

[**A&M researchers study cowpea drought, heat tolerance**](#) ([TheEagle.com](#), 2/2) Cowpeas, known as black-eyed peas in the U.S., are an important and versatile food legume grown in more than 80 countries. Texas A&M University scientists are working to map the genes controlling drought and heat tolerance in recent varieties. Under a National Institute for Food and Agriculture grant of \$500,000, Texas A&M scientists will take advantage of the recently developed DNA sequencing technology to map and ultimately clone the genes controlling drought and heat tolerance for molecular studies and deployment of these genes in other crops, she said.

[**Student agricultural and food systems innovation prize contest launched**](#) ([Prairie Star](#), 2/10)

Food ties all of humanity together, and making sure there is enough to go around while conserving our natural resources is critical to the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) mission. Our researchers think about how to sustainably produce greater quantities of safe and nutritious food every day. Our in-house science agency, the Agricultural Research Service, has laboratories across the country that work on those problems, while our National Institute of Food and Agriculture seeks out the most promising ideas from our university partners and awards the funding needed to get started. Sometimes, all it takes is a fresh perspective to make a big jump in progress.

[**Microwave pasteurization improves food safety, taste**](#) ([WSU News](#), 2/10) A new technology available to food companies increases product quality while reducing the chance of contaminated chilled or frozen meals being sold in retail markets. A group of engineers at Washington State University has developed a novel microwave-assisted pasteurization system that can semi-continuously process pre-packaged chilled meals. This marks an important milestone in a research program funded by a \$5 million National Institute of Food and Agriculture grant awarded in 2011 to WSU and partners across the country.

[**National 4-H Council and HughesNet team up spark youth interest in science, technology careers**](#) ([MarketWatch](#), 2/11)

With statistics showing the U.S. falling behind in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education and careers, National 4-H Council and HughesNet announced today a new partnership to introduce more American youth to hands-on, community-based STEM learning. National 4-H Council is the private sector, non-profit partner of the Cooperative Extension System and 4-H National Headquarters located at the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) within the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

[**Research in ethnic greens and herbs to be presented at workshop**](#) ([Penn State News](#), 2/13)

Growth in minority populations in the United States is providing opportunities for the specialty-crop industry to fill the rising demand created by ethnically diverse consumers. Researchers and extension staff from four land-grant universities will hold a one-day workshop on March 3 in Valley Forge. The workshop grows out of a project supported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and led by Rutgers University. Funded through the Specialty Crop Research Initiative of the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture, the effort also includes personnel from Penn State, the University of Massachusetts and the University of Florida.

[**NSAIDs could reduce impact of shipping**](#) ([Bovine Veterinarian](#), 2/13)

Most cattle are transported by truck at least once during their lifetime. During transit, calves become stressed and thus are more susceptible to developing lung infections such as bovine respiratory disease (BRD). Through a grant from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture, a multi-institutional team led by researchers

at Iowa State University hopes to better understand post-transit changes in cattle and assess the impact of a long-acting, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) on reducing stress and improving the immune function and health of feedlot cattle.

[\\$5M grant to kill pathogens in chilled food](#) (Food Quality News, 2/14) Researchers at Washington State University (WSU) have launched a pasteurization machine called MAPS (Microwave Assisted Pasteurization System) reduce contamination in chilled or frozen food. It is seen as an alternative to commercial canning (sterilization) processes for shelf-stable foods and in trials saw better results in mollusks, shrimp, and tofu. The research is funded by a \$5 million National Institute of Food and Agriculture grant awarded in 2011 to WSU and partners across the country.

[Warm up by eating well at home](#) (Observer Today, 2/16) This long snap of cold weather has a lot of people feeling a bit stir crazy. The people who took the time to stock their pantries and freezers thoughtfully before it got cold out probably found it was much easier to throw together quick, healthy and inexpensive meals. if you'd like more ideas to improve your family's health, call to learn more about the Cornell University Cooperative Extension's Eat Smart New York program. The Eat Smart New York Program is one of many programs offered by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Chautauqua County, a community based educational organization affiliated with the federal government through the United States Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

[4-H works to develop a virtual youth livestock program](#) (Iowa State Daily, 2/18) Growing up, some children were not allowed to own a pet of any kind because of all of the responsibilities, financial or personal issues. The 4-H Youth Development Organization is now starting to develop a program to virtually raise an animal. Amy Powell, an ISU animal science extension specialist hired by 4-H, is helping develop a curriculum program that focuses on science, technology, engineering and math skills, also known as STEM. "We trick children into learning science," Powell explained. "They learn and they don't even realize it."