



January 27, 2020

Dear NCFAR Members, Sponsors & Supporters,

I am pleased to present the 2019 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-ESCOMP & 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 2019:



Education, with a Purpose—Laying the groundwork for longer term funding success through our highly successful '[Lunch~N~Learn](#)' Hill Seminar Series. **RESULTS!!!** 500 attendees reached through 9 seminars in 2019—more than 9,600 attendees through 153 seminars over 15 years—demonstrating the value of federal funding in food and agricultural RE&E through a mosaic of leading-edge presenters and topics and that also provide timely information that help staff do their jobs. NCFAR also collaborated with a great team in the third annual Congressional Ag Research Exhibition, a highly successful and growing initiative (also inaugural briefing on Senate side). The '*education with a purpose*' objective of these outreach initiatives is *more informed and positive recommendations by hill staff to Members of Congress about*

federal 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. In a challenging budget climate, FY20 funding levels for REE were increased slightly over FY19 levels, with \$425 million for AFRI.

2020 presents *fresh challenges and opportunities* in a Presidential election year, including year 16 of the '[Lunch~N~Learn](#)' Hill Seminar Series and targeted advocacy in the annual budget and appropriations process. 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 2019 budget year ended with a balanced bottom line, and healthy reserves. I look forward to working with you in 2020.

R. Thomas Van Ordall
Executive Director

NCFAR 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

[Click Here](#) for a PowerPoint (PDF) version of NCFAR's 2019 Annual Report

NCFAR as a 'customer-led' coalition took outreach and advocacy actions on a number of fronts in 2018 in support of federal funding for food and ag RE&E. Insights on the direction set by the Board can be found in the [2019 annual meeting minutes](#), with additional direction for the 2020 action program reflected in the [December 18, 2019 year-End Board meeting minutes](#).

OUTREACH—EDUCATION WITH A PURPOSE!

The 'Lunch~N~Learn' 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.



15 years
153 seminars
9,600 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. In 2019, there were 9 seminars, with 500 attendees.

Leading researchers representing a variety of disciplines from 70 institutions and agencies across the nation have presented federally funded research and extension efforts 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 inaugural 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 2019. Our team works diligently to maintain a contacts database for about 2,000 hill staff, agency officials and interested stakeholders.

**ENABLING OPEN-SOURCE DATA NETWORKS
BETTER WHISKEY THROUGH SCIENCE
STATUS OF GENOME EDITING IN FOOD ANIMALS
GENE DRIVES TO COMBAT OUR WORST WEEDS
EXTENSION & PARTNER RESPONSE TO FARM
FINANCIAL & MENTAL HEALTH STRESS
COMBATING ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE
MORE THAN JUST THE MALL
SOY-FREE CHICKEN?
BOLSTERING RURAL AMERICA'S FUTURE**

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.

NCFAR also collaborated with 5 other organizations, plus sponsors, in the third annual **Congressional Agricultural Research Exhibition**, with over 30 exhibits from across the nation. The bipartisan Congressional Ag Research Caucus cohosted the Exhibition, with co-chairs Rodney Davis (IL) and Jimmy Panetta (CA) joined by other Members speaking and visiting exhibits along with 250 hill staff and other attendees. An inaugural briefing was held on the Senate side. Leading representatives of REE agencies attended.



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 have these “*education with a purpose*” initiatives 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 federal funding. At a minimum hill staff that receive the email invitations 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 and farm bill implementation, building the base of support for federal funding for food and ag RE&E and planned actions impacting NIFA and ERS.

Appropriations advocacy benefited from enhanced coordination and collaboration between NCFAR and APLU BAA, supporting and reinforcing their 'one ask,' unified approach. Selected highlights:

- [FY20 Testimony](#) to House Ag Appropriations.
- [FY20 Testimony](#) to Senate Ag Appropriations.

The Final FY20 budget signed into law included a modest increase in REE funding, and included \$425 million for AFRI.

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 2020. Your feedback, questions and suggestions are always welcome!

Respectfully Submitted,



R. Thomas Van Arsdall, Executive Director

1/27/20