



THE FAR-B NEWS

Dedicated to promoting the research and education programs of the
Henry A. Wallace Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, Beltsville, Maryland

Friends of Agricultural Research-Beltsville, Incorporated P.O. Box 1061, Beltsville, MD 20704-1061

JANUARY 2012

Editor: Hank Becker

President's Message

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

First I want to wish all a very healthy and prosperous new year. I know 2012 will be challenging.

At the January 10, 2012 meeting of the FAR-B Board of Directors we decided to continue the FAR-B Summer Internship program. In this program, FAR-B will provide funding in the amount of \$2,500 each for 4 summer interns awarded to a permanent scientist in each of the Institutes/Centers located at BARC. A committee composed of three scientists within each Institute/Center will evaluate the applications and select the applicant they believe will provide a student intern the best opportunity to interact and learn about agriculture research in a laboratory setting. It is our sincere hope that these internships will be provided meaningful research experiences for academically promising high school senior or college students so that they will consider science/agriculturally-related careers when they complete their formal education.

FAR-B co-sponsored numerous major events at BARC this past year. This included the support of the Beltsville Area Diversity Taskforce which included Beltsville Area Graduate Student Agricultural Research Symposium held February 10-11, 2011, and six meetings throughout the year. In addition, FAR-B handled the registration for the Plant Germplasm Operations Committee meeting held at BARC June 21-22, 2011; the BARC-UMD Fall Symposium - Trends in Agriculture—October 20, 2011; and the BARD Workshop "Microarrays and Next-Generation Sequencing for detection and Identification of Plant Viruses - November 17-19, 2011. For a complete list of activities FAR-B sponsored, visit our website: www.far-b.org.

FAR-B members will again be judging Middle School



Beltsville Academy student Samantha Finazzo and Aaron Barnes with FAR-B President Jim Anderson and Ms. Riffe at Aggie Poster Awards ceremony. Samantha and Aaron are the 2nd and 3rd place poster winners; Ryanna Naithram (the 1st place winner) was out sick that day.

Science Fair projects in Montgomery, and Prince George's Counties on March 17, 2012. Judging Middle School Science fairs has been one of our outreach activities for the past six years. There are lots of very bright boys and girls at these science fairs, and we believe our small cash awards and certificates helps keep them interested in science. If you are interested in helping out, please call or send me an email. We can use your help, and I guarantee you will enjoy discussing the projects of these young students.

The science trailer from the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation will be coming back to the Beltsville Academy under the sponsorship of FAR-B. FAR-B, along with the school and the PTA will sponsor the trailer this coming fall.

FAR-B will again be hosting the luncheon for the BARC Poster Day (April 19, 2012) and presenting awards to the top three posters presented by the High School Interns that are working in various BARC laboratories. This year the winner will be awarded the **Vernon G Pursel Student Scientific Achievement Award**.

In May, we hope to see you at the FAR-B Annual Meeting.

In closing, please remember that it's time to send in your membership dues, which are quite essential for FAR-B to continue our support of various activities at BARC. In 2010, FAR-B received the most contributions from CFC since FAR-B started to participate in the CFC. FAR-B thanks all federal employees who contributed so generously. There were 58 employees, including 35 anonymous and 2 who gave unknown amounts. **THANK YOU!**

Jim Anderson, President

You've got to pay your dues (for 2012) . . . If you want to get the news!

Area Director's Message

Best wishes to all for a productive and rewarding 2012. For the Beltsville Area, this past year could best be characterized as a year of change. This change was reflected in the turnover of personnel in the office, a hiring freeze that was put in place, reductions in travel, and a significant reduction in the size of the Area office. I think many of these changes, while difficult to deal with initially, will ultimately be beneficial.

Across ARS, change has also been prevalent. All of the Area offices have seen their staff size decrease and there is implementation of service centers to carry out administrative functions across the Areas. The budget of ARS was reduced approximately \$39M in FY12 and ten locations were closed out entirely and the staff at those locations will be offered a reassignment elsewhere in the agency. To accommodate and pay for these relocations, positions throughout the agency were frozen and an early out/buy out program was offered to employees. In the Beltsville Area, there were 35 employees, including 9 SY's, who took advantage of these retirement incentives. Beltsville was fortunate in that none of the cuts in program were from here. I think this is a reflection of the high regard for the research program being conducted here. However, we will pick up a number of the employees who were displaced from the ten locations that were closed out. I think this will work out well for us and we will welcome these new employees. They are a group of very talented, productive and hard working employees who have much to offer the Beltsville Area.

