



January 31, 2018

Dear NCFAR Members, Sponsors & Supporters,

I am pleased to present the 2017 NCFAR Annual Report ([Click Here](#) for PPT version). NCFAR's basic mission *is to sustain and increase federal funding in food and agricultural research, Extension and education (RE&E)*. Our unique role is to provide a common forum and a unified voice, bringing together stakeholders in the research, extension and education (RE&E) community and entities representing research 'customers'—e.g., the diverse array of *stakeholders who need and benefit from research outcomes*. As a customer-led coalition, NCFAR seeks to *complement* the efforts of allied groups, such as APLU (BAA-ESCAP & ECOP), CAST, the AFRI Coalition, SoAR, Friends of ARS, and Friends of NASS. The actions and outcomes highlighted in this report are made possible through the ownership involvement of Members and Sponsors, with limited funding leveraged through collaborative efforts.

Two basic premises help guide the NCFAR [Board of Directors](#) in shaping the program of action: 1) There is significant value when research 'customers' play a more prominent role in making the "ask" for federal funding, and 2) It is important to focus limited available resources where NCFAR can contribute *maximum value* to the larger effort.

NCFAR continued to focus on the following areas in 2017:



Education, with a Purpose—Laying the groundwork for longer term funding success through our highly successful '[Lunch~N~Learn' Hill Seminar Series](#). **RESULTS!!!** 510 attendees through 7 seminars in 2017—more than 8,300 attendees through 131 seminars over 13 years—about the value of federal funding in food and agricultural RE&E through a mosaic of leading-edge presenters and topics and that also provided timely information that help staff do their jobs. NCFAR also partnered in the inaugural congressional ag research exhibition. The '*education with a purpose*' objective is *more informed and positive recommendations by hill staff to Members of Congress about funding for food and agricultural RE&E*.

Targeted Advocacy—Providing opportunities to give a greater voice to 'customers' and other stakeholders in support of sustaining and increasing funding in the budget and appropriations process and a strengthened farm bill research title. As 2017 came to an end, while advocacy continued, FY18 funding levels remained unresolved. Continued implementation of 2014 Farm Act. Foundation for Food and Agricultural Research (FFAR) open for business and moving forward with aggressive business plan. Preparations for Farm Bill reauthorization underway.

2018 presents *fresh challenges and opportunities*, including the fourteenth year of the '[Lunch~N~Learn' Hill Seminar Series](#), with collaborative support for the second Congressional Ag Research Exhibition; strong support for a new Summit on the Future of Agricultural Research; farm bill reauthorization; targeted advocacy in the annual budget and appropriations process; actions in support of FFAR and other research provisions during Farm Bill reauthorization; continued support for Breakthroughs 2030—a 10-year research strategy and justification. Limited resources will be leveraged through improved coordination and collaboration with allied organizations.

Thanks to the sustained involvement and support of NCFAR [Members and Sponsors](#), your organization is well positioned to take on these critical challenges and opportunities. The 2017 budget year ended with a strong bottom line, with healthy reserves. Efforts will continue to build Membership-Sponsorship in 2018 to support the mission.

I look forward to working with you in 2018. Your continuing ownership involvement is needed and appreciated.

R. Thomas Van Orsdall
Executive Director

NCFAR 2017 ANNUAL REPORT

[Click Here](#) for a PowerPoint (PDF) version of NCFAR's 2017 Annual Report

NCFAR as a 'customer-led' coalition took outreach and advocacy actions on a number of fronts in 2017 in support of federal funding for food and ag RE&E. Insights on the direction set by the Board can be found in the [2017 annual meeting minutes](#) and the December 11, 2017 [Year-End Board minutes](#).

OUTREACH—EDUCATION WITH A PURPOSE

'Lunch~N~Learn' Hill Seminars—7 Seminars with 510 Attendees in 2017:

The hill seminar series is *education with a purpose*. NCFAR is working to increase hill staff awareness of, and appreciation for, the value of food and agricultural RE&E and their important outcomes. This effort lays the necessary foundation of knowledge for maintaining existing funding levels, and for achieving future funding increases when the budget climate improves. The moderator for NCFAR and guest presenter at each hill seminar are tasked to ensure the seminars stay "on message" by highlighting (1) the contribution of federal funding to the project, and (2) other research and science-based outcomes that need additional funding, driven by identified or anticipated real-world challenges. In keeping with NCFAR's mission to advocate funding for ALL food and agricultural RE&E, a mix of intra-mural and extramural speakers and projects is selected.



