

USDA/NIFA Top Official encourages future scientists to combat food waste



L-r: SU System Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Provost M. Christopher Brown II; Land-Grant Campus Chancellor-Dean Bobby R. Phills; USDA/NIFA Director Sonny Ramaswamy; and System President-Chancellor Ray L. Belton.

The director of USDA/National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), Dr. Sonny Ramaswamy held a seminar titled, “National Institute of Food and Agriculture: An Update from Your Federal Partner” on April 25, 2017 at the SU Ag Center in Baton Rouge, LA.

During his presentation, Ramaswamy discussed the fact that people are dying because of food all over the world. Some, due to lack of food and some because there is too much food.

He went on to say that Americans need to reduce the amount of food that we waste every year.

“We lose about a third or half of all the food we make before it makes it to the dinner table,” said Ramaswamy. “We are wasting and losing about \$120 billion annually. Food waste is not only happening in homes; it’s also happening in restaurants,” citing huge serving portions and how grocery stores throw away bruised fruits and vegetables.

He encouraged the students, as future scientists, to develop new ideas to make what was once called unusable food attractive, like the creators of Ugly Juice, LLC, which uses aesthetically imperfect fruits and vegetables to make their juices.

Ramaswamy also warned the audience that nutrition and agricultural scientists must find solutions to problems such as hunger, obesity and access to nutritious foods or the situation will get worse by 2050 – the year many scientists have predicted that the global populations will surpass 9 billion people and will increase the demand for food and fiber.

Prior to the seminar, Ramaswamy met with 1890 student scholars, members of the Land-Grant Campus’s executive team and USDA/NIFA grant recipients from the SU Ag Center and the College of Agricultural, Family and Consumer Sciences.

Local Baton Rouge television station brproud.com, an affiliate of NBC 33 and Fox 44, aired a story on Dr. Ramaswamy’s seminar during their 10 p.m. news cast on April 25, 2017.

Photos of Dr. Ramaswamy’s visit are available at our [Google album](#).