Media Advisory

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“Investing in a Better Future through Public Agricultural Research”

Washington, DC – For Immediate Release – The economic value of agricultural research is the subject of National C-FAR’s “Lunch~N~Learn” Hill Seminar on Monday, March 14, at noon in 1302 Longworth House Office Building. The featured speaker is Dr. George Norton, Professor, Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics, Virginia Tech, who will report on a CAST publication developed by a Task Force chaired by Dr. Wallace Huffman, Professor in the Department of Economics, Iowa State University.

The authors point out that “agricultural productivity cannot be easily jump-started after a long period of stagnant investment in public agricultural research.” Their report “addresses likely future changes in U.S. agricultural supply and how investments in public agricultural research can improve the future well-being of residents of the United States and the world.”

“This presentation provides excellent perspectives on the value of federally funded food and agricultural research 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 & Agricultural Research (National C-FAR).

Summary: Everyone is concerned with return on investment, and agricultural research continues to be an example of the positive impact well-placed funding can have. Agriculture is a key to the nation’s economy, and research not only boosts that industry, it also promotes solutions for many of the country’s pressing problems. Agricultural research policy covers many important topics including health, energy, environment, rural development, trade, and food safety. The recognized scholars authoring this Commentary provide an assessment of the high “rate of return” agricultural research has delivered to the American and global public and why funding is truly in the public interest. CAST Commentary QTA2011-1, Investing in a Better Future through Public Agricultural Research.

Dr. Norton’s research focuses on international agricultural development, agricultural research evaluation, and integrated pest management. He is a member of a research project entitled “Impact Analysis and Decision Strategies for Agricultural Research,” which addresses policy issues related to the U.S. agricultural research system. His presentation will be available at http://www.ncfar.org/Hill_Seminar_Series.asp. The seminar is open to the public and the media and is featured in concert with National Agriculture Day/Week.

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 entering its sixth year, regularly presents leading-edge researchers working to provide answers to pressing issues confronting the public and Congress. The Hill Seminar Series and Success Profiles help demonstrate the value of public investment in food and agricultural research—investment that returns 45 percent per year on average. 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.

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