13 years
131 seminars
8,300+ attendees

The 'Lunch~N~Learn' Hill Seminar series has a high brand recognition. Attendance by hill staff has been strong, and feedback from key hill staff has been positive.

Leading researchers representing a variety of disciplines from well over 50 institutions and agencies across the nation have presented research related to timely topics of interest to hill staff, agency officials and interested stakeholders. [Click Here](#) for more seminar series highlights, including topics, speakers, presentations, media releases and photo collages back to the first year, in 2005.

It is a major challenge to get busy hill staff to attend briefings. NCFAR's team is literally competing for their time and attention. The Research Outreach Committee (ROC) selects eye-catching titles for timely and substantive research topics that will pique curiosity and motivate recipients to look further at the abstract to learn what the heck the seminar is about, and hopefully deciding to make time to attend. Examples are provided in the box of the first words they saw in the subject line of their e-mail invitations to our hill seminars in 2016. Our team works diligently to maintain a contacts database for about 2,000 hill staff, agency officials and interested stakeholders.

FARM ECONOMY UPDATE
PLANT BREEDING AND GENETICS
ACCELERATING PATH TO IMPROVING PUBLIC HEALTH
THROUGH FOOD BASED SOLUTIONS
ROBOTIC WEED WARS
DIGITAL AGRICULTURE
WHY DOES HONEY BEE HEALTH MATTER?
FARMING IN THE FOREST? YES, INDEED!



NCFAR also collaborated in the inaugural **Congressional Agricultural Research Exhibition**, with over 20 exhibits, 7 Members of Congress attending and NCFAR President Andy LaVigne emceeding.

The “*brand identity*” of the “Lunch~N~Learn” Hill Seminars is well established. Hill staff have provided continuing feedback that they appreciate receiving the invitations and take away information that is useful in their own work. The House Ag Committee also used the first seminar of 2017 as a briefing for Ag LA’s for a hearing that week on the farm economy!

The active involvement of members and supporters remains crucial to success. Members and supporters continue to be responsive to requests for speaker-topic nominations. NCFAR works to leverage limited funds through collaborative efforts—including generous sponsorships, speaker travel costs underwritten by institutions and national trade associations, and through partnering efforts such as with CAST.

How well has this “*education with a purpose*” worked in advancing NCFAR’s mission? Unfortunately, no way has been identified of measuring the impact of the seminar series as a ‘building block’ for hill staff recommendations to Members of Congress regarding funding. At a minimum hill staff that receive the e-mails and/or attend are more aware and informed about what federal RE&E funding provides, laying the groundwork for more positive outcomes when advocacy actions and contacts are made.

TARGETED ADVOCACY ACTIONS

In keeping with its mission, NCFAR took a number of targeted actions on the advocacy front related to budget and appropriations, implementation of the 2014 Agricultural Act, farm bill reauthorization and building the base of support for federal funding for food and ag RE&E. Selected highlights:

- [President-Elect Letter](#) in support of increased investments in food & ag science.
- [Wilkins Farm Bill Testimony](#), House Ag Research Subc.
- [Ag Research Testimony](#), Senate Ag, including group statement of support for FFAR.
- [FY18 Testimony](#) to House Ag Appropriations, plus [group letter](#).
- [FY18 Testimony](#) to Senate Ag Appropriations, plus [group letter](#).

Appropriations advocacy benefited from enhanced coordination and collaboration between NCFAR and APLU BAA.

NCFAR also played a role in facilitating other group letters, sending out action alerts about opportunities where stakeholders could add their voices in support of federal funding for food and agricultural RE&E, and signing group letters as appropriate. [Click Here](#) to access archived documents.

We look forward to your growing ownership involvement and support in 2018. Your feedback, questions and suggestions are always welcome!

Respectfully Submitted,

R. Thomas Van Arsdall
Executive Director