

ARS @ You



Research for the Growing World

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www.ars.usda.gov



Greetings, ARS Family!

I want to begin by thanking all of you! It's difficult to adequately express my sincere appreciation, gratitude, and admiration for your patience, understanding, and endurance during these uncertain and challenging times of tight budgets and adaptation to change. Also, thanks to ARS leaders and managers for tackling these challenges directly and for developing strategic solutions while ensuring continued delivery of scientific excellence to our customers and stakeholders!

I want to acknowledge all the ARS employees who retired in 2011 and thank them for their service. I am proud to have worked over the years with such a talented group of people. Their collective service and dedication to the Federal Government and to the American public will have a lasting impact into the future, as will the contributions of our continuing workforce.

This month, I sent you a message with ARS-specific information on **USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack's "Blueprint for Stronger Service."** If you haven't done so already, I encourage you to read both items. A [video message](#) from the Secretary is included on the USDA Web site for your viewing.

While ARS has endured about a 7-percent reduction to its budget, workforce, and research programs in the current and past fiscal years—and some additional modest adjustments may be required in the few years ahead—I am optimistic about sustained and even enhanced support in the longer term for ARS' core programs and mission.

Given the global challenges of worldwide population growth, increasing food demands and needs for nutritional health, changing climates, dwindling availability of arable land and water for food production, and growing needs for renewable bioenergy production, ARS is uniquely positioned to deliver the high-quality scientific and technological solutions needed. I am confident that our Nation's policy leaders will recognize that continued investments in agricultural science are essential to meeting these global challenges.

As USDA celebrates its [150th anniversary](#) this year ("Moving Agriculture Forward USDA – Growing, Innovating, and Celebrating 150 Years"), we should also take a moment to reflect on and celebrate ARS' many scientific contributions, and those of our predecessor organizations, to agriculture and the public that have made Americans' lives better and have made food safer, more abundant, and more affordable.

As we look to the future with optimism, ARS will continue to focus on building and sustaining the strongest scientific, employee, leadership, and management team needed to deliver relevant, quality scientific research results to our customers and stakeholders.

I extend my best wishes for a productive, promising new year!

Sincerely yours,

Edward B. Knipling

In this edition...

Around ARS

Notable Awards

Did You Know?

Please submit story ideas and national award items to Tara T. Weaver-Missick, tara.weavermissick@ars.usda.gov or call 301-504-1663.

Around ARS

Your Two Cents



www.ars.usda.gov/yourtwocents

Your Two Cents (Y2C) continues to be a forum for discussion of ARS topics that are important to **you!** Check out the latest **ideas** submitted by your colleagues, and weigh in on the “Telework and the Press” poll question.

Is the training budget in your unit non-existent? You aren't alone! Check out the **Toolkit** on the **ARS Cultural Transformation** site. Our theme for December/January is “Personal and Career Development.” You can find links to AgLearn courses on these topics, as well as books and activities for your use. And coming soon, we will be posting instructions, coursework, and even a blog on how to “mirror” the requirements for programs, such as the Executive Leadership and other costly training, in your IDP... for free! AgLearn is a great resource for our employees, and we will continue to help you navigate it and make the best use of it for your own career.❖



Veterans Career Fair Expo Hall.

ARS Participation at the Veterans Career Fair and Expo – January 18, 2012

Jenny Allen, ARS Equal Employment Opportunity Specialist, Beltsville, MD; **Cathy Walker**, ARS Human Resources Specialist, Beltsville, MD; and **Mary Weber**, ARS Employ-

ment Officer, Beltsville, MD, represented ARS at the Veterans Career Fair and Expo on January 18 at the Washington Convention Center, Washington, DC, to help veterans find career opportunities in the agency.

The ARS representatives explained the job application process, discussed hiring flexibilities and options, and reviewed the veterans' work experience for skills that could be matched to various career opportunities at ARS such as Financial Specialist, Financial Technician, Information Technology Specialist, Secretary, Contract Specialist, Environmental Protection Specialist, Human Resources Specialist, and Human Resources Assistant.

