



On the Bayou

DECEMBER 2018



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Message from the Director

Dr. Deepak Bhatnagar

The Holidays are an opportunity to relax and spend time with family and loved ones. It is a way to revitalize mind, body, heart and soul. It brings happiness and joy after finishing a year of hard work.

My best wishes to you and your family for a wonderful Holiday Season, and health and happiness in the New Year.

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Events and Observances

Native American Heritage Month

Submitted by: Kelley Williams

The NAHM committee held two events, a luncheon on November 15th and a film on Nov. 29th. Our first event featured two speakers from Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA, Garret Thomassie, Plant Management Specialist, and John Boatman, Conservationist. Their presentation was titled, “**Native Plant Research for Coastal Restoration and Efforts to Restore Culturally Significant Plants for Native American Tribes**”. The speakers brought several plants to donate to the event as door prizes. The committee included a Veteran’s Honor Ceremony where veterans were recognized and received a handmade gift as a symbol of gratitude for their service. All remaining pins were taken by Matt Hillyer and donated to the VA hospital. Participants enjoyed lunch catered by Sammy’s Restaurant and a delicious carrot cake.



Our second event featured the film, **RUMBLE: The Indians Who Rocked the World**. The documentary examined the contribution Native Americans made to American popular music and the overlooked influence of indigenous people on popular music culture. The film focused on music icons like Link Wray, Jimi Hendrix, Buffy Sainte-Marie, Taboo (The Black Eyed Peas), Charley Patton, Mildred Bailey, Jesse Ed Davis, Robbie Robertson, and Randy Castillo. The event was brown bag with the committee providing popcorn, oranges and hot apple cider.



Events and Observances (cont.)

Holiday Season

Submitted by: Suzi Brashear

The Employee Advisory Council hosted the **SRRC Tree Trimming** where we came together to decorate the Holiday Tree and have some hot chocolate and cookies.



The Center's **Holiday Party** was held on December 11th with the Employee Advisory Council hosting the gathering and providing the main courses and beautifully decorating the Bayou Conference Room. Thanks to everyone who brought their favorite side dish. And of course, there were plenty of desserts!



Seminar

Submitted by: Sophie Uchimiya

A seminar entitled, "Two-Dimensional Correlation Spectroscopy and Development of Bioplastics *Nodax™*" was presented by Dr. Isao Noda on Friday, November 30, 2018.

Dr. Noda is the Affiliated Professor, Department of Materials Science and Engineering, University of Delaware and Chief Science Officer/Senior Vice President of Innovation of Danimer Scientific. Dr. Noda is the world-renowned inventor of *Nodax™* PHA biopolymer bioplastics. By utilizing two-dimensional infrared correlation spectroscopy, Dr. Noda pioneered the development of a specific type of PHA known as medium-chain-length polyhydroxyalkanoates (mcl-PHA). 2D correlation spectroscopy provided a critical insight into a way to modify the molecular structure of PHA to make this class of biomaterials much more useful and inexpensive to become a viable replacement for conventional petroleum-based plastics. Dr. Noda's talk covered the earlier development of this exciting new bioplastics and subsequent fundamental scientific research effort carried out on PHAs using 2D correlation spectroscopy.



Science Laboratory Technology Internships: Partnership between Delgado and USDA

Submitted by: Jacqueline Nesbit

Faculty from Delgado Community College visited SRRC to give an informational seminar on their Science Laboratory Technician/Biotechnology program on Dec. 13. The students enrolled in the program are required to complete an internship in a chemistry- or biology-related laboratory to give them hands-on experience. Many SRRC scientists attended the seminar and showed interest in establishing a collaboration with Delgado in the education of young students who may be interested in pursuing careers in scientific disciplines. Our Center Director has been, and remains supportive of such a partnership.



Scientific Presentations and Meetings (cont.)

All Staff Meeting

The Center will have an All Staff Meeting on December 19th at 10:00 in the Bayou Conference Room. Please make an effort to attend.

