



# NERA News & Notes

Volume 3, Issue 1, January 2005

From the Office of the Executive Director

---

## CSREES COMPETITIVE GRANTS WORKSHOP - FEBRUARY 1

A workshop on CSREES funding opportunities in support of Research, Education and Extension activities will be held on Tuesday, February 1, 2005 at the Renaissance Hotel, Washington, DC. The workshop is designed for CSREES Competitive Programs' applicants and university administrators. The workshop will provide an overview of Competitive Programs, tips for success in grant writing, and breakout sessions targeted to individual programs. CSREES staff responsible for the administration of the various programs will make presentations. For registration and other information, please visit the website at <http://www.conted.vt.edu/usdagrant/>



## Symposium: Plant Breeding and the Public Sector: Who Will Train Plant Breeders?

March 9-11, 2005, Michigan State University

There has been increasing worry globally about who will train plant breeders in the future. To date, much of the training has been provided in North American Universities, but the number of public breeders is steadily declining. This situation was dramatically portrayed in a recent news feature in the journal *Nature* entitled "A Dying Breed".

The reason for the decline in plant breeding programs is complex, but revolves around two primary factors. First,

as plant breeders retire, they are being replaced by scientists involved in more basic genetic studies. This shift is fueled by the perception that private sector breeding efforts are adequate to meet cultivar needs. Second, cuts in University resources have led to reduced support of Extension field programs, and this has pushed the current crop of public plant breeders to shift their activities towards fundamental/basic studies that can be supported by federal grants and private sector.

The loss of plant breeding programs is of great concern to both our domestic plant breeding industry and the international community. A substantial proportion of the plant breeders in developing nations were trained at U.S. Universities, and almost all the private North American breeders attended Land Grant Universities. The bottom line is that we must find a way to keep a critical mass of applied geneticists and plant breeders at public universities in the U.S. and around the world, if we are to maintain our graduate programs in plant breeding.

What is needed is a partnership among the Land Grant Universities, private breeding companies and international programs that will support our plant breeding training programs. To have this happen, the interested parties need to get together and have a dialog that results in the development of a roadmap. MSU will host a symposium to discuss this critical issue and propose future steps to address this issue. To make sure that all the major stakeholders are involved, we intend to contact members of the entire plant breeding community, including private breeding programs, major commodity groups, international training centers and University breeders.

Speakers will include:

- Dr. P. Stephen Baenziger (Eugene W. Price Distinguished Professor, University of Nebraska) - Plant Breeding Training in North America
- Dr. Fred Bliss (Senior Director, R & D Special Projects, Seminis Seeds and former Will W. Lester Endowed Chair at The University of California) - Plant Breeding in the Private Sector of North America
- Dr. Gurdev Khush (Former Head of Plant Breeding at IRRI and World Food Prize 1996) - Plant Breeding Training in the International Sector
- Dr. Michael Morris (Senior Economist at World Bank and former Director of Economics Program of CIMMYT) - Building Capacity for International Plant Breeding: What Roles for the Public and Private Sectors?
- Dr. Elcio Guimaraes (Senior Officer Cereal/Crop Breeding, FAO) - Assessment of National Plant Breeding and Biotechnology Capacity Worldwide

Following formal presentations, breakout groups will discuss four topics.

1. What kind of training do plant breeders need?
2. Are there more effective ways to train domestic and international breeders than is currently being done?
3. How will we provide improved varieties of minor and subsistence crops in the future?
4. How can the private and public sector most effectively partner to train new generations of plant breeders?

Breakout groups will report back to the attendees with their recommendations, followed by open discussion. The organizers plan to collate the reports and recommendations to produce a manuscript for publication and follow-up actions.

Contact information: Please contact Sandy Allen, Meeting coordinator, for future updates on the meeting

and with any suggestions you might have on the content and format of the meeting E-mail: [allens@msu.edu](mailto:allens@msu.edu).



## **Recent Requests for Proposals (RFP's)**

### **NSF partnerships for International Research and Education NDSSF 05-553**

The NSF partnerships for International Research and Education (PIRE) Program will enable US institutions to establish collaborative relationships with foreign groups and institutions in order to advance specific research and education objectives and to make possible a research effort that neither side could accomplish on its own. The program is intended to catalyze a cultural change in US institutions by establishing innovative new models for international collaborative research and education. It is also intended to facilitate greater diversity in student participation and preparation, and to contribute to the development of a diverse, globally-engaged, science and engineering workforce.

The PIRE program is limited to one lead submission per institution, and/or up to 2 participating, non-lead submissions. A complete program description is available via the NSF's website, at <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2005/nsf05533/nsf05533.htm>

### **USAID - Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Management – Collaborative Research Support Program (SANREM CRSP)**

The SANREM CRSP solicits applications to plan and conduct long-term collaborative research activities in support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) efforts to promote sustainable and environmentally sound development through agriculture and natural resource management.

