



### ***In This Issue:***

**Your Two Cents**

**Around ARS**

**Notable Awards**

**Did You Know?**

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



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

Secretary Vilsack has renewed his pledge to continue the Cultural Transformation (CT) of USDA, and with that in mind, he recognized ARS leadership for their progress at his Faces of Cultural Transformation event on December 4 in the USDA South Building, Washington, DC. During the December Administrator's Council meeting, our CT champions discussed plans for the continued transformation of ARS to include improvements to business processes, enhancements to [Your Two Cents \(Y2C\)](#) and the ARS Intranet. The goal of the ARS Intranet is improved and streamlined communication throughout the agency. We also want to make it easier for the ARS family to find everything they need to do their jobs efficiently and in a timely fashion—a one-stop shop for everyone. Please stay tuned for more updates! We are continuing to implement improvements suggested during the Y2C Summit last month. If you haven't had a chance to do so yet, [click here](#) to watch an interview with ARS Associate Administrators Chavonda Jacobs-Young and Caird Rexroad, and see what they and other ARS leaders said about [Y2C](#). ❀

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.

## Around ARS

At the first Asian Food Festival at the ARS Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, Beltsville, MD, on December 5, ARS staff raised around \$900 for the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). Thirty different Asian dishes—Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese and Persian—and five different types of tea were offered. The dishes were created by Asian-American employees, including visiting scientists, and over 100 customers were served. This well-attended fundraiser provided not only a delectable feast but also a great opportunity to learn about different cultures and exchange recipes. ❀



The Asian Food Festival Team, from left: Shoulei Yan, Catherine Parsons, Michael A. Witles, Emely Shuck, Yaguang “Sunny” Luo, Jingwei Huan, Haijuan Yan, Liping Kou, Ellen Turner and Tianbao Yang.



Over 100 customers were served.



Yum!

For this holiday season, the ARS laboratories at Franklin and Orono, ME, donated 200 whole salmon and 500 pounds of Maine potatoes to feed their neighbors through the Bar Harbor Food Pantry, which provides food security to about 150 families in Hancock County, ME. Every year employees at the **ARS National Cold Water Marine Aquaculture Center** (NCWMAC), Franklin, ME, raise a group or “year-class” of salmon in their breeding program. Poor-performing fish are culled and the best fish are saved to reproduce. Many of the culled fish go to local food banks. Potatoes are the main commodity grown for research at the **ARS New England Plant, Soil, and Water Laboratory** (NEPSWL) in Orono, ME. Some of the donated fish and potatoes were shared with other area food pantries. ❀

On November 30, 2012, employees at the **ARS Thad Cochran Southern Horticultural Research Laboratory** in Poplarville, MS, hosted a group of students from the Poplarville High School. The students were enrolled in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) and A.E.S.T. (Agriculture, Environmental, Science and Technology) classes. ARS scientists explained their research projects to the students and gave them a tour of the facility. ❀

As part of ARS outreach, Plant Pathologist **Christina Cowger**, ARS Plant Science Research Unit, Raleigh, NC, worked with NC State University Extension and the North Carolina Small Grain Growers Association to produce four short videos on the identification and management of major wheat diseases in North Carolina and the southeastern United States. Cowger is featured in the videos on identification and management of four common and damaging diseases in Mid-Atlantic wheat production: powdery mildew, leaf rust, *Stagonospora nodorum* blotch and Fusarium head blight (scab). The videos are available at <http://www.ars.usda.gov/News/News.htm?modecode=66-45-25-00>. ❀

A service of the **National Agricultural Library**, **DigiTop Navigator** (<http://digitopnavigator.nal.usda.gov>) now includes the GEOBASE and GeoRef databases. These two new databases contribute nearly 4 million additional records and strengthen Navigator’s subject coverage in the areas of environmental sciences, geology, geography and geomechanics. **DigiTop Navigator** allows simultaneous searches of records from 11 key agricultural and life science databases including AGRICOLA, AGRIS, BIOSIS, CAB Abstracts and MEDLINE. **Navigator** also helps you work more effectively with alerts and citation lists, exports to bibliographic managers and emailing of citations. Try Navigator today and submit your feedback and questions to [DigiTop@usda.gov](mailto:DigiTop@usda.gov)! ❀

**David S. Marshall**, Acting ARS National Program Leader for Plant Genetics and Grain Crops, Raleigh, NC, and **Kay Simmons**, ARS Deputy Administrator, Crop Production and Protection, Beltsville, MD, visited Pakistan in September 2012 as part of a group to help farmers increase productivity and improve food security in Pakistan by introducing disease-resistant varieties of wheat. The group represented USDA's Wheat Productivity Enhancement Project (WPEP), a collaborative program focused on scientific exchanges on wheat productivity to help develop and introduce disease-resistant varieties, improve agronomy practices and upgrade infrastructure in Pakistan. WPEP has introduced 60 advanced wheat varieties in Pakistan in the first of 115 wheat trials scheduled this year at the National Agricultural Research Council (NARC) and other locations throughout Pakistan. Three ARS locations are involved in the research: Raleigh, NC, St. Paul, MN, and Pullman, WA. ❀



David Marshall inspects rust-infected plants in the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council greenhouse in Muree, Pakistan. Photo courtesy of the United States Embassy, Islamabad, Pakistan.

