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[www.ars.usda.gov/yourtwocents](http://www.ars.usda.gov/yourtwocents)

### Your Two Cents (Y2C)

The [Cultural Transformation Team](#) needs to hear from you! ARS's organizational culture is one where work-life balance, diversity, and suggestions for process improvement are highly valued. We want to know what *you* are doing at your work centers that reflects those values. Did you conduct a Cinco de Mayo celebration? Did you have a brown bag lunch featuring a guest speaker? What training have you taken? We are now required as an agency to report these activities under our Cultural Transformation metrics each month; we need your help to keep track of these activities! Please [email](#) us and let us know your plans or activities. [Y2C](#) administrators are now able to track progress of action items, as well as run reports on status updates and incomplete action items. There is also a field in the console to write an "impact statement" for each action item—a summary of the issue, what staff did to take care of it, and the positive impact it had on ARS. This will be especially helpful when reporting to the Administrator's Council and the Department about improvements and streamlining in our agency. Other improvements, such as the new ARS employee Intranet, are under way. Look for updates in future *ARS & You* issues! ❀

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.

### Keep It Simple!

Don't forget to take the "[Introduction to Plain Language](#)" course in your [AgLearn](#) "To Do" list, in support of ARS's 3-month "Plain Writing Information Campaign"! For more information, contact ARS's Plain Writing Coordinator, **Tara T. Weaver-Missick**, by email ([tara.weavermissick@ars.usda.gov](mailto:tara.weavermissick@ars.usda.gov)) or by phone (301-504-1663). ❀

### Around ARS

On April 23, 2013, Earth Day celebrations at the ARS Thad Cochran Southern Horticultural Laboratory (TCSHL), Poplarville, MS, were kicked off with a presentation by two representatives from the Gaining Ground Sustainability Institute of Mississippi. After the presentation, TCSHL staff planted an herb garden made from a recycled shipping pallet. The finished product will be displayed in front of the main office. Staff then went to the city park, where they planted blueberry plants in a People's Garden that TCSHL is helping to build. Staff also planted native live oak trees in the landscape at the laboratory.

See related photos in [Photo Corner](#). ❀

On April 18, 2013, Biological Science Laboratory Technician **Chris Rees**, Research Molecular Biologist **Jhonatan Sepulveda-Villet**, and Animal Caretaker **Tim Paul**—all with the ARS Dairy Forage and Aquaculture



Chris Rees speaking with students.

Research Unit, Milwaukee, WI—participated in a career fair at the National Ocean Sciences Bowl in Milwaukee. The event was designed for students from across the Nation to learn more about careers in the marine sciences by talking with current professionals. The 125 students attending the event were all winners of their respective regional competition. ARS representatives visited with about 75 students and provided an exhibit. ❀

On April 23, 2013, Biological Science Technician **Chris Odt** and Microbiologist **Dave Stevenson**, ARS U.S. Dairy Forage Research Center (USDFRC), Madison, WI, presented at the 2013 Science Night at Emerson Elementary School in Madison, WI, as part of an Adult Role Models in Science program. The event attracted 350 students and family members. On April 26, 2013, Research Chemist **Wayne Zeller**, USDFRC, spoke to 60 students and faculty members at the Center for Biophysical and Biochemical Studies Noon Seminar Series at Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, about careers in agricultural research. ❀

Students aren't the only ones who can have fun at the ARS Beltsville Area (BA) [Student Discovery Garden](#). There is a new Student Discovery Garden "Learn at Lunch" seminar series designed for BA employees. At the first seminar, held on March 15, 2013, Biological Science Technician **Victor Levi**, ARS Bee Research Laboratory, Beltsville, MD, taught the audience about honeybees. Future seminar topics include native bees, native plants, and climate change. The BA [Student Discovery Garden](#) is a project of the [BA Diversity Task Force](#). For more information, email [BARC.Diversity@ars.usda.gov](mailto:BARC.Diversity@ars.usda.gov) or visit [http://www.ars.usda.gov/Aboutus/BA\\_Diversity\\_Task\\_Force](http://www.ars.usda.gov/Aboutus/BA_Diversity_Task_Force). ❀

On April 15-16, 2013, the National Agricultural Library's (NAL) **Food and Nutrition Information Center (FNIC)** Web and Reference Team (WRT) exhibited at the National Food Policy Conference in Washington, DC. WRT members promoted FNIC information products, including [Nutrition.gov](#) videos, various resource collections, and special program information. Approximately 400 people attended the conference. ❀

Staff from the National Agricultural Library's (NAL) **Food Safety Information Center (FSIC)** and **Food and Nutrition Information Center (FNIC)** represented NAL at the 15th annual Maryland Day on April 27, 2013. This year's theme—Explore Our World of Fearless Ideas—attracted a record 105,000 visitors. FSIC and FNIC exhibited in "Ag Alley," featuring hands-on food safety and nutrition education information. The interactive MyPlate game for children and the fat and muscle models from the NAL collection were especially popular. ❀

## Notable Awards



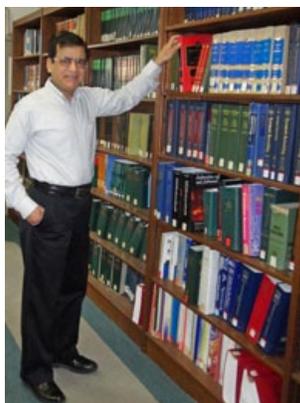
James Bonta.