Center Visitors

Joe Lipovsky, SEA Tech Transfer Coordinator visited SRRC on Friday, Nov 30th. Center scientists met with Mr. Lipovsky to discuss individual CRADAs and technology transfer issues.

Upcoming Research Planning Session

Submitted by: Mike Dowd

Following the Beltwide meeting in New Orleans (Jan 8-10), a Research Planning Session will be held for the cotton programs at the Center on Jan. 11, 2019.

In attendance will be three ARS National Program Leaders, a number of ARS administrators, the scientists from the Cotton Structure and Quality, Cotton Chemistry and Utilization, and Cotton Fiber Bioscience Research Units, representatives from Cotton, Inc., the National Cotton Council, the National Cotton Ginners Association as well as academic and industry leaders.

The program is being conducted to prepare for the upcoming National Program 306 OSQR review cycle.

Submitted by: Terri Von Hoven

Dec 6-7	International Conference on Material Science and Engineering	Las Vegas, NV
Dec 10-12	World Congress on Food and Nutrition	Dubai, UAE
Dec 23-24	<u>International Conference on Agricultural and Biological Science</u>	Miami, FL
De 27-28	<u>International Conference on Agriculture and Biotechnology</u>	Bangkok, Thailand

Submitted by: Shannon Beltz

Shelia Parker, our Area Safety & Occupational Health Manager, will be visiting SRRC on February 5-6, 2019. We will be sending out guidance for preparations sometime in January ☺

Submitted by: Shelia Parker

'Tis the Season to be Jolly – so why are so many of us unhappy during what is supposed to be the most wonderful time of the year? **In one word – STRESS!**

Don't let the holidays become something you dread. Instead, take steps to prevent the stress and depression that can descend during the holidays. Learn to recognize your holiday triggers, such as financial pressures or personal demands, so you can combat them before they lead to a meltdown. With a little planning and some positive thinking, you can find peace and joy during the holidays. Although you may miss loved ones who are no longer here, surround yourself with other friends and family during the holidays.

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available for **confidential** counseling. Reach out to them if necessary at **1 800 222 0364**.

Available EAP Benefits:

- Crisis Counselors 24/7 365 Days of the Year
- In-Person Counseling (6 sessions per issue per year)
- Free 1-hr Legal & Financial Consultation Per Issue Per Year (no work-related issues)
- Work-Life Balance Assistance

Website: www.FOH4you.com

Retirement

Jocelyn D. Mack, Human Resources Assistant retired at the end of November due to health reasons. Jocelyn has served for over 24 years and everyone here has benefitted from her service as the HR contact. We will have a farewell party for her in the new year.

Jocelyn wishes to thank all those who donated leave to help her through her difficult illness.



Submitted by: Janell Becker

Please Welcome Our New Employee

Keegan Callerame is on an L/A appointment, working with Dr. Isabel Lima. Keegan received his Bachelor of Science in Cell and Molecular Biology from Tulane University. He also studies Taekwondo, Han Mu Do, and karate.

2019 Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) Participant Limits and Catch-up Contribution Instructions

TSP Contribution Limits – Form TSP-1: <https://www.tsp.gov/PDF/formspubs/tsp-1.pdf>

The 2019 tax year (PP26-December 23, 2018 – PP25-December 21, 2019) contribution limit for TSP has increased to \$19,000.

- The biweekly payroll deduction for 26 pay periods to reach a maximum of \$19,000 is \$731. Once the employee's total contributions reach the contribution limit for the tax year of \$19,000, employee payroll deductions and agency matching contributions will automatically stop.

TSP Catch-up – Form TSP -1C: <https://www.tsp.gov/PDF/formspubs/tsp-1-c.pdf>

The 2019 tax year contribution limit for the TSP Catch-up will remain \$6,000.

- If you are, or will be age 50 or older during the 2019 calendar year, you may also contribute an additional \$6,000 to the TSP if you are already contributing the maximum amount of \$19,000 in regular TSP contributions.
- The biweekly payroll deduction for 26 pay periods to reach a maximum of \$6,000 is \$231 if you begin at the start of pay period 26 (December 23, 2018) and contribute for the entire 26 pay periods in tax year 2019.
- TSP Catch-up contributions automatically stop with the last salary check of the tax year and for 2018 that will be pay period 25 (December 9 – December 27, 2018). You **must** re-elect TSP Catch-up contributions each tax year if you wish to contribute the additional \$6,000.

