



# 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**

JUNE 2010

Editor: Hank Becker

## President's Message

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

On May 13 the 25<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of Friends of Agricultural Research – Beltsville was held in the Conference Room of Building 005, BARC-West. The keynote speaker this year was Dr. Cheng-I Wei, Dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Maryland.

About 40 members and guests were in attendance as Dean Wei discussed his views on various challenges and opportunities that the University, BARC, and agriculture in general faces in the years ahead. Some of the major challenges Dean Wei discussed were: potential food shortages and world hunger due to population growth, providing a safe, secure, more nutritious food supply, dealing with water quality and quantity issues in the face of climate change, and is-

ues regarding biotechnology and biofuels as affecting agricultural production and uses of renewable natural resources.

It is clear that Dean Wei's researchers at the university face the same funding issues as the scientists here at BARC do in conducting research to meet some of these challenges. He pointed out that many of these challenges may best be met by increased cooperation between the university and BARC scientists. While the university and BARC have had numerous cooperative endeavors in the dairy, agronomy, horticulture, and biotechnology research in the past, Dean Wei indicated there is considerable room for more joint research efforts in the future.

Following a lively question and answer session between Dean Wei and the audience, Dr. Tom Sexton provided a brief update on current issues facing BARC, which will appear below in this newsletter.

## BARC Friendship Day Gathering Set for July 17

After a successful poinsettia plant sale in December 2009, plans to raise funds for FAR-B include a second FAR-B/ BARC Friendship Day gathering at the home of BARC retiree, Freddi Hammerschlag on Saturday, July 17, 2010 from 1-5 p.m. The cost for adults is \$12 per person and children under 18 are free. All proceeds will support the 2010 BARC Research Programs.

Again, this event not only aims to raise funds but also to promote stronger ties between BARC employees and FAR-B members. You can download the flyer and send a check by

mail or pay by credit card on line ([www.far-b.org/friendshipday.html](http://www.far-b.org/friendshipday.html)). Note: this year, in lieu of attending Friendship Day, you can make a donation to FAR-B.

FAR-B will also sponsor another poinsettia sale in December with notices going out in August or September.

Hope you will support FAR-B by attending Friendship Day and/or by purchasing poinsettias! Many thanks in advance for your support and thanks to all of you who have supported us in the past!

**Freddi Hammerschlag, Fundraising Chair**

**Friends of Agricultural Research-Beltsville, Incorporated**

It was my pleasure to begin the business portion of the meeting by presenting the FAR-B Distinguished Service Award to Dr. Phil Kearney. Phil is a Charter Member of FAR-B and had an illustrious 32-year research career at BARC as a Research Chemist at the bench, Research Leader of the Pesticide Degradation Lab, and Director of the Natural Resources Institute before retiring from ARS and serving as the Associate Director of the Maryland Water Resources Research Center at the University of Maryland for an additional 15 years. Phil has made immense contributions to FAR-B serving as President from 1996 to 1998, Vice-President from 1999 to 2002, and Chairman of our CFC Committee from 2000 until this past February. Phil's sterling efforts on the CFC Committee have brought FAR-B about \$50,000 in donations during the past 10 years.

During the remainder of the meeting I gave a Power Point presentation illustrating the various events that FAR-B sponsored during the past year, most of which have been covered in either this newsletter or the January issue, and can be seen at [www.far-b.org/Events.html](http://www.far-b.org/Events.html).

Late winter and spring are a busy time of year for FAR-B activities. In February and March a few of our faithful members and volunteers served as FAR-B judges at area Science Fairs held in Howard, Montgomery, and Prince George's County. This has been one of FAR-B's outreach activities for the past five years. This year FAR-B awarded \$10, \$20, and \$30 gift certificates to 30 Middle School students for their superior posters. Each year, one or two of the student awardees send FAR-B a note to thank us for their award. This year we received the following email from one of FAR-B's first place awardees at the Prince George's Area Science Fair that I think you will enjoy reading:

*Dear Friends of Agricultural Research - Beltsville,*

*Thank you very much for the \$30 Target gift card for my third place finish in the Environmental Analysis category at the Prince George's Area Science Fair. My project was about nitrogen vs. phosphorus in various bodies of water in the Anacostia River watershed and the effect of rainfall.*

