

NIFA in the News – Week of January 7, 2013

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### **In the News**

**Biofuels plant to open in St. Gabriel (WWL 1/6).** 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 plant will focus 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 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](#)

**LSU AgCenter to open pilot biofuels plant Jan. 25 (The Town Talk 1/6).** 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, said project director Vadim Kochergin. Located at the Audubon Sugar Institute at 3845 Highway 75 in St. Gabriel, the pilot plant 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](#)

**LSU AgCenter's biofuels pilot plant to open in St. Gabriel (The Republic 1/6).** 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 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](#)

**Organics “Thrown Under the Bus” in Farm Bill Extension, Say Industry Advocates (Food Safety News 1/6).** “We’ve been thrown under the bus.” That’s how some organic farmers and advocates are describing the government’s “eleventh-hour” decision on Jan. 1 to extend the 2008 farm bill for 9 months instead of enacting a new 2012 farm bill. Their dismay is based on how organics fared when the 2008 farm bill was extended until September 2013 (Section 701). Pure and simple, mandatory

funding for a variety of organic programs written into the 2008 farm bill didn't qualify for automatic inclusion into the farm bill extension. USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture, the federal partner in the Cooperative Extension System, provides federal funding to the system. In the 2008 farm bill, the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative was funded at \$18 million for fiscal year 2009 and \$20 million for fiscal years 2010-12, plus a \$25-million-per-year authorization for appropriations. [Link](#)

Tuskegee awarded nearly \$700,00 from USDA (WRBL 1/7). According to a news release, "Over the next five years, Tuskegee University students will be able to have stipends for a summer internship program that focuses on plant pathology. In collaboration with the lead institution, Iowa State University, Tuskegee has been awarded a grant for \$699,492 by the United States Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. Funds for the project proposal, "Transgenic Approaches in Managing Sudden Death Syndrome in Soybean," will be used to provide the stipends for undergraduate students to participate in an eight-week program at Iowa State for training in plant pathology. [Link](#)

**ARS working toward brown marmorated stink bug control (Southeast Farm Press 1/7).** Agricultural Research Service scientists are exploring various aspects of monitoring and control of this increasingly important insect pest, which is an invasive Asian species known as a sporadic pest of many tree fruit crops in China, Korea, and Japan. A major project led by Leskey, funded through the USDA-National Institute of Food and Agriculture's Specialty Crop Research Initiative Program, is called "Biology, Ecology, and Management of Brown Marmorated Stink Bug in Orchard Crops, Small Fruit, Grapes, Vegetables, and Ornamentals." While this is a mouthful, it goes to the heart of the damage that can be caused by this pest. The project is funded for 3 years with \$5.7 million in federal funds and \$7.3 million in matching funds. [Link](#)

**Universities Receive \$10 Million From USDA For Bioenergy Research (Agriculture.com 1/07).** According to a news release from the USDA, \$10 million has been awarded in research grants to 29 U.S. university bioenergy research programs. The grants are reportedly intended to spur the production and use of biobased products in an effort to create jobs, sustain natural resources, and reduce U.S. dependence on foreign resources. The USDA reported that the long-term goal for research projects is to implement sustainable regional biofuel systems that meet the Energy Independence and Security Act goal of 36 billion gallons of biofuels per year by 2022. The 2012 fiscal year university grant recipients were selected based on the research of potential policy options for biofuel production systems, how the systems might impact the environment, what socioeconomic impacts biofuel systems would have on rural communities, and what kinds of environmental implications would be involved. [Link](#)

**Forum looks at nation's food and health issues (The Eagle 1/9).** The director of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture discussed global and national food and public health problems during a forum at the George Bush Presidential Library and

Museum on Tuesday. For a closer examination of the role of genetics and genetic research in society, Sonny Ramaswamy, administrator of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, was invited to shed light on their connection to food and health issues. [Link](#)

**TAHC accepting nominations for areas of Texas for the Veterinary Loan Repayment Program (North Texas e-News 1/10).** The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) is accepting nominations until Friday, February 15 for areas of the state experiencing a specific need for veterinarians to work in the areas of food animal medicine, rural private practice, or public practice. The TAHC will forward nominations for selected areas to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for inclusion in the national Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP) for the 2013 award cycle. The VMLRP will pay up to \$25,000 per year for three years towards qualified educational loans, for eligible veterinarians who agree to serve in a designated shortage area. [Link](#)

**Busy Season for Bioenergy (Clean Energy 1/10).** You may not have noticed, but interesting things have been happening in Washington with regards to bioenergy. In fact, it's been quite a busy few months of new project and policy developments. In December, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced \$10 million in research grants to spur production of bioenergy and biobased products with a heavy emphasis on sustainability. [Link](#)

**Scientists Awarded Grant to Probe Genetic Resistance for PRRS (National Hog Farmer 1/10).** A team of researchers at Iowa State University (ISU) has received a \$3 million grant to study genetic resistance to the costliest disease threatening the pork industry and transfer this technology to the industry. The translational genomics grant comes from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. The ISU researchers will spearhead a five-year collaborative effort that also includes researchers at Kansas State University, the University of Minnesota, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Roslin Institute in Scotland and industry collaborators. This project builds on previous and ongoing work by the same team of researchers. [Link](#)

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