechnology
by Small Businesses and Universities

Washington, DC—March 20, 2018, for Immediate Release – A new CAST paper focusing on opportunities and challenges for small businesses and universities in the development of innovative agricultural biotechnology will be the subject of NCFAR’s “National Agriculture Week seminar on Friday, March 23, at 10 am in 328A Russell Senate Office Building and again at noon in 1302 Longworth House Office Building. The presenter is Dr. Alan McHughen, CE, Biotechnology Specialist and Geneticist, University of California–Riverside

“Taxpayers support safe genetically engineered crops and foods improved with wider consumer and environmental benefits,” says Dr. McHughen. “Many such beneficial products have been developed by public and small private breeders, but unnecessary regulations are keeping them off the market.”

“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: Since the early 1980s, American taxpayers have invested heavily in public, university, and small business developers of crops and foods improved using biotechnology. Yet the return on this investment, in terms of new, improved genetically engineered (GE) crops, is disappointingly thin. Although the U.S. Department of Agriculture, universities, and small businesses have developed dozens of GE crops—with improved traits ranging from healthier and less allergenic to safer and more environmentally sustainable—and carried many through safety and premarket testing, almost all have been denied commercial release mainly because of U.S. regulatory obstacles that disproportionately penalize public, academic, and smaller private breeding entities. This report analyzes the current U.S. regulatory system for GE crops, compares it with those of major trading partners, and considers various aspects of agricultural biotechnology regulation, including labeling and scientifically sound alternatives to the unnecessarily restrictive current regulatory system to allow the benefits of safe agricultural biotechnology products from small business and universities to accrue to farmers, consumers, and the environment.

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.