

NIFA in the News – Week of October 14 2013

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In the News

Vilsack: Following through to keep our youth safe on the farm (Cattle Network 9/27). Last year, USDA promised to address youth farm safety in innovative, comprehensive ways, working in partnership with folks from around the country. On September 25, we announced new plans to strengthen that commitment by developing a national training curriculum to reduce agricultural hazards to young workers. USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture awarded \$600,000 over two years to Pennsylvania State University, which will work with partner universities and a broad range of agriculture and education organizations to develop this training curriculum. The result will provide a unified approach to national youth farm safety education, as well as a formalized effort to educate rural youth who are working on the farm or ranch. Overall, NIFA has provided nearly \$2 million in funding under the Obama Administration to complement the good efforts of America's farmer, rancher and producer organizations to improve youth farm safety. [Link](#)

Registration open for Beef Facilities Conference (Tri-State Neighbor 9/27). Beef barns of all types are becoming more commonplace in the Upper Midwest. "But there is a lot that we are still learning about these barns," said Beth Doran, Iowa State University (ISU) Extension and Outreach beef program specialist. To share this information, a one-day Beef Facilities Conference will be held Nov. 21 at the Best Western Plus Ramkota Hotel and Conference Center in Sioux Falls. The conference is a cooperative effort of ISU Extension and Outreach, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension, South Dakota State University, the USDA Agricultural Research Service and the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture. [Link](#)

USDA grant to develop youth farm safety curriculum (Manchester Enterprise 9/29). The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced funding to provide safety training for the more than 2 million youth working in agricultural production. USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) awarded \$600,000 to Pennsylvania State University

to develop a national training curriculum that lessens agricultural hazards to young workers.

[Link](#)

HarrisVaccines Awarded Swine Disease Research Grant (National Hog Farmer 10/1). Ames, Iowa-based vaccine producer, Harrisvaccines, today announced it has been awarded a grant from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) for porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome (PRRS) virus research. This project is supported by Agriculture and Food Research Initiative Grant no. 2013-67015-21307 from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture. The grant will be a two-year project to focus on a new way of looking for protective determinants of the PRRS virus. HarrisVaccines says the goal is to find a sequence or set of sequences found across all PRRS virus strains that could then be used to make a more effective PRRS virus vaccine. [Link](#)

Producers can select comparable farms with update to farm finance website (Farm and Dairy 10/2). A recent upgrade to the popular FINBIN website allows producers to benchmark their farm or ranch finances against a peer group of truly comparable farms, improving producer access to farm financial databases. FINBIN is the farm financial benchmarking database maintained by the Center for Farm Financial Management (CFFM), which is part of University of Minnesota Extension and the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences. The revisions to FINBIN were funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Institute of Food and Agriculture. [Link](#)

Bumpers College Revamps Curriculum (The Arkansas Traveler 10/2). Arkansas high school students who do not plan to work in agriculture production can explore other career options in the business through a revamped curriculum created by the Dale Bumpers College of Agriculture, Food and Life Sciences. The curriculum was designed for Phase II of the Visual Communications on the Road in Arkansas program. Phase I created a two-week communications curriculum. Phase II, which runs until June 2014, expanded the curriculum to 16 weeks, with additional topics that include Web design, graphic design and careers, Edgar said. Edgar plans to request assistance for Phase III, which will provide agriculture programs with technology, she said. Money for the project was provided by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture. [Link](#)

Infectious Diseases Grants Announced (The Pig Site 10/2). A collaboration between BBSRC, the USA's National Science Foundation (NSF), National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the US Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) has awarded more than \$16M in Ecology and Evolution of Infectious Diseases (EEID) grants. The EEID program supports research to understand the ecological and biological mechanisms behind human-induced environmental changes and the emergence and transmission of infectious diseases. [Link](#)

Harrisvaccines awarded swine disease contract from USDA subsidiary (Vaccine News Daily 10/4). Harrisvaccines, a vaccine production company, announced on Tuesday that it was awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture for swine disease research. The grant, supported by the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative Grant no. 2013-67015-21307, will provide Harrisvaccines with the resources to research the Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome Virus. [Link](#)

AVMA Tells Nation's Leaders: Get Back to Work (Veterinary Practice News 10/4). The ongoing shutdown of the federal government has led to fewer health and safety inspections and the threat of an animal vaccine shortage, the American Veterinary Medical Association warned today. Veterinary research approved for funding by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture. Grants to researchers may be delayed. [Link](#)

