



Dear Colleagues:

Last week I announced, as many of you already know, my plan to retire in early September. I want to restate here my reflections that I earlier shared with all ARS colleagues, as well as extend them to ARS' many partners, stakeholders, and other readers of this newsletter.

I am taking the retirement step at this time with some hesitation and considerable mixed feelings as ARS continues to adapt to challenging times, yet also knowing that we are on the threshold of exciting new initiatives in the agricultural sciences. I will be leaving with confidence that ARS is well prepared and positioned to successfully address the significant needs and opportunities ahead.

My optimism is boosted by recent favorable action by the Administration, House, and Senate on the pending FY 2014 budget for ARS. As we await Congressional conference action on the appropriations bill and other fiscal matters in the next few months, there are signs that ARS could receive up to a 10 percent funding increase next year over our current sequester-depressed FY 2013 funding level.

This potential budget outcome reflects the increasing importance and necessity of agricultural research for helping to achieve global food security and environmental sustainability, major challenges facing the Nation and world over the next several decades. The positive budget proposal also recognizes ARS' record of outstanding research accomplishments—past and present—and our capacity and reliability to deliver the ever-continuing technology improvements needed for agriculture and food productivity and quality. These goals constitute ARS' enduring mission and “reason for being,” even though the ways we conduct and manage our work frequently change over time.

In my 46-year career with USDA, I have observed and experienced numerous such changes, for example, in organizational structures; policies and operations; funding levels; specific research problems and priorities; new science opportunities; laboratory locations and partnerships; technologies and methods used to carry out, account for, and communicate our research; and workforce and leadership. While ARS' mission and goals remain much the same over time, I and others know that periodic changes in other aspects of our operations, of which I will soon be a part, are somewhat normal events and transitions, as in any dynamic and progressive organization.

Over about the past 10 years serving as the ARS Administrator, I have worked with many of you to lead, implement, and manage programs and change while striving constantly to preserve our identity, research mission, and fundamental values of relevant, quality, and problem-solving agricultural science to help achieve Department goals and serve our customers for public benefit. My entire career has been most rewarding. I greatly value the many friendships and professional associations I have had with ARS and other USDA colleagues, as well as with our many external partners and stakeholders.

Over the coming months, I will continue to support and promote ARS' important work. During this time and beyond, I extend my long-term best wishes to all of you for your continued success.

Sincerely,

Ed Knipling

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[Click here for HTML version.](#)



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

Your Two Cents (Y2C)



www.ars.usda.gov/yourtwocents

[Your Two Cents](#) (Y2C) has been experiencing some technical difficulties lately. A few months ago, [Y2C](#) suffered an attempted hacking. Though the attempt was unsuccessful, the incident required new security measures to be implemented. Unfortunately, the resulting programming—as well as software updates and the new browser's compatibility—caused outages and other issues, and for that we apologize. We are continuing to fix those issues, so *please* keep using the site and keep letting us know whenever you encounter a problem. Thank you for your patience! As always, the [Cultural Transformation Team](#) wants to hear from you. Please continue to [email](#) us and let us know your plans and activities! ❀

Around ARS



Blueberry Jubilee participants enjoy a tractor ride.

The Blueberry Jubilee, held on June 8, 2013, attracted over 10,000 visitors, thanks to the support from the local community, including the ARS **Thad Cochran Southern Horticultural Laboratory** in

Poplarville, MS. Jubilee visitors enjoyed tractor rides from downtown Poplarville to the lab, where they attended a presentation about ARS's mission and research program. Visitors toured the beautifully kept ARS grounds. The Blueberry Jubilee is held the second Saturday in June every year—when blueberries are the most ripe and plentiful. (See additional photos in [Photo Corner](#)!) ❀

On June 19, 2013, students from a biology class at Pearl River Community College taught by ARS Horticulturist **Donna Marshall**, ARS Thad Cochran Southern Horticultural Laboratory, Poplarville, MS, visited the ARS location. Marshall led the students through the laboratories, explaining the research being conducted and its impact on the fruit and ornamental industries in the surrounding areas. The students also met with ARS Research Entomologist **Blair Sampson**, who spoke about entomological science and the ecology of insect communities on commercial plant industries. Sampson showed the students his elaborate insect collection. The students enjoyed learning from Sampson, as it reinforced what they had been taught in the classroom. ❀



Visitors check out an observation beehive at the USDA Farmers' Market.

