

US Ag Secretary Tom Vilsack: Future of food, farming lies in science

What if I told you a scientist had recently discovered a way to remove up to 98% of the allergens in peanuts without affecting the flavor, thereby diminishing a severe health threat to some 2.8 million Americans who suffer from peanut allergies?

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If that sounds a little like science fiction to you, you wouldn't be alone. But...[it] exists today as part of the hundreds of scientific breakthroughs made by [USDA](#) and USDA-supported scientists since the start of the Obama Administration.

When people think of USDA, they may not immediately think of cutting-edge science or discovery. But USDA is the world's largest agricultural research force.

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When wheat and barley production in the United States was threatened by stem and stripe rusts emerging in East Africa and spreading rapidly, USDA-funded researchers worked to identify 40 new genes resistant to new strains of stem rust called Ug99. The resistant genes were identified from extensive trials in Kenya and Ethiopia over the last decade and are now being bred into U.S. grain.

In Florida, an insect carrying the bacteria causing citrus greening disease is devastating the citrus industry by decreasing marketable fruit in infected groves by more than 50 percent...ARS scientists developed a molecular system to prevent the insect, known as the Asian citrus psyllid, from feeding on the citrus sap, preventing them from transmitting the bacteria from tree to tree.

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The challenges facing our nation are immense. But they can be addressed with robust investment, not only in our science, research and development enterprise, but also with a focus on making sure our next generation succeeds where and when they need to...

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [Food and Ag Science Will Shape Our Future](#)