Research activities are expected to address the role of technology integration, governance, economic policy and enterprise development, biodiversity, conservation and

environmental services, social and institutional capacity building, globalization, vulnerability and risk in sustainable agriculture and natural resource management.

Program objectives and application procedures for Planning Award RFA and associated Long-Term Research Award RFA are attached and available at: <http://www.oired.vt.edu/sanremcrsp/>

Planning Award RFAs (\$720,000 total funding):

- Up to 20 awards at \$25,000-50,000
- Project Period: April 1 through September 30, 2005
- Application Due Date: February 23, 2005

Long-Term Research Award RFAs (\$6,000,000 total funding):

- Up to six awards at \$250-300,000 per year
- Project Period: December 1, 2005 through September 30, 2009
- Application Due Date: September 30, 2005

This request for applications is issued by: Management Entity (ME) of the SANREM CRSP, Office of International Research, Education, and Development (OIREd), Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 840 University City Boulevard, Suite 5-7, Blacksburg, Virginia 24061-0378. Email: [sanrem@vt.edu](mailto:sanrem@vt.edu) Website: <http://www.oired.vt.edu/sanremcrsp/>

### **Community-based Wetland Restoration Projects**

The National Association of Counties (NACo) and the Five Star Restoration Challenge Grant Program project partners are currently accepting applications for the 2005 Five Star Restoration Challenge Grants. The Five Star Program provides modest financial assistance (\$10,000 on average) to support community-based wetland, riparian and coastal habitat restoration projects that build diverse partnerships and foster local natural resource stewardship through education, outreach and training activities.

The stars in “Five Star” are the partners, funders, and/or participants who offer cash and in-kind services necessary to complete the restoration project including:

- Local or tribal governments (e.g., boards of county commissioners, departments of planning, environment or parks and recreation)
- Schools or youth organizations (e.g., state or local youth conservation corps, county job training programs)
- Local businesses or corporations
- Conservation organizations or local citizens groups
- State and federal resource management agencies
- Foundations or other funders

Begun in 1997, The Five Star Restoration Challenge Grant Program is a partnership between NACo, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the Wildlife Habitat Council, and made possible with support from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The deadline for applications is March 1, 2005. For more information on the Five Star Program and how to apply, please visit [www.naco.org/fivestar](http://www.naco.org/fivestar) or contact Jason Shedlock at 202/942-4252 or [jshedloc@naco.org](mailto:jshedloc@naco.org)

### **USDA – DOE Biomass Research and Development Grants**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) today announced the availability of up to \$15 million in grants to support President Bush’s energy plan to develop renewable energy and expand the economic prospects and environmental benefits of biomass.

Through the Biomass Research and Development Initiative, grants are available to eligible entities to carry out research, development and demonstrations on

biobased products, bioenergy, biofuels, biopower and related processes.

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, on behalf of USDA and DOE, is requesting proposals for biomass research, development and demonstration projects. The solicitation package (USDA-GRANTS-67-3A75-5-22) is posted on the federal funding opportunities website at <http://www.Fedgrants.gov>

Pre-applications for this joint solicitation must be submitted by February 15, 2005, to USDA-NRCS, Management Services Division, P.O. Box 2890, Washington DC 20013-2890, Attn: Sheila Leonard. Approximately 400 applications were submitted for this solicitation in both fiscal years 2003 and 2004. Eligible applicants include private sector entities, institutions of higher education, nonprofit organizations, national laboratories, federal and state research agencies and consortiums consisting of two or more of these entities. Grants will be awarded competitively based on technical merit and program priorities identified in the solicitation package.

For this solicitation, a minimum nonfederal share of 20 percent of the total project cost is required. The federal share of each grant is expected to range from \$250,000 to \$2 million, with the work proposed to be completed within a three-year timeframe. Information on energy and agriculture is available at <http://www.usda.gov/energy>



## Conferences of Interest

### **Risk Management Strategies for Northeast Small and Limited Farmers**

USDA will host a 2-day risk management conference, March 2 – 3 2005 at the Sturbridge Host Hotel and Conference center, 366 Main Street, Sturbridge, MA. The risk management conference will focus on local marketing issues, legal liabilities, family and labor issues, food safety and security, business planning and production programs. For more information, see [www.rma.usda.gov](http://www.rma.usda.gov),

or contact Hugh Joseph at Tufts University [hjoseph@tufts.edu](mailto:hjoseph@tufts.edu)

### **Public and Private R&D Partnerships in Homeland Security Conference**

U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Science and Technology Directorate is sponsoring the First Annual Working Together: Conference on Public/Private Research and Development Partnerships in Homeland Security, April 27 & 28, 2005 at the Seaport Hotel and World Trade Center, Boston. Emphasis will be placed on encouraging public-private partnering among scientists and engineers from government, national laboratories, universities, research institutes, and private sector firms investing in R&D.