The Veterans Career Fair and Expo offered more than 150 exhibits and 100 interview booths staffed by Federal and private-sector employers on hand to meet with more than 5,000 attendees at this veterans-only event. The attendees were seeking positions in the Metropolitan Washington area, Delaware, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, North Carolina, and other locations on the East Coast.

Participants were required to bring proof of military service to expedite the use of noncompetitive hiring authorities for onsite interviews, which took place in a separate section of the career fair. Attendees also had the opportunity to enroll in benefits and learn about the many services the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and other agencies and organizations provide for veterans. ❀



Volunteers for Riverside Park Clean Up Event.

REE Employees Participate in Team Building and Volunteer Event

Twenty-five Research, Education and Economics (REE) employees participated in a team building and volunteer event on January 12 in the Riverside Neighborhood Park, Edmonston, MD. ARS Freedom of Information Act Coordinator **Stasia Hutchison**, ARS Information Staff, Beltsville,

MD, was among the REE volunteers. Volunteers picked up trash and debris from the stream and the park. Equipped with pruning shears, another group cut the non-native plants that were growing on the trees.

Maddie Koenig, Volunteer Coordinator, [the Anacostia Watershed Society](#), gave a presentation to the group on the Anacostia River watershed, the history of the area, and the importance of removing trash and debris from the park and the surrounding stream.

The event was organized by **Yeshi Abebe**, Advisor to the Secretary for Special Projects, USDA Office of the Secretary, Washington, DC.

Read more about the event at <http://www.anacostiaws.org/news/blog>. ❀

NAL Partners with the University of Maryland

The ARS National Agricultural Library's (NAL) Food and Nutrition Information Center (FNIC), in partnership with the University of Maryland, hosted its Annual Joint Class Day on January 9 at NAL. The event brought together more than 75 dietetic interns, who participated in sessions led by speakers from Government and private industry on the theme "Nutrition, Communication, and Information Management." Marissa Duswalt, USDA Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, delivered the keynote address. Other presentations addressed mobile technology for health, social media, nutrition informatics, electronic health records, and nutrition education. Attendees also viewed exhibits and resources from FNIC and NAL's Food Safety Information Center and Rare and Special Collections. ❀

New Tool for Conserving and Sustaining Wild Guatemalan Plant Species

The “[Atlas of Guatemalan Crop Wild Relatives](#)” (Atlas Guatemalteco de Parientes Silvestres de las Plantas Cultivadas) is a new tool for conserving and sustaining wild Guatemalan plant species. It is currently available in Spanish, and an English-language version is in progress. The Atlas is a collaborative work of the USDA-ARS, Bioversity International, the International Center for Tropical Agriculture, and the University of San Carlos of Guatemala.

On December 2, 2011, Botanist **Karen Williams**, ARS National Germplasm Resources Laboratory, Beltsville, MD, and one of the authors of the Atlas participated in the launch of the Atlas in Guatemala. The Atlas is presented in Google Earth® with information on distribution, use, diversity, and conservation status for 105 species of wild Guatemalan plants that are related to 29 different crops. The maps in the Atlas draw on a database of 2,600 records of scientific specimens conserved in numerous national and international institutions, primarily herbaria and seed banks.

For more information or to download the Atlas and the supporting database, go to <http://www.ars.usda.gov/ba/atlaswrguatemala>.♣

Notable Awards



ARS-developed turfgrass.

Wayne Hanna, formerly Supervisory Plant Geneticist, ARS Coastal Plain Experiment Station, Tifton, GA, is the recipient of the 2012 U.S. Golf Association Green Section Award for developing environmentally friendly grasses that have improved golf courses worldwide. Hanna was inducted into the [ARS Science Hall of Fame](#) in 2006 for his turfgrass breeding and genetics research. The bermudagrasses he developed are widely used for forage and on golf courses, athletic fields, and home lawns (See [ARS & You, July 2010 “Did You Know?”](#)). After retiring from ARS, Hanna continued his research at the University of Georgia, College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, Tifton, GA.♣

Research Agronomist/Dairy Scientist **Wayne Coblenz**, ARS Environmentally Integrated Dairy Management Research Unit, Madison, WI, received the Research Award from the Agricultural Research Stations of the University of Wisconsin (UW)-Madison on January 19. ARS and UW-Madison researchers work collaboratively with labs in Marshfield, WI, and a research farm in Stratford, WI. ♣

Did You Know?

