



Two New ARS Web Sites Launched This Month

The ARS Information Staff (IS) announced its newly redesigned Sci4Kids Web site on June 7. The site has a new look and feel,

and includes easier site navigation, vibrant graphics, interactive content, videos and animation. It is designed to educate kids ages 8 to 13 about the importance of agriculture and science in their daily lives in a fun and meaningful way. Sci4Kids operates with the recognition that today's children are tomorrow's farmers, scientists, policymakers and consumers. The new site will also feature contests throughout the year designed to engage teachers and students. Have an interesting ARS science story idea? Contact **Jan Suszkiw** (A.K.A. Dr. Watts at jan.suszkiw@ars.usda.gov). Check it out at www.ars.usda.gov/is/kids.

IS Director **Sandy Miller Hays** announced the launch of the new IS Services Web site (www.ars.usda.gov/is/services) on June 8 at the ARS Administrator's Council. The new site features resources designed to help ARS employees with communicating consistent, professional, targeted messages to agency customers and stakeholders. Need an article written about your research, want a new brochure or a new exhibit, or need outreach materials and ideas for your customer events? The Information Staff is here to help! In the coming weeks, IS will be sending a welcome letter and magnets with the Web address to ARS field locations. If you need a magnet or have questions about the new site, please contact **Tara Weaver-Missick** (tara.weavermissick@ars.usda.gov).



ARS NAL Helps "Chefs Move to Schools" Program

In conjunction with First Lady Michelle Obama's *Let's Move!* campaign to combat childhood obesity, the Team Nutrition/Healthy Meals Resource System, located at NAL, is helping to play matchmaker in the new "Chefs Move to Schools" program. The program calls on chefs to adopt a school and work with parents, teachers, school nutrition professionals and administrators to educate kids about food and nutrition and to improve school-provided meals. The program was announced May 13, 2010, but the First Lady and White House Assistant Chef Sam Kass officially kicked it off on June 4 with a gathering of 500 chefs on the South Lawn.

As of June 15, 1,194 chefs and 714 schools have signed up. In the coming weeks, chefs will be paired with schools requesting help so communities can begin the new school year with a goal of great food, good nutrition and fun cooking. To learn more about "Chefs Move to Schools," visit <http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/chefs.html>.



Do You Know About the "Your Two Cents" Focus Group?

"Your Two Cents" (Y2C) was designed to give every ARS employee a "direct line" to senior leadership. The Y2C Focus Group works hard to help the response team keep it relevant and on target. The Focus Group comprises employees from all walks of "ARS life" and helps the response team

research and write responses to questions received via Y2C that will speak to all ARS employees regardless of where they work.

Focus Group members continually review the ideas and responses, leave comments for responders that help keep responses on target, and meet with the response team once a week. Members include: **Jeff Carroll** (Lubbock, TX), **Stewart Gray** (Ithaca, NY), **Sandy Groneberg** (Morris, MN), **Sara Hake** (Albany, CA), **Mary Beth Hall** (Madison, WI), **Carol Moran** (Ames, IA), **Perry Rainosek** (Houston, TX), **Julie Tarara** (Prosser, WA) and **Candace Wilson** (Fort Detrick, MD).

As of June 10, “Your Two Cents” has received over 170 ideas and innovations! Please join the discussion at <http://www.ars.usda.gov/yourtwocents>, and stay tuned for an announcement of the “Your Two Cents First 100 Days” Initiative, which will unveil actions that have taken place and are underway as a result of the Y2C program. Also, visit the site for a new commenting feature that allows you to weigh-in on ideas posted by others.

ARS Laboratory in Georgia Is Helping Save Lives



Childre's 2-year-old granddaughter.

On May 21, employees at the ARS National Peanut Research Laboratory (NPRL) in Dawson, GA, hosted a blood drive for the American Red Cross. The drive was a success for the Red Cross. Forty people participated and a total of 33 units of blood were donated. Twenty-two ARS laboratory personnel participated in the blood drive. Four employees were first-time donors. Biological Science Lab Technician, and regular platelet donor, **Jesse Childre** organized the blood drive following a presentation (in March) by Suzanne McNair of the American Red Cross about the need for blood donors. Childre's motivation is his 2-year-old granddaughter who has received several units of whole blood and platelets after being diag-

nosed with acute lymphocytic leukemia in December 2009.