On the facilities side, we look forward to the completion of our major building projects in 2012 that were funded through the government stimulus program. These two projects, Building 306 on BARC-East and the Administration Building at the U.S. National Arboretum are ahead of schedule and look great. They will be definite assets to the Area.

I would like to think that the past year was an anomaly in terms of change and that we will be entering a period of stability. But, I know that is just

wishful thinking and that more changes are likely. I think that as we look to the future, we can be optimistic that no matter what changes might be in store for us. This past year has shown us that change can be beneficial and that we can rise up to meet the challenges that change brings.

I continue to be optimistic about our future and I am sure that with the continued support of FAR-B, we will have a great year ahead of us.

Joseph Spence, Area Director

Dianne Odland Retires from ARS Information Staff

Analyzing the chlorophyll/vitamin content of green veggies; developing food money management/nutrition education materials; evaluating consumers' home fridge/pantry contents during a cross-country food makeover tour; traveling to Hollywood to appear on the "Home Show;" conducting roach races at the FFA (Future Farmers of America) Career Show; and coordinating programs to help kids learn about agriculture. How varied can a career be? AND, how much fun are public servants allowed to have?

Such has been the rewarding career of Dianne Odland, first at the University of Maryland where she received a graduate degree in food science, then during nearly 40 years of Federal service starting at USDA's Consumer and Food Economics Institute and culminating at ARS' Information Staff from which she retired just a few weeks ago.

Dianne joined the Information Staff in 1994 where "outreach" became her forte--enthusiastically promoting ARS research, mainly through exhibiting at professional and educational conferences. AAAS or the National Cattlemen's Beef Association--whatever the conference--chemists, entomologists, dietitians, or science teachers--whatever the target audience--"hands-on" was always her approach to engage conferees and help them learn about the agency--Super Slurper demos, the unforgettable cockroach races, sunbutter tasting, and supermarket

-sized shopping carts stuffed full of ARS-developed technologies, for example.

Closer to FAR-B's heart, for nearly a decade, Dianne served as the Board's "Outreach Advisor" and helped coordinate a number of all-school science enrichment programs at Beltsville Academy, FAR-B's "adopted school." Science in your Shopping Cart, Making Healthy Food Choices, Exploring Animal Science, Exploring Plant Science, Exploring Environmental Science, and Chemistry in Everyday Life were some of the featured themes.

"Our goal was always to provide meaningful and memorable educational experiences for kids to help them connect agriculture to their everyday lives. The more interactive, the better, because that's how most kids learn best. Plus...it makes learning FUN! We always relied heavily on BARC staff to help bring their science alive. What an experience for the kids to meet "real" scientists and learn about what they do!"

A few years ago, Dianne initiated FAR-B's partnership with the Maryland Ag Education Foundation to arrange mobile science laboratory visits to the school. A retired science teacher presents an agriculturally relevant lesson and then supervises experiments using the scientific method. Last fall's program included a lesson on pizza ingredients for the younger children and an egg inspection activity for older students. The program always gets rave reviews from both the teachers and students and includes numerous lesson options, so it's on schedule again for next fall. Cost of the lab's week-long visit is shared by FAR-B, the school, and the school's PTA. FAR-B members, BARC staff, and PTA members help the teacher coordinate the lab experience. Dianne looks forward to helping with next fall's visit.

Dianne Odlan, Liaison, ARS Info Staff

Financial Report

In 2011, FAR-B had income of \$39,732 and expenses of \$27,693 for a net of \$12,039. The main sources of income were: dues (\$4,229), Combined Federal Campaign (\$9,234), donations (\$3,849),

interest and dividends (\$3,503), fund raising activities (\$1,350) and workshops and symposia (\$17,541 minus \$8,232 expenses to date). Donations were high this year because of the Vernon Pursel Memorial Fund. Income from dues was down 5% from 2010, but from CFC was up 50%. Fund raising activities were the annual poinsettia sale and the FAR-B Friendship Day in June. Expenditures by category were: research (42%), education (39%), outreach (12%), fund raising (2%) and administration (5%).