How to Make Changes to TSP contributions

- Employees are encouraged to make electronic changes by using the “Self-Service” feature on the **Employee Personal Page (EPP)** found at: <https://www.nfc.usda.gov/EPPS>
- Employees who wish to submit paper elections should complete form [TSP - 1](#) for regular TSP contributions and form [TSP - 1C](#) for Catch-up contributions. The forms can also be found at: www.tsp.gov
- Submit your election form(s) before **December 19, 2018**, for the change to be effective at the beginning of tax year 2019 which starts with pay period 26 (December 23, 2018).
- **If you've already made elections for your 2019 TSP contributions via EPP and you want to make a change, please submit a hard copy form through your timekeeper or Administrative Officer. Timekeeper or AO should note: “Revised 2019 TSP Contributions” in the portal ticket.**
- Forms/changes received after December 19, 2018 will not be effective until **after** the beginning of the

2019 tax year and contribution amounts will need to be adjusted to ensure the maximum contribution.

Other changes to your TSP contributions may be made at any time throughout the year.

Additional information on TSP limits and catch-up contributions can be found at: <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/401k-contribution-limit-increases-to-19000-for-2019-ira-limit-increases-to-6000> ; [TSP Contribution Limits](#)

Contact: Employees who do not use the Employee Personal Page (EPP) should work with their timekeepers and Administrative Officers to submit TSP forms through the Customer Service Portal.

Combined Federal Campaign

Submitted by: **Suhad Wojkowski**

Tis the season of giving and the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) is a great way to support the organizations that touch our lives in direct and indirect ways. There are many ways charitable organizations touch our lives such as research on disease prevention and treatment, community improvement and capacity building, education, medical research, mental health and crisis intervention, or providing career retraining. The list goes on and on, and their meaningful work often goes unrecognized.

Please take the time to find a cause you are passionate about and decide to recognize the work through a contribution, at whatever level you think appropriate, if you haven't done so already.

The CFC campaign closes on **January 11th**, so if you plan to donate, please submit your pledges as soon as possible so they can start on pay period 1 of the coming year. All employees can now donate through the [CFC Donor Pledging System](https://cfcgiving.opm.gov/welcome) (<https://cfcgiving.opm.gov/welcome>).

Thank you for your support, and if you have any questions, please ask your keyworker or Suhad.

Suhad, CFC Coordinator

Keyworkers:

AO/DO Matt King

CSQ Mia Schexnayder

CFB Dawn Reed

FFS Stephanie Gross

CCU Crista Madison

FPSQ Shawndrika Reed

CU Kandan Sethumadhavan

Happy Holidays everyone!



Annual Clothing Drive

The Martin Luther King, Jr. & Day of Service Committee presents SRRC 8TH Annual Clothing Drive. We will be collecting items to donate to Ozanam Inn, a non-profit shelter and kitchen for the homeless in New Orleans.

Please consider donating men's, women's, and children's clean, unstained clothing items for this worthy cause. Blankets, purses, shoes, belts, etc. will also be accepted. Donations may be brought to the Administrative Office, where we will consolidate the clothing before delivery to Ozanam Inn in January. Donations will be accepted Now – January 11, 2019.

Thank you for your generosity.