*I am an 8th grader at Hyattsville Middle School and science is one of my favorite subjects. My mom did her lab work at your site for her master's degree in horticulture, and we drove through your beautiful fields and woods on Saturday on the way back from an orchestra competition in the Baltimore area. I really enjoyed seeing other students' projects at the science fair open house and I noticed some students did their research in your facilities.*

*Area science fair was a great experience for me - I have been doing science fair projects since I was a 4th grader at University Park Elementary School but this is the first year my project went to the area level.*

*Sincerely,  
Parker Krueger*



**Dr. Cheng-I Wei, Dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Maryland.**

While Parker evidently received a third place award from the category judges, our FAR-B judge, Jim Smith, gave him a first place award. Based on Parker's letter, I think Jim picked a real "winner"!

On March 18, I had the privilege of submitting FAR-B's annual testimony to the U.S. house and Senate Subcommittees on Agriculture, Rural Development,

Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations. We are once again greatly indebted to Jim Butcher for doing the heavy lifting in composing our testimony. This year's testimony requested an increase of \$13 million for the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, which was in line with President Obama's 2011 budget submission. I invite you to read the complete text of the testimony FAR-B submitted on the web at [www.far-b.org/Testimony.html](http://www.far-b.org/Testimony.html).

In closing, if you haven't already done so, please send in your membership dues. Also, don't forget to join us at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual FAR-B/BARC Friendship Day on July 17, 2010.

*Vernon Pursel, President*

## **Area Director's Message**

This is turning out to be a great year for the Beltsville Area!

Our Centennial activities kicked off with a visit by USDA Secretary Vilsack, Acting Undersecretary Jahn and Congressman Steny Hoyer. They met with a number of scientists in their labs and met with a packed house in our auditorium to address the employees. It is clear that there is support for agricultural research and specifically the work being conducted in the Beltsville Area. But as was pointed out, the economy and the pressures being put on discretionary spending will not go away anytime soon. Although the administration's FY2011 budget request is very good for the Beltsville Area, it remains to be seen what our actual appropriation will be.

Everyone at Beltsville is excited about our upcoming Public Field Day on June 5th. This will be our biggest field day ever and we are sure it will be our best. The much needed work on the clock tower, which has come to symbolize the Center, has been completed and it looks great. For this field day we will put our best foot forward and highlight the outstanding work that we do and the tremendous return on investment to the public.

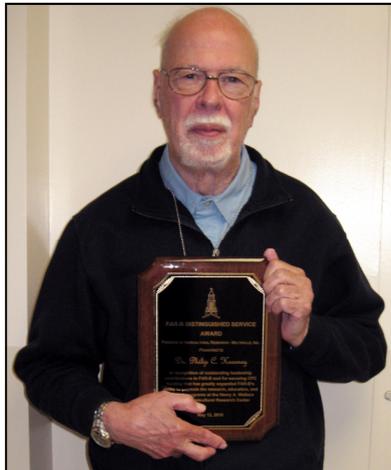
It is also with great pleasure that we recently learned of the election of one of our scientists to the most prestigious National Academy of Sciences. Dr. Jitender P. Dubey, known to many of us as JP,

recently received this much deserved recognition. This is a rare honor that is most unusual for a parasitologist and for an agricultural researcher. When we add Dr. Dubey to the list of Beltsville scientists who have achieved such recognition, his election to the Academy serves as an inspiration to all of us in the Beltsville Area.

Lastly, I am pleased to report that as we prepare our FY2011 ARMP's packages, we can see that the cost saving measures we have made in the Beltsville Area continue to be successful. For the coming year, we have reduced indirect research costs by well over one million dollars. Significantly, these savings have not come at the expense of a reduction in services. In addition, we have been able to establish a program for improving the appearance of the grounds and buildings at BARC and to re-establish a much needed preventative maintenance program.

As always, I want to thank FAR-B and its members for their ever present support of BARC. That support really does make a difference to help make BARC the outstanding world-class leader in agricultural research that it is.