In 2011, FAR-B funded three high school student interns at BARC as well as again supporting the following activities: science enrichment program at the Beltsville Academy in October in conjunction with the Maryland Agricultural Education Association, BARC Poster Day, awards at middle school Science Fairs in Howard, Montgomery and Prince George's Counties and Beltsville Area programs organized by the Diversity Task Force, including the Student Discovery Garden. FAR-B assisted in organizing the Plant Germplasm Operations Committee meeting in May, the BARC-University of Maryland Symposium in October and the BARD workshop on use of microarrays for detecting plant viruses in November.

Richard Zimmerman, Treasurer

Fundraising

Friends of Agriculture – Beltsville (FAR-B) held its 6th poinsettia plant sale in Fall 2011 and again our plants were purchased from Homestead Gardens. Notices were sent out to all FAR-B members and to Beltsville Agricultural Center (BARC) employees in September and October for the poinsettias. Pick-up was held at BARC-West Building 011A on Tuesday, December 13, 2011. The cost of each poinsettia was \$14.00 and 64 plants were sold. The money collected from the poinsettias has gone into a FAR-B fund to support BARC scientists. Many thanks to all of you who supported the plant sale. We hope to do this again next year and welcome any thoughts you may have about this event. We also welcome any suggestions for other fundraising events.

Freddi Hammerschlag, Fundraising Chair



Beltsville Academy Hosts Maryland Agriculture Mobile Science Lab

The Beltsville Academy, with underlying financial and hands-on voluntary help from FAR-B and the school's Parent Teachers Association, hosted a week-long visit by the Agricultural Products Mobile Science Lab, from October 24 to 28. Each day, students visited the lab to complete hands-on scientific investigations related to the vital role agriculture plays in their daily lives. To assure linked educational value, each investigation is carefully matched to the Maryland Voluntary State Curriculum. Each investigation takes 30-to-40-minutes per class to complete. Five to six classes can visit the lab during the course of the school day.

Before the week is over, every class—kindergarten through grade five—will visit the lab. Inside, students will meet their Lab Instructor—former Prince George's County special education teacher Carolyn Menne.

Mrs. Menne will describe the scientific



Beltsville Academy kindergarteners check out images of ripening corn, scrumptious-looking pepperoni pizza, and more as they prepare to enter the mobile science lab.

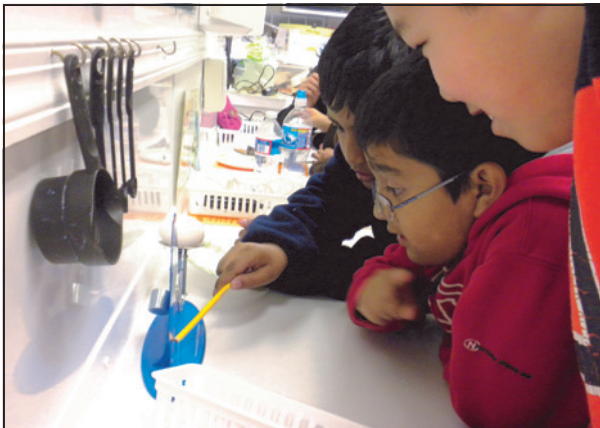
method, illustrating core principles with examples of hypothesis, procedures, observations, and conclusion drawing. She will talk students through the agricultural sources of pizza ingredients, or how to grade and candle an egg.

Jim Butcher,
Community Outreach





These Beltsville Academy elementary students (Grades 3–5) take part in an “Eggciting Eggs” activity at the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation’s Ag Products Mobile Science Lab.



Students act as egg inspectors after they have learned how to identify and label the parts of an egg. In these photos, students are candling, weighing and measuring eggs and inspecting them for freshness.



IN MEMORIAM

Joseph J. Higgins

Joseph J. Higgins of Rockville, MD died on Thursday, January 12, 2012. Joe was in the unit at BARC that did plant exploration and then later he was in the unit that handled plant patents when it was located at NAL. Joe was a veteran of World War II. He was a photographer in the Navy, including aerial photographer. He attended Paint Branch Unitarian Church.