On April 11, 2013, Research Hydraulic Engineer **James V. Bonta**, ARS Watershed Physical Processes Research Unit, Oxford, MS, received the Civil Engineering Alumnus Achievement Award from the School of Civil Engineering of Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN. This prestigious award is presented to a select group of Purdue graduates who have had outstanding career achievements and have made major contributions to the civil engineering profession. Fewer than 100 individuals have been given this honor in the history of the university. ❀

Center Director **Sevim Z. Erhan**, ARS Eastern Regional Research Center, was inducted as a Fellow of the [Society of Tribologists and Lubrication Engineers \(STLE\)](#) at its annual meeting on May 7 in Detroit, MI. STLE's Fellows Committee recognizes long-term members who have made a significant impact in the field of tribology and lubrication engineering. ❀



Sevim Erhan.



Vijay Juneja.

Supervisory Microbiologist **Vijay K. Juneja**, ARS Residue Chemistry and Predictive Microbiology Research Unit, Wyndmoor, PA, has been elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Microbiology for his significant contributions to multiple areas within the broad discipline of food safety microbiology. He was inducted at the 113th [American Society for Microbiology](#) General Meeting on May 21 in Denver, CO. ❀

Research Leader **Robert Mandrell**, who recently retired from the ARS Produce Safety and Microbiology Research Unit in Albany, CA, has been elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Microbiology. He was inducted at the 113th [American Society of Microbiology](#) General Meeting in Denver, CO, on May 21. ❖



## Photo Corner

See related story in [Around ARS](#) about Earth Day celebrations at the ARS Thad Cochran Southern Horticultural Laboratory.



Kerry O'Donnell.

On April 11, 2013, Microbiologist **Kerry O'Donnell**, ARS Bacterial Foodborne Pathogens and Mycology Research Unit, Peoria, IL, received the Josef von Arx Award from the [Centraalbureau voor Schimmelcultures](#) (CBS-KNAW) in Utrecht, The Netherlands, which is an

institute of the Royal Netherlands

Academy of Arts and Sciences. O'Donnell was recognized for his outstanding contribution to taxonomic research of fungal biodiversity. The award was presented at the CBS-KNAW Fungal Biodiversity Centre Symposium in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. ❖



Research Chemist **Eleanor "Ellie" Brown**, ARS Eastern Regional Research Center, Wyndmoor, PA, has been selected to receive the IULTCS Merit Award from the [International Union of Leather Technologists and Chemists Societies](#) (IULTCS). She will be honored at the XXXII IULTCS Meeting in Istanbul, Turkey, May 29-31. ❖



Ellie Brown.

Research Chemist **Fred J. Eller**, ARS Functional Foods Research Unit, Peoria, IL, received the Herbert J. Dutton Award from the Analytical Division of the [American Oil Chemists Society](#) (AOCS) at its 104th Annual Meeting & Expo, April 28-May 1, Montreal, Canada. ❖



Fred Eller.

## Did You Know?



If you live in parts of the South, that ant mound you see in the backyard could be more than just a nuisance. If they are fire ants, they could sting you, too. When disturbed, fire ants swarm onto a person by the hundreds, biting and stinging to produce painful, pus-filled wounds.

Did you know that ARS scientists have been working hard to develop strategies to control these invasive pests? They have come up with a number of environmentally friendly methods, including special baits and traps, parasitic flies, and microorganisms to help keep fire ant populations in check.

For example, ARS researchers at Gainesville, FL, working with cooperators in Argentina, studied two parasitic microsporidia to curb fire ants. The scientists found that worker ants transfer one species of microsporidia to the queen, reducing her egg production so colonies eventually die out. Another species, tested in Argentina, destroyed fire ant colonies there without infecting other, native ants or arthropods.

Another natural enemy, the phorid fly, from South America has been studied by ARS researchers and has been released in Florida to help control the ant. In Florida, since the fire ant control program began in 1995, five species of phorid flies have been released to parasitize various sizes of fire ants. Each phorid fly lays an egg into individual fire ants. These eggs later develop within the fire ant's head, ultimately causing its demise.

Also, ARS researchers developed a new bait gel formulation in cooperation with private investigators. The bait formulation, which comprises a specific mixture of carbohydrates, lipids and proteins, is weather resistant and can be eaten by ants year-round. It contains 5 percent boric acid, which, in tests, killed fire ant colonies in 2 months or less, depending on their size and the season.

So, thanks to these and other ARS advances, you can look forward to the possibility of fire-ant-free days ahead.

### ***Did you know that...***

- Fire ants first entered the United States about 1918, near Mobile, AL?
- Fire ants are social insects that nest in the soil in large colonies containing tens of thousands to more than 200,000 ants?

Source: [Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station](#)

*Written by Sean Adams, ARS Information Staff.*

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