

NIFA in the News – Week of February 28, 2011

Curious as to what happens to all the news releases you see in the NIFA newsroom? Here's the weekly summary of NIFA in the news for the week of February 28, 2011.

In the News

Universities worry about cuts in research funding (Capital Ag Press 2/24).

Universities in the Northwest are concerned about the availability of funding for agriculture research. Roger Beachy, director of USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture, said the general concern in agricultural research is justified as Congress considers the current budget. "It is critically important we recognize the importance of research and science that underlies our food and agriculture sector, and the importance of maintaining the funding level," he said. [Link](#)

Budget cuts may hurt urban food efforts, agriculture official says (St. Louis Beacon 2/25).

Roger Beachy, former head of the Donald Danforth Plant Science Center in St. Louis, expressed concern Friday about the impact that federal budget cuts might have on research and other programs at the Department of Agriculture. Last year, Beachy was appointed the department's first director of National Institute of Food and Agriculture. [Link](#)

Virginia Tech shares in grant to study effects of climate change on southern pine forests (First Science.com 2/25).

The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) has awarded a consortium of land-grant institutions in the South, which includes Virginia Tech, a \$20 million Coordinated Agricultural Grant to study the effects of climate change on southern pine forests. [Link](#)

Purdue included in \$20 million USDA climate research grant (Daily Kos 2/27).

Purdue University will participate in a \$20 million U.S. Department of Agriculture research, education and Extension program aimed at keeping Midwest corn-based cropping systems resilient in the face of future climate uncertainties. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture awarded the grant to a team of 10 universities and two USDA Agricultural Research Service institutions Friday (Feb. 18). [Link](#)

New land, new career (Times Daily 2/27). In March, the Consortium for Agricultural Newcomers Access to Learning will start a three-year effort to mentor and offer planning services for beginning farmers, who are defined as those who have operated a farm for 10 years or less. Agronomists and economists with Auburn University, Alabama A&M University and Tuskegee University are heading the

\$675,000 effort to establish a statewide program to provide education, training, technical assistance and outreach. The National Institute of Food and Agriculture, a branch of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is funding the effort. [Link](#)

"Food deserts" and nutrition: a Q&A with USDA's Roger Beachy (St. Louis Public Radio – MO 2/28) Food deserts” – which are places without access to fresh produce and other healthy foods – continue to be a problem throughout the U.S. Here in St. Louis, the Old North Grocery Co-op opened last summer, in an effort to increase healthy food options in an underserved part of the city. It's the first co-op in Missouri to serve a predominantly low-income neighborhood. The director of USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Roger Beachy, was in St. Louis recently visiting the Old North co-op. He spoke with St. Louis Public Radio's Véronique LaCapra about the issue of nutrition. [Link](#)

U.S. Sen. Harkin: Disproportionate and unwise budget cuts in House of Representatives budget would damage food, agriculture, and farm conservation initiatives critical to Iowa date (Iowa Politics 2/28). Late last week the U.S. House of Representatives passed budget legislation covering the remainder of fiscal year 2011. If enacted, this budgetary onslaught would seriously impair efforts to improve the quality of life in rural communities; to ensure safe food for American consumers; to conserve soil, enhance water quality, restore wildlife habitat; and to spur economic growth and create jobs. The legislation would also cut by about 16 percent (\$217 million), as compared to fiscal 2010, the funding for grants by USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) supporting food and agriculture research, education, and extension at land grant institutions, such as Iowa State University, and similar entities. Iowa would thus receive some \$5.3 million less through NIFA this year as compared to fiscal 2010 if the House budget proposal were enacted. [Link](#)

OSU Develops New Barley That Resists Stripe Rust Fungus, Thrives In Northwest (Beer Advocate 2/28). Oregon State University has developed the first winter hooded barley that produces high yields of forage, thrives in the Northwest and resists a crop-damaging fungus known as stripe rust. Verdant barley has its own DNA "fingerprint," or genetic profile, which was developed with the support of the USDA-NIFA Barley CAP Project to provide more efficient development of varieties in the future. [Link](#)

