

NIFA in the News – Week of October 24, 2011

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In the News

Practical Farmers Announce Fall Farminars (Wallaces Farmer 10/19). Practical Farmers of Iowa, an organization that advances profitable, ecologically sound and community-enhancing approaches to agriculture, will be hosting eight online seminars called Farminars. Practical Farmers of Iowa's Fall 2011 Farminars are made possible with funding from the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture. [Link](#)

Forget Occupy Wall Street, Occupy Organic Farms (Examiner 10/20). Organic farming organizations are calling for organic shoppers to send a letter to the Farm Bill Committee to ask for increased funding to support the growth in the organic farming and food manufacturing sector. The Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative (OREI) is USDA's flagship competitive research and extension grants program dedicated to organic agriculture. The program is very competitive and each year funds only a small percentage of eligible proposals. To meet the growing sector's research and extension needs, OREI should be funded at \$30 million in mandatory funds annually, and retain its authorization for appropriation. [Link](#)

USDA announces first NIFA fellowships (Hagstrom Report 10/20). The Agriculture Department's National Institute of Food and Agriculture today announced the names of the first class of NIFA fellows. USDA Chief Scientist and Undersecretary for Research, Education and Economics Catherine Woteki said in a news release that the 54 fellowships that will go to pre- and post-doctoral students at 32 universities to "train and develop the next generation of agricultural, forestry and food scientists" by providing them \$6 million in funding." [Link](#)

Davidson County Briefs: TSU ag college gets \$1.9 million grant (The Tennessean 10/21). The College of Agriculture, Human and Natural Sciences at Tennessee State University has been awarded a \$1.9 million grant to strengthen teaching, research and extension programs in the food and agricultural sciences areas. TSU received the grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture through the National Institute of Food and

Agriculture's 1890 Capacity Building Grants Program. This is the second time in as many years that the Agricultural College has received the maximum funding of this type from the USDA. [Link](#)

Union County Gets Moving with Nationally Recognized Wellness Program (CentralNewJersey.com 10/21). Many area residents have been learning to practice healthier eating habits while improving their physical activity, with help from free and low-cost programs offered by The Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Union County. Now one of the programs, called Get Moving--Get Healthy New Jersey, has been recognized with the prestigious National Institute of Food and Agriculture award for Innovative Program Models by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. [Link](#)

Direct marketing workshop on tap for small farmers (Nevada Appeal 10/23). Challenged by today's industrial food system, many small farms are looking for new and creative ways to sell their products directly to consumers. Western Nevada College Specialty Crop Institute offers a workshop on "Direct Marketing for Small Farms." The WNC Specialty Crop Institute is an innovative program that teaches alternative farming methods. Funding for this project is provided by the Washington State University Western Center for Risk Management Education and the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture. [Link](#)

Breakthrough in the production of flood-tolerant crops (EurekAlert 10/23). Now experts at The University of Nottingham, working in collaboration with the University of California, Riverside, have identified the molecular mechanism plants use to sense low oxygen levels. The discovery could lead, eventually, to the production of high-yielding, flood-tolerant crops, benefiting farmers, markets and consumers across the globe. The research is published on Sunday October 23 in the prestigious journal *Nature*. The work was funded by the UK Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC), Malaysian government through MARA, the US Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA-NIFA), and the US National Science Foundation. [Link](#)

How plants sense low oxygen levels to survive flooding (e! Science News 10/23). Experts at the University of California, Riverside and The University of Nottingham now report they have discovered how plants sense low oxygen levels to survive flooding -- a finding that could lead eventually to the production of high-yielding, flood-tolerant crops, benefiting farmers, markets and consumers everywhere. Bailey-Serres's group was supported by grants from the US Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture and the US National Science Foundation. [Link](#)

USDA Announces the First Class of NIFA Fellows (Growing Georgia 10/23). The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) has awarded 54 fellowships to pre- and post-doctoral students in the first class of NIFA Fellows, to train and develop the next generation of agricultural, forestry and food scientists. [Link](#)

USDA Secretary Vilsack Sends Key Message to FFA: Think Ag (Wallaces Farmer 10/24). Thousands of smart, fast-thinking FFA members gathered in Indianapolis last week, and the message they received from Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack? Pursue careers in agriculture. The USDA Office of Advocacy and Outreach assists people who want to learn about USDA's efforts to support new producers. In the past two years, more than 40% of all USDA's farm loans have gone to beginning farmers and ranchers. In addition the National Institute of Food and Agriculture has the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development program, and there are other programs focused on young farmers. [Link](#)

Breakthrough for flood-tolerant crops (Farmers Weekly 10/24). High yielding arable crops that can withstand periods of flooding could be a step closer after researchers discovered how plants sense low oxygen levels. The project is funded by the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, the Malaysian government through MARA, the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture, and the U.S. National Science Foundation. [Link](#)

Train crops to survive floods (Futurity 10/24). Discovery of the mechanism by which plants sense low oxygen levels could eventually lead to the production of high-yielding, flood-tolerant crops. The work was funded by the UK Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, Malaysian government through MARA, the US Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture, and the National Science Foundation. [Link](#)

Native bees are better pollinators than honeybees (PhysOrg 10/25). He is one of a dozen researchers across the Northeast involved in a five-year, \$3.3 million project to study whether the pathogens, viruses and fungi that are harming the honeybee also affect native bee species. The grant, led by Anne Averill of the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, will also investigate how native bee abundance and diversity are influenced by the size, pesticide use, landscape and crop diversity on farms. Danforth is also the lead researcher on a four-year, \$450,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agriculture and Food Research Initiative that will fund research on native bee species abundance in New York state apple orchards. [Link](#)

