



## NATIONAL COALITION FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

Media Advisory

### A DIAGNOSIS OF TROUBLED WATERS

*“Assessing the Health of Streams in Agricultural Landscapes:  
The Impacts of Land Management Change on Water Quality”*

**Washington, DC** – March 20, 2012, For Immediate Release – The quality of the nation's stream waters is the subject of National C-FAR's fourth Research Hill Seminar in 2012 on Monday, March 26, at 10 AM in 337 Russell Senate Office Building and again at a 'Lunch~N~Learn' at noon in 1300 Longworth House Office Building. The featured speaker is Dr. Donald Huggins, Director, Central Plains Center for Bioassessment, Lawrence, KS.

“The health of streams in agriculturally dominated watersheds has long been assumed to be almost entirely dependent on nearby agricultural practices,” says Huggins, an author of the CAST special report. “Despite major investments in conservation, we are finding that a whole systems approach that takes into account the many factors responsible for water and stream degradation may be necessary to repair the quality of the nation's streams and rivers.”

“This presentation provides an excellent example of the value of federally funded food and agricultural research in producing the scientific outcomes and outreach needed to meet 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges and opportunities,” says Chuck Conner, President of the National Coalition for Food & Agricultural Research (National C-FAR).

Governments are making substantial investments in the modification of agricultural production activities. Conservation practices have, indeed, reduced nutrient, sediment, and contaminant loads to those streams, but evidence remains strong that water quality and stream health, especially of those waters draining into the Mississippi River, is still a challenge. Land management practices, then, obviously are but one of multiple factors affecting streams. These range from natural determinants of stream quality to imposed conditions related to current land use, farm practices, altered hydrology, legacy conditions from past uses, and other watershed activities. Understanding the role and interplay of land- and stream-related factors in determining water and stream quality is necessary in implementing watershed changes and allowing time for these changes to translate to stream improvements.

Seminar presentations are available at [http://www.ncfar.org/Hill\\_Seminar\\_Series.asp](http://www.ncfar.org/Hill_Seminar_Series.asp). The seminar is open to the public and the media.

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**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 in its sixth 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](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](http://www.ncfar.org); or contact Tom Van Arsdall, Executive Director, at [tom@vanarsdall.com](mailto:tom@vanarsdall.com) or (703) 509-4746.

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