



Capital Notes

Washington State Council of Farmer Cooperatives * 9103 Chestnut Hill Lane SE * Olympia, WA 98513

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Leadership program seeking applicants

Spokane, Washington – The Washington Agriculture and Forestry Education Foundation is actively seeking qualified candidates for 30 fellowships in ClassXXIII of its leadership program according to David Roseleip, President. People involved in the agriculture, forestry, or fisheries industries are encouraged to apply. The final deadline for applicants is June 16, 2000.

Each year 30 people from throughout the state are selected to participate in the two-year leadership development program which serves to broaden skills, enrich experiences and increase knowledge. The mission of the program is to develop leaders for the natural resources industries, strengthening the industry, communities, and organizations in the process.

This is accomplished through attendance at 16 seminars over the course of a two year period. Fourteen three-day seminars focus on such topics as communications, economics, state government and health care, as well as other pertinent issues. The first year of the program features a ten-day visit to Washington D.C. to better understand the federal government process. During the second year, a three-week visit to selected foreign countries provides participants with exposure to governments, economic systems, cultures and practices that are important to international experience.

The Washington Agriculture and Forestry Education Foundation covers all costs of the program with exceptions of meals, in-state transportation and membership in the Foundation. Interested parties should write to the Washington Agriculture and Forestry Education Foundation: P.O. Box 13348, Spokane, WA 99213. They may also contact office by phone 509-926-9113, fax 509-926-6993, or request an application by e-mail to carey@agforestry.org.

President issues biotechnology proclamation

Following is a proclamation issued by President Clinton, relating to National Biotechnology Month, January 2000 - The Proclamation recognizes " ...the enormous potential that biotechnology holds for improving the quality of life here in the United States and around the world.

NATIONAL BIOTECHNOLOGY MONTH, 2000

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA A PROCLAMATION

As we stand at the dawn of a new century, we recognize the enormous potential that biotechnology holds for improving the quality of life here in the United States and around the world. These technologies, which draw on our understanding of the life sciences to develop products and solve problems, are progressing at an exponential rate and promise to make unprecedented contributions to public health and safety, a cleaner environment, and Economic prosperity.

Today, a third of all new medicines in development are based on biotechnology. Designed to attack the underlying cause of an illness, not just its symptoms, these medicines have tremendous potential to provide not only more effective treatments, but also cures. With improved understanding of cellular and genetic processes, scientists have opened exciting new avenues of research into treatments for devastating diseases-- like Parkinson's and Alzheimer's, diabetes, heart disease, AIDS, and cancer-- that affect millions of Americans. Biotechnology has also given us several new vaccines, including one for rotavirus, now being tested clinically. That could eradicate an illness responsible for the deaths of more than 800,000 infants and children each year.

The impact of biotechnology is far-reaching. Bioremediation technologies are cleaning our environment by removing toxic substances from contaminated soils and ground water. Agricultural biotechnology reduces our dependence on pesticides. Manufacturing processes based on biotechnology make it possible to produce paper and chemicals with less energy, less pollution, and less waste. Forensic technologies based on our growing knowledge of DNA help us exonerate the innocent and bring criminals to justice.

The biotechnology industry is also improving lives through its substantial economic impact. Biotechnology has stimulated the creation and growth of small businesses, generated new jobs, and encouraged agricultural and industrial innovation. The industry currently employs more than 150,000 people and invests nearly \$10 billion a year on research and development.

Recognizing the extraordinary promise and benefits of this enterprise, my Administration has pursued policies to foster biotechnology innovations as expeditiously and prudently as possible. We have supported steady increases in funding for basic scientific research at the National Institutes of Health and other science agencies; accelerated the process for approving new medicines to make them available as quickly and safely as possible; encouraged private-sector research investment and small business development through tax incentives and the Small Business Innovation Research program; promoted intellectual property protection and open international markets for biotechnology inventions and products; and developed public databases that enable scientists to coordinate their efforts in an enterprise that has become one of the world's finest examples of partnership among university-based researchers, government, and private industry.

Remarkable as its achievements have been, the biotechnology enterprise is still in its infancy. We will reap even greater benefits as long as we sustain the intellectual partnership and public confidence that have moved biotechnology forward thus far. We must strengthen our efforts to improve science education for all Americans and preserve and promote the freedom of scientific inquiry.

We must protect patients from the misuse or abuse of sensitive medical information and provide Federal regulatory agencies with sufficient resources to maintain sound, science-based review and regulation of biotechnology products. And we must strive to ensure that science-based regulatory programs worldwide promote public safety, earn public confidence, and guarantee fair and open international markets.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim January 2000 as National Biotechnology Month. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this nineteenth day of January, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Testing of farm worker drinking water reveals few pesticide problems

OLYMPIA - Inspections of water systems serving 10,000 farm workers and their families in 1999 revealed few instances of pesticide contamination, according to a report released Monday by the state Department of Health. Last summer and fall, department staff inspected and tested the water supplied by 150 public water systems serving 189 temporary farm worker facilities statewide. Only two water samples--one percent of the total--exceeded drinking water standards for pesticides. This is similar to water quality results from other public water systems statewide.

Secretary of Health Mary Selecky said last year's testing and inspections was the most extensive effort ever for a single category of water systems.

The effort was launched in response to a request last year by Gov. Gary Locke, who asked the department to evaluate whether current testing requirements--particularly for pesticides--are adequate to protect the health of temporary farm workers.

While the results of this extensive testing led Secretary Selecky to conclude that existing regulations are adequate to protect farm worker health, she said there is room for improvement in applying those regulations. While the testing found few instances of pesticide contamination, more than half of the systems inspected require some improvement to protect public health.

"The most common problems we found during the inspections were poorly constructed old wells that were in bad locations in the first place, and inadequately maintained, deteriorating drinking water facilities," Selecky said. "These conditions can allow bacteria and other contaminants to reach drinking water."

As anticipated, the testing showed many systems with elevated nitrate levels, which can cause a type of anemia in young children. In those instances, Selecky said, immediate steps were taken to protect public health, including requiring facility operators to provide bottled water and post warning signs on drinking water facilities.

The department has initiated enforcement efforts to make sure all problems are corrected before facilities are licensed this year.

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The Washington State Council of Farmer Cooperatives is a trade association representing agricultural cooperatives. The council's primary goals are to represent its members before the legislature and agencies of government and to provide cooperative education for its members.

Capital Notes is produced by the Council to inform its members about issues of interest to cooperatives.

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