Dr. Deepak Bhatnagar

We were fortunate that Hurricane Dorian did not enter the gulf. However, we can all feel the pain of the residents of the Bahamas who bore the brunt of the storm in a way that is probably worse than Katrina. But human tragedy is human tragedy, and it hurts the same. We can pray for their resilience, and be an example for them. There are many ways we can send in help to them, and we should try to do so.

For us, the hurricane season goes on till November 30; and we must continue to be ready and fully prepared in case a hurricane comes our way.

Among the items that we are dealing with now is the end of the 2019 fiscal year. Most of the units have made their commitments for their funds. Just in case you did not know, we are required to use up 99.99% of our allocation by September 30, leaving only a few hundred dollars in each account in case of any errors or omissions; hopefully nothing major turns up as no account can end in the negative.

As I mentioned in the All Staff meeting on August 26th, it is also time to work on Performance Plans. All of us should be working on our narratives and IDPs. I will send out the schedule for various steps to completing the process of performance evaluations shortly. These deadlines will be firm because we do not have any room for delays in processing all the documents for SRRC. At the fourth quarter review in mid-September, supervisors must discuss with employees what the expectations are in preparation of the narratives. Scientists should get clarity from the RLs on the publication requirements.

Looking forward to the new fiscal year starting October 1. We hope that we will have a budget in place by then so that we can concentrate totally on our research priorities.
Cultural Diversity Day Celebration
Submitted by: Elena Graves and Jeannine Moraitis

The SRRC 2019 Cultural Diversity Day event was held on Monday, August 19. Twenty-two employees volunteered as cooks and shared their culinary expertise to showcase food that represented their cultural heritage. Over 60 attendees were treated to hearty dishes and exotic savory tastes as well as sweet, delicious desserts. We greatly appreciate the efforts of the cooks as well as those who volunteered with all the work needed for a successful event.
Events and Observances (cont.)

Seminar for the Nominations for 2018 SRRC Outstanding Paper

Submitted by: Matt Lebar

Top 4 SRRC Papers of the Year Competition

On August 16, the Awards Committee hosted a seminar for the 4 senior authors to each give a 10 minute Center-wide presentation, followed by 5 minutes of Q&A.

The Committee’s goal here was to: a) actively involve the Center in listening to colleagues, b) open our eyes to the great work coming out the SRRC, and c) seek our own scientific community’s involvement – in the form of meaningful questions for our authors. This seminar likewise is used to help guide our final Committee vote to select the winner for the Outstanding Paper of the Year at SRRC.

The guidelines state that presentations should:
Clearly state the objective(s), the originality, what research was accomplished, the salient results, and what was the most significant and relevant impact (current or potential).

The 4 presentations were:

Top 4 SRRC Papers of the Year Competition (cont.)

Sunghyun Nam, Daniel A. Alhassan, Brian D. Condon, Alfred D. French, and Zhe Ling. Thermally Induced Structural Transitions in Cotton Fiber Revealed by a Finite Mixture Model of Tenacity Distribution. ACS Sustainable Chemistry and Engineering, 2018, https://doi.org/10.1021/acssuschemeng.7b04919


Center Visitor
Submitted by: Deepak Bhatnagar

**Dr. James Lindsay**, National Program Leader (NP 108) visited SRRC and the Food and Feed Safety Research Unit on August 14-15. Dr. Lindsay met with all FFS scientists and was given an overview of FFS research. His visit also included a trip to the new greenhouse under construction. Dr. Lindsay was very instrumental in making this greenhouse a reality.

Rain Garden
Submitted by: Cathy Mason

Rain garden news! The Greater New Orleans Iris Society, Iris Preservation Group will be donating Giant Blue irises (*Iris giganticaerulea*) for our garden. This iris is our state flower, and is one of the five species making up the Louisiana irises. It was once the predominant Iris species in our area before the drainage projects along the Lakefront in Orleans parish. Normally we see the blue form of this iris, but we may also receive some of the white flowering form as well.

The irises will be planted in our rain garden in the fall, which is the optimal time for thinning and transplanting irises. Irises are just breaking summer dormancy as the temperature begins to drop in the fall and the weather is more conducive to working outside. In the coming years, we will be able to enjoy the iris bloom in early spring.

