



Your Two Cents Makes Improvements



www.ars.usda.gov/yourtwocents

Have you been to see us lately? A lot has changed at “[Your Two Cents](#)”, making your navigation, searching, and commenting even easier.

And, we’ve recently posted some new information on the site that may be of interest: some stats on the “[Your Two Cents](#)” program to date, and a clearinghouse of information on the ongoing Fiscal Year 2011 budget situation.

A visit to “[Your Two Cents](#)” is well worth your time: ARS senior leadership is listening and [acting on your ideas](#), and your colleagues are listening to your [best practices](#). We are happy with the success of “[Your Two Cents](#)”, many thanks to those of you who have used the site to invest in ARS!

ARS Cultural Transformation Underway

Work is ongoing with some [agencywide cultural transformation initiatives](#) such as telework, while a few, such as authorship criteria on scientific publications, are nearing completion. In the near future, an ARS cultural transformation Web site “Review, Refresh, Reform” will be finished and will feature progress reports on all initiatives and many interesting and different ways to promote meaningful exchange on cultural transformation topics such as leadership, inclusion, and empowerment.

National Capital Area CFC Campaign Ends



The National Capital Area Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) officially ended in February 2011 and USDA reached 97 percent of its goal,

collecting \$1,913,138. The biggest contribution within USDA came from almost 1,500 ARS employees in the Washington metro area who contributed \$242,878 of that amount. That’s the most money ARS has ever collected and represents a 3 percent increase over the amount collected last year in the Washington metro area. Volunteers at other ARS locations also did their part to raise significant amounts for CFC. Given the hard times, it’s a testament to the generosity of ARS employees.

This couldn’t have happened without your help and the hard work of dozens of team leaders and keyworkers!

Some ARS keyworkers joined their USDA colleagues for a governmentwide CFC-National Capital Area awards ceremony held downtown on February 16, 2011. Associate Deputy Administrator **Carol Shelton**, ARS Administrative and Financial Management Division, and ARS coordinators Information Technology Specialist **Sherry Panzer**, ARS National Agricultural Library (NAL), and Chemist **Edith Blackwell**, ARS Food Composition and Methods Development Laboratory in Beltsville, MD, also accepted three awards at a later event to celebrate ARS participation. An awards luncheon for ARS keyworkers, held on March 2 in Beltsville, MD, gave special recognition to Secretary **Cookie Darcy**, NAL, for her “lifetime” of CFC efforts and to the ARS Beltsville Area’s Plant Sciences Institute for being the most effective group in the 2010 campaign.

Around ARS



Jody Johnson, doctoral student from the ARS Bee Research Lab, Beltsville, MD.

ARS and NIFA joined a host of other public and private scientific societies as exhibitors at the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Conference at the Washington Convention Center in Washington, DC, on

February 18–20, 2011. The conference included a weekend of “Family Science Days”—a unique science showcase offering an array of hands-on demos and kid-friendly activities.

Enjoying nonstop booth traffic, several staff from the ARS Beltsville Agricultural Research Center’s Bee Research Laboratory and the ARS Beltsville Human Nutrition Research Center discussed colony collapse disorder, the importance of pollination to American food security (and questions about the bees themselves), and the role of our nutrition monitoring research in developing the new 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

The booth drew lots of press attention, including several camera crews, plus followup opportunities from a German filmmaker doing a documentary on honey bees, CBSi Smart Planet, and a CNN reporter interested in our research on the snacking patterns of adolescents. The exhibit was coordinated by the ARS Information Staff. ❀

In 2010, ARS signed a memorandum of understanding with the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT)/Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) to help facilitate research collaborations among the agencies. CIAT and CGIAR specialize in improving agriculture for the developing world, and their research has improved the quality of life for millions of people. In February 2011, Research Entomologist **Jonathan Lundgren**,

ARS North Central Agricultural Research Laboratory in Brookings, SD, went to Calí, Colombia, for a 3-month expedition to establish research collaborations among the agencies. Lundgren’s research focuses on promoting ecological strategies for managing insects and weeds. Colombia is one of the most biodiverse places on earth, and Lundgren will work with CIAT scientists, including his host, Dr. Kris Wyckhuys, to evaluate how these approaches adapt to agricultural systems in South America. ❀

As of March 1, the “Chefs Move to Schools” program has 2,428 chefs and 2,108 schools signed up for its matching program—pairing chefs with schools. This program brings together chefs and school staff to improve meals served and teaches children about food and nutrition. “Chefs Move to Schools” is part of **First Lady Michelle Obama’s** *Let’s Move!* campaign to combat childhood obesity. Team Nutrition’s Healthy Meals Resource System, located at the ARS National Agricultural Library, is helping to coordinate the program. To learn more about “Chefs Move to Schools,” visit: <http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/chefs.html>. ❀