Born in Washington, DC on Aug. 3, 1924, he is the father of Jay Stephen Higgins of Englewood, FL, Jenny Mason of Rocklin, CA, Jody Higgins of Frederick, MD and Louise Singer of Williamsburg, VA. Dr. Higgins is also survived by his eight grandchildren and by his longtime loving companion, Diane Lewis. Service will take place at Arlington National Cemetery at a later date.

Wendell H. Headley

Wendell Headley died on January 20. During his ARS career, he managed Range 2 greenhouses at BARC during the 1970's and 1980's. He retired from ARS around 1988. Wendell is survived by his wife Trudy of 58 years who worked at the ARS RPES office and his son Alan Headley and daughter Kara Kehrer. He was buried on January 25 at Baldwin Memorial Methodist Church Cemetery, Millersville, MD.

Robert Perdue

Robert E. Perdue Jr. 86, a retired ARS botanist who helped conduct research into the use of cancer-treating medicines died July 20 at Suburban Hospital in Bethesda after a stroke.

Jim Perdue moved to the Washington area in the early 1950s and worked for the U.S. Geological Survey where he helped map vegetation in China, India and Thailand.

He joined USDA in 1957 to work for ARS in Beltsville. In 1960, he worked in cooperation with the National Cancer Institute to help procure plant samples to be tested for use in anti-cancer drugs.

After retiring from ARS in 1989, he started his own company that helped develop plant crops in Latin America. Beginning in 2006, he served as a consultant to HeteroGeneity—a private firm that promotes the use of plants in foods and pharmaceuticals.

Robert was a Norfolk, VA native and a 1949 botany graduate of the University of Maryland. He received his master's degree in 1951 and a doctorate in 1957--both in botany—from Harvard University.

He served as an officer in the U.S. Army's 101st Airborne Division during World War II. He was shot in the knee during combat and later suffered a shrapnel wound from a land mine in Germany. His military decorations included the Bronze Star Medal and two Purple Hearts.

In 2010, he self-published a book on the Office of Strategic Services, the wartime forerunner of the CIA and its WWII operations in Greece.

His first marriage to Gloria Pugh ended in divorce. Survivors include his wife of 35 years, Georgia Persinos Bergstrom Perdue of North Bethesda; three children from his first marriage—Robert E. Perdue III of Falling Waters, WV, Susan Sherwin of Alfine, UT, and Holly Boyle of Church Hill, MD; 10 grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

Jim Elgin

James Hansford Elgin, Jr. died on Tuesday, December 13, 2011 on his family farm in Rocky Ridge, MD. He dealt with Alzheimer's for many years following his retirement. Jim will be cremated and then buried in the family plot in Woolwine, VA by the Methodist church his grandfather built. Additional details will be available after the holidays.

Jim received his BS and MS from the University of Maryland in College Park, MD. Beginning in 1961, Jim worked part-time on alfalfa research at the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center while a student. Jim continued his research on alfalfa at Penn State University where he received his Ph. D in 1969. He then move across the country and began his professional career with the USDA-ARS at

Prosser, WA conducting research on stem nematode resistance of alfalfa. He moved back to Beltsville in 1974 where he became the alfalfa breeder in the Field Crops Lab. In 1981 he was selected as the Research Leader for the Germplasm Quality and Enhancement Laboratory and in 1986 he became the first Institute Director for Plant Sciences Institute at BARC. Jim became the National Program Leader for Forage and Range Research in 1987 and served in that capacity until his retirement from the USDA-ARS in 1998. Following his retirement he served as the Executive Vice President for the Association of Official Seed Certifying Agencies Advisory Committee for 3 years.

Jim had published 145 research publications in the area of alfalfa genetics, breeding, pathology, and entomology and was extremely knowledgeable of a wide spectrum of forage species. He received major awards from his peers as a Fellow of the Crop Science Society of America, The American Society of Agronomy and an Honorary Member of the North American Alfalfa Improvement Conference. After his retirement he settled into a new home which he built for his wife, Margaret (Peggy) Heflin, and himself on his family farm in Rocky Ridge, MD. Jim will be truly missed as he was always the eternal optimist seeing the good in all the people he met.