To celebrate National Pollinator Week (June 17-23), Biological Laboratory Technician **Andy Ulsamer**, ARS Bee Research Laboratory, Beltsville, MD, hosted a special beehive exhibit at the USDA Farmers' Market at the George Washington Carver Center, Beltsville, MD, on June 20, 2013. Visitors viewed an observation beehive, a protective hat, and a smoker can, and they received handouts about bees and honey. Also helping at the exhibit was Outreach Coordinator **Jay**

Green, ARS Information Staff, Beltsville, MD. Upon spotting the beehive, many visitors made a beeline to the display and were abuzz with questions like "Where's the queen?"



Andy Ulsamer, right, explains bee activity.



Notable Awards

Soil Scientist **Mark Tomer** and Research Leader **Thomas Moorman**, both with the ARS Agroecosystems Management Research Unit, Ames, IA, and Soil Scientist **Colleen G. Rossi**, formerly with the ARS Grassland Soil and Water Research Laboratory, Temple, TX, received the *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation's* Best Research Paper Award for Impact and Quality for their paper "Assessment of the Iowa River's South Fork Watershed: Part 1. Water Quality." The award was presented at the [Soil and Water Conservation Society's](#) (SWCS) 68th International Annual Conference held July 21-24 in Reno, NV. ❀

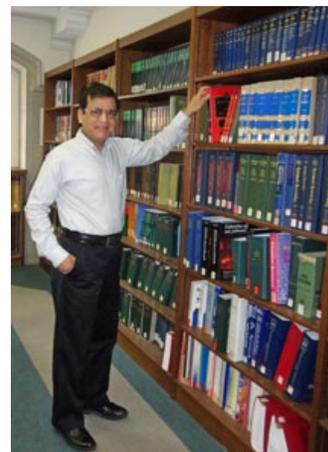
Research Agricultural Scientist **David W. Archer**, ARS Northern Great Plains Research Laboratory, Mandan, ND, received the 2013 Conservation Research Award from the [Soil and Water Conservation Society](#) (SWCS) for his leadership in research to quantify economic outcomes of conservation practices. He was recognized at the 68th International Annual SWCS Conference on July 23 in Reno, NV. ❀



David Archer.

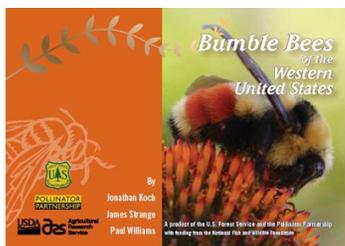
Research Plant Geneticist **Chad Finn**, ARS Horticultural Crops Research Unit, Corvallis, OR, received the Wilder Silver Medal from the [American Pomological Society](#). The award recognizes Finn's significant contributions to the science and practice of pomology, including the development and release of berry cultivars that have had an impact in fruit production and his work in germplasm development. The medal was presented at the annual meeting of the [American Society for Horticultural Science](#) in Palm Desert, CA, July 22-25. ❀

Research Chemist **George E. Inglett**, ARS Functional Foods Research Unit, Peoria, IL, received the 2013 Bor S. Luh Award for outstanding achievements in technology transfer and international exchange of ideas in the field of food technology from the [Institute of Food Technologists](#) (IFT). The award was presented during IFT's national meeting held July 13-16 in Chicago, IL. ❀



Vijay Juneja.

Supervisory Microbiologist **Vijay K. Juneja**, ARS Residue Chemistry and Predictive Microbiology Research Unit, Wyndmoor, PA, received the [International Association for Food Protection's](#) 2013 GMA Food Safety Award, sponsored by the [Grocery Manufacturers Association](#) (GMA). The award was presented during the association's annual meeting, July 28-31, in Charlotte, NC. ❀



A publication about bumble bees co-authored by Research Entomologist **James Strange**, ARS Pollinating Insects Research Unit, Logan, UT, was selected by the [American](#)

[Library Association](#) as one of the Notable Government Documents of 2012. [Bumble Bees of the Western United States](#) was published jointly by the U.S. Forest Service and the Pollinator Partnership with funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. The book in its entirety may be downloaded at <http://pollinator.org/PDFs/BumbleBee.GuideWestern.FINAL.pdf>. ❀