*Joseph Spence, Area Director*



**FAR-B Distinguished Service Awardee Dr. Phil Kearney.**

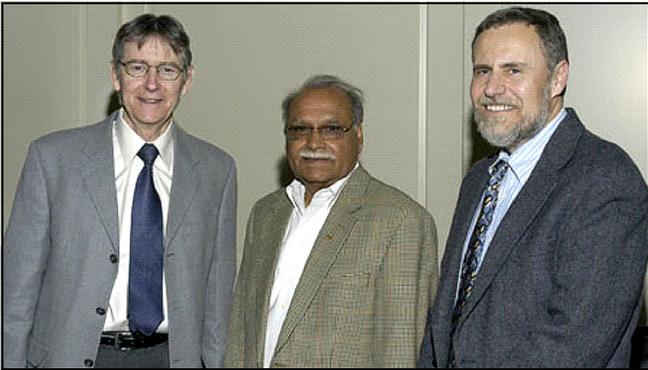
## **Financial Report**

The financial condition of FAR-B continues to be good. Major expenditures so far this year have been in support of the Beltsville Poster Day in April and middle school Science Fairs in Howard, Montgomery and Prince George's Counties. Again this year, the Science Enrichment Program at Beltsville Academy will be one of the major programs supported, although the timing has moved this to the fall rather than the spring. FAR-B will also be contributing support to the new Demonstration Garden between buildings B-006 and B-007

and other BARC Centennial activities.

Through the end of April, income from dues is slightly lower so far than in 2009. Similarly, support through the Combined Federal Campaign, FAR-B's single largest source of income, is lower than last years as is the interest earned on FAR-B's savings accounts. Nevertheless, FAR-B should have sufficient income to support all programs planned for this year

**Richard Zimmerman, Treasurer**



**Robert Davis, Jitender Dubey and BARC Director Joseph Spence. (Left to Right)**

## **Dr. Dubey Elected to National Academy of Sciences**

Dr. Jitender P. Dubey, Microbiologist in the Animal Parasitic Diseases Laboratory, has been elected to membership in the National Academy of Sciences in recognition of his highly productive career and outstanding contributions to the mission of ARS. He has achieved great international recognition from his peers in agriculture, veterinary medicine and public health. He is recognized for contributions to the control and biology of three major parasitic diseases of livestock and humans (toxoplasmosis, neosporosis, and equine protozoal myeloencephalitis, EPM) caused by single-celled parasites, *Toxoplasma gondii*, *Neospora caninum*, and *Sarcocystis neurona*, respectively. There are no effective vaccines or drugs to eliminate these parasites in tissues. Control measures for these diseases

and/or prevention of transmission to humans are based on farm management practices and hygienic measures based largely on the research that Dr. Dubey has published.

Dr. Dubey has received awards from many international organizations, including the most highly cited authors in Animal Sciences discipline worldwide for the decade that ended in 2001 by Current Contents, Institute of Scientific Information, U.K. Dr. Dubey has more than 1200 peer reviewed publication--many of them in high impact journals (*Science, Nature, Proceedings National Academy of Sciences*) and has collaborated with more than 400 scientists worldwide.

**Vernon Pursel, President**

## **BARC Poster Day**

FAR-B once again played a major role in supporting the BARC Poster Day that was held on Wednesday, April 21, 2010, at the ARS National Visitors Center. FAR-B presented cash awards to the top three student intern posters, as well as, providing refreshments and lunch for all participants and tent-rental to accommodate poster displays.

This year a total of 29 student interns were entered in the poster competition and 43 Post-doctoral Research Associates, Visiting Scientists, and new Research Scientists presented posters.

Winners of this year's student intern poster competition were: First Prize (\$300) - Ankur Patel, Eleanor Roosevelt High School, Mentor: Pat Millner, Environmental Microbial and Food Safety Laboratory, Effects of soil solarization on a non-toxicogenic *Escherichia coli O157:H7 strain*; Second Prize (\$200) - Jasmine Harper-Davis, Eleanor Roosevelt High School, Mentor: Brian Bowker, Food Quality Laboratory, Measurement of purge protein composition as an indicator of beef tenderness; Third Prize (\$100) - Melanie Dennis, Eleanor Roosevelt High School, Mentor: Janet Slovin, Genetic Improve-

ments of Fruits and Vegetables Laboratory, The small heat shock protein gene families in *Fragaria vesca*.



Left to right: Melanie Dennis, Jasmine Harper-Davis, and Ankur Patel.