While our work in ARS makes a difference in the lives of many, the NPRL challenges other ARS laboratories to host at least one blood drive in their community during the next 12 months. Save a life. Donate blood.

Grand Forks Employees Walk the Talk

About 50 employees at the ARS Grand Forks Human Nutrition Research Center (GFHNRC) in Grand Forks, ND, embarked on a 5-month, “Walk-the-Talk” program that started February 9, 2010. As part of the redirection of the GFHNRC's research into obesity prevention, staff was challenged to walk 1 million steps. Workshops on living healthier were offered during the noon lunch period. A daily, small-step-of-the-day message was distributed to every employee via e-mail. The program ended June 15, 2010, and the 1 million steps challenge was met!

New Food-Themed Poster Exhibit Opens at NAL

On June 21, 2010, ARS NAL opened a new exhibit of food-themed posters from the World War I and World War II eras. Cory Bernat, now a project archivist at the National Park Service, independently developed the exhibit based on research she did for her Master's thesis at the University of Maryland, uncovering the educational and patriotic gems among unprocessed posters within NAL's Special Collections. The exhibit will run from June 21 through September 30, 2010, and an online version is available at http://www.good-potato.com/beans_are_bullets/index.html. The Food & Think blog at *Smithsonian Magazine* conducted an interview with Bernat about her work (<http://blogs.smithsonianmag.com/food/2010/05/28/american-food-posters-from-world-war-i-and-ii/>).

Around ARS

ARS scientists participated in the Borlaug Global Rust Initiative and the Eighth International Wheat Conference in St. Petersburg, Russia, on May 30–June 4, 2010, which focused on an international collaboration to increase wheat productivity and to protect wheat from virulent new cereal pathogens. **Kay Simmons**, ARS National Program Leader (Plant Genetics and Grain Crops), served as the U.S. Delegate to the Executive Committee. Plenary talks were given by Research Plant Pathologists **Yue Jin**, ARS Cereal Disease Laboratory in St. Paul, MN, and **Stephen Goodwin** with the ARS Crop Production and Pest Control Research Unit in West Lafayette, IN. A recent paper by ARS scientists was declared the “Cereal Rust Discovery of the Decade” by conference organizers. The paper describes the life cycle of the stripe rust pathogen for the first time and was written by **Jin** and Research Geneticist **Les Szabo** and Research Leader **Martin Carson**, also with the ARS Cereal Disease Laboratory.

Mike Shannon, ARS National Program Leader for Water Availability & Watershed Management, addressed the 2010 Legislative Conference of the Irrigation Association in Washington, DC. The Irrigation Association is composed of more than 2,000 member companies, and brings together national leaders in agricultural and turf/landscape irrigation. The conference presents an opportunity for industry to develop and continue dialogues with elected officials, policymakers and regulators regarding issues of significance to the irrigation industry. Shannon discussed ARS priorities relating to agricultural irrigation and ways industry can better partner with ARS in areas of common interest.



Lygus bug.

Quarantine Officer **Dominique Coutinot** with the ARS European Biological Control Laboratory (EBCL) in Montpellier, France, gave two presentations at the Seventh Symposium of the Moroccan Association for Plant Protection, which was held

May 26–27, 2010, in Morocco. His first presentation was on the international and regional legislations and regulations for biological control, and his second was on his project surveying Morocco for parasitoids to help control *Lygus* bugs in the United States. These collections produced significant results, including new records and first collections of *Lygus* in Morocco from one of its weedy hosts, *Chenopodium album*. Coutinot also received the official certificate from the French Civil Aviation Directorate, granting EBCL a new permit good until June 30, 2014, allowing the facility to continue to ship specimens with minimum disturbance to the material at customs and the airport.

On June 7–10, **Cyril Gay**, ARS National Program Leader for Animal Health and Safety, organized a Global Foot-and-Mouth Disease Research Alliance (GFRA) workshop at the Fourth Annual Meeting of EPIZONE, in Saint Malo, France. EPIZONE provides scientists from around the world a network of Excellence for Epizootic Disease Diagnosis and Control. Diagnostics, surveillance, epidemiology, intervention strategies and risk assessment of epizootic diseases were discussed at the meeting.

