

"When You Plant, You Grow"

--Youth Program Cultivates Future Scientists--

New 4-H Program Cultivates Future Scientists



Whether or not you've joined the burgeoning number of U.S. households planting a garden this year, one basic principle applies: There won't be a harvest if you don't plant the seeds.

[Donald T. Floyd, Jr., President and CEO, National 4-H Council]

The National 4-H Council understands that principle, and this week officially launched a new program--Generation: AG. Today's Youth, Tomorrow's Workforce--dedicated to preparing 1 million new young people to excel in science, engineering, and technology by 2013. The "harvest" of "One Million New Scientists: One Million New Ideas" will be directly, and critically, dependent on the "planting" of time, effort, and resources today. The 4-H presentation was held Wednesday (June 10, 2009) at the Danforth Plant Science Center in St. Louis, Missouri, and provided input from academic, corporate, nonprofit, and government representatives.

[Rajiv J. Shah, USDA Under Secretary of Education, Research, and Economics, and Chief Scientist]

The keynote address was given by Rajiv J. Shah, MD, newly appointed USDA Under Secretary of Research, Education, and Economics and Chief USDA Scientist. In his first official speech since his appointment 3 days earlier, Dr. Shah stated that the goals of the USDA and 4-H are closely aligned. Issues related to hunger, obesity, energy, and sustainability challenge the United States and the world, and 4-H programs are critical to help prepare new scientists to deal with these and other agricultural issues in the future.



Other participants included Donald T. Floyd, Jr. (President and CEO, National 4-H Council); Roger N. Beachy (President, Danforth Center); James C. Borel (Group Vice President--Agriculture, Dupont); Carl M. Casale (Executive Vice President, Monsanto); E. Gordon Gee (President, The Ohio State University); Jeremy Embalabala (CEO, TechOctane, Inc.); Roger Olson (Vice President, National 4-H Council); Fred A. Cholick (Dean of Agriculture and Director of Kansas State Research and Extension); Bob Horton (Professor of Educational Design, The Ohio State University); Eric Spell (President, AgCareers.com); Sara Weidner (Sophomore, Ag Business Major, University of Missouri); Jennifer Sirangelo (Senior Vice President and Chief Development Officer, National 4-H Council); and Gregory Lilly (Research Associate, Pioneer, and 4-H Alumnus).



A recently published (April 2009) Tufts University study found that eighth grade youth who had participated in 4-H for at least 1 year were 3.5 times more likely than nonparticipants to contribute to their families, themselves, and their communities. Further, youth development programs like 4-H, which provide optimal opportunities for positive youth development, reduce the likelihood of youth to engage in risky behaviors such as

underage drinking, smoking, bullying, and vandalism. The study also confirms that 4-H youth are leaders, achieve higher marks in school, and contribute to self and society--all which help strengthen the communities in which they live. To access the complete Tufts University study, click [HERE](#).

The National 4-H Council says it's time to see 4-H as "more than cows and plows." With a decline in the number of family farms, there's been a corresponding decline in the number of "farm kids" involved in 4-H (12% membership in 2007). Twenty-first century 4-H is now comprised primarily of young people from suburban and urban backgrounds (88% in 2007), so new 4-H programming and focus are based on the new demographics.

The National 4-H Headquarters at USDA works with the Cooperative Extension Service, land-grant universities, private partners, and other programs to promote the power of youth. To learn more, and to view a short video clip, click [HERE](#).