This two-day Conference will focus on state-of-the-art science and technology to anticipate, prevent, respond to, and recover from high-consequence chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, explosives and cyber terrorist threats. The conference will also address protection of the nation's critical infrastructure, and the harnessing of science and intelligence to reduce threat and risk.

Papers are being sought on the following topics:

- Threat Characterization for: Chemical, Biological, Radiological / Nuclear, Conventional Explosives (CBRNE)
- Threat and Vulnerability Assessment including: Knowledge Discovery (Semantic Graphs), Technology-based Emerging Threats (e.g., terrorist exploitation of advances in nanotechnology and biotechnology), Advanced Risk Modeling, Simulation and Analysis for Decision Support, Modeling and Simulation (Cognition and Behavior), Discrete Sciences, Visual Analytics
- Sensors including: Performance Improvement, Next-Generation Designs, and Architecture for Devices and Systems
- Forensics and Attribution for Chemical and Biological Events

- Chemical Countermeasures Including: Detection (TICs and TIMs), Surveillance/Detection (Low Volatility/Chemical Warfare Agents)
- Biological Countermeasures including: Agricultural Security, Surveillance (Situational Awareness)
- Radiological/Nuclear Countermeasures including: Passive and Active Detection
- Explosives Detection including: Bulk and Trace Detection and Nanosensors
- Methods to Disarm/Defeat Conventional Explosives
- Critical Infrastructure Protection and Cyber Security including: Addressing Insider Threat, Large Scale Situational Awareness
- Post-Event Recovery and Restoration from events involving the use of chemical and biological agents and nuclear and radioactive materials (e.g., improvised nuclear devices and radiological dispersion devices).

Abstracts should be submitted in MS word and limited to a maximum of 250 words. Please include on the same page the author(s) title, name, address, phone, fax, email and organization affiliation. In addition a maximum of 100 word biography of the presenting author is required. Abstract deadline is February 7, 2005.

For more information on the First Annual National Homeland Security R&D Conference, please refer to: [www.homelandsecurityresearchconference.org](http://www.homelandsecurityresearchconference.org)



### **Update from the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development**

Last fall, the Center was instrumental in developing and submitting three different USDA/NRI grant proposals

involving multiple experiment stations in the Northeast U.S.:

- Enhancing the Prosperity of Small Farms and Rural Agricultural Communities: The Role of Industry Clusters (this multi-disciplinary and multi-functional proposal was submitted to the new NRI Program Area 66.0, Enhancing the Competitiveness of Small Farms and Communities);
- The Competitiveness of Agriculture: Do Communities Have a Role? (Program Area 61.0, Markets and Trade);
- The Rural Brain Drain: An Examination of its Relative Causes, Consequences and Policy Implications for Place-Based Development Strategies (Program area 62.0, Rural Development).

The total value of these pending grant applications is close to \$1.5 million. The Center was also involved in three smaller grants (one of which is pending and two of which were funded) involving agri-tourism (WV and PA), educational programming for the Chesapeake Bay area (MD, PA) and workforce development for agriculture. Further details are available in The Center's Annual Report 2004, which will be mailed shortly.

The Center convened scientists and educators at the Rural Industry Cluster/Industry Targeting (IC/IT) Workshop, December 2-3, 2004 in Orlando, FL. Co-sponsors of this workshop included the Regional Project NE-1011 (Rural Development Alternatives in the New Economy) and the Community Policy Analysis Network (CPAN) of the Rural Policy Research Institute (RUPRI). The objective was to examine whether, in an environment of continued losses in natural resource- and manufacturing-based employment, rural communities can use industrial targeting and clustering to retain and expand their employment base. A proceedings with scientific papers will be published, and educational materials will be developed out of the workshop.

Currently, we are in the process of canvassing faculty in the Northeast U.S. (and nationally) to gauge interest in continuing the multi-state project **NEC-1001, Land Use Management and Policy**. The project is currently scheduled to expire in September 2005. We want to avoid potential duplication with the efforts of **W-1133, “Benefits and Costs of Natural Resource Policies Affecting Private and Public Lands”**. This Western project includes numerous scientists from the Northeast (primarily agricultural economists).



### **A Remainder!**

#### **March 2-3 NERA Meeting**

The NERA Meeting on March 2-3, 2005, will be held at the USDA-Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC) campus where the NERA-OED is presently located. Holding the meeting in Beltsville, MD, will give directors the opportunity to network and enhance their collaboration with colleagues in USDA - ARS and the National Agriculture Library (NAL). Dr. Peter Young, NAL Director will demonstrate ‘Digitop’ a new system where agricultural journals resident in the NAL collection can be accessed via the internet.

The NERA Executive Committee met on January 12 to discuss the program and arrangements. The agenda for the spring NERA meeting is posted at the following URL.

<http://www.agnr.umd.edu/users/nera/workshop/NERAAgendaMarch2005.html>