## **FAR-B COMMUNITY OUTREACH SLURP!!!**

Ever see a toddler in a disposable diaper sagging near the ground and wondered in wide-eyed amazement how much liquid those things can actually hold?

Well on April 20 and 22, thanks to FAR-B outreach gurus Allan Stoner and Jim Anderson, eight 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade science classes at Beltsville Academy (formerly Beltsville Elementary School) found out—the scientific way!

From hypothesis to conclusion... students had fun learning about the amazing properties of poly-absorbents. Back in the 1970's ARS scientists married cornstarch to a synthetic chemical and created a product so thirsty, it could absorb hundreds of times its own weight in water. Someone called it "Super Slurper," and the name stuck. The absorbent compound, which can slurp up to 2,000 times its weight in water, is used in a variety of products—fuel filters, baby powders, and wound dressings, for example. Compounds very much like it are now used in

disposable diapers.

As part of FAR-B's ongoing Science Enrichment Program at Beltsville Academy, the diaper experiment was included in a Science in Your Shopping Cart lesson to show one of the many ways that agricultural science contributes to everyday life. A mini-shopping cart containing a wide variety of ARS-produced technologies served as the basis for discussions and for a follow-up quiz. At the end of each class a copy of the *ARS Science in Your Shopping Cart* was sent home with each student.

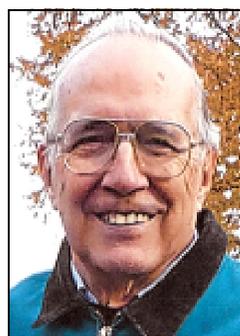
Al and Jim have been actively involved in the Science Enrichment Program for several years now, enjoy interacting with students, and agree that the highest reward in outreach is to see kids actively engaged in hands-on activities that help them learn real-life lessons.

The answer you're waiting to hear: Over 2 pounds!

*Jim Butcher, BARC Community Outreach*

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## **IN MEMORIAM**



### **Paul A. Putnam**

Dr. Paul Adin Putnam, 79, passed away unexpectedly on Saturday evening, May 8, 2010, at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center. He was born on July 12, 1930, in Springfield, Vt., the son of Beatrice (Baldwin) and Horace Putnam. He graduated from Springfield High School and was an All-State player on the 1947 State Championship Football Team. Always an honors student, he received academic scholarships to the University of Vermont for his B.S., Washington State University for his M.S. and Cornell University for his Ph.D. Paul Putnam was a distinguished agricultural scientist and had numerous publications while working

for the USDA for 37 years. He was a natural leader who became the Area Director of the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center in Maryland, when it was the world's largest agricultural research center. After his service at Beltsville, Paul served as the Area Director of the Midwest Area in Ames, Iowa in the mid 1980s and as the Area Director the Mid South Area in Stoneville, Mississippi in the early 1990s. He was a member of numerous scientific societies and was particularly active in the American Society of Animal Science. In recognition of his leadership, he was appointed to the U.S. Senior Executive Service, representing our nation's top civilian leaders.

While in Ithaca, New York, he met and married the love of his life, Elsie Ramseyer of Oklahoma, and they celebrated 54 years together. He and Elsie raised a family that includes three daughters, Pamela Crowley of Beavercreek, Ohio; Penelope Rupp of Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania; Paula Cornelius of York, Pennsylvania, and one son, Tyler Putnam of Fincastle, Virginia. He had nine grandchildren.,

Paul's commitment to his hometown of Springfield was the focus of his "second career." He served the town as a selectman and chair of the Select Board and contributed on numerous committees and town boards, including Rotary International, Springfield on the Move, and the Edgar May Health and Recreation Center.

Paul was a very positive, engaging man and his warm humor and goodwill were a force of great good for all those who knew him. He will be remembered as a man of many talents and interests, an excellent artist, musician, writer and world traveler. Paul was a true Vermont farmer, and was passionate about working in the fields and woods of his family's 150-year-old dairy farm. In fact, he was active on his farm up until the day of his hospital admission. He brought his science and academic skills to the land and had written several books about Vermont farm life.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Springfield United Methodist Church, 10 Valley St., Springfield, VT 05156; or the Edgar May Health and Recreation Center, 140 Clinton St., Springfield, VT 05156.