Harrisvaccines awarded grant for swine disease research (Ames Tribune 10/4). Harrisvaccines has been awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to research a virus affecting the nation's swine herds. The grant from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture was awarded to Harrisvaccines for research of the Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome Virus. The research will be done in collaboration with PathoVacs Inc., an early stage biotechnology company also located in Ames. Both companies are based in the Iowa State University Research Park. Harrisvaccines was awarded the \$398,000 grant for two years. The research will utilize existing research staff, spokesman Joel Harris said. [Link](#)

UI scientist studies spread of harmful plant (The News-Gazette 10/4). Horseweed is the bane of soybean farmers, straying into their neatly planted fields and in some cases drastically reducing yields. That's one reason Junming Wang, an atmospheric scientist at the University of Illinois State Water Survey's climate-science section, is using balloons — yes, balloons — to study the spread of this pesky plant, also known as marehail. Wang's atmospheric science group received a three-year, \$500,000 grant for the study last December from the USDA's Agriculture and Food Research Initiative. [Link](#)

Ivy Tech expands precision agriculture program (Kokomo Perspective 10/7). Jennifer Vandeburg, chair of the Agriculture Program at Ivy Tech's Kokomo Region, said the recently awarded grant will support Ivy Tech's precision agriculture education program by funding a mobile lab to take the high-tech program to area high schools as well as expand opportunities for Ivy Tech students. The grant comes under the auspices of USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture, through the federal SPECA program. SPECA initiatives aim at promoting and strengthening secondary education and two-year postsecondary education in agriscience and agribusiness with the goal of encouraging more young Americans to pursue and complete a bachelor's degree or higher in the food and agricultural sciences. [Link](#)

USDA grant to develop youth farm safety curriculum (AgriNews 10/8). The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced funding to provide safety training for the more than 2 million youth working in agricultural production. USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture awarded \$600,000 to Pennsylvania State University to develop a national training curriculum that lessens agricultural hazards to young workers. The training will align with Career Cluster Standards of the National Council for Agricultural Education for a unified approach to a national farm safety education and curricula-certification program for youth. [Link](#)

Ivy Tech Kokomo to Steer USDA Grant to Precision Ag Program (Hoosier Ag Today 10/9).

Ivy Tech Community College is the recipient of a \$144,000 grant for their precision agriculture program. The 3-year grant for Ivy Tech's Kokomo Region is from USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture with a goal of encouraging more young people to pursue degrees in food and agricultural sciences. [Link](#)

IAN Whole Foods (AgInfo.net 10/10). Melinda Manore, a professor of nutrition at U. of Oregon, was awarded \$4.7 million to start a program, called "The WAVE Ripples for Change: Obesity Prevention for Active Youth". It was awarded by the United States Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. "How is nutrition going to guide the way that we are or are not obese? One of the eating styles that I think there is a lot of research for, for weight control as well as in terms of getting a healthy diet is consuming what we call a low energy dense diet. What that means is we eat whole fruits, vegetables and grains and do not drink our calories in soda. We eat lean meats, beans and legumes. And when we do those kinds of things, I don't have to worry that you are going to eat too many apples. How can I get you to select an apple instead of French fries. That kind of diet also means we do not have to worry so much about portion size which is a real issue in this country. We, as Americans, think that bigger means we get better value instead of taking about the quality of what we are eating. [Link](#)

Looking for new genes for resistance to wheat stem sawflies (Ag Professional 10/15).

Scientists discovered some 70 years ago that they could fight wheat stem sawfly by growing a new type of wheat. The wheat had a solid stem instead of a hollow one, making it harder for females to lay eggs and leaving less room for larvae to grow. Montana wheat farmers still benefit from that breakthrough, and Montana State University now has a new grant that could add weapons to their arsenal, said MSU wheat breeder Luther Talbert. With a five-year \$500,000 grant from the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Talbert and his colleagues will screen 4,000 to 5,000 varieties of wheat that originated in areas of the world where wheat stem sawflies are a problem. The scientists will look for resistant traits that may be present in the wheat and then try to identify the genes associated with that resistance. New resistance genes will be incorporated into new varieties of wheat. [Link](#)

Efforts to Improve Access to Public Ag Research Underway (Farm Futures 10/17). Following

up on a federal commitment to ensure publicly funded agricultural research is easily accessible, a team of faculty members from the Purdue University agriculture and library sciences departments this week organized a conference in Washington, D.C., to further discuss a program that would collect and organize such data. The workshop, called Smarter Agriculture, promoted greater and easier access to data that could be used to help drive innovative breakthroughs in areas including health, energy, the environment, national security and agriculture. Though the government shutdown hindered federal participation, funding was previously provided by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture and allowed the conference to continue. [Link](#)



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