Wilda H. Martinez

Wilda H. Martinez passed away at her home in Abita Springs, LA, on Sunday, July 24, 2011. She will be greatly missed by her many friends, colleagues, coworkers, as well as agricultural producers and processors, representatives of commodity organizations, human nutritional professionals, university faculty, and administrators.

Mrs. Martinez received her BA in Chemistry from the Newcomb College, Tulane University in New Orleans, LA, in 1950 and continued her education with advanced studies at both Tulane and Iowa State University and her thirst for scientific knowledge through on-the-job opportunities.

Wilda served ARS without interruption since 1954 until her retirement in the November

2007. Over half a century distinguished career with the Federal Government brought considerable recognition to her and ARS. As a research scientist at the Southern Regional Research Center in New Orleans, she used basic tools in chemistry and biochemistry to assess the safety and utility of cottonseed protein products to find alternative uses of cotton byproducts. In 1975, she joined the Office of National Programs (ONP) as a National Program Leader for Marketing and Processing of Field Crops—the first woman to serve on that staff—and subsequently she advanced to the position of Associate Deputy Administrator for Agriproducts and Human Nutrition in 1992. She was a visionary leader and strong advocate of both basic and applied research and possessed a keen sense of the role of scientific research in solving day-to-day problems in agriculture. While in the ONP she was a strong advocate for food quality and safety—like pathogen and mycotoxin—research, and human and animal nutrition—phytase and cut fruit research. Her leadership in these areas facilitated ARS finding concrete solutions to daily problems affecting ARS customers and stakeholders. She championed large scale effort to limit the aflatoxin contamination of Arizona cotton production. The other example of Mrs. Martinez visionary leadership was her contribution to assembling an interdepartmental collaborative research team charged with developing the *Tilletia controversa* Kuhn (TCK) Pest Risk Assessment Model. The development and then acceptance of this model by the People's Republic of China, Mexico, Brazil and India has been crucial to eliminating an embargo of U.S. wheat imports by these countries.

In 1997, Mrs. Martinez moved to Philadelphia, PA, first as the Acting and since 1998 as the Director for the North Atlantic Area—a position she held until her retirement in November 2007. As the NAA Director, she led a multidisciplinary team, organized into 21 Research Management Units and located in 12 States from Maine to West Virginia. Wilda placed an extremely strong emphasis on refocusing programs based on customer needs and insisting that these projects provide practical solutions to their problems. She was instrumental in bringing several programs to national and inter-

national recognition with the USDA Robert H. Holey Center for Agriculture and Health in Ithaca, NY, and the Genomics Laboratory in the Jean Myer USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging in Boston, MA, serving as prime examples. Also, she oversaw the expansion of research that included three new programs: the National Center for Cool and Cool Water Aquaculture in Leetown, WV; the National Cold Water Marine Aquaculture Center in Orono, ME; and the Grape Genetics Research Unit in Geneva, NY.

During her career, Mrs. Martinez has been recognized as a leader, a team member, and an outstanding mentor for new scientists and a strong advocate for the training of our future leaders. She was respected and admired both nationally and internationally by her peers and colleagues. Her achievements are many and substantiated by the numerous awards she received: the USDA Superior Award in 1972 and 1982; the Federal Woman of the Year Award in 1975; two Presidential Rank Meritorious Awards in 1997 and 2005; recognitions from the National Association of Wheat Growers Foundation for Outstanding Contributions to the Expansion of Wheat Utilization in 1989; recognition from the American Bakers Association, National Association for Wheat Growers and Millers National Federation for her contribution to wheat, flour and end products quality research; USDA Group Honor Award for Excellence, *Tilletia controversa* Kuhn Pest Risk Assessment Task Force; and others. She was elected a Fellow, American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1987.

Wilda was very demanding of herself and worked tirelessly with great enthusiasm and dedication. She also was demanding of those who worked with her, but she was very fair. She was an avid reader and had broad interests that in addition to science included literature, music, arts, and history. She constantly acquired new knowledge and skills that allowed her to grasp and understand new and emerging issues in science. Most of all, however, she was a warm, kindhearted individual whose only expectation, also for herself, was that we all continue to do the very best work that makes ARS proud. She will be greatly missed.

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First Class

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