## **John Landis Hyde**

John ("Jack") L. Hyde, 85, died on Monday, April 19, 2010 at the Cayuga Medical Center. Dr. Hyde is survived by his son, John Hyde Campbell of Livermore, CA and two granddaughters, Stephanie Campbell-Painter of Sacramento, CA and Erica Campbell of La Jolla, CA, and one great-granddaughter.

Dr. Hyde was born as "Jack Cunningham" on May 17, 1924 in Greensboro, NC. His birth parents were Jack and Rita Cunningham. The family suffered severe set-backs during the great depression and at age 9 Jack was left at a local orphanage. He was adopted at age 11 by Rev. Albert and Erva Hyde during which time his name was changed to Hyde.

The Hydys eventually came to Trumansburg, NY where Jack attended Trumansburg Central School for several years. Beginning his sophomore year, he received a basketball scholarship and attended New Hampshire Preparatory School.

Jack joined the US Navy in 1942 and served as a Pharmacist's mate during World War II caring for wounded and sick soldiers until his discharge in 1945. He attended Cornell University under the GI Bill and received his Bachelor of Arts in 1949, Doctor of Veterinary Medicine in 1954, and Master of Science in 1959.

After receiving his DVM, Jack worked at a small animal clinic in New Jersey. In 1959, he joined the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine as an instructor in large animal veterinary medicine and did research for several years.

## ***Friends of Agricultural Research-Beltsville, Incorporated***

In 1961, he joined the ARS scientific staff at the Plum Island Animal Disease Center located off the North Fork of Long Island. He eventually rose to be Assistant Director and for 12 years served as the Chief Biological Safety Officer. His research in biological safety cemented his reputation as an expert in containment of both foreign and domestic animal diseases, a skill for which he was internationally recognized.

In 1975, Jack moved to the USDA Agriculture Research Center in Washington D.C. where he directed programs on foreign animal disease containment in Europe, Africa, China and Korea. He later joined USDA, APHIS in charge of International Programs in Veterinary Services. Jack was totally dedicated to the control and eradication of animal diseases and protecting U.S. livestock.

He retired from the USDA in 1985 but remained active as an expert in animal disease containment until his death. During his retirement, Jack worked extensively in Korea. He remained active in veterinary medicine as a member of the New York State Veterinary Medical Society and the Southern Tier Veterinary Medical Association for which, at one point, he served as president.

Although a dedicated professional, Jack loved good food, lively conversation, and a "couple of snorts" with his close friends. When telling his many yarns he always had a twinkle in his deep blue eyes and a devilish grin. Jack was also an avid outdoorsman during his younger years and hunted and fished many of the local areas. He passed his love of the outdoors and fly-fishing onto his son.

At his request, Jack will be cremated and his ashes scattered in a local wooded area where he spent some of his happiest moments as a young man. Also, he did not want a funeral service. However, being true to his Irish roots, he requested a celebration at a local restaurant/bar where all his friends could toast him a fair voyage and exchange yarns of his exploits (there were many).

The celebration will be held on the afternoon of Friday, June 11. Please contact the Perkins Funeral Home in Dryden at 607-844-8161 for further information. In lieu of flowers, the family requests any gifts in his memory be sent to the SPCA at 1640 Hanshaw Road, Ithaca, NY 14850 or Hospicare, Tompkins County, 172 East King Road, Ithaca, NY 14850. [www.perkinsfuneralhome.com](http://www.perkinsfuneralhome.com).

### **BARC Celebrates 100th Birthday on June 5th, Public Field Day**

“At BARC, We’ve Only Just Begun,” Beltsville Agricultural Research Center Director Joseph Spence writes in the Forum space of the April 2010 issue of *Agricultural Research Magazine*. “For an agricultural research facility that started out in 1910 with a single dairy barn, we’ve done pretty well over the years,” allows Spence in admirable understatement.

Actually, that comment might easily be recast to read something like this: “From its modest beginning, BARC became the world’s largest, most

diversified agricultural research complex. It became the nation’s flagship agricultural research center, an internationally acclaimed gold standard of agricultural research excellence.” The April *Agricultural Research Magazine* commemorates milestone BARC accomplishments of the past, salutes the present, and looks ahead to that which is to come. The magazine is on-line at: <http://ars.usda.gov/is/AR/>.

***Jim Butcher, BARC Community Outreach***

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## First Class

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