Speaking of the *Let’s Move!* campaign, in recent efforts it has teamed with the U.S. Tennis Association’s 10 and Under Initiative to encourage young people across the country to get active, try tennis, and lead healthy lifestyles. One of the star tennis players featured in a recent public service announcement commercial that aired on ESPN is ARS Human Resources Specialist **Michelyn Boyd’s** daughter, Noa (seen in the turquoise shirt). Watch the video: [Let’s Move! with the First Lady: 10 and Under Tennis](#). The video features the First Lady and tennis legends Andre Agassi and his wife Stefanie Graf. For more information about the *Let’s Move!* Campaign, visit <http://www.letsmove.gov>. ❀

Hopguard, a new product to combat varroa mites in honey bee colonies, is now commercially available. Hopguard was developed under a Cooperative Research and Development Agreement between **Gloria DeGrandi-Hoffman**, Research Leader at the ARS Carl Hayden Bee Research Center, Tucson, AZ, and John I. Haas, Inc., Yakima, WA. The Environmental



Varroa mite on a honey bee.

Protection Agency approved a Section 18 exemption for Hopguard for use in controlling varroa mites—a major pest of honey bees worldwide, responsible for large colony losses. Any threat to honey bees is a threat to American agriculture. Bee pollination is responsible for about \$15 billion in added crop value, particularly for specialty crops such as almonds and other nuts, berries, fruits, and vegetables. Hopguard will be available to beekeepers through Mann Lake Ltd. of Hackensack, MN. ❖

ARS Information Staff and NAL's Digital Information Services Team exhibited at USDA's 2011 Agricultural Outlook Forum held on February 24–25, 2011, in Crystal City, VA. USDA has hosted the forum since 1923 to provide agricultural leaders with sound information for drafting policy and making decisions. Among the distinguished plenary speakers this year were former **President Bill Clinton** (Watch video: http://www.usda.gov/oce/forum/2011_Speeches/clinton.html) and **Senator Debbie Stabenow**, Chairwoman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry (Watch video: http://www.usda.gov/oce/forum/2011_Speeches/Stabenow.html). ❖

ARS scientists and national program leaders met with more than 28 stakeholders and customers to discuss future research directions for the ARS San Joaquin Valley Agricultural Sciences Center, in Parlier, CA. The Program Visioning Workshop, held on February 14–15, 2011, identified problems, issues, challenges, and constraints affecting California agriculture. The group will develop a report. A representative from the Fresno office of **Senator Diane Feinstein** also briefly attended the workshop. ❖

The ARS National Agricultural Library (NAL) hosted three student interns from the University of Michigan School of Information as part of the school's annual Alternative Spring Break program. From February 28–March 4, 2011, the students, all specializing in



The three students (L to R) are: Hao Zeng, Ruidi Tan, and Rishu Arora.

Human-Computer Interaction, worked with different teams across NAL. Rishu Arora studied selected pages within the Rare and Special Collections' Web site and suggested improvements in design and usability. Ruidi Tan analyzed Web usage statistics for Nutrition.gov and the Food and Nutrition Information Center Web sites. Hao Zeng consulted on the Drupal project, assessing NAL's progress, identifying potential roadblocks, and recommending alternatives. ❖

Roy Scott, ARS National Program Leader for Oilseeds and Biosciences, and representatives of the National Cotton Council and Cotton Inc., visited Mexico on February 15–18, 2011, to participate in a Cotton Winter Nursery site visit. Scott met with Mexican partners in the Cotton Winter Nursery project. This project provides U.S. universities and private companies, as well as ARS, with warm-climate sites that can support additional breeding cycles during the winter for research in cotton breeding and genetics. ARS partners with U.S. cotton stakeholders to fund the Nursery, and the site visit included meetings with the Mexican partners to ensure continued success of the partnership. ❖

David Brauer, Program Manager for the ARS Ogallala Aquifer Program (OAP), was nominated to present at the "Agriculture, Food, Nutrition and Natural Resources R&D Roundtable," in Washington, DC, at the American Association for the Advancement of Science, on March 15. In addition, **Steven Kappes**, ARS Deputy Administrator for Animal Production and Protection, and Jerry Taylor, University of Missouri-Columbia, gave a talk on the international collaborative effort to sequence the bovine genome; **David Klurfeld**, ARS National Program Leader for Human Nutrition, and John Milner, National Institutes of Health, Rockville, MD, presented information on the National Food and Nutrient Analysis

Program; and **Mark Walbridge**, ARS National Program Leader for Water Quality & Water Management, along with Lisa Duriancik and Michelle Laur, both with NRCS in Beltsville, MD, gave a talk on the Benefits of Farm Bill Conservation Programs.