On June 10, Research Scientist **Marie-Claude Bon** with EBCL attended a special session of the General Assembly of Agropolis International, the umbrella organization of Montpellier that includes many national French institutes. Agropolis views USDA as one of its principal international partners. Agropolis International maintains a Web site with significant summary publications on agricultural themes, most recently on the Geographic Information System and on the partnership with Brazilian Labex. You can download English versions from <http://www.agropolis.org/>.

Eileen Thacker, ARS National Program Leader for Animal Health, and **Steven Olsen**, Veterinary Medical Officer at the ARS National Animal Disease Center in Ames, IA, met on June 10 with the Minister of Agriculture and his ministry agents from Kyrgyzstan about the collaborative brucellosis research conducted by both the United States and Kyrgyzstan for the last three years. Future collaborative research was also discussed.

Eileen Thacker, ARS National Program Leader for Animal Health; Deputy Chief Ginger Murphy of USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); and NRCS Scientist John Fripp will be spending several weeks in June and July in Afghanistan to provide support to the Ministry of Agriculture and the Kabul Conference at the request of **USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack**. During her time there, Thacker will also be attending a workshop in Kabul, Afghanistan to participate in discussions to develop goals, objectives, and national programs in agriculture and rural development, which will aid reconstruction and stability, and help increase economic opportunities for the Afghan people.

On June 12, **Jeff Silverstein**, ARS National Program Leader for Aquaculture, participated in a sustainable seafood event sponsored by The Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History and The Smithsonian Associates in Washington, DC. Richard Harris, National Public Radio science correspondent, moderated three panel discussions on the topics of seafood sustainability challenges, the future of aquaculture and consumer choices. Silverstein served as a panel member and discussed the future of aquaculture.

Mark Boggess, ARS National Program Leader for Animal Production, and **Cyril Gay**, ARS National Program Leader for Animal Health and Safety, participated in the American Association of Swine Veterinarians Meeting held on June 15, 2010, in Washington, DC. Gay presented an update on current ARS swine disease research, as well as present swine disease priorities from the 2010 ARS/NIFA Stakeholder Animal Health workshop held in March.

Boggess presented an update on current ARS swine production research.

Cyril Gay, ARS National Program Leader for Animal Health and Safety, attended the workshop on "Moving Towards Comprehensive Global Disease Surveillance" held on June 16, 2010, at the U.S. Department of State in Washington DC. The focus of this meeting was to discuss approaches to build core capacities on disease surveillance to meet the World Health Organization's International Health Regulations.

On June 16–18, **Kay Simmons**, ARS Acting Deputy Administrator for Crop Production and Protection, participated in "Promoting Health by Linking Agriculture, Food and Nutrition," a conference organized by the National Agricultural Biotechnology Council at the University of California-Davis. The conference examined the dichotomy of agriculture and diet being both the problem and the solution to an increasing health crisis by examining the science linking agriculture, food, and nutrition to health.

Cyril Gay, ARS National Program Leader for Animal Health and Safety, will attend The Center of Excellence for Emerging and Zoonotic Animal Diseases (CEEZAD) Meeting on June 28–29, in Manhattan, KS. There will be a public meeting on the first day to discuss emerging pathogens of importance for human and animal health followed by a meeting the next day for CEEZAD members, consultants, the external evaluation board and the Department of Homeland Security.

Robert Mandrell, Research Leader of the ARS Produce Safety and Microbiology Research Unit, in Albany, CA, was invited to participate as a panel member at the Center for Produce Safety (CPS) Inaugural Symposium and Research Priorities Meeting held June 23–24 at the Mondavi Center at the University of California-Davis. The panel will assess how to move forward with produce food-safety-related issues. Researchers who were awarded grants presented results of 11 CPS-funded research projects grouped thematically around key research priori-

ties related to real-world produce production and harvest practices, such as survivability of *E. coli* and *Salmonella*; new testing methods; and transport of pathogens in the production environment. CPS was established with public and private partnerships at UC-Davis.

Members of the Federal and Armed Forces Round Table of the American Library Association have elected **Vicky Crone**, an ARS National Agricultural Library (NAL) Librarian, as Vice President/President Elect for the 2010–2012 term. In addition, **Kelvin Watson**, Head of NAL's Acquisitions and Collection Development Branch, has been elected to the Executive Board of the Black Caucus of the American Library Association for the 2010–2012 term.