In Europe, Aviation Biofuels Reach the Runway (Reuters 10/25). The combination of impending offset purchases and high oil prices appear to be forcing the aviation industry's hand when it comes to fossil fuel alternatives, which has been signaling strong demand for sustainable advanced biofuels. Recent awards from the USDA - including \$136 million in grants spread across five regional projects through its Agriculture and Food Research Initiative - are aimed at ramping up production over the next decade. [Link](#)

Grants Totaling More Than \$5M For Specialty Crop Research (Farm Progress 10/25). The grants are part of 29 awards, totaling \$46 million, from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. Institutions in

19 states are receiving the grants as part of the Specialty Crop Research Initiative that will be used to develop and share science-based tools to address the needs of America's specialty crop industry. [Link](#)

USDA Announces First Class of NIFA Fellows (Michigan Ag Connection 10/25).

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) has awarded 54 fellowships to pre- and post-doctoral students in the first class of NIFA Fellows, to train and develop the next generation of agricultural, forestry and food scientists. [Link](#)

MSU receives almost \$743,000 for research, new courses involving sheep and organic farming (Montana EDU News 10/25).

Montana State University has received almost \$743,000 to research the use of sheep in organic farming, incorporate those findings into MSU courses, and share the discoveries with Montana producers and growers. The three-year grant - announced Tuesday, Oct. 25, by U.S. Agriculture Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan -- was one of 23 awarded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture in 18 states. The grants totaling \$19 million were given through two programs: the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative and the Organic Transitions Program. [Link](#)

UC Santa Cruz gets \$2.6M federal grant (Silicon Valley Business Journal 10/25).

The University of California, Santa Cruz .University of California, Santa Cruz Latest from The Business Journals Green brings unexpected Gold to UC Santa CruzVMware reveals 'forest' campus plansUniversity of Maryland a top 'cool school' for green efforts Follow this company ., on Tuesday received a \$2.6 million grant to promote research into organic agriculture from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It was one of 23 grants totaling \$19 million made by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as part of its National Institute of Food and Agriculture's organic agriculture research and organic transitions programs. [Link](#)

WSU gets USDA grant for organic research; Beef industry profitability (Ag Info Net 10/26).

Washington Ag Today October 26, 2011 Agriculture Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan has announced 23 new grants to research and extension programs working to help organic producers and processors grow and market high quality organic products. Washington State University is one of the recipients. It is getting nearly 746-thousand dollars for a project to research management practices that integrate cover crops, tillage practices, organic amendments and livestock to improve soil quality, utilize nitrogen more efficiently and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from soil and farm machinery. [Link](#)

Cornell Researchers Receive \$4.5 Million to Study Grape Varieties (Cornell Daily Sun 10/26).

A team of Cornell researchers recieved two grants, totaling \$4.5 million, by the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture Specialty Crop Research Institute in September to study grape breeding in the New York region. [Link](#)

Seattle Tilth Wins USDA Grant for Farm Business Training (Seattlest 10/26).

Talk about grass-roots. Local non-profit gardening and education organization Seattle Tilth has been awarded \$483,160 from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, a competitive grants program administered by the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). These dollars will fuel Seattle Tilth's Farm Works skills training for immigrants, refugees and low-income families who reside in South King County. [Link](#)

W.Va. group gets USDA organic initiative grant (Bloomberg Businessweek

10/26). A Morgantown, W.Va. planning project has been awarded a \$50,000 federal grant for an organic crop initiative. Downstream Strategies LLC will receive one of 23 grants awarded in 18 states from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. [Link](#)

USDA backing organic agriculture research at AU (Opelika-Auburn News

10/26). A new federal grant to Auburn University funding integrated pest management research on cruciferous vegetables such as broccoli, cauliflower and collard greens should help organic farms like Jan Garrett's Sunbright Organics in Tuskegee...An \$881,000 grant awarded to Auburn University is one of 23 new grants totaling \$19 million for 2011 projects announced by the U.S. Agriculture Department Tuesday. The projects are aimed at helping farmers in 18 states grow organic crops. [Link](#)

Agriculture Grants for Beginning Farmers and Ranchers (Bandera County

Courier 10/27). Applications for agriculture grants are available from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) to help fund beginning farmer and rancher projects implemented between October 2012 and September 2013. [Link](#)

Florida grant to help create consumer-friendly muscadines (Southeast Farm

Press 10/27). University of Florida grape researcher Dennis Gray has been awarded a five-year, \$2.2 million specialty crop grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture to continue his work toward creating disease-resistant, seedless muscadine grape varieties. [Link](#)

NMSU snares \$800,000 USDA grant (Las Cruces Sun News 10/27).

New Mexico State University will soon receive an \$800,000 grant from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture to prepare students for career paths with the USDA Forest Service. [Link](#)

Entomology professor receives teaching award (ASU Herald 10/27).

Tanja McKay, entomology professor at ASU, was recently chosen by the Entomological Society of America (ESA) as the winner of the Distinguished Achievement Award in Teaching. McKay's most recent grant, received from the USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) NIFA (National Institute of Food and Agriculture) in the amount of \$450,000, is for red flower beetles and integrative pest management in rice

fields. [Link](#)

USDA funds \$2.3 million study of organic grains (ECN 10/27). To enhance the market value of such organically grown grains such as heritage wheat, emmer, spelt and einkorn, Cornell has received \$2.3 million over four years from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture. [Link](#)

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