## Notable Awards



Donald Knowles.

ARS honored **Donald Knowles**, **Kenneth Vogel** and **Larry Cundiff** as the newest inductees in its Science Hall of Fame on December 5 during a ceremony in College Park, MD. **Knowles**, Research Leader, ARS Animal Disease Research Unit, Pullman, WA, was recognized for animal disease research. **Vogel**, Supervisory Research Geneticist and Research Leader, ARS Grain,

Forage and Bioenergy Research Unit, Lincoln, NE, was recognized for developing perennial grasses for bioenergy. **Cundiff**, Research Geneticist (retired), ARS U.S. Meat Animal Research Center, Clay Center, NE, was recognized for beef genetics research. ARS established its Science Hall of Fame in 1986 to recognize agency researchers for their outstanding lifelong achievements in agricultural sciences and technology. Visit <http://www.ars.usda.gov/careers/hof/> to read about past inductees and view interviews with some of the honorees. ❀

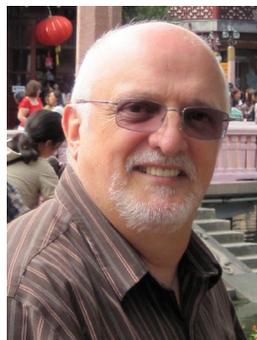


Kenneth Vogel.

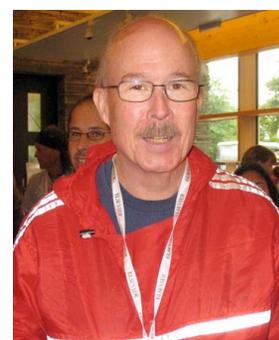


Larry Cundiff.

Supervisory Research Plant Geneticist **Melvin Oliver**, ARS Plant Genetics Research Unit, Columbia, MO, and Microbiologist **Kerry O'Donnell**, ARS Bacterial Foodborne Pathogens and Mycology Research Unit, Peoria, IL, were recently elected as Fellows of AAAS in the section on Agriculture, Food, and Renewable Resources. ❀



Mel Oliver.



Kerry O'Donnell.

## Did You Know?



As the holidays quickly approach, many of us are planning our gatherings with family and friends, right down to the festive food fare—from tender, juicy [turkey](#) and stuffing to yummy side dishes, which may include an assortment of fruits and veggies with custom-made dishes like candied [sweet potatoes](#) and the best part

of the holiday—the dessert! Certainly, the star attraction this time of year are the holiday cookies! Who can resist just one nibble?

Well, ARS scientists are baking up some “healthier” holiday cookies of their own—in the name of research, of course! Researchers at the **ARS Soft Wheat Quality Laboratory** in Wooster, OH, are identifying ways to make flour with more whole grains. Many Americans don’t eat enough whole grains and dietary fiber. Consumption of whole grains, in some studies, has been associated with reduced risk of heart disease (plaque buildup in the walls of the arteries), which can lead to heart attack or stroke. In fact, USDA’s [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) recommends that we consume at least half of all grains as whole grains, and The National Academies’ [Institute of Medicine](#) recommends the following daily fiber intake: men (age 50 and younger) – 38 grams, men (age 51 and older) – 30 grams, women (age 50 and younger) – 25 grams, and women (age 51 and older) – 21 grams.

Scientists at the Wooster lab are trying to determine how much dietary fiber is really in today’s whole-grain soft-wheat flours with the goal of developing wheat with even more nutritional value. Soft wheat is used to make

crackers, cakes, cookies, breakfast bars, pancakes, waffles, flour tortillas, some snack chips and other products. In contrast, hard wheat is used to make things like pasta.

Using new test methods to determine dietary fiber levels of whole-grain flours made from soft wheat, ARS scientists found that soft-wheat whole-grain flours have, on average, about 14.8 grams of dietary fiber in each 100 grams of flour. Though it’s only slightly higher than the most widely referred to U.S. estimate, this information is valuable because it could be used in new editions of nutritional databases to help present a more comprehensive picture. Many food makers and regulatory agencies like the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, which is responsible for food labeling, may use this information when developing nutrient data labels.

Though there are many health sources of fiber, beans being high on the list—ARS has research on that, too—it’s nice to know that one day we can snack happily and healthily (and in moderation, of course) without guilt.

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

### **Executive Editor**

Sandy Miller Hays

### **Managing Editor**

Tara T. Weaver-Missick

### **Writer-Editor**

Mina Chung

### **Designer-Editor**

Carol Nathan

### **Contributors**

Tracy Havermann

Mel Oliver

Yaguang “Sunny” Luo

Tara T. Weaver-Missick

David Marshall

Bill Wolters

Kerry O’Donnell