Beltsville Master Gardeners

When USDA Headquarters initiated the Executive Master Gardener Program, five ARS employees from the ARS Beltsville Agricultural Research Center were eager to sign up—**Lisa Bailey** (Personnel Security Specialist), **Linda Daly-Lucas** (Program Support Specialist), **Pat Dobson** (Administrative Assistant), **Martha Edens-Schmidt** (Biological Science Technician) and **Ann Simpkins** (Biological Science Lab Technician). The program consists of 16 hours of core training, 16 hours of volunteer time, and 8 hours of continuing education each year. Volunteer opportunities include participating in all aspects of gardening, as well as public education and outreach about safe, effective and sustainable horticulture practices. Master Gardeners are representatives of USDA and integral members of a team focused on helping the community and supporting the People's Garden Initiative. Multiple ideas and new plans are quickly evolving from BARC employees to support the People's Garden Initiative. One such idea is the Student Discovery Garden (SDG), which is a new community outreach project at BARC envisioned by the Science and Education Subcommittee of BARC's Workplace Diversity Task Force and headed by Research Plant Physiologist **Lewis Ziska**.



George Meyers, Farm Crew Foreman at BARC, is ultra-talented at transforming old farm equipment into art.

Examples of his art are all around the BARC-West campus, including the sunflower and cut-tire planting container in the Urban Garden display of the Student Discovery Garden.

New Mexico Chili Pepper Fiesta

Scientists from the ARS Sustainable Agricultural Systems Lab in Beltsville, MD, have been advising USDA People's Garden coordinators since the inception of the project. This year, Research Ecologist **Jude Maul** and Support Scientists **Natalee Gautam** and **Sarah Emche** provided the seedlings planted in the garden as a way of supporting USDA's initiative. Early this spring, Maul was asked for his help by People's Garden coordinators and representatives from the New Mexico Department of Agriculture. He propagated 23 varieties of chili peppers for the New Mexico Chili Pepper Fiesta, which was held on June 9 at the People's Garden site on the National Mall and attended by State Representative Ben Ray Luján (3rd District) and USDA Deputy Secretary **Kathleen Merrigan**.

Notable Awards

Research Engineer **Zhongli Pan** and Research Leader **Tara McHugh** of the ARS Processed Foods Research Unit in Albany, CA, and exchange Ph.D. student Wenjuan Wu from Jiangsu University, China, were given the Armand Blanc Award of the International Commission of Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering (CIGR) Best Paper Award for their article on, “Continuous and Pulsed Ultrasound-Assisted Extractions of Antioxidants from Pomegranate Peel.” The award was presented on June 15 during the Seventeenth World Congress of CIGR in Quebec, Canada.

Thomas Jackson, Hydrologist with the ARS Hydrology and Remote Sensing Laboratory in Beltsville, MD, has been chosen as one of two recipients of the First Annual Distinguished Agriscience Scientist Awards sponsored by the Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation and the American Farm Bureau Federation. The Foundation is a Federal agency established by Congress to “encourage and support research, study and labor designed to produce new discoveries in all fields of endeavor for the benefit of mankind.” Jackson is being recognized for outstanding research accomplishments in remote sensing to determine soil moisture via satellites. The award will be given on July 12, 2010.

A team of ARS scientists with the ARS Dairy and Functional Foods Research Unit in Wyndmoor, PA—Research Food Technologist **Charles Onwulata**, Chemist **Audrey Thomas**, Chemical Engineering Technician **Eric Tilman**, Engineering Technician **Matthew Toht**, Chemical Engineering Technician **John Mulherin** and Chemical Engineer **Jhanel Wilson**—was awarded a Gold Medal in the Technical Accomplishment (Group) Category at the recent 2010 Excellence in Government Awards, sponsored by the Philadelphia Federal Executive Board, for their project “Ready-to-Eat Meals for Emergency Feeding.” The team created an Instant Corn Soy Blend, a powder that can be used to make porridge without cooking. For the first time, the USDA Foreign Agriculture Service and the U.S. Agency for International

Development issued a new product request for emergency feeding: Instant Corn Soy Blend.

