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# AgriLife NEWS

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## What's the apple of your eye? researchers ask

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AUSTIN – An apple that's sweeter but packed with naturally healthy compounds. Broccoli that's tastier but armed with more antioxidants. If that's what consumers want, Texas AgriLife Research scientists want to know it.

With that in mind, a conference on "Consumers to Farm: Changing Patterns in the Fruit and Vegetable Industry" will be held on Aug. 21 in Austin.

Consumers are welcome to participate in the one-day meeting hosted by the Vegetable and Fruit Improvement Center, an interdisciplinary unit started in 1993 as a part of Texas A&M University. Registration fees and information are at <http://vfic.tamu.edu/2009vficconference/Registration.htm>.

"What is in it for me?" is the question consumers always want to know about scientific research," said Dr. Bhimu Patil, director of the center, which is headquartered in College Station. "So researchers need to answer the question of what impact our work will have on consumers."

Patil said about 80 percent of the conference will focus on consumer needs and how they benefit from a research partnership between agricultural and medical scientists and industry.

The event, at the Omni Hotel, 700 San Jacinto Blvd., will begin with a display of posters in consumer-friendly terminology to explain current findings. The public is invited to view these posters from 8-10:15 a.m. and visit with the scientists.

Beginning at 10:30 a.m., representatives from public schools and the Austin fire department will discuss changes in consumer preferences.

The keynote address will be by Dr. Randall E. Westgren, professor of agricultural



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






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economics at the University of Missouri-Columbia. Westgren also holds the Al and Mary Agnes McQuinn Chair in Entrepreneurial Leadership.

From 2-3:30 p.m., a round table of producers, grocers and restaurateurs will discuss the challenges and opportunities facing the produce industry from the regional, state and national perspectives.

Concluding the day will be a 4-5:30 p.m. research update on fruit and vegetable breeding, environmental impacts of healthy compounds in produce, extracting healthy compounds from produce and how these compounds may help prevent human disease. -30-

## AgriLife Communications

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