



In This Issue:

Your Two Cents
Around ARS
Notable Awards
Photo Corner
Did You Know?

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Please submit story ideas and national award items to Mina Chung, mina.chung@ars.usda.gov, or call 301-504-1653.



www.ars.usda.gov/yourtwocents

Your Two Cents (Y2C)

Thank you for continuing to submit ideas and best practices to us at [Your Two Cents \(Y2C\)](#)! We hope you will continue to find [Y2C](#) a valuable tool and encourage your ARS colleagues to try us out. It is particularly gratifying when ARS employees ask us for more information about specific topics than what they found on [Y2C](#). That means that the site is the go-to resource for many of our colleagues. We at [Y2C](#) always welcome your questions and suggestions and will do our best to respond on a timely basis. The Y2C Response Team has some improvement initiatives under way that will be unveiled in time for the site's 4th birthday celebration in May.

As much as we want to be your one-stop shop for everything, there are certain things that we can't help you at [Y2C](#), namely EEO issues; Leave and Benefits; Alternative Dispute Resolution; and Waste, Fraud, and Abuse. If you have concerns in those matters, click on the links in the [Y2C User Agreement](#) to reach the office that can help you.

And don't forget to get a sneak peek of Axon—the new ARS Intranet—by clicking on the Axon button on [Y2C's](#) main page. Axon is on schedule and will be launching soon. Stay tuned for more details!

Lastly, the [Cultural Transformation \(CT\)](#) Team has completed the [CT](#) Action Plan for 2014. We'll keep you posted as we roll out new plans in support of the initiatives of Agriculture Secretary **Tom Vilsack** and ARS Administrator **Chavonda Jacobs-Young**. ❖

Around ARS



Research Plant Physiologists Anne Plotto and Jinhe Bai set up for the orange juice taste panel.

ARS's U.S. Horticultural Research Laboratory in Ft. Pierce, FL, held its annual open house on April 2. The open house attracted 150 students from 9 high schools in the surrounding

area and over 325 other visitors, including stakeholders, local elected officials, and members of the general public. Several groups of students and their professors from Indian River State College and Keiser University also attended. Lab employees worked hard to provide eight guided tour stops from labs to greenhouses and the insectary, featuring a different demonstration of ARS research at each of the eight stops, as well as a tour of the Picos Road Farm. Many visitors who attended last year's open house returned this year and brought friends with them. See more photos of the open house in [Photo Corner](#). ❀

The 60th anniversary of ARS's Walnut Gulch Experimental Watershed in Tombstone, AZ, was celebrated on March 6-7, 2014. Including 27 ARS employees and students, a total of 111 participants attended the 2-day event. The program consisted of four sessions: a tour



Research Agricultural Engineer Mark Nearing, left, explains the long-term runoff and sediment findings from a small flume at the Lucky Hills shrubland study site.

of the experimental watershed, a session on treating channels (building check dams), a field discussion of erosion and sedimentation, and a computer training session on the Rangeland Hydrology and Erosion (RHEM) model and Automated Geospatial Watershed Assessment (AGWA) tool. There was also a dinner to thank the ranchers for allowing ARS scientists to do research on their land, to recognize the contributions of retired Walnut Gulch employees, and to reflect on 60 years of research. The Walnut Gulch Experimental Watershed is a research project of ARS's Southwest Watershed Research Center in Tucson, AZ. See [Photo Corner](#) for more. ❀

In celebration of Women's History Month, ARS's Western Business Service Center invited safety instructor David Williford to the Jamie Whitten Delta States Research Center in Stoneville, MS, to present his "Refuse to Be a Victim" seminar to ARS employees at a brown-bag lunch on March 12, 2014. This 45-minute seminar highlighted the most effective strategies for personal defense. ARS employees learned crime prevention strategies, including criminal psychology, automobile crime prevention, home security, carjack-avoidance techniques, and the use of personal safety devices. Williford also demonstrated a few self-defense moves designed to spot weaknesses in a criminal's approach and thus take advantage of the weaknesses to prevent an attack. The seminar was designed to complement the "Women of Courage" theme. ❀

On March 26, 2014, the ARS Honey Bee Breeding, Genetics, and Physiology Research Unit in Baton Rouge, LA, celebrated Women's History Month with a potluck and the second of a two-part presentation on the life, death,



Biological Science Lab Technician Dee Colby gives a presentation about the life and legacy of Henrietta Lacks.