Supervisory Research Agricultural Engineer and Research Leader **Robert Evans**, with the ARS Northern Plains Agricultural Research Laboratory in Sidney, MT, received an Outstanding Reviewer Award from the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers (ASABE) for providing outstanding peer reviews of manuscripts in the ASABE’s Soil and Water Division.

Co-authors Botanist **David Spooner** and Research Geneticist **Shelley Jansky** with the ARS Vegetable Crops Research Unit in Madison, WI, and Reinhard Simon, with the International Potato Center in Lima, Peru, were selected by the Crop Science Society of America for an outstanding paper award in Plant Genetic Resources during the year 2009, for their paper, “Tests of Taxonomic and Biogeographic Predictivity: Resistance to Multiple Disease and Insect Pests in Wild Relatives of Cultivated Potato.” The authors will be recognized at the upcoming meeting in Long Beach, CA, October 31–November 4, 2010.

Mary Torrence, ARS National Program Leader for Food Safety, was honored with the Distinguished Alumnus Award from the College of Veterinary Medicine, The Ohio State University. This award recognizes alumni who have made distinguished contributions to society in the course of their professional careers and who bring recognition to their College. The award was presented at the annual College of Veterinary Medicine Oath and Hooding Ceremony on June 12.

On June 4, 2010, **James Bruce**, Biological Science Lab Technician with the ARS National Center for Genetic Resources Preservation in Fort Collins, CO, was awarded the Anna Lute Award from the Front Range Seed Analysts. He is being honored for his major accomplishments in the field of seed testing.

On July 15, 2010, Postdoctoral Research Associate **Von Mark Cruz**, with the ARS National Center for Genetic Resources Preservation in Fort Collins, CO,

will receive the 2010 Outstanding Young Scientist Award in the field of plant breeding from the National Academy of Science and Technology in the Philippines. He is being recognized for his important contributions to technology transfer activities on biotech crops in the Philippines, biotechnology communications and outreach in the Asian region, and accomplishments in plant genetic resources conservation and management while at the National Plant Genetic Resources Laboratory in the Philippines and the ARS North Central Regional Plant Introduction Station in Ames, IA.

2010 ARS Area Scientist of the Year Award Winners

Beltsville Area Senior Research Scientist

Joan Lunney, Research Chemist, ARS Animal Parasitic Diseases Laboratory in Beltsville, MD, for significant research contributions and international leadership in determining protective immune mechanisms and genetic resistance for infectious pathogens of importance to the U.S. swine industry.

Beltsville Area Early Career Scientist

George Liu, Research Biologist (Bioinformatics), ARS Bovine Functional Genomics Laboratory in Beltsville, MD, for conducting outstanding research on cattle genome copy number variations associated with economically-important health and production traits.

Mid South Area Senior Research Scientist

Karamat Sistani, Research Leader, ARS Animal Waste Management Research Unit, Bowling Green, KY, for outstanding research and team leadership in utilizing animal wastes to increase crop yields, while protecting water and air quality and controlling pathogens.

Mid South Area Early Career Scientist

Ryan P. Viator, Research Agronomist, ARS Sugarcane Research Unit, Houma, LA, for identifying, conducting, and transferring research that meets current and future needs of the sugarcane industry.

Midwest Area Senior Research Scientist

Roger P. Wise, Research Geneticist, ARS Corn Insects and Crop Genetics Research Unit, Ames, IA, for distinguished research and leadership in genomics of disease interactions in cereal crops.

Midwest Area Early Career Scientist

Amy L. Vincent, Research Veterinary Medical Officer, ARS National Animal Disease Center, Ames, IA, for excellence in swine influenza virus pathogenesis, transmission and vaccine research supporting the U.S. swine industry.

North Atlantic Area Scientist

James Giovannoni, Research Molecular Biologist, ARS Robert W. Holley Center for Agriculture and Health, Ithaca, NY, for his international leadership in tomato genomics, including pioneering discoveries in fruit ripening, and for his leadership in tomato genome sequencing.

North Atlantic Area Early Career Scientist

Helen L. Ngo, Research Chemist, ARS Eastern Regional Research Center's Sustainable Biofuels and Co-Products Research Unit, Wyndmoor, PA, for outstanding research in developing novel catalysts and catalytic processes for converting fats and oils into biobased products and biofuels.

