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### **Your Two Cents (Y2C)**

An agency-wide webcast was held by the Administrator's Council on December 5 to inform employees about the state of the agency, as well as several exciting new initiatives. Our best attended webcast to date, over 450 of our ARS colleagues tuned in to find out the current state of the agency, the budget, a new communication initiative called "ARS Exchange," and the new ARS Recognition Program. The one-hour webcast also included time for Q&As. Among the questions asked was whether there was a launch date for "Axon," the new ARS Intranet. The site was actually close to launching, but technical issues beyond ARS's control caused a delay. The Intranet Team is working hard to resolve these issues, and Axon is scheduled to launch in 2014.

The [Cultural Transformation](#) (CT) Team is continuing to work on the CT Action Plan for 2014. ARS's enhanced communication efforts are evident in the new initiatives introduced in the webcast, as well as in the continued use of [Your Two Cents](#) (Y2C). Forming strong communication throughout the agency will ensure the success of CT efforts in ARS in the coming year. As always, the Team wants to hear from you, so please continue to [email](#) us and let us know your plans and activities! ❀

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

### **Skype Now Available**

Skype is now available as an ARS collaboration tool. Skype allows users to communicate with other users by voice, video, or instant messaging over the Internet. ARS worked with USDA's Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) to allow the business use of Skype for collaborating with domestic and international research partners, but **NOT** for personal use.

Since using Skype can impose significant information technology (IT) security risks, the ARS OCIO has developed specific guidance for using Skype. To have Skype securely installed and configured on your computer—or if you have any questions or require technical assistance—please follow your standard, routine process for requesting IT support.

Once you obtain access to Skype, we recommend that you test your connectivity a day or two before your scheduled event because of possible limitations of your network capacity. ❀

## Around ARS



Participating in the groundbreaking were, from left to right, **Scott Aker**, **Kevin Morris**, **Zoe Clarkwest**, **Colien Hefferan**, **Geoffrey Rinehart**, and **Michael Stachowicz**.

The *Grass Roots* exhibit groundbreaking ceremony and lecture was held at ARS's U.S. National Arboretum (USNA) on November 15, 2013. The exhibit is part of the larger [Grass Roots Initiative](#) developed cooperatively by USNA and the [National Turfgrass Federation](#) to highlight the science, environmental benefits, and social impact of turfgrass. Attended by over 75 participants including the media, turfgrass industry representatives, and members of the public, the event celebrated the beginning of the construction phase for the *Grass Roots* exhibit. Following the keynote lecture by Frank Rossi, turfgrass science professor at Cornell University, attendees proceeded to the site of the 1.3-acre *Grass Roots* exhibit near the Arboretum entrance for the actual groundbreaking. USNA Director **Colien Hefferan** spoke about the importance of the exhibit's goals to educate. Participating in the groundbreaking ceremony also were **Scott Aker**, Head of Horticulture, USNA; **Geoffrey Rinehart**, Grass Roots Initiative Coordinator, USNA; Kevin Morris, National Turfgrass Federation; Zoe Clarkwest, Rain Underground; and Michael Stachowicz, National Park Service. For more information, contact Geoffrey Rinehart at [geoffrey.rinehart@ars.usda.gov](mailto:geoffrey.rinehart@ars.usda.gov).



*The Science of Cheese*—a 304-page volume by Research Chemist **Michael Tunick**, ARS Dairy and Functional Foods Research, Wyndmoor, PA—is being released at the end of this month by [Oxford University Press](#). The book details the science and history behind cheese, beginning with milk and including explanations of all of the steps in cheesemaking, descriptions of hundreds of varieties, and the reasons why cheese is a nutritious and delicious food. It also includes a periodic table of cheeses, some stories about cheese, and developments in the area by ARS researchers. ❀

On November 14 and 21, 2013, the ARS Northern Plains Agricultural Research Laboratory (NPURL) in Sidney, MT, marked its 50th anniversary with two evening presentations to familiarize the public with key scientific concepts affecting research efforts, as well as provide a sense of what direction that research may take in the next 50 years. ARS speakers included Plant Ecologist **Erin Espeland**, who discussed the impact of evolutionary biology and genetics in the development of wheat production, and Insect Pathologist **Stefan Jaronski**, who discussed current grasshopper management research. A hands-on DNA extraction exercise was included in Espeland's talk. In addition, lab employees conducted fun craft and game activities for children focusing on crops, soils, insects, and weeds. The themes for the two evenings reflected important research at NPURL. ❀

Technical Information Specialists **Tim Allen** and **D'Anna Jensen**, with the ARS National Agricultural Library's Animal Welfare Information Center (AWIC), staffed the AWIC exhibit at the 64th American Association for Laboratory Animal Science (AALAS) National Meeting in Baltimore, MD, on October 27-31, 2013. Allen and Jensen had the opportunity to talk with people from around the world about animal welfare issues and met with animal care inspectors and members of non-governmental organizations involved in animal welfare issues. ❀

USDA's [2014 Agricultural Outlook Forum](#) is coming February 20-21 in Arlington, VA. ARS scientists will highlight work in nanotechnology and citrus greening in two sessions organized by ARS, NIFA, APHIS, Forest Service, and NIST (National Institute for Standards and Technology). The Forum addresses current agricultural issues and brings together the agricultural, political, and diplomatic communities. ARS will be hosting an exhibit at the event. For more information, visit <http://www.usda.gov/oce/forum/>. ❀

## Notable Awards



Cathleen J. Hapeman.

