



NATIONAL COALITION FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

Media Advisory

HANDS-ON SCIENCE IN THE WILD

*“Discovery of the Innate Plant-Protective Properties of Plants,
and Delivery to the U.S. Marketplace and Beyond”*

Washington, DC – April 11, 2012, For Immediate Release – Discovering the innate health-protective properties of plants is the subject of National C-FAR’s fifth Research Hill Seminar of 2012 on Monday, April 16, 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. Mary Ann Lila, Director, Plants for Human Health Institute, North Carolina State University.

“Wellness-promoting attributes in plants have now been demonstrated in recent trials,” says Dr. Lila. “However, critical additional research lies ahead before the science translates into public awareness and, more importantly, sustained dietary changes.”

“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).

Abstract: Plants that exist at the extremes in nature can masterfully produce unique chemical cocktails that allow survival despite environmental stresses. These same chemicals, once ingested by man, are capable of interacting with human therapeutic targets to inhibit disease and fortify our body’s metabolism. Today, the ready availability of sophisticated ‘omics’ technologies (genomics, transcriptomics, pharmacogenomics, and metabolomics) has permitted science to elucidate and confirm multiple human health-protective properties linked to consumption of these natural phytochemicals. Consumers are aware of the term ‘antioxidant’ as proactive route to make dietary choices that avoid chronic human diseases—in particular, cancer. Still, research suggests that only 1% of the adult US population (and 2% of kids) consumes the recommended amount of these plant-based components on a daily basis. Urgent research priorities and milestones to be discussed include: 1) validation of bioactive attributes in plant foods and development of clear-cut guidelines for public adoption; 2) development of novel functional food formulations that capture bioactive benefits in a shelf-stable, convenient format that is not cost-prohibitive; and 3) translation of functional food technology into a biofortification strategy to benefit the developing world.

Seminar presentations are available at http://www.ncfar.org/Hill_Seminar_Series.asp. The seminar is open to the public and the media.

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 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.