The program highlighted the value of Federal investment in agriculture-related sciences, as well as the value of collaborative research. There were a total of 61 nominations and OAP was one of 8 selected to present at the event, which was organized by the Farm Foundation, NFP, the Charles Valentine Riley Memorial Foundation, the Institute of Food Technologists, the Federation of Animal Science Societies, the American Society of Agronomy, the Soil Science Society of America, and the Crop Science Society of America, in collaboration with USDA's REE Mission Area, the USDA Forest Service, and USDA's National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board. **REE Under Secretary Cathie Woteki** was also present and discussed lessons learned and opportunities for the future. ❀

Leaders from the Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative of Florida (Jim Shine) and the American Sugar Cane League (Windell Jackson) met with key ARS staff, led and organized by **Gail Wisler**, ARS National Program Leader for Horticulture and Sugar on February 23, 2011, to address the need to develop genetic resources for sugarcane and energy cane feedstock development. Stakeholders and ARS staff have drafted a plan for a new Sugar Cane Consortium for developing new "upstream" genetic resources to meet public and private sector needs. This plan is targeted to address the "precompetitive" needs of both the sugar and energy cane industries, and to broaden the germplasm base for these crops. ❀

The Future Scientists Program is an educational outreach program that was initiated in the ARS Southern Plains Area, but has since expanded under the umbrella of the USDA Hispanic-Serving Institutions National Program. ARS scientists are an essential component for both sharing their research with teachers at workshops and then inviting students to the research centers. Recent efforts are being made to expand the program nationwide. The first expansion



Future scientists at a middle school students in Arcibo, PR, planted this field of corn to attract corn earworm moths for capture.

took place in the ARS Pacific West Area in 2009, and then in the ARS South Atlantic Area. In follow-ups to ARS workshops held last June, Craig Wilson, Director of the USDA Hispanic-Serving Institutions National Program/Future Scientists Program, hosted teaching days on February 13–24, 2011. ❀



Photo Corner

REE Under Secretary Cathie Woteki talks with Research Geneticist Mark Farnham, ARS U.S. Vegetable Lab, Charleston, SC, during her recent visit to the lab.



Notable Awards



Steven Seefeldt.

On February 7, 2011, Research Agronomist **Steven Seefeldt**, ARS Subarctic Agricultural Research Unit, Fairbanks, AK, and Research Leader **Stephen Duke**, ARS Natural Products Utilization Research Unit, Oxford, MS, both received one of the Weed Science Society of America's (WSSA) Outstanding Reviewer Awards. This

award recognizes excellence in reviewing WSSA's journals. WSSA presents few awards annually, so this is a significant honor. The awards were presented at the 51st Annual Meeting of the WSSA, in Portland, OR.

In addition, Ecologist **Adam Davis**, ARS Global Change and Photosynthesis Unit, Urbana, IL, received WSSA's Outstanding Early Career Weed Scientist Award for excellence in research and contributions to the discipline of weed science. Davis' research focuses on improving weed management in field crops. ❀



Jerry L. Hatfield.

Laboratory Director **Jerry L. Hatfield**, ARS National Laboratory for Agriculture and the Environment, was recognized as a Distinguished Alumni Fellow of Kansas State University for his achievements in agricultural research and leadership. He was honored at a special ceremony on the Manhattan campus held on

February 23–24, 2011. ❀

Research Chemist **Mark Berhow**, ARS National Center for Agricultural Utilization Research, Functional Foods Research Unit, Peoria, IL, will receive the 2011 Service Recognition Award from the University of Illinois College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences. On April 18, 2011,

Berhow will be honored for his collaborative efforts with researchers at the college over the past 10 years. The award recognizes outstanding service to the college. ❀

The Israel-based Wolf Foundation has selected **James Cook**, Research Leader (retired) of the ARS Root Disease and Biological Control Research Unit, in Pullman, WA, to receive the prestigious Wolf Prize for Agriculture. This prize honors those who promote science and the arts for the benefit of humankind. The presentation will be on May 23, 2011, in Jerusalem. Cook is also a laureate of the ARS Science Hall of Fame. ❀

Research Leader **Floyd Dowell**, ARS Engineering and Wind Erosion Research Unit, in Manhattan, KS, received the Andersons Cereals and Oilseeds Award of Excellence from the U.S. Quality Grains Research Consortium. Dowell was honored for his significant accomplishments in measurement technologies for quantifying quality attributes of grains and oilseeds, and for research that has impacted the health and well-being of people and animals in the developing world. The award was presented at the NC-213 Annual Meeting, in Kansas City, MO, on February 16, 2011. ❀

Molecular Biologist **Daniel Hwang** of the ARS Western Human Nutrition Research Center, Davis, CA, will receive the 2011 Osborne and Mendel Award on April 10, 2011, at the Experimental Biology Meeting in Washington, DC. This award, from the American Society for Nutrition, recognizes outstanding recent basic research accomplishments. ❀



Steven Lehotay.