New Orleans Holiday Events

Submitted by: Terri Von Hoven

11/23/18 - 01/01/19	Celebration in the Oaks	City Park, NOLA
11/23/18 - 12/30/18	Audubon Zoo Lights	New Orleans
11/25/18 - 12/30/18	Kenner Christmas Village	Loyola Av, Kenner
11/30/18 - 12/30/18	Christmas in the Park	Lafreniere Park, Metairie
11/30/18 - 12/26/18	Miracle on Fulton St	New Orleans
12/02/18 – 5 - 7pm	Chanukah and Menorah Lighting	Riverwalk, NOLA
12/01/18 – noon	Krewe of Jingle Parade	Downtown, NOLA
12/01/18 –12/31/18	Christmas New Orleans Style	Various NOLA locations
12/01/18 –5.30-8pm	Algiers Point Bonfire & Concert	Algiers Point, NOLA
12/01/18 –12/31/18	Reveillon Dinners	Various NOLA locations
12/06/18 - 12/09/18	LUNA Fête	Lafayette Square, NOLA
12/08/18 – Noon	Running of the Santas	Warehouse District, NOLA
12/14/18 - 12/16/18	Festival of the Bonfires	Lutcher
12/15/18 – 10am	Santa's North Pole Steam Train	Parade New Orleans East
12/15/18 – Noon	Jingle on the Boulevard	Parade New Orleans East
12/15/18 – Noon	Harahan Christmas Parade	Harahan
12/16/18 – Noon	Holiday Songbook	New Orleans Jazz Market, NOLA
12/22/18 - 12/31/18	NOLA ChristmasFest	Morial Convention Center
12/24/18 – dusk	Christmas Eve Bonfires on the Levee	Gramercy, LA



Recycle dates: December 20th



Recent SRRC Publications

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Submitted by: Suhad Wojkowski

Full text pdfs of SRRC publications are available in the Eprints database via “Library” link on the SRRC Intranet page: <http://nola.srrc.usda.gov:8000/srrcmenf.htm>

Click on the article’s title below to launch the pdf from Eprints.

Bonilla, Franklin, Chouljenko, Alexander, Reyes, Vondel, Bechtel, Peter J., King, Joan M. and Sathivel, Subramaniam (2018) [Impact of Chitosan Application Technique on Refrigerated Catfish Fillet Quality](#). LWT - Food Science and Technology, 90. pp. 277-282.

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Lasekan, Adeseye, Cao, Hanjuan, Maleki, Soheila J. and Nayak, Balunkeswar (2017) [Shrimp Tropomyosin Retains Antibody Reactivity after Exposure to Acidic Condition](#). Journal of the Science of Food and Agriculture, 97. pp. 3623-3630.

Liu, Meilan, Long, Hongxu, Li, Wengying, Shi, Mingwang, Cao, Heping, Zhang, Lin and Tan, Xiaofeng (2019) [Boosting C16 Fatty Acid Biosynthesis of Escherichia coli, Yeast and Tobacco by Tung Tree \(Vernicia Fordii Hemsl.\) Beta-Hydroxyacyl-Acyl Carrier Protein Dehydratase Gene](#). Industrial Crops and Products, 127. pp. 46-54.

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Mattison, Christopher P., Cavalcante, Jefferson M., Gallao, Maria I. and De Brito, Edy S. (2018) [Effects of Industrial Cashew Nut Processing on Anacardic Acid Content and Allergen Recognition by IgE](#). Food Chemistry, 240. pp. 370-376.

Ratnayaka, H.H., Boue, Stephen M., Dinh, T., Le, S.B. and Cherubin, R. (2018) [Photosynthesis and Kaempferol Yields of Soy Leaves Under ABA Application and Mechanical Wounding](#). Journal of Plant Biochemistry & Physiology, 6 (2). pp. 1-9.

Stein-Chisholm, Rebecca E., Beaulieu, John C., Grimm, Casey and Lloyd, Steven W. (2017) [LC-MS/MS and UPLC-UV Evaluation of Anthocyanins and Anthocyanidins during Rabbiteye Blueberry Juice Processing](#). Beverages, 3 (56). pp. 1-17.

Uka, Valdet, Moore, Geromy G., Arroyo-Mananares, N., Nebija, Dashnor, De Saeger, S. and Di Mavungu, J.D. (2017) [Unravelling the Diversity of the Cyclopiazonic Acid Family of Mycotoxins in Aspergillus flavus by UHPLC Triple-TOF HRMS](#). Toxins, 9 (35). pp. 1-21.