

NIFA Clips

[Putting Vermont farms to the test](#) (University of Vermont, 4/9) Stacked 15 high, 1,500 culture plates line the bench of John Barlow's University of Vermont lab. This is the collection of just one day at one Vermont farmstead cheesemaker's farm. His research on various forms of Staphylococcus will fill in the gaps in understanding which are of concern to food safety, which are beneficial in the culturing of cheese and which may affect human health. Barlow's work is year two of a three-year \$300,000 transdisciplinary grant from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

[NIFA celebrates Extension's centennial](#) (YouTube, 4/13) NIFA is celebrating Extension's 100 birthday this year, and we want to hear from you. Tell us your story of how the Cooperative Extension System has impacted your life. Post it across social media, tweet it to us at @usda_nifa with the hashtag #Ext100Years. We're looking forward to hearing from you!

[Penn State assists those who help military families](#) (Centre Daily Times, 4/13) Mallori Hamilton grew up a military brat, attending school in Germany for 17 years while her father served in the Air Force. Today, Hamilton is a research assistant at Penn State's Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness, a government-funded organization for psychologists, counselors and other professionals who help military families. The initiative began with a grant from the National Institute for Food and Agriculture through the Department of Defense. As a land-grant university, one of Penn State's missions is to translate research into practical application.

[U of M to launch organic project](#) (Post Bulletin, 4/14) University of Minnesota Extension is launching a new project to educate farmers on transitioning to organic production. The project will have e-learning tools including interactive online educational materials. Modules will focus on the fundamentals of organic agriculture, how to transition, decision case studies and quizzes. The project is funded by a three-year grant from USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

[Work begins to attain gain of tolerance for permethrin in juice grapes in United States](#) (MSU Extension, 4/14) One of the near harvest pest management tools legally used by Canadian grape growers is permethrin, which does not have a tolerance in the United States. This has significantly hampered trade and impacted the profitability of this important specialty crop industry in recent years. The IR-4 Project (Interregional Research Project No.4) facilitates the registration of sustainable pest management technology for specialty crops and minor uses. IR-4, primarily funded by [USDA NIFA](#), facilitates pesticide registration for specialty crops by conducting field residue trials and often efficacy and crop safety trials.

[Tractor Supply, National 4-H Council launch 'Spring Paper Clover' campaign](#) (Sedalia Weekly Observer, 4/14) Tractor Supply Company, in partnership with National 4-H Council, recently announced the launch of its spring 2014 Paper Clover Campaign. The largest retail farm and ranch supply store chain in the United States raised more than \$3.2 million for 4-H programs across the country through the Paper Clover Campaigns over the last four years. Tractor Supply Company and Del's Feed and Food Supply customers may purchase paper clovers between April 23 – May 4 for \$1 or more during checkout. All funds

raised will be used to support 4-H youth development program activities in the communities where Tractor Supply stores are located.

[NIFA programs support adapting animal production to climate change \(Global Harvest Initiative, 4/14\)](#) (Blog written by Rachel Melnick, of NIFA's Institute of Bioenergy, Climate, and Environment.) When combining "climate change," "heat stress," and "agriculture," most people think of drought and wilted crops – and they'd be right – but there is much more to it than that ... for instance, the effect climate change can have on animals. To combat this, the [U.S. Department of Agriculture's \(USDA\) National Institute of Food and Agriculture \(NIFA\)](#) is providing more than \$30 million over 5 years to support research into mitigating the impact of climate change on animal production.

[Inspiring the next generation of innovators: President Obama honors the nation's cutting-edge scientists and engineers \(The White House, 4/15\)](#) A group of leading researchers were honored yesterday at the White House as recipients of the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers (PECASE), which is the highest honor bestowed by the United States Government on science and engineering professionals in the early stages of their independent research careers. (NIFA-funded scientist Dr. Iris Kanevsky-Mullarky, from Virginia Tech's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, was recognized for her research on enhancing immune response to *Staphylococcus aureus* infections that cost the U.S. dairy industry about \$2 billion annually, or 11 percent of total milk production.)