Location of SRRC Rain Garden after groundwork and rain
2019 Federal Employee Training Symposium of “Discovering the Leader in You”

Submitted by: Mia Schexnayder

The 2019 Federal Employee Training Symposium provided an uplifting session for SRRC employees at the Audubon Tea Room on August 7. The event highlighted several key individuals as they shared personal stories about their distinct leadership journeys. These federal executives gave insightful and compelling stories, sharing their wisdom with the audience:

- Dr. Deepak Bhatnagar, Center Director SRRC
- Calvin W. Turner, Jr., Director, USDA, National Finance Center (NFC)
- Anita R. Adkins, Acting Deputy Director, USDA, NFC
- Dawn Hughes-Morris, 36 years of federal service including Acting Director for NFC and Government Employees Services Divisions (GESD), among others.

In addition, several other executives in leadership positions interacted with employees, providing positive reinforcement of how to harness effective leadership skillsets. Participants appreciated their efforts, as they took every opportunity to connect with their co-workers.

After each speaker discussed the pathways of discovering true leadership potential, attendees participated in a broad range of activities and engagement assessment tools. A special DiSC Classic Personal Profile System session was conducted which focused on the essential components of dominance, influence, steadiness, and conscientiousness in leadership. The activities helped employees discover their own distinct methods of management and prosper using their unique talents. A contest to create the “Biggest House of Cards” was held, designed to embody these leadership skills. The team made up of SRRC and NFC employees won the contest! The SRRC employees were Stephanie Gross, FFS, Crista Madison, CCU, Scott Pelitire, CU, and Mia Schexnayder, CSQ. This DiSC victory was won by building the biggest house of cards with tape, index cards, and markers, using a combination of effective communication and cooperation skills by the four DiSC personalities of the team. The members learned that by understanding themselves, controlling their personal reactions, and maximizing their talents, a positive attitude towards achieving collaborative success can be achieved.
**SRRC Intranet Page Update**

Submitted by: Suhad Wojkowski

Significant updates have been made to our SRRC website, adding the following resources:

- **SRRC Time and Attendance Policy** is available under the link: SRRC Information, Organizations and Policies
- **List of Trusted Journals** is available under the Research Related link (in the column on the left side of the page).

All journals on this list are peer-reviewed and issued by publishers with a demonstrated commitment to standard peer-review practices. These journals also have an editor-in-chief who is a subject specialist and an editorial board, and are transparent in how they operate (e.g. fee structure, country of origin).

The Trusted List is comprehensive, but it is not complete. It consists of journals that are indexed in AGRICOLA, which means a significant portion of their content is about agriculture, food and the related sciences. It is updated monthly, with the most recent List dated August 1, 2019.

Additions to the List are welcomed for journal titles that meet the review criteria/process - especially titles that fall outside the scope of the List; for example, medical titles. If you would like to add/recommend a journal title to the List, contact Suhad.

To check out the SRRC Intranet website, go to: [http://nola.srrc.usda.gov:8000/srrcmenf.htm](http://nola.srrc.usda.gov:8000/srrcmenf.htm)

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**Scientific Presentations and Meetings**

Submitted by: Terri von Hoven

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09/04-05</td>
<td>International Conference on Biological, Agricultural, Environmental &amp; Medical Sciences</td>
<td>Bordeaux, France</td>
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<tr>
<td>09/07-08</td>
<td>Farm to Table International Symposium</td>
<td>New Orleans, LA</td>
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<tr>
<td>09/11-12</td>
<td>Industrial Engineering Conference</td>
<td>Dubai, UAE</td>
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<tr>
<td>09/19-21</td>
<td>International Conference on Chemistry Education &amp; Research</td>
<td>Rome, Italy</td>
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<td>09/30</td>
<td>Plant Science and Research Conference</td>
<td>Valencia, Spain</td>
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<tr>
<td>09/30</td>
<td>International Conference on Recent Advances in Science, Engineering and Technology</td>
<td>Dubai, UAE</td>
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<tr>
<td>09/30</td>
<td>International Conference on Polymer Chemistry</td>
<td>Nanjing, China</td>
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Submitted by: Shannon Beltz

**Job Hazard Assessments:**
Our JHA library is coming along nicely, but it is not complete! Please send me all of the JHAs for your lab. Just attach them to an e-mail and send them my way. I am compiling all of them into a JHA library for all of us to use as a reference.