Research Chemist **Steven Lehotay**, with the ARS Eastern Regional Research Center's Residue Chemistry and Predictive Microbiology Research Unit, in Wyndmoor, PA, will receive the 2011 Harvey W. Wiley Award from AOAC International at their annual meeting being held on Septem-

ber 18–21, 2011, in New Orleans, LA. Lehotay is being honored for his accomplishments to improve the analysis of chemical residues in foods, including developing the Quick, Easy, Cheap, Effective, Rugged, and Safe (QuEChERS) method for pesticide residue monitoring. ❀



Savithiry Natarajan.

Research Molecular Biologist **Savithiry Natarajan**, ARS Soybean Genomics and Improvement Laboratory, Beltsville, MD, has been awarded a 2011 Fulbright Senior Specialist Grant in recognition of her research in evaluating the quality and safety of transgenic soybeans using proteomics. The Fulbright Specialist Program funds

short-term collaborative projects at higher education institutions in more than 100 countries. Natarajan used the grant to conduct a workshop in proteomics at Fayoum University in Egypt. ❀

Several ARS scientists will receive a Federal Laboratory Consortium (FLC) National Award for Excellence in Technology Transfer on May 5, 2011, at FLC's National Meeting in Nashville, TN. The award recognizes top technology transfer activities across the Federal Government. The ARS technology transfer award winners include:

Research Leader **Christopher Sommers**, Chemical Engineer **David J. Geveke**, Mechanical Engineer **Neil Goldberg**, and Chemical Engineer **Michael Kozempel** (retired), with the ARS Food Safety and Intervention Technologies Research Unit, in Wyncmoor, PA, for developing a flash pasteurization method for improving the food safety of hot dogs.

Agricultural Engineer **Heping Zhu** and Research Leader **Charles R. Krause**, with the ARS Application Technology Research Unit, in Wooster, OH, and Randall H. Zondag, Extension Horticulturist at the Ohio State University Extension Service, for developing comprehensive application technology and strategies to reduce pesticide use.

Agricultural Engineer **Tom C. Pearson** and Agricultural Engineer **Daniel L. Brabec**, ARS Engineering and Wind Erosion Research Unit, in Manhattan, KS, for developing an instrument for rapidly detecting insects in infested grain.

Research Leader **David Suarez** and Research Microbiologist **Erica Spackman**, with the ARS Southeast Poultry Research Laboratory in Athens, GA, for developing tools for detecting H1N1 influenza virus.

In addition, **Patrick G. Hunt**, Center Director of the ARS Coastal Plains Soil, Water, and Plant Research Center, in Florence, SC, has been awarded one of two prestigious 2011 FLC Laboratory Director of the Year Awards. This award is given annually to directors who have made outstanding contributions supporting technology transfer activities at their laboratory for the previous calendar year. ❀

Did You Know?

Just outside the scenic town of Geneva, NY, you will find the **ARS Plant Genetic Resources Unit (PGRU)** and the **ARS Grape Genetics Research Unit (GGRU)** that together serve as a safe harbor for many wild and domestic varieties of grapes, apples, tart cherries, and vegetables that grow around the world.

The collections are the result of expeditions by scientists and germplasm donations—seeds, leaves, branches and twigs, and often the plants themselves—from researcher and breeder collections, botanical gardens, seed companies, foreign exchange programs, private organizations, and growers. The end result is a genetic treasure trove.

Both units maintain and study materials for use in breeding and research on a myriad of diseases, pests and pathogens, from powdery mildews that attack grapes to scab diseases that threaten our apple orchards.

Maintaining the collections is no small chore. Each sample must be characterized and its description posted to the ARS Genetic Resources Information Network. The staff is working on digital images to accompany the descriptions.

In addition to collections at Geneva, some seeds from the Geneva collections are preserved at the ARS National Center for Genetic Resources Preservation (NCGRP) in Fort Collins, CO. PGRU and NCGRP are part of a network of ARS repositories nationwide that make up the ARS National Plant Germplasm System—a cooperative effort by public and private organizations established to preserve genetic plant diversity.

New material comes in to the Geneva units all the time. The latest inventory includes 1,500 grape samples, 1,300 onion samples, 230 buckwheat samples, 5,800 tomato varieties, 130 tart cherry varieties, 7,000 apple trees, and 2,200 cole crop varieties, such as cabbage and kale. The collection boasts many

heirloom varieties grown centuries ago, like tomatoes, preserving these crops for future generations.

Read “[ARS Collections—Roots of a Blossoming Science](#)” to learn about ARS’ collections on plants, animals, arthropods, parasites, and microbes. ❖

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

Grapes.



Apples in the ARS germplasm collection.

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