Research Hydraulic Engineer **Dave Goodrich**, ARS Southwest Watershed Research Center (SWRC), Tucson, AZ, and four of his SWRC colleagues received the [American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers'](#) (ASABE) 2013 Superior Paper Award for their paper "[KINEROS2/AGWA: Model Use, Calibration, and Validation](#)." The four other ARS co-authors are Support Scientist **Ian (Shea) Burns**, Hydrologist **Carl Unkrich**, Hydrologist **Mariano Hernandez**, and Support Scientist **Lainie Levick**. The award was presented at ASABE's Annual International Meeting in Kansas City, MO, July 21-24. The non-ARS co-authors are Darius Semmens, D. Phillip Guertin, Suni Yatheendradas, and Jeff Kennedy. ❀

The ARS **Water Management Research Unit** in Parlier, CA, recently received a plaque from Reedley College honoring the unit's participation in the SEED International Student Program. Soil Scientist **Suduan Gao** and Research Biologist **Don Makus** each hosted a student and provided the international students an opportunity to learn about agricultural research and about USDA. ❀

Research Chemist **Craig Byrdwell**, ARS Food Composition and Methods Development Laboratory, Beltsville, MD, presented the Julius Lewkowitsch Memorial Award Lecture at the Compositional Analysis of Lipids Meeting in Ghent, Belgium, June 20-21, 2013. The award is presented every other year by the Lipids Technical Interest Group of the [Society of Chemical Industry](#). Byrdwell's award lecture was entitled "Three and Four Mass Spectrometers in Parallel for Lipid Analysis: How Many Instruments Are Enough?" ❀

Research Leader **Stacey A. Gunter**, ARS Southern Plains Range Research Station, Woodward, OK, is the 2013 recipient of the [American Society of Animal Science](#) (ASAS) Animal Management Award. The award was presented on July 9 at the American Dairy Science Association-American Society of Animal Science Joint Annual Meeting in Indianapolis, IN. ❀



Photo Corner

See related story in [Around ARS](#) about the Blueberry Jubilee in Poplarville, MS.



Blueberry train ride through downtown Poplarville.



Tractor rides, anyone?

Did You Know?



July is National Watermelon Month, but most people don't know that watermelons have been brought to you by ARS research.

In 1954, Charles Fredric Andrus, with ARS's U.S. Vegetable Laboratory in Charleston, SC, developed what is considered today

the classic watermelon variety—the Charleston Grey. The Charleston Grey—which has great flavor, an oblong shape and hard rind that make it easy to stack and ship and, even more importantly, extensive disease resistance—is in the pedigree of 95 percent of the watermelons grown around the world.

Watermelons originated in Africa around the Kalahari Desert. They have been grown in this country as early as 1629.

But when geneticist Amnon Levi, who leads the watermelon program at ARS's U.S. Vegetable Laboratory, did a DNA analysis of watermelon varieties, he found that all of them are just about genetically identical, making them vulnerable to a single disease or pest. To broaden the gene pool, ARS researchers are going back to wild watermelon relatives in Africa to find genes for resistance to problems like watermelon vine decline, root-knot nematode, and Zucchini yellow mosaic virus.

Other research that ARS has under way includes trying to graft watermelon vines onto rootstocks that are more resistant to diseases and pests. ARS researchers are also working on ways to speed up production so that farmers can go from flowering to market-ready fruit in only 5 weeks.

Thumping a watermelon for ripeness is an old wives' tale that claims that the deeper and heavier the thump, the riper the fruit. But that thud can also indicate an overripe, mushy-centered melon.

The rind of the Charleston Grey is glossy before the watermelon ripens, and it turns matte when the watermelon is ready to eat. Also, where the watermelon rests on the soil, there is usually a light green to white "bald spot." When this bald spot changes to pale yellow or cream, the melon is ripe.

Watermelons are about 6 percent sugar and 91 percent water. They are usually a good source of vitamins A and C and lycopene.

Watermelon Fire & Ice Salsa

3 C. de-seeded and chopped watermelon

1/2 C. diced green peppers

2 Tbsp. lime juice

1 Tbsp. diced cilantro

1 Tbsp. diced green onion

1-2 Tbsp. diced jalapeño peppers

Combine ingredients, mix well, and cover. Refrigerate an hour or more. Serve with chips or as garnish for chicken or fish.

Recipe courtesy of the [National Watermelon Promotion Board](#).

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