**Ether Purge:**
Thanks very much to Michael Easson and John Bland for helping to facilitate the removal of expired ethers from SRRC! This was a big project that we have been working on for a few months now. We have now disposed of the most critical items on our list. We will be tracking ether expiration dates (and other potentially explosive chemicals) more closely in the future to avoid keeping these dangerous chemicals for longer than necessary. Please ONLY purchase what you NEED, and be prepared to share so that we can keep quantities low. Thanks for understanding and cooperating.

**Chemical Repository:**
Do you need a chemical? Maybe you just need 5 mL or 10 g? **Before you BUY, give Room 0101 a TRY!** You can search the chemical inventory on our Intranet (Safety > SRRC MSDS/SDS Database and Chemical Inventory) and see if the item you are looking for is located in the repository. These chemicals are available for transfer to your location. Save yourself the trouble and expense of placing another order. Please feel free to e-mail me if you have any questions about this process.

Thanks to everyone for attending the Chemical Hygiene Training. Please complete your make-up training ASAP if you could not make the presentation. Thanks in advance!

**Get to know your Safety Committee:**

**Featured Committee Member:** Jeff Cary  
**Position:** Assistant Safety Committee Chair  
**College & Degree(s):** LSU, PhD Microbiology  
**Years at USDA:** 30  
**Years in NOLA:** 30 (Covington)

**What’s your favorite fungus?** Aspergillus flavus of course!  
**What’s the most interesting thing about fungal DNA?** There remain so many mysteries to be solved when it comes to the biological function of the secondary metabolites produced by the enzymes that A. flavus genes encode.  
**What’s your favorite thing about working at SRRC?** Getting to interact with scientists both within and outside of SRRC.  
**What’s your favorite Star Wars movie and why?** I really liked Episode VI-Return of the Jedi, because everything was going so bad for the resistance at the end of Episode V and Luke gets to make peace with Dad (Darth).  
**Your go-to snowball flavor:** strawberry  
**If you had a choice between king cake or beignets...** King cake, there are so many varieties  
**Your favorite po-boy?** Oyster/shrimp combo  
**Mardi Gras, Jazz Fest, or a Saints Game?** Mardi Gras  
**Spring, Summer, Fall, or Winter?** Fall (football!)  
**What’s playing in your car music-wise when you drive to work?** 70s/80s classic rock  
**If you were flying out of MSY tomorrow, where would you go?** Banff, Canada- the Canadian Rockies are beautiful!  
**Tell us one thing we don’t know about you:** I was part of an Air Guitar band back in college.
SRRC Through the Years
Submitted by: Christine Sickler

Then and .....  

Mary Rollins in the Fiber Microscopy Laboratory, Cotton Fiber Research Division, 1941

Now ....

Grand Binocular Microscope R&J Beck c. 1880  
This microscope was produced in Feb 1880 by Charles Collop of London, England

Nikon Eclipse Ni-E Microscope  
This motorized compound light/fluorescent microscope is used by Food and Feed Safety for digital imaging of fungal mycelia, spore and plant samples.

Human Resources Corner

Community Recognition

Our own Ron Franklin, Shantell Franklin’s son (and Veronica Washington’s grandson) plays for the Pedal Valves Cardinals. Ron went 7-for-13 (.538 batting average) and reached base in 12-of-18 plate appearances (.667 on-base percentage) in the five regional games for Louisiana. The team advanced to the American Legion Baseball World Series in Shelby, NC after winning the Southeast Regional championship. The series was played on August 15-20.

Ron worked in the Cotton Structure and Quality Research Unit as a Physical Science Technician over the summer. He graduated from Archbishop Rummel High School in May, and will be attending Bossier Parish Community College in the fall.

