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Harvesting Opportunities from Lessons Learned in the Maize (Corn) Genome Project

Washington, DC – For Immediate Release – The maize genome sequencing project is the subject of National C-FAR’s “Lunch~N~Learn” Hill Seminar on Monday, July 25, at noon in 1302 Longworth House Office Building. The featured speaker is Dr. Patrick S. Schnable, Baker Professor of Agronomy at Iowa State University founding director of ISU’s Center for Plant Genomics.

“Prior Federal investments in plant genomics research have positioned us to develop crops that exhibit new functionalities and better withstand environmental stresses,” says Schnable.

“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 21st century challenges and opportunities,” says Chuck Conner, President of the National Coalition for Food & Agricultural Research (National C-FAR).

Following its domestication about 10,000 years ago, plant breeders have exploited the extensive genetic diversity of maize (corn) to adapt this species to meet human needs. Over the past 75 years breeders have been tremendously successful at increasing grain yields. But increasing world demand for corn grain for food, feed, fiber and fuel provides new challenges, particularly because future yield increases must take place in a world where critical agricultural inputs will be more expensive (e.g., nitrogen fertilizer) and limited (e.g., water). Over the past 15 years, the Federal government has made substantial research and development investments in plant genomics, including the $30 million maize genome sequencing project. This presentation focuses on how future research and development can be built on the lessons learned from the maize sequencing project to ensure high levels of sustainable agricultural production even in the face of increasing climate variability.

Dr. Schnable’s presentation will be available at 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. 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.