[Land stewardship group lauds Beginning Farmer launch \(WNAX, 4/15\)](#) (Contains audio clip) The U.S. Department of Agriculture has rolled out the first grant cycle of the newly reauthorized Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program. Minnesota Land Stewardship Project policy organizer Adam Warthesen says it is part of the recently passed farm bill and provides resources that enables groups to help beginning farmers build sound farming practices and add to the economic viability of their rural communities.

[Celebrate extension's centennial by sharing your extension story \(USDA, 4/16\)](#) This year, NIFA is celebrating 100 years of Extension by acknowledging the people Extension helps the most – YOU! There are countless stories across the country of how this organization has contributed to the success of individual farmers and ranchers, families and youth. Share your Extension story! Using Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube or your blog, I invite you to help us share the important role Extension plays all across the country. Use the hashtag #Ext100Years and tweet it to us at @usda_nifa. Creativity is encouraged and we'll share some of our favorites.

[When it comes to food, is nano next for a definition? \(Food Processing, 4/17\)](#) We believe that nano, with its nanotechnology and the resulting nanomaterials, is the next big thing in foods and their packaging. But, with all the questions that remain about this evolving technology, we also believe that it is crucial that science and the industry work to ensure that the excitement of developing new uses of nanotechnology not overwhelm the research on and understanding of the effects of those nanomaterials in the body. As defined by USDA, nanotechnology is "the science of studying and producing materials and devices of nanometer size – about the size of a small molecule or individual atom." USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture agency manages grant programs that fund nanotechnology research projects.

[Clovis field day draws NM farmers \(Deming Headlight, 4/17\)](#) Research in New Mexico and West Texas has shown that including winter canola, a broad leaf crop, in the rotation offers many benefits including better grassy weed management in this area's cropping

systems. Canola meal, left over material after high quality edible oil is extracted from seed, is an excellent source of protein for dairy cattle in the region. It is currently imported from Canada. With U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture Alternative Crops program funding, research is being conducted at the Clovis Science Center to develop winter canola into an economically and agronomically viable alternative crop for the region.

[Pros and cons of soil insecticide use for corn rootworm protection](#) (AgWeb, 4/17)

Entomologists say root protection from single traits that are working well will not increase when an insecticide is added on top of the trait. As for rootworm management, the issue continues to be a major concern for farmers across much of the Midwest. Earlier this year, a webinar "Corn Rootworm Management in the Transgenic Era" was presented by five land-grant entomologists. The webinar was supported by a USDA-NIFA North Central IPM Program grant.

[Microwave pasteurization: A new industrial process producing high quality and safe food](#) (USDA, 4/18) (Blog written by NIFA's Hongda Chen)

More than 90 percent of American households have microwave ovens where people heat their food, yet this same technology is seldom used for large-scale production in the food industry. As home cooks know, microwave ovens do not excel at heating food evenly. With the help of a \$5 million grant from NIFA, a team of scientists and engineers led by Washington State University have developed an innovative, pilot-scale microwave assisted pasteurization system to rapidly and evenly heat packaged food products.

[Finney receives 2014 Intercollegiate Graduate Student Outreach Achievement Award](#) (Penn State News, 4/18)

Denise M. Finney, doctoral candidate in ecology, is the recipient of the 2014 Intercollegiate Graduate Student Outreach Achievement Award. This award recognizes outstanding achievements of Penn State degree candidates in any of the Intercollegiate Graduate Degree Programs that relate to bringing their scholarship to the community in order to benefit society in some manner. Finney's most recent grant is a highly prestigious USDA-National Institute of Food and Agriculture predoctoral fellowship in which she spells out a professional development plan that balances scientific discovery, teaching in the classroom and outreach.

