

NIFA in the News – Week of August 5, 2013

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In the News

Crowell on video junkies, ag research and county fairs (Farm and Dairy 8/1). Need more ag R&D. Speaking of numbers and billions, I read an interesting list of major companies and their investments in R&D. Google invested \$3.8 billion, \$5.2 billion and \$6.8 billion into research and development in 2010, 2011 and 2012, respectively. In a similar vein, the Congressional appropriations to all the agencies within the National Institutes of Health totaled nearly \$31 billion in fiscal year 2012. But how important is federal spending on agricultural research and development? It's not even on the radar screen. The National Institute of Food and Agriculture within the USDA has a line item for its ag research appropriations. The Agriculture and Food Research Initiative received just \$277 million (sorry, we don't even rank a "b-billion") in its FY13 appropriation. [Link](#)

You Want Jobs? Agriculture Has Them! (Gas2.org 8/2). American farms are struggling to attract workers, according to reports out last week. Farmers have jobs, but no applicants – and they concede that the problem is only getting worse as innovation in alternative fuels like ethanol and biodiesel, as well as growing demand for the materials necessary to make plant-based renewable plastic pushes up demand for their products to the point that there are thousands of jobs waiting to be filled. With green jobs growth out-pacing literally every other US industry, this is a serious problem. "We certainly have a shortfall, no doubt about it," said Sonny Ramaswamy, director of the Agriculture Department's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. Ramaswamy added that while there has been an increase in the number of students enrolled in agriculture at US universities, "that's not been enough to

keep up with the demand (read: jobs) that we've got in the workforce." [Link](#)

Cracks in the system: Salmonella proves to be a problem in beef, too (Stlbeacon.org 8/2).

Salmonella tainted ground beef could be the biggest challenge facing the industry, said a leading beef researcher. Scientists have realized they may have misidentified the source of Salmonella in beef cattle. They now realize it may be in the lymphatic system of cattle, making it harder to prevent than E. coli. The most recent study was funded by a USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture grant, more beef check-off money and private industry support. [Link](#)

Ag Students Are in Demand (PayScale.com 8/4). Today's agribusinesses go beyond traditional farm jobs, and have more job openings than applicants to fill them. "We certainly have a shortfall, no doubt about it," says Sonny Ramaswamy, director of the Agriculture Department National Institute of Food and Agriculture, in an interview with the Des Moines Register. Agriculture student enrollment is on the rise, Ramaswamy says, but "that's not been enough to keep up with the demand that we've got in the workforce." [Link](#)

Roger Sherman garden: a place for growing children (MyRecordJournal.com 8/4). The University of Connecticut's Cooperative Extension System College of Agriculture and Natural Resources received a \$2.5 million grant from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, to be administered over five years. It picked schools in four counties for the program. The school started its grant-funded Connecticut Fitness and Nutrition Club in Motion program in the spring. Interested students participated in the program after school and have continued their involvement into the summer. "This is teaching children how to become healthier through nutrition, healthy snacks, exercise and gardening," said Umekia Taylor, of Meriden, an associate extension. [Link](#)

Researchers preserve cancer-fighting properties in frozen broccoli (Gizmag .com 8/7).

Broccoli is one of those foods we're told to eat as youngsters because it's good for us. Unfortunately, researchers at the University of Illinois (U of I) found some of that goodness, namely the vegetable's cancer-protective benefits, doesn't survive the process its subjected to before reaching the freezers at supermarkets. Thankfully, the researchers followed up their initial research and found a simple way to preserve broccoli's cancer-fighting properties. But Elizabeth Jeffery, a U of I professor of nutrition, and her team found that this process also destroys the enzyme myrosinase which, when brought into contact with glucoraphanin when raw broccoli is chopped or chewed, forms broccoli's cancer-preventive

compound, sulforaphane. The team's studies, which were funded by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), are published in the [Journal of Functional Foods](#) and the [Journal of Food Science](#). [Link](#)

Scientists put cancer-fighting power back into frozen broccoli (Scienceblog.com 8/7). There was bad news, then good news from University of Illinois broccoli researchers this month. In the first study, they learned that frozen broccoli lacks the ability to form sulforaphane, the cancer-fighting phytochemical in fresh broccoli. But a second study demonstrated how the food industry can act to restore the frozen vegetable's health benefits. USDA and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) funded this research. [Link](#)

Georgia team competes at National 4-H Forestry Invitational (Independentmail.com 8/7). Georgia was one of 13 state teams that competed in the 34th Annual National 4-H Forestry Invitational, from July 21 through July 25. Teams from Pennsylvania, Alabama and New York placed first, second, and third respectively. The invitational was held at West Virginia University Jackson's Mill State 4-H Camp and Conference Center, near Weston, W.V. The event was sponsored by Farm Credit System, The Sustainable Forestry Initiative Inc., The Society of American Foresters, West Virginia University Extension Service, The American Forest Foundation and the Association of Natural Resource Extension Professionals. 4-H is a youth education program operated by the Cooperative Extension Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Institute of Food and Agriculture and the state land grant universities. More than six million youth, 540,000 volunteers, and 3,500 professionals participate in 4-H nationwide, and nearly 100,000 are part of the 4-H Forestry Program. [Link](#)

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