Research Chemist **Cathleen J. Hapeman**, ARS Environmental Management and Byproduct Utilization Laboratory, Beltsville, MD, and Research Leader **Stephen O. Duke**, ARS Natural Products Utilization Research Unit, University, MS,

were inducted as Fellows of the [Agrochemical Division of the American Chemical Society](#) (ACS) during the Fall ACS National Meeting, September 8-12, in Indianapolis, IN. ❀



Stephen O. Duke.

Jennifer Trapp, a doctoral student mentored by Research Geneticist **Phil Miklas**, ARS Vegetable and Forage Crops Research Unit, Prosser, WA, won best graduate student poster at the National Bean Improvement Cooperative biennial meeting in Portland, OR, on October 28-30, 2013. Trapp's winning poster was entitled "Identification of QTL for Drought Tolerance and Characterization of Extreme Phenotypes in the Buster x Roza Mapping Population." ❀

Research Entomologist **Ron Ochoa**, ARS Systematic Entomology Laboratory, Beltsville, MD, was recently named President-Elect of the [Acarological Society of America](#) in recognition of his stature among fellow acarologists (acarology is the study of mites and ticks). ❀

**Joshua Villarreal**, an intern at the ARS Cattle Fever Tick Research Laboratory in Edinburg, TX—part of the ARS Knipping-Bushland U.S. Livestock Insects Research Laboratory in Kerrville, TX—won the Entomological Society of America Undergraduate Student Award on November 15, 2013. Villarreal, who was a student at the University of Texas-Pan America during his internship, is now studying at the University of Texas in Austin. ❀



David C. Goodrich.

Research Hydraulic Engineer **David C. Goodrich**, Southwest Watershed Research Center, Tucson, AZ, joined the 2013 Class of [American Geophysical Union](#) (AGU) Fellows on December 11, during the AGU Fall Meeting in San Francisco, CA. Goodrich was honored for influential advances in arid and semiarid hydrology and in ecohydrology, interdisciplinary leadership, and for

communicating that science. ❀

On November 5, 2013, Research Scientist **Michael Haas**, ARS Sustainable Biofuels and Co-products Research, Wyndmoor, PA, received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Biodiesel Board (NBB) for his research, technical achievements, and advice to the industry over his career. The award was presented at the NBB Annual Research Meeting in Kansas City, MO. ❀



Michael Haas.



# Photo Corner



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FutureCeuticals congratulates **Dr. George Inglett** for receiving the 2013 Bor S. Luh International Award from the Institute of Food Technologists.

As lead scientist for the USDA in the 1990s, Dr. Inglett developed Nutrim®, a next-generation, patented Oat Bran with extraordinary formulation and mouth-feel capabilities, particularly in RTD and RTM beverages. FutureCeuticals holds the exclusive license to the TRIM process, and has been producing and selling Nutrim® ever since.

Building on the success of Nutrim®, FutureCeuticals also offers BarleyTrim®, AncienTrim®, and ModCarb™, a breakthrough all-grain complex carbohydrate food. Together, this stable of beverage-ready grains offers unique product development opportunities, all made possible by the dedicated work of Dr. Inglett.



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The Institute of Food Technologists' tribute to Research Chemist George E. Inglett, ARS Functional Foods Research Unit, Peoria, IL, the 2013 winner of the Institute's Bor S. Luh Award.

## Did You Know?



Pickles are a multi-billion-dollar industry in the United States, and it's trending ever hotter today as more and more craft brands show up in stores and farmers' markets all over the country. But did you know ARS has helped commercial pickle-making meet the highest standards of quality,

environmental impact, and food safety over the years? And ARS continues to do this important work today.

Pickling is one of mankind's oldest ways of safely preserving food. But today, we require objective measures to ensure that pickles always meet the highest food safety standards.

In the late 1990s, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) wanted to add tighter food safety controls for all acidified foods, including pickles. While everyone knows that heat and acid stop bacteria, no one knew the exact numbers for doing that during pickling and for doing that while not hurting the quality of pickles. So the researchers at the ARS Food Science Research Unit in Raleigh, NC, took on the task of identifying those precise processing conditions.

Today, all U.S.-produced pickled vegetables—cabbage, peppers, tomatoes, etc.—and all the different dill pickles—bread and butter, sweet, sour, kosher, etc.—follow standards based on ARS researchers' work.

Putting precision in commercial pickle-making has been the mission of the ARS lab in Raleigh since it opened in 1935.

Microbiologist John L. Etchells, who headed the ARS lab until 1974, first brought pasteurization to the industry—a huge step in preventing spoilage and making room-temperature, shelf-stable products possible.

Food Technologist Henry Fleming, who led the ARS lab next, developed a process that ended the problem of bloating—pockets of gas ballooning up within cucumbers during fermentation that disqualified about one-third of each batch from highest value use.

Fleming also began working on the pickling industry's major environmental problem of brining salt disposal. Today, among the lab's projects is developing pickling fermentation technology based on calcium chloride rather than sodium chloride so that, instead of becoming potential pollutants, processing leftovers could be used to improve farmers' and homeowners' calcium-deficient soil.

Just 1/8 cup of pickles counts as one of the five recommended daily servings of fruits and vegetables!

Written by **Kim Kaplan**, ARS Information Staff.

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