

NIFA in the News – Week of February 20, 2012

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In the News

2 Maine groups get \$325K in hunger grants (Sheboygan Press 2/19). Two Maine organizations are getting \$325,000 in federal grants to help fight hunger. The two grants in Maine are among 27 grants totaling \$4.8 million awarded nationwide by U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. Cultivating Community, a nonprofit agency in Portland that promotes community development through agriculture training programs, will receive \$300,000, while the Good Shepherd Food Bank in Auburn is getting \$25,000. [Link](#)

Genetically engineered salmon facing fierce opposition (Boston Globe 2/20). AquaBounty Technologies, a Waltham company that has created a genetically engineered Atlantic salmon, is trading water while it waits for the Food and Drug Administration to decide whether it can sell its fast-growing fish to the public. More than \$60 million has been invested in AquaBounty since it was launched in 1991, and that amount includes support from the United States and Canadian governments. In 2011, it received \$494,162 from the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. [Link](#)

USDA launches website for new farmers, ranchers (Wyoming Business Report 2/20). A new online portal to provide assistance for beginning farmers and ranchers has been launched at [Start2farm.gov](#). The portal includes links to training, financing, technical assistance and other support services, as well as successful case studies about new and beginning farmers and ranchers. The purpose and priorities for the National Institute for Food and Agriculture Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) are "to provide U.S. beginning farmer and rancher producers and their families, as appropriate, with the knowledge, skills and tools needed to make informed decisions for their operations, with the goal of enhancing success of beginning farmers and ranchers," the website says. [Link](#)

2013 Budget Supports Food Safety, Hunger Relief (Supermarket News 2/21). President

Obama's 2013 budget calls for continued support for several programs that focus on hunger prevention, food safety, and obesity prevention in the U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. In the proposed budget, the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative, which provides grants for research in areas like food safety, food security, childhood obesity prevention and climate change, would receive an additional \$60 million dollars from 2012 for a total budget of \$325 million. [Link](#)

Serotonin Plays Key Role in Bone Loss, Researchers Find (HealthCanal.com 2/21). A discovery by researchers at the University of Cincinnati (UC) could lead to new understanding of bone loss during lactation and new therapies for bone loss in certain types of cancer. The researchers, led by Nelson Horseman, PhD, a professor in the department of molecular and cellular physiology, identified serotonin, a neurotransmitter best known for its role in mood, appetite and sleep regulation, as a key component in such bone density loss. The research was supported by grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture–National Institute of Food and Agriculture, the Marlene Harris–Ride Cincinnati Foundation, the U.S. Department of Defense and the National Cancer Institute. [Link](#)

Long-term, food-safety funding needed: AMIF (Meat and Poultry 2/22). Feedback on the National Institute of Food and Agriculture's Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) program was provided by the American Meat Institute Foundation (AMIF) during a stakeholders meeting held Feb. 22. In light of significant food-safety challenges the meat and poultry industry faces, continuous support and long-term funding of food-safety research was encouraged by AMIF. [Link](#)

Beginning farmers get boost from start2farm.gov (Western Farm Press 2/22). We know that America's farmers and rural communities are vitally important to our nation's economy, producing the food, feed, fiber and fuel that continue to help us grow. There are hundreds of programs and resources available to help meet these efforts. However, sometimes it's hard to know where to look. To overcome this challenge, the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Agricultural Library, in partnership with the American Farm Bureau Federation, has created www.Start2Farm.gov, an online database connecting beginning farmers and ranchers with available programs and resources. [Link](#)

ZeaChem Signs Contract to Develop "Drop-In" Advanced Biofuels (Sun Herald 2/23). ZeaChem Inc., a developer of biorefineries for the conversion of renewable biomass into sustainable fuels and chemicals, today announced that it has successfully completed contract negotiations to receive its portion of a \$40 million grant from USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) through the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) Regional Coordinated Agricultural Project (CAP). The USDA project will establish regional systems for the sustainable production of bioenergy and bio-based products. [Link](#)

Biomass intern program offers unique opportunity (Biomass Power & Thermal 2/23). The Summer Biomass Internship Program, a collaboration among three upstate New York organizations, will give undergraduate and graduate students a chance to work in the biomass industry. Through the program, interns can earn up to \$5,000 from a USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture higher education challenges grant program. [Link](#)

Obama budget targets potato research (Capital Press 2/24). Potato industry officials plan to

lobby Congress against nearly \$3 million in cuts to potato pest and disease research and variety development included in President Barack Obama's \$3.8 trillion federal budget proposal. The president has requested \$1.4 million in cuts to pest and disease research through USDA's Agricultural Research Service and \$1.35 million in potato breeding research through USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. [Link](#)

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