Northern Plains Area Senior Research Scientist

Robert Graybosch, Research Geneticist with the Grain, Forage and Bioenergy Research Unit, Lincoln, NE, for sustained research innovation and productivity leading to wheat with improved yield, quality and disease resistance.

Northern Plains Area Early Career Scientist

Jonathan Lundgren, Research Entomologist, North Central Agricultural Research Laboratory, Brookings, SD, for innovative, outstanding research on multitrophic interactions within agricultural systems, emphasizing how generalist predators are affected by farm management, and how biodiversity improves pest management.

Pacific West Area Senior Research Scientist

Sarah Hake, Center Director, ARS Plant Gene Expression Center, Albany, CA, in recognition of scientific leadership and major impact on plant developmental genetics.

Pacific West Area Early Career Scientist

Jeffrey A. Fabrick, Research Entomologist, ARS U.S. Arid-Land Agricultural Research Center, Maricopa, AZ, for innovative application of insect biochemistry and molecular biology in understanding and sustaining transgenic crop technology and integrated pest management.

South Atlantic Area Senior Research Scientist

Thomas E. Carter, Jr., Research Geneticist/Plant Breeder, ARS Soybean and Nitrogen Fixation Research Unit, Raleigh, NC, for pioneering research on genetic diversity in soybean breeding and for developing the first high-yielding drought-tolerant soybean germplasm.

South Atlantic Area Early Career Scientist

Russell C. Nuti, Research Agronomist, ARS Peanut Research Unit, Dawson, GA, for conceiving and conducting research, and transferring it to applicable stakeholders in the peanut industry.

Southern Plains Area Senior Research Scientist

Andy Cole, Acting Research Leader, ARS Renewable Energy and Manure Management Research Unit, Bushland, TX, for outstanding research in beef cattle nutrition and in management of environmental impacts of beef cattle feeding operations.

Southern Plains Area Early Career Scientist

Brandon Bestelmeyer, Research Ecologist, ARS Range Management Research Unit, Jornada Experimental Range, Las Cruces, NM, for excellence in rangeland research resulting in ecologically-based technologies used in managing millions of acres of rangelands in the United States and around the world.

Did You Know?

Americans now have a spectrum of fresh-cut fruits and vegetables to choose from—choices not available nearly a decade ago. Food lifestyle changes, also occurring over the last decade—including an increased demand for a variety of fresh, convenient, healthy, quick snacks and meals—have shaped the way we eat and what we eat. Research conducted at the **ARS Western Regional Research Center** in Albany, CA, has revolutionized the food industry and the way Americans eat. ARS scientists teamed with Mantrose-Haeuser Co., Inc., headquartered in Westport, CT, to develop a coating that helps prevent fresh-cut fruits and vegetables from browning. ARS exclusively licensed its U.S.- and foreign-patented technology to Mantrose-Haeuser, who manufactures the coating, under the trade name NatureSeal®. NatureSeal® is sold commercially to apple processors and food retailers who use the coating to treat fresh-cut fruits and vegetables.

The technology uses a special blend of vitamin salts and minerals to extend the shelf life of sliced fruits for up to 28 days under refrigeration without detectable changes in color, flavor or texture. This is the first available commercial product of its kind that doesn't have a bad aftertaste or residue. Mantrose-Haeuser has had tremendous success with the technology.

Initially developed for sliced apples and pears, the technology has been expanded for use on 19 different produce items including sliced avocados, celery, potatoes, carrots, peaches, and romaine lettuce. Over the past few years, the technology has reached expanded markets. Many well-known fast food chains, grocery and retail stores, and restaurants now offer fresh apple slices and other fresh-cut fruits and vegetables as healthy menu options. In addition, organic apple growers are now using the coating to treat sliced apples, offering consumers an organic selection.

This technology has enhanced the booming demand for fresh-cut fruits and vegetables by helping Americans, particularly children, meet recommended dietary intake for fruits and vegetables while on the go. Sliced apples treated with NatureSeal® are now served in the National School Lunch Program through the USDA Sliced Apple Program—and more than 1,000 schools nationwide buy NatureSeal® directly to treat sliced apples on-site for use in school lunches.



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