

NIFA in the News – Week of December 24, 2012

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 December 24, 2012.

### **In the News**

**MSU to share \$10M federal research grant to develop bio-energy, bio-based products (The Detroit News 12/14).** Michigan State University is one of more than 20 universities to share \$10 million in federal research grants to spur production of bio-energy and bio-based products, U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said Friday. Michigan State — the only Michigan recipient — will receive \$349,695 for projects that Vilsack said will lead to the development of sustainable regional systems and create jobs. [Link](#)

**USDA grants support sustainable bioenergy production (Biomass Magazine/ 4-traders 12/14).** Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack has announced \$10 million in research grants to spur production of bioenergy and biobased products that will lead to the development of sustainable regional systems and help create jobs. Vilsack highlighted the announcement today with a visit to Michigan State University, a grant awardee. The Secretary also pointed to a recent study released by Iowa State University, and funded by the USDA, which finds that while the use of biobased products in automobile manufacturing is increasing, there are still many parts in the top-selling automobiles manufactured in the United States that may be replaced with biobased materials. [Link](#)

**Sustainable Bioenergy Production Supported by USDA (Environmental Protection 12/14).** Tom Vilsack, agriculture secretary, has announced today that \$10 million grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) have been issued in order to help increase the production of bioenergy and bio-based products that can be used in the development of sustainable regional systems, which can also help create more jobs. Vilsack also spoke about a recent study, which has been performed by Iowa State University (ISU) found that the use of bio-based products in the manufacturing of vehicles has increased over the past few years in the U.S. Funding for the ISU research was provided by the USDA. [Link](#)

**Presidential commission calls for more ag research funds (Natural Resource Report 12/16).** A high-level report on agriculture research funding has been issued by the White House Office of Science and Technology, underscoring the importance of farming to the domestic economy and the global population. The President's Council

on Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) issued the report, which focused on the need for agricultural preparedness and the existing U.S. research infrastructure.

[Link](#)

**County cuts could end 4-H, pest fight (Cincinnati Enquirer 12/17).** Unless Hamilton County's Extension program can come up with almost \$68,000 by the end of the year 4-H will shut down, the group's nutrition programs for the poor will cease, its thousands of volunteer hours spent on public gardening projects will stop and its work to prevent tree-killing pests from invading the county will end. Every state is facing budget cuts, which has affected Extension programs, said Sonny Ramaswamy, director of the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. "Extension has played an important role in the lives of Americans for a hundred years, and the current spate of retirements, budget cuts, and loss of positions, are taking their toll," Ramaswamy said. "As a nation, we are reaching the tipping point where this unbelievable institution called Extension is in jeopardy." [Link](#)

**Next-Gen Electric Vehicles Could Be Home Grown, In More Ways Than One (Clean Technica 12/17).** The US Department of Agriculture has just kicked off a \$10 million bioproduct and biofuel research project aimed at the automotive industry. The new grants were awarded by USDA's Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI), which was established under the 2008 Farm Bill. The funds will be spread among more than two dozen research institutions across the country, primarily in public universities. The goal is to develop regional systems for producing sustainable biofuels and biobased products. [Link](#)

**Presidential commission calls for more ag research funds (The Poultry Site 12/17).** A high-level report on agriculture research funding has been issued by the White House Office of Science and Technology, underscoring the importance of farming to the domestic economy and the global population. The President's Council on Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) issued the report, which focused on the need for agricultural preparedness and the existing US research infrastructure. Noting the emerging and evolving threats to agriculture production, the paper makes the case for additional and re-balanced funding for research programs dedicated to agriculture. It also calls for an additional \$700 million in annual funding for agriculture research, which a report co-chair said is justified because agriculture research funding has been flat for decades. [Link](#)

**Beef scientists, engineers study manure emissions; results to be available in 2013 (Farm and Ranch Guide 12/17).** A group of dedicated beef researchers, scientists and engineers are studying manure emissions and manure management styles in monoslope barn facilities. Two years were spent collecting data at four monoslope barns. The research team included members from Nebraska, Iowa and South Dakota. With funding from the USDA Agriculture and Food Research Initiative, the manure management study results will be published in 2013. [Link](#)

**USDA issues grants to support sustainable bioenergy production (Ag**

**Professional 12/17).** Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced \$10 million in research grants to spur production of bioenergy and biobased products that will lead to the development of sustainable regional systems and help create jobs. Vilsack highlighted the announcement today with a visit to Michigan State University, a grant awardee. The Secretary also pointed to a recent study released by Iowa State University (ISU), and funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which finds that while the use of biobased products in automobile manufacturing is increasing, there are still many parts in the top-selling automobiles manufactured in the United States that may be replaced with biobased materials. "USDA and President Obama are committed to producing clean energy right here at home, to not only break our dependence on foreign oil, but also boost rural economies," said Vilsack. "These projects will give us the scientific information needed to support biofuel production and create co-products that will enhance the overall value of a biobased economy.