Ron is pictured holding the banner in the middle. Congratulations Ron!
Retirement of Dr. Maureen Wright
Submitted by: Thomas Klasson

Dr. Maureen Wright, a Research Microbiologist in the Commodity Utilization Research Unit, retired on August 31, 2019 after 31 years of federal service at the Southern Regional Research Center. She first joined SRRC as a Mycotoxin Laboratory Technician Co-Op Student in 1982, while working on her Bachelor Degree in Microbiology at Xavier University of Louisiana. After receiving her PhD in Molecular Biology from LSU-Baton Rouge in 1990, she returned to SRRC as a Postdoctoral Research Geneticist in the Food and Feed Safety Research Unit. In 1992, she accepted a permanent position and worked as a Molecular Biologist and Microbiologist until 2003 when she became a Research Microbiologist. She joined the Formosan Subterranean Termite Research Unit in 1998, and transferred to the Commodity Utilization Research Unit in 2012.

2019 Creature Crawl for a Cause

Monday October 14, 2019
7:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Audubon Zoo Picnic Pavilion Entrance
6500 Magazine Street
New Orleans, Louisiana

The New Orleans Federal Executive Board (NO FEB) invites the Federal community to help us kick-off this year’s Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) at Audubon Zoo, with the 2019 Creature Crawl for a Cause. CFC charities will be available to talk about their organizations. CFC representatives will be on hand to answer questions about making charitable donations. This event will feature a 5K Run/Walk and a Kids Run.

CFC attendees, race participants, and family members will get admission to the zoo for FREE. Participants are welcome to stroll through the zoo until the conclusion of the event at 1:00 p.m.

Register for the 2019 Creature Crawl for a Cause:
(https://runsignup.com/Race/LA/NewOrleans/CREATURECRAWLFORACAUSE)

- Kids Run: $10 (The ½ mile kids run will begin at 8:00 a.m.)
- 5K Run/Walk: $25

Website registration closes on 10/11/19. Race-day registration will start at 7:30 a.m.
Mark your calendars for the 2019 SRRC Awards Day:
Thursday, September 19
Bayou Conference Room (MCR) from 10:00-11:00 a.m
Awards Day lunch, will follow from 12:15-2:00 p.m.

Supervisory Training
Submitted by: Janell Becker

As part of the Supervisory Training for FY19, all supervisors must read the book, “Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking when Stakes are High,” and then have a Leadership Session to discuss what was learned. Dr. Deepak Bhatnagar will host this Leadership Session for all supervisors on Monday, September 9th, at 10:00 a.m. in the Bayou Conference Room.

September New Orleans Area Events
Submitted by: Terri von Hoven

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tr>
<td>09/07</td>
<td>Who Dat Nation Rally and Music Festival</td>
<td>JPAS, Metairie</td>
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<tr>
<td>09/12-15</td>
<td>Burlesque Festival</td>
<td>New Orleans</td>
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<tr>
<td>09/20-22</td>
<td>National Fried Chicken Fest</td>
<td>Woldenberg Park, NOLA</td>
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<tr>
<td>09/20-22</td>
<td>St. Tammany Crab Festival</td>
<td>Slidell, LA</td>
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<td>09/21</td>
<td>NOLA On Tap</td>
<td>City Park, NOLA</td>
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<td>09/27-29</td>
<td>New Orleans Improv Festival</td>
<td>Allways Lounge, NOLA</td>
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<tr>
<td>09/27-29</td>
<td>Gretna Heritage Festival</td>
<td>Gretna, LA</td>
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<tr>
<td>09/27-11/02</td>
<td>Scout Island: Scream Park</td>
<td>City Park, NOLA</td>
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Death of Former Employee

Virginia Tompkins Ferrara passed away on Saturday, August 10, 2019, at the age of 84. Beloved wife, mother of 8 children, and grandmother, she is also survived by 9 great grandchildren and one on the way and was a beloved aunt to 22 nieces and nephews. Mrs. Ferrara was a graduate of St. Margaret's Academy of Minneapolis, MN. She was a longtime employee of the USDA Southern Regional Research Center and was a parishioner of Our Lady of Perpetual Help of Kenner, LA. She is buried in Greenwood Cemetery. The family requests donations in memory of Mrs. Ferrara be made to the Alzheimer's Association.
Recent SRRC Publications

Submitted by: Suhad Wojkowski


Click on the article’s title below to launch the pdf from Eprints.