and legacy of Henrietta Lacks, given by Biological Science Lab Technician **Dee Colby** and Research Molecular Biologist **Beth Holloway**. Henrietta Lacks, who died from cervical cancer in 1951, was an African-American woman whose tumor was used to grow cell lines. The cell lines are being used to this day for research around the world and have been instrumental in many scientific breakthroughs including the development of the polio vaccine. ❀

Dominique Coutinot, Quarantine Officer at the ARS European Biological Control Laboratory (EBCL) in Montpellier, France, has been selected as a "jury president" by the French National Institute for Agricultural Research (INRA). In that capacity, he will lead evaluation of key positions for that agency. The selection of Coutinot as a jury president for INRA shows that EBCL is part of the French scientific community. See a photo of EBCL in [Photo Corner](#). ❀



Research Leader Thomas E. Carter, Jr., presents a talk to policymakers and their staff on Capitol Hill.

On March 17, 2014, Research Leader and Research Geneticist **Thomas E. Carter, Jr.**, at the ARS Soybean and Nitrogen Fixation Unit in Raleigh, NC, was the Distinguished Speaker at a seminar designed for policymakers and their staff entitled “More Crop for the Drop—A Global Search Through the National Plant Germplasm System for Drought Tolerant Soybeans.” Organized by the National Coalition for Food & Agricultural Research (NC-FAR), the seminar took place in the Longworth House Office Building in Washington, DC, one of three office buildings for the U.S. House of Representatives. ❀

Notable Awards

David Klurfeld, ARS National Program Leader for Human Nutrition, Beltsville, MD, received the Volunteer of the Year award from the [American Society for Nutrition \(ASN\)](#) during the Experimental Biology meeting in San Diego, CA, on April 26-30. The award recognizes outstanding contributions that volunteers make to enhance and promote the activities and programs of ASN. Among Klurfeld’s many important contributions to ASN is his service as an Associate Editor of its *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. ❀

The [Asian Tiger Mosquito Team](#), which included three ARS scientists, received the 2014 Team Excellence Award from the Rutgers School of Environmental and Biological Science and the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station on April 24. The 31-member team included Research Entomologist **Dan Kline** and Research Leader **Gary Clark** at the ARS Mosquito and Fly Research Unit in Gainesville, FL, and **Dan Strickman**, ARS National Program Leader for Veterinary, Medical and Urban Entomology, Beltsville, MD, and Acting Director of ARS’s overseas biological control laboratories. The team also included members from universities, State and county governments, the pest control industry, the U.S. Navy, and health organizations including the CDC. ❀

Retired Research Chemist and Collaborator **Alfred (Al) French**, at the ARS Southern Regional Research Center in New Orleans, LA, was inducted as a Fellow of the [American Chemical Society](#) National Meeting on March 16-20, 2014, in Dallas, TX. The award recognizes Division members whose dedication, leadership, and enthusiastic service has kept the Division moving forward. ❀

The Federal Interagency Committee for the Management of Noxious and Exotic Weeds (FICMNEW) recently honored **John Lydon** of ARS with the Jerry Asher National Invasive Plant Management Memorial Award for his outstanding leadership in the field of Invasive Plant Management. From 2009 until his death in October 2012, Lydon served as the ARS National Program Leader for Weeds and led ARS research initiatives involving invasive plants, herbicide resistance, and biological weed control. In addition to serving as the ARS representative to FICMNEW, Lydon served on the USDA-APHIS Technical Advisory Group for Biological Control Agents of Weeds (TAG-BCAW). ❀

University of Mississippi student **Xiaoning Wang**, now with the National Institutes of Health, received the 2014 Research Article of the Year Award from the *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry*. Much of Wang’s Ph.D. training and research in fungal plant pathogens and fungicides was done under the supervision of Research Plant Pathologist **David Wedge** at the ARS Natural Products Utilization Research Unit in University, MS, who also is one of the co-authors on the paper. ❀



Photo Corner



A technician harvests common bean plants for research conducted in collaboration with the Agricultural Research Institute of Mozambique in Sussendenga, Mozambique.



Technicians prepare harvested common bean plants for research conducted in collaboration with the Agricultural Research Institute of Mozambique in Sussendenga, Mozambique.



The People's Garden display at the open house at ARS's U.S. Horticultural Research Laboratory, Ft. Pierce, FL. See related story in [Around ARS](#).



The orange juice taste panel at the open house at ARS's U.S. Horticultural Research Laboratory, Ft. Pierce, FL. See related story in [Around ARS](#).