[Free student loan money waiting for veterinarians](#) (Huffington Post, 4/18) The National Institute of Food and Agriculture, USDA, has announced there is money available in fiscal year 2014 for their Veterinary Medicine Loan Program (VMLRP). Veterinarians eligible must serve in two areas: (1) geographical areas that the USDA Secretary determines have a shortage of veterinarians; and (2) areas of veterinary practice that the Secretary determines have a shortage of veterinarians, such as food animal medicine, public health, epidemiology and food safety.

[No coupons required: Saving the old-fashioned way](#) (News-Messenger, 4/19) I did quite a bit of research into frugal meal plans and found several resources, but my favorite was a website produced by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The SNAP-Ed Connection Recipe Finder Database includes recipes reviewed by nutrition professionals using specific cost and nutrition criteria. (NIFA supports SNAP-Ed by providing leadership, establishing collaborative relationships, and strengthening communication among federal, state, and local partners.)

[Study: Economic, community impacts of farmers markets](#) (WSU News, 4/21)

Farmers markets in the state have more than doubled in the last decade, from nearly 80 to more than 160, according to a recent report by Washington State University. The report is based on a 2010 study that examined economic and community impacts of farmers markets that could help shape strategies and policies to sustain them.

[USDA awards research grants to address the impact of climate change of U.S. agriculture](#) (Farm and Ranch Guide, 4/22)

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced today that USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) awarded \$6 million to 10 universities to study the effects of climate on agriculture production and develop strategies to provide farmers and ranchers with the solutions they need to supply the nation with quality food.

[Fishy classes at Warren County Career Center](#) (Dayton Daily News, 4/23)

Warren County Career Center students are skipping the soil and using fish waste to grow vegetables. The high school juniors and seniors in Karl Flem's biotechnology and environmental science classes have constructed and are maintaining an aquaponics system. The Ohio Center for Aquaculture Research and Development at OSU received an award from the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture to develop a program for training new and beginning aquaculture farmers.

[Commentary: Grant writers shouldn't win big bucks](#) (Ag Professional, 4/24)

I'm sure a percentage of our website visitors got bent out of shape when we reported the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is awarding \$6 million to 10 universities to "study the effects of climate on agriculture production and develop strategies to provide farmers and ranchers with the solutions they need to supply the nation with quality food." But most of the university research projects that have earned research dollars from the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture seem to be rewards to university grant writers who are good at theoretical searches for wisdom—not real-life production agriculture useful for practical near-term results.

[Food security draws big crowd and money](#) (Two Rivers Tribune, 4/25)

The setting was the end of Year Two in a five-year, multimillion dollar federal grant to promote food security up and down the Klamath. Food Security is the term applied to a community's ability to access healthy, affordable and culturally acceptable food. In the cases of the tribes, access to the traditional food base including salmon and acorns, has been disrupted by land ownership boundaries and a generation of elders who were shipped to government boarding schools where they were scoured of their language and their traditional knowledge. (This project was funded by a NIFA AFRI grant.)

[Researcher with NIFA roots earns international prize](#) (USDA, 4/25)

(NIFA blog) One of America's most renowned agricultural researchers, a man who has already collected two of the USDA's top honors, has now earned international recognition with the Wolf Prize in Agriculture. Jorge Dubcovsky, a professor of plant sciences at the University of California–Davis, is a plant geneticist who works with wheat to improve disease resistance, nutritional value, yield, and adaptability to a changing environment. Over the years, USDA's [National Institute of Food and Agriculture](#) (NIFA) has provided more than \$15 million to fund more than 20 of Dubcovsky's research projects.

[Senators want robust funding for PEDv vaccine](#) (Food Poisoning Bulletin, 4/27)

Last week, six U.S. senators wrote a [letter](#) to the heads of the Senate and House

Subcommittees on Agriculture, asking that the FY 2015 appropriations bill include funding for vaccinations against Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea virus (PEDv). Since the disease first emerged in April 2013, more than 6 million pigs have been killed in the U.S. The virus does not affect people. There is no currently licensed vaccine for PEDv, so funding for the USDA's Agricultural Research Service and National Institute for Food and Agriculture programs needs to be increased to research the illness and to develop a vaccine.