



# News Release

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## **AGRI-ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH GROUP AWARDS PRIZE FOR INNOVATION TO NRCS CHIEF WELLER**

WASHINGTON, DC. – As part of their spring workshop, the Center for Behavioral and Experimental Agri-Environmental Research (CBEAR) presented Jason Weller, Chief of the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), with the 2016 CBEAR Prize for Agri-Environmental Innovation. In presenting the Award, CBEAR Associate Director Mark Masters commented, “By promoting a culture of innovation and evidence-based decision making within NRCS, Chief Weller is meeting the 21<sup>st</sup> Century challenges associated with fulfilling the agency’s mission of providing resources to support conservation implementation.”

Upon accepting the award on behalf of his NRCS colleagues, Chief Weller encouraged CBEAR to continue helping NRCS to “think outside the box, be creative, be innovative, but also help us better communicate what it is we do, to ultimately help us better incentivize good solutions on the land.” Weller also expressed optimism that “social and behavioral techniques and approaches can help with adoption and maintenance of conservation solutions.”

Speaking in reference to future collaborative efforts, Weller commented, “I look forward to a continued partnership with CBEAR and the research community to help us improve ultimately what we do, which is to help people help the land.”

The CBEAR workshop addressed the Obama administration’s new Executive Order about the integration of behavioral insights into federal programs, the growth of experimentation and testing in business and government, reviews to support evidence-based program management, and a summary of promising new results from recent CBEAR collaborations with USDA.

**CBEAR** is a collaborative group of researchers that incorporates behavioral insights into program designs, primarily within USDA, to achieve greater levels of participation and satisfaction, improved environmental outcomes and reduced program costs. Directed jointly by research leaders at the University of Delaware and Johns Hopkins University with funding from the USDA Economic Research Service, CBEAR efforts are supported by a diverse group of research professionals within academia and government from across the United States. For more information, visit <http://www.centerbear.org>.

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