Research Hydrologist Russ Scott, second from right, describes measurements of evapotranspiration at the Kendall grassland on the Walnut Gulch Experimental Watershed. See related story in [Around ARS](#).



ARS European Biological Control Laboratory in Montpellier, France, with its quarantine facility on the left.



Participants at the Customer/Partner Dialogue Workshop on March 27, 2014, at the ARS Coastal Plains Soil, Water, and Plant Research Center in Florence, SC.

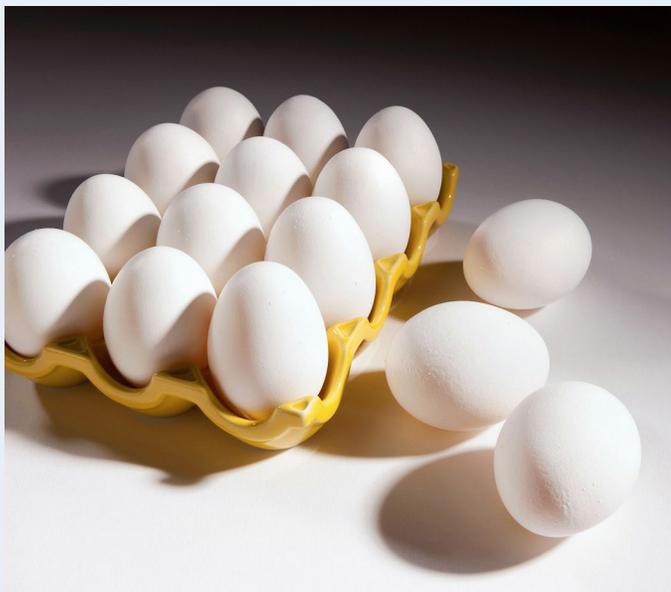


Computational Molecular Biologist Brian Scheffler and Research Plant Geneticist Jodi Scheffler volunteer at a Habitat for Humanity House in Leland, MS. They were both honored in 2013 with a President's Volunteer Service Award.



Area Director Deborah Brennan, South Atlantic Area, at the Customer/Partner Dialogue Workshop on March 27, 2014, at the ARS Coastal Plains Soil, Water, and Plant Research Center in Florence, SC.

Did You Know?



This spring, you and your family might have gone on an egg hunt. Likewise, ARS scientists continually hunt for ways to ensure our food is nutritious and safe to eat.

Scientists at ARS's Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging in Boston, MA—working with the Egg Nutrition Center in Washington, DC—found that the human body is better able to absorb lutein from eggs than from any other dietary source, including supplements. The researchers suspect that's because of other components in the egg's yolk, such as lecithin. And this suggests that eggs can be an inexpensive source of highly bioavailable lutein.

ARS scientists at the Southeast Poultry Research Laboratory in Athens, GA, are also doing their part to make sure the eggs we eat are safe to consume. They focus on reducing the risk of contamination of eggs from pathogens, like *Salmonella*. That pathogen has been associated with eating raw or undercooked eggs, and it can cause diarrhea, stomach cramps, fever, and—in some instances—death.

Scientists at the ARS Eastern Regional Research Center in Wyndmoor, PA—working with the Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory in Plainsboro, NJ—found that positioning individual eggs between two electrodes that send radio waves back and forth through the egg (radio frequency or RF heating), followed by a brief hot-water bath, can kill 99.999 percent of the *Salmonella* within the egg. Unlike conventional heating, RF heating warms the egg from the inside out, so that the heat-tolerant yolk receives more heat than the delicate, heat-sensitive white (albumen). From start to finish, the treatment takes around 20 minutes, making it about three times faster than the conventional hour-long hot-water-immersion pasteurization method. And not only is this method faster, but it doesn't ruin the taste, texture, or color of the eggs.

So whether you're hunting for eggs or other good foods to eat, you can get *egg-cited* about the fact that your ARS colleagues are doing their part to help ensure your food is nutritious, tasty, and safe to eat.

Written by Jay Green, ARS Information Staff.

Executive Editor

Sandy Miller Hays

Managing Editor

Tara T. Weaver-Missick

Writer-Editor

Mina Chung

Designer-Editor

Carol Nathan

Contributors

Emily Domagtoy

Jay Green

Melissa Harrell

Tracy Havermann

Sandy Miller Hays

Phil Heilman

Beth Holloway

Judy Sheetz