

NIFA in the News – Week of March 25, 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 March 25, 2013.

In the News

Advancing the frontier of sustainable agriculture in the Southwest (Southwest Farm Press 3/4). Early sustainable research projects were so successful in providing substantial benefits to agriculture that in 1988 USDA established the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program to provide financial assistance through a grant program to farmers, ranchers, researchers and educators to develop innovations that would improve farm profitability, protect natural resources and the environment, and to revitalize rural communities. Over the last 25 years, SARE has awarded nearly \$200 million for more than 5,000 initiatives that have greatly improved agriculture across the nation and around the world. [Link](#)

Seminars help farmers better manage on-farm employees (Ag Week 3/21).

Fourteen farmers attended a first-of-its-kind set of seminars in North Dakota on agriculture employment management. The seminars, held in Jamestown, were led by extension service staff in three states and focused on the general issues that affect agriculture — hiring, retaining, motivating and evaluating employees. Funding for the project was through the North Central Center Risk Management Education Center and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. [Link](#)

UK equine researcher gets large USDA grant to identify EAV virus carrier gene in stallions (Key Forward 3/22).

Udeni Balasuriya, a professor at the University of Kentucky Maxwell H. Gluck Equine Research Center, recently received \$2.9 million to identify a virus carrier gene in stallions. Outbreaks of the equine viral arteritis cost the industry millions. The five-year grant, awarded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Agriculture and Food Research Initiative, is one of the largest awarded to the UK College of Agriculture last year. It is unusual because most USDA grants target food animals. The grant includes funds for disseminating the information quickly and effectively to the public. [Link](#)

Genetic Basis for Establishment of EAV Carrier State (The Horse 3/22).

New research from the University of Kentucky (UK) suggests that genetic factors play a role in determining stallion susceptibility to equine arteritis virus (EAV) infection. To continue these studies, we have recently been awarded a \$2.9 million five-year grant by the United States Department of Agriculture-Agriculture and Food Research

Initiative to specifically identify the genetic factors responsible for establishment of the EAV carrier state in stallions. [Link](#)

Critical dairy cow fertility focus of new \$3M study (High Plains Journal 3/22).

Fertility in dairy cattle is normally considered a result of multiple environmental factors, but more recently, scientists have determined there may be a greater genetic connection than once thought, according to a Texas A&M AgriLife Research scientist. "Genomic Selection for Improved Fertility of Dairy Cows with Emphasis on Cyclicity and Pregnancy" has been awarded \$2.98 million for 60 months from the U.S. Department of Agriculture within the National Institute of Food and Agriculture 2012 Agriculture and Food Research Initiative's Food Security program. [Link](#)

Territorial delegates push for nutrition program (Saipan Tribune 3/25).

Three delegates to a federal food and nutrition conference two weeks ago had an opportunity to explain their issues to a powerful member of the U.S. House of Representatives, thanks to a timely assist from Amata Coleman Radewagen. The Pacific Islands were represented at the National 2013 Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program Coordinators' Meeting at Washington, D.C.'s Fairfax Hotel. Organized by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, the coordinators manage NIFA's Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program. This unique program currently operates in all 50 states and in American Samoa, Guam, Micronesia, Northern Marianas, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. [Link](#)

\$1.9 Million USDA Grant to Battle Bean Root Rot in African Soils (Missouri Ag Connection 3/25).

A Michigan State University (MSU) AgBioResearch scientist has received one of five grants issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to develop varieties of common bean (*Phaseolus vulgaris* L.) that are resistant to soil-borne pathogens found in East and Southern Africa. [Link](#)

ASA Details Impact of Continuing Resolution on Soybean Farmers (Minnesota Farm Guide 3/28).

In response to the signing into law of the Continuing Resolution (CR) by President Barack Obama yesterday, the American Soybean Association (ASA) has examined the ramifications for soybean farmers contained in the measure, which funds the federal government through the end of the 2013 fiscal year on September 30. The Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI), a priority for ASA, was not only funded in the CR, but it was one of the few programs for which funding was increased. The program is now funded at \$274.8 million, \$10 million more than in FY2012. As a discretionary program, however, AFRI will be subject to USDA's 2.5 percent reduction within the next six months. Appropriations for research at land-grant universities (often called "capacity funding"), which fund ARS and extension activities, all suffered a cut of 7.61 percent from last year's funding levels.

[Link](#)

Project focuses on improving food pantries in rural food deserts (LimaOhio.com 3/28).

Ohio State University Extension is taking part in a five-year, \$4 million grant to help isolated communities increase availability of nutritious foods. The project is

funded through the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture and its 2012 Agriculture and Food Research Initiative's Food Security Program. [Link](#)

What Does the Continuing Resolution Mean for Agriculture? (Farm Future 3/29). President Obama Wednesday signed the Continuing Resolution, effectively authorizing funding for government operations until the end of the fiscal year on Sept. 30. Despite the long lists of amendments and standing provisions in the Ag Appropriations bill tucked inside the CR, there are several notable changes that will affect agriculture. Funding for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative was increased by \$10 million, now funded at \$274.8 million. As a discretionary program, however, AFRI will be subject to USDA's 2.5% reduction within the next six months. Appropriations for research at land-grant universities will still be funded, though it will be cut by 7.61%. [Link](#)

Improving dairy cattle fertility is focus of \$3 million USDA grant (Farm and Ranch Guide 3/28). The USDA National Institute for Food and Agriculture has invested \$3 million to help address cattle infertility, which is one of the biggest barriers to global competitiveness for American dairy farmers. The research component will begin by focusing on identifying genetic markers for fertility in dairy heifers and cows. University of Florida animal scientist Pete Hansen and John Cole, a scientist with the USDA Agricultural Research Service in Beltsville, Md., will pursue the second research step: identifying and isolating the factors contributing to daughter pregnancy rates based on the sire's genetics. [Link](#)

Published on March 29, 2013 / Jennifer Martin