Agriculture: Research Funds Are Down (Chemical and Engineering News 2/28). The Department of Agriculture's research budget would take a hit under the 2012 budget request. USDA would receive \$2.8 billion for agricultural R&D, a decrease of \$228 million, or 7.6%, compared with the 2011 continuing resolution. NIFA, which funds extramural research, would see its 2012 budget shrink to \$1.4 billion, a decrease of \$122 million, or 8.2%, compared with the 2011 estimates. The cuts are directed at \$141 million in earmarks and a few selective programs. However, funding for NIFA's Agriculture & Food Research Initiative (AFRI), the primary competitive research grants program at USDA, would rise to \$325 million, an increase of \$63 million, or 24.0%, compared with 2011. [Link](#)

OSU gets \$3M to evaluate corn production (The Lantern 2/28). Researchers at Ohio State's College of Food, Agriculture and Environmental Sciences earned a share of a \$20 million United States Department of Agriculture grant to study the sustainability of corn production across the Midwest. With increased public scrutiny over the energy-intensive nature of corn production, USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture awarded OSU \$3 million of the \$20 million project. [Link](#)

Tiny wasps could curb a massive stink bug invasion (The Baltimore Sun 2/28). Maryland's newest terrorist life form — the brown marmorated stink bug — may eventually meet its archnemesis in the form of a tiny prizefighter of a wasp from Asia. If all goes well, Hoelmer hopes to have authorization to release the Asian wasps into the environment some time in 2013. For desperate farmers, two years might not be soon enough. So last month, Maryland joined nine other states and submitted a grant proposal for \$22 million to the National Institute of Food and Agriculture to explore both long and short-term solutions to the stink bug problem. [Link](#)

OSU's new barley resists stripe rust fungus, thrives in Northwest (Beer News 2/28). Oregon State University has developed the first winter hooded barley that produces high yields of forage, thrives in the Northwest and resists a crop-damaging fungus known as stripe rust. Verdant barley has its own DNA “fingerprint,” or genetic profile, which was developed with the support of the USDA-NIFA Barley CAP Project to provide more efficient development of varieties in the future. [Link](#)

USDA announces coordinated ag project grant for wheat and barley (Farm and Ranch Guide 3/1). Roger Beachy, director of USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) has announced that NIFA awarded a \$25 million grant over five years for wheat and barley research to a team led by Dr. Jorge Dubcovsky, University of California-Davis and Gary Muehlbauer, University of Minnesota. The primary goal of the new \$25 million Triticeae-CAP is to develop new varieties of wheat and barley. The work will focus on the biological and abiotic stresses that are caused, at least in part, by changes in weather patterns. [Link](#)

What can be done about food deserts? (Harvest Public Media 3/1). In St. Louis, the Old North Grocery Co-op opened last summer, in an effort to increase healthy food options in an underserved part of the city. It's the first co-op in Missouri to serve a predominantly low-income neighborhood. Roger Beachy, the director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture, was in St. Louis recently visiting the Old North co-op. [Link](#)

Watching Climate and Corn (The Farmer 3/2). The University of Minnesota is one of 10 land-grant universities that will be involved in research on keeping Midwest corn-based cropping systems resilient in the face of future climate uncertainties. Support for the research comes from a new \$20 million Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture grant. [Link](#)

WSU applying for federal biomass grant (Pugent Sound Business Journal 3/2).

Washington State University is hoping to establish a regional biomass research center for aviation fuels, which could net up to \$45 million in federal funding over five years. In the next few months, the university is expecting to hear back on a pair of applications it submitted last year to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. WSU's proposals would establish research centers focused on studying either tree- or plant-based aviation fuels, two materials that are most abundant in the region. [Link](#)

USDA official to speak at OSU (Corvallis Gazette Times 3/2).

Agriculture Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan is expected to Oregon State University this evening to talk about USDA's 'Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food' initiative and the efforts to reduce childhood obesity through First Lady Michelle Obama's program, "Let's Move!" In January, the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture announced it would give OSU a \$5 million grant to study childhood obesity in rural areas. [Link](#)

Cornell Wins \$1.3 Million Grant To Investigate New Wine Practices (Cornell

Daily Sun 3/4). To keep the wine industry of the eastern United States growing, the Specialty Crop Research Initiative awarded Cornell a \$1.3 million grant to investigate new viticulture practices and marketing strategies. Tom Bewick, leader of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture and program director of the SCRI, said he hopes Cornell's valuable expertise will benefit grape-growers in New York and other states in the Mid-Atlantic region. "Having Cornell on the team demonstrates the long-standing expertise Cornell has in grape production," Bewick said. Cornell's grant is just a piece of a larger \$3.8 million wine-expansion project headed by Prof. Tony Wolf, viticulture, Virginia Tech. [Link](#)



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