Children and adults of all ages love cheese! It's simplistic, yet complex. Scientists at **ARS' Eastern Regional Research Center (ERRC)**, Wyndmoor, PA, have made major contributions to the dairy field, particularly in innovations relating to cheese. Specifically, ERRC's Dairy Research Management Unit's research goals are to improve and safeguard dairy products, to expand scientific knowledge of dairy's chemical and physical properties, and to find new ways to expand dairy products for consumer use—adding value for dairy farmers as well.

About a half-century ago, ARS scientists developed a deodorizing process that removed off-flavors from milk. The method, which allowed milk to be pasteurized by quick cooling in a vacuum chamber, permitted cheese milk to be pasteurized and deodorized, and increased in concentration by 8 percent. Cheese makers adopted the process.

In the late 1960s, ERRC scientists developed a phosphate-and-heat treatment for preparing milk starters for use in cheese making. In previous methods, certain bacteria were used to make cheese, but many of those bacteria were destroyed by viruses—rendering the product unusable. Within 5 years of developing this technique, half of U.S. cheddar cheese makers were using this new ARS process.

Consumer interest in low-fat products has been around for quite some time. In response to consumer demand, ERRC scientists developed a low-fat ripened skim milk cheese in the 1960s. Prior to that time, no such product existed. Thanks to the ARS team's ingenuity, consumers could enjoy a low-fat, high-moisture, semisoft cheese that resembled cheddar in texture and flavor. This new cheese contained 6 percent fat, compared to 33 percent in cheddar, and 30 percent protein, compared to 25 percent in cheddar.

This research laid the framework for the reduced fat mozzarella cheese (also developed by ERRC scientists) used today in USDA's National School Lunch Program (NSLP). This new version has improved storage life and contains only 10.8 percent fat, compared to 21 percent fat in regular mozzarella. The NSLP has been using the low-fat cheese to make lower fat pizzas since 1995, and it began using only the low-fat version in 2000.

As of January 2012, USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service—responsible for school lunch commodity purchasing—ordered more than 10 million pounds of low-fat mozzarella for the past month alone.

The low-fat version is better for you, but how does it taste, you ask? In taste tests and “trash can” tests—which evaluate the amount of pizza thrown out by students—students preferred low-fat mozzarella cheese pizza to full-fat mozzarella pizza.

So remember to thank ARS scientists for their contributions to the dairy and cheese making industries...and bon appétit!

*Written by **Tara T. Weaver-Missick**, ARS Information Staff.*





Scrambled Egg and Mozzarella Breakfast Pizza

Ingredients (makes 2 servings):

- 1 whole wheat English muffin
- 2 mushrooms, sliced
- 2 green onions, finely chopped
- 4 tablespoons diced green or red bell pepper
- 1/2 cup egg substitute
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- Dash of oregano or Italian seasoning
- 4 teaspoons pizza sauce
- 1/2 cup shredded low-moisture, part-skim mozzarella cheese

Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.

Split English muffin in half and toast; set aside.

Heat a small non-stick skillet over medium heat. Add mushrooms, green onions and bell pepper. Cook, stirring continuously for 2 minutes, or until vegetables are softened. Stir egg substitute, pepper and oregano into vegetable mixture. Cook, stirring continuously until egg substitute is set, about 2 minutes.

Spread 2 teaspoons of pizza sauce onto each English muffin half. Spoon a quarter of the egg mixture over pizza sauce and top with a quarter of the cheese. Spoon the remaining egg mixture and cheese evenly on top of the muffins. Place the muffins on a baking sheet and bake for 5 minutes, or until cheese is melted.

Used with permission from the [National Dairy Council](#).