[Link](#)

**Presidential science commission calls for more ag research funds (USAgNet.com 12/17).** A high-level report on agriculture research funding was issued Friday by the White House Office of Science and Technology, underscoring the importance of farming to the domestic economy and the global population. The President's Council on Advisors on Science and Technology issued the report, which focused on the need for agricultural preparedness and the existing U.S. research infrastructure. [Link](#)

**Strange Bedfellows: USDA and Automotive Industry Pair to Develop Biobased Automobile Parts (Green Optimistic 12/18).** Recently, a \$10 million bioproduct and biofuel research project aimed to change the automotive industry was begun by the US Department of Agriculture. The 2008 Farm Bill, which established the USDA's Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI), was responsible for awarding the grants to make this initiative possible. Over two dozen public university research institutions across the US will receive the funds to develop regional systems to produce sustainable biofuels and biobased products. [Link](#)

**Small Steps to Health and Wealth offered in January (Holyoke Express 12/18).** Small Steps to Health and Wealth™ Colorado is a new program offered by Colorado State University Extension and sponsored by Haxtun Hospital District that addresses how financial problems can affect health and how poor health can affect finances. This new Extension program is the first of its kind to encourage people to make positive behavior changes to simultaneously improve their health and personal finances. The project was supported by the Rural Health and Safety Education Competitive Program of the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture. [Link](#)

**USDA Supports Sustainable Bioenergy Production (Domestic Fuel 12/19).** The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has awarded \$10 million in research grants to help develop production of bioenergy and biobased products. Ag Secretary Tom Vilsack made the announcement while visiting Michigan State University, one of the grant winners. [Link](#)

**USDA releases money to support bio-based production (BioEnergy News 12/19).**

Bioenergy and bio-based product sectors received a \$10 million (€7.5 million) boost from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) this month. The announcement was made by agriculture secretary Tom Vilsack, who also highlighted the growth potential in the automobile industry of bio-based products via research conducted by the Iowa State University. USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture awarded the grants through its research initiative. Projects were awarded across four key areas: policy options for and impacts on regional biofuels production systems; impacts of regional bioenergy feedstock production systems on wildlife and pollinators; environmental implications of direct and indirect land use change and socioeconomic impacts of biofuels on rural communities. [Link](#)

**Ranch webinars stress drought planning (Rapid City Journal 12/21).**

A winter/spring webinar series will provide drought planning information and tools to advisors seeking to help Great Plains ranchers better prepare for and respond to drought. The webinars are sponsored by the National Drought Mitigation Center at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The series was developed with support from the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program, which is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture — National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA-NIFA). [Link](#)

**What Do People Think About Biofuels? (Domestic Fuel 12/24).**

What do people in the Southeast think about biofuels? Do they support biofuel ventures? Who will grow the biomass? Will those in established industries fight against it? These are just a few of the questions researchers from the University of Georgia and the U.S. Forest Service are asking as part of studies in locations throughout the Southeast suited for biomass development. Supported by a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture, which funds research projects on sustainable bioenergy through its Agriculture and Food Research Initiative. [Link](#)

**Amazon deforestation brings loss of microbial communities (EurekAlert 12/24).**

An international team of microbiologists led by Klaus Nüsslein of the University of Massachusetts Amherst has found that a troubling net loss in diversity among the microbial organisms responsible for a functioning ecosystem is accompanying deforestation in the Amazon rainforest. This work was supported by grants from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture and the Research Support Foundation of the State of São Paulo. [Link](#)

**MSU economists funded for biofuel policy study (Madison County Herald 12/25).**

A team of Mississippi State University agricultural economists recently received funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to study policies impacting biofuel supply chains. The USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture awarded the \$273,120 grant through its Agriculture and Food Research Initiative. In the bioenergy sector, the institute is funding projects that study how biofuels production programs will contribute positively to rural economies, help increase energy independence, and

work well with current agricultural systems. [Link](#)

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