

NIFA in the News – Week of March 5, 2012

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In the News

Sustainable ag conference set for Sitting Bull College (Bismarck Tribune 3/4). A conference on sustainable agriculture is scheduled for March 13 at Sitting Bull College in Fort Yates. A variety of topics will be addressed including: the best use of unexpected income, understanding the futures markets and anthrax in cattle. The program is sponsored by Sitting Bull College and the USDA-National Institute of Food and Agriculture. [Link](#)

Farm Bill, Crop Insurance, Trade Priorities Highlight 2012-13 ASA Policy Direction (Southeast AgraNet 3/5). ASA supports reauthorization of the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) to expand competitive research at USDA, as well as reauthorization to maintain research capacity at our land-grant universities. [Link](#)

Veterinary Educators to Converge on the Hill to Raise Awareness (Sacramento Bee 3/6). The deans and department chairs of our nation's colleges of veterinary medicine (CVMs) and comparative medicine are planning to meet with congressional representatives and staff to raise awareness about the need to support veterinary medical education. Support for programs that fund animal health research through the United States Department of Agriculture, which are addressed through the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) and the Animal Health and Disease Research Formula Fund. The Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP), which provides financial incentives for veterinarians to work in rural areas where there is a need for veterinarians to look after the health of livestock and poultry and protect our nation's food supply. [Link](#)

USDA Encourages Local-food Initiatives (Hobby Farms 3/7). The USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture recently announced 27 grant awards made through its Community Food Projects program. Funding totaling \$4.8 million will be used to support food and nutrition initiatives across the country, including a teen-run community kitchen incubator, a program to help indigenous people return to healthful eating and a youth-led food-security movement. [Link](#)

REACCH-ing for farming's future (Climatesolutions.org 3/7). Climate change is among the greatest challenges facing 21st century agriculture. To anticipate those challenges, a cutting-edge Northwest scientific exploration is bringing some very 21st century tools to bear. Regional Approaches to Climate Change (REACCH) is one of the largest such projects ever mounted. The \$20-million, five-year effort funded by the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture focuses its efforts on one of the world's great grain growing regions, the inland Northwest. USDA Agricultural Research Service scientists are participating in the project. [Link](#)

New pig model may lead to progress in treating debilitating eye disease (Science Codex 3/9). A newly developed, genetically modified pig may hold the keys to the development of improved treatments and possibly even a cure for retinitis pigmentosa (RP), the most common inherited retinal disease in the United States. The pig model was developed by researchers in the University of Louisville Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences and at the National Swine Resource and Research Center at the University of Missouri. The research was funded by The National Institutes of Health and the National Eye Institute, Research to Prevent Blindness, Discovery Eye Foundation, the National Institute of Food and Agriculture. [Link](#)

Fertilizer Forecaster aimed at improving water quality (GantDaily.com 3/9). A grant of \$484,000 will support a joint Penn State/USDA Agricultural Research Service project designed to help farmers improve water quality by making better decisions about when and where to apply fertilizer. The funding, from USDA's Agriculture and Food Research Initiative, will enable scientists to develop the Fertilizer Forecaster, a Web-based decision-support tool that producers can use before applying fertilizer to assess the risk of nutrients running off in surface water. [Link](#)

Obama appoints OSU dean to lead national ag institute (Capital Press 3/9). Oregon State University College of Agricultural Sciences Dean Sonny Ramaswamy has been appointed director of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture by President Barack Obama. He will leave OSU later this spring to assume the post, which carries a six-year term. NIFA, formerly the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, is the lead agency within the USDA that supports research, education and extension programs in the nation's land-grant university system. [Link](#)

President Obama taps Oregon State's Ramaswamy (Portland Business Journal 3/9). President Barack Obama on Friday appointed Oregon State's Sonny Ramaswamy as the next director of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture in the U.S. Department of Agriculture. [Link](#)

President Appoints Former Purdue Dean as Director of USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (Hoosier Ag Today 3/9). President Obama announced today his intent to appoint Dr. Sonny Ramaswamy as Director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). [Link](#)

Government says bees in crisis and funds millions for local solutions (Washington Times 3/9). Bees are nearing a "crises," prompting the government to spend millions on a massive

data base and asking beekeepers on March 27 for advice on how to save them and prevent the nation's agriculture from collapsing. Facing this, Congress and the National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) took action last year, granting \$5.6 million to establish a national, massive data base under the Bee Informed Partnership (BIP) program. [Link](#)

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