

## **NIFA in the News – Week of January 14, 2013**

Curious as to what happens to all the news releases you see in the [NIFA newsroom](#)? Here's the weekly summary of NIFA's mentions in the news media for the week of January 14, 2013.

### **In the News**

**LSU AgCenter to open biofuels plant in St. Gabriel (Port South 1/11).** The LSU AgCenter Audubon Sugar Institute plans a Jan. 25 opening for a pilot plant designed to produce biofuels and biochemicals from agricultural crops and byproducts. The centerpiece of the AgCenter's sustainable bioproducts Initiative, the plant focuses on processing sweet sorghum, energy cane and other grassy feedstocks into convertible sugars, fiber and bioproducts for further refining into butanol, gasoline, isoprene and biochemicals. The plant is located at the Audubon Sugar Institute in St. Gabriel and is part of a larger project funded by a five-year, \$17.2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. [Link](#)

**USDA: BioEnergy R&D Will Spur Innovation & Opportunity (Guardian Express 1/11).** On Friday Jan. 11, 2013 United States Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack visited a state-of-the-art bioindustrial facility at Renmatix today, where he announced \$25 million to fund research and development of next-generation renewable energy and high-value biobased products from a variety of biomass sources. The projects announced today are funded by USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) through the Biomass Research and Development Initiative, established in the 2008 Farm Bill. [Link](#)

**Free online marketing workshop for farmers to be offered in Bloomington-Normal (Farmers Advance 1/12).** A University of Illinois agricultural communications professor will host a free online marketing workshop on Sunday, Jan. 27, from 8:45 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Illinois State University Alumni Center. The workshop is part of a multi-state, USDA-funded project to provide training for beginning farmers and ranchers. Preference will be given to those who have less than 10 years of experience in their enterprise. [Link](#)

**Targeting Norovirus (Food Technology January 2013).** Many people believe that most foodborne illness is caused by bacteria, but the truth is that the most common cause of foodborne-disease outbreaks in the United States is a virus. In 2011, the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) funded a variety of projects as part of NIFA's Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) Food Safety Challenge program ([www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/foodsafetyafri.cfm](http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/foodsafetyafri.cfm)). Among the projects funded were three projects to develop innovative food processing technologies to destroy noroviruses and other foodborne pathogens. These three mega research grants totaled \$15 million (\$1 million per project per year for five years). [Link](#)

**Why frack when you can grow biofuel? (Clean Technica 1/14).** USDA has just embarked on a new round of \$25 million in funding for four new biofuel research and development projects, offering farmers and other rural property owners the potential for new alternatives to selling or leasing their land for natural gas fracking. The new projects all involve next-generation, non-food biomass, including waste products that

would normally represent a costly burden to agricultural operations. One of the grants, for \$6.9 million, will go to USDA's Agricultural Research Service in Pennsylvania (a state that also happens to be ground zero for the fracking debate, as depicted in the documentary Gasland and the new movie Promised Land). The project involves a scaled down catalytic cracking process mimicking the systems used by the petroleum industry. This one is particularly interesting because it involves distributed energy technology that is designed to be installed at individual farms, rather than at a large central location. [Link](#)

**USDA Awards \$1.5 Million Grant To Study Lima Beans (Growing Produce 1/16).** Delaware is second only to California in production of lima beans. USDA awarded the University of Delaware (UD) a five-year, \$1.5 million Specialty Crop Research Initiative grant to study the impact of various diseases on the crop in Delaware and throughout the mid-Atlantic region. [Link](#)

Published on January 17, 2013 / Jennifer Martin

