

NIFA in the News – Week of July 9, 2012

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In the News

Local farmers lead Beginning Farmers Training Course (Madison Daily Leader, 7/9) Farm Beginnings is a farmer-led training and support program that provides participants the opportunity to learn first-hand about low-cost, sustainable methods of farming and the tools to successfully launch a profitable farm enterprise. Farm Beginnings is an established curriculum developed Minnesota-based Land Stewardship Project. The project is supported by the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture. [Link](#)

Keeping farm in family requires strategy (USA Today, 7/10) According to the Department of Agriculture, family farms account for about 98% of all farms in the [USA](#) and for 85% of the nation's total agricultural output. About 70% of the nation's farmland will change hands in the next two decades, and recent surveys show that about 89% of farmers don't have a farm-transfer plan, according to the [USDA](#). [Link](#)

Local trio wins first place at 4-H film festival (Jamestown Sun, 7/11) Three local 4-H members look to inform audiences about the ethics of fair exhibits through a film they have produced for the upcoming North Dakota State Fair's 4-H film festival. 4-H is a youth organization administered by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Agricultural to more than 6.5 million young people nationwide in an effort to promote leadership, citizenship and life skills, according to its website. [Link](#)

USDA/NIFA Director Makes Visiting UNH a Priority (UNH Campus Journal, 7/11) COLSA hosted Sonny Ramaswamy, director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), at a town hall-style meeting at UNH's Woodman Horticultural Farm Tuesday. Ramaswamy's trip to UNH marks his second visit to a land-grant college since his appointment as director of NIFA by the White House eight weeks ago. In attendance were many of COLSA's faculty, students, and staff, and members of the public, including Commissioner of Agriculture, Lorraine Merrill; State Senator Amanda Merrill; and Director of the New Hampshire Farm Bureau, Rob Johnson. [Link](#)

Food science deserves a place at the table (Nature, 7/12) Although it typically commands less attention than many areas of government-funded research, agricultural science accounts for roughly \$2 billion of this year's US federal budget. A key component of this spending is the \$705 million allocated to the US National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) where Sonny Ramaswamy was sworn in as director on 7 May. [Link](#)

Holistic Management International, (HMI) Awarded \$537,101 Grant to Train Beginning Women Farmers (Heartland News, 7/12) HMI is being awarded a grant based upon the success of their Beginning Farmers & Ranchers: Women in the Northeast program. The USDA NIFA BFRD Program is awarding the grant to continue HMI's work in the Northeast and expand the program to Austin, Texas. [Link](#)

Staring down the horns of budget cuts (Science, 7/13) Sonny Ramaswamy, the new director of the \$1.2 billion National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), the U.S. Department of Agriculture's center for extramural research funding, says he hopes to raise the profile—and the budget—of agricultural research. But Ramaswamy, a charismatic entomologist who started in May, faces a tough fiscal environment. “Everybody's ox is going to be gored,” he says, but adds that: “I'm cautiously optimistic that we're going to come out well.” [Link](#)
