

**The John A. Milner Fellowship Program – A Joint Activity of the USDA
Beltsville Human Nutrition Research Center (BHNRC) and the NIH Office
of Dietary Supplements (ODS)**



**John A. Milner
1947 - 2013**

We are announcing an exciting new opportunity for postdoctoral fellows who would like to conduct research in the area of bioactive components in foods and dietary supplements and learn about the translation of nutrition science into policy. This program is inspired by the life and work of John Milner, who until his untimely death was the Director of the Beltsville Human Nutrition Center (BHNRC) at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Dr. Milner devoted his career to expanding knowledge about the mechanisms of action and the health effects of bioactive components of foods, while in academia, the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and most recently at the BHNRC. During his federal career, some of his most active collaborations were with the Office of Dietary Supplements (ODS) at NIH. Thanks to his work, there continues to be a remarkable partnership between the ODS and BHNRC. It is fitting, therefore, that these two agencies are joining forces to celebrate Dr. Milner by encouraging the careers of junior scientists interested in bioactive components of foods and dietary supplements. The Fellowship which we are announcing will also allow candidates to develop experience and skill at the crossroads of science and policy.

The program is called the **John A. Milner Fellowship Program** and participants will be called **Milner Fellows**.

The purpose of the John A. Milner Fellowship Program is to create opportunities for early-career nutrition scientists to strengthen their skills through two years of post-doctoral research, supplemented by training programs, peer-networking, and field learning experiences. The outcome would be to build a cadre of early-career investigators who can learn to:

- Build productive partnerships among government, academia, and the private sector; and
- Contribute and communicate scientific knowledge to problems of critical importance in nutrition.

The focus of Milner Fellows' research and activities will be characterized by:

- Cutting-edge research in bioactive components of foods and dietary supplements;
- Defining frontiers and leading the future of nutrition research;
- Developing future world leaders in nutrition research and application through training and mentorship; and
- Building coalitions of organizations and partnerships to support research on bio-actives.



These Fellowships enable outstanding early-career scientists to work in world-class laboratories at the BHNRC, in close collaboration with scientists at ODS, to improve and expand their research skills and learn about the translation of nutrition science into nutrition policy.

Individuals who want to better link nutrition science with pressing policy needs are encouraged to apply. We envision that the cadre of scientists supported by the John A. Milner Fellowship Program eventually will assume leadership positions across the field of nutrition, primarily in the science of bioactive components of foods and dietary supplements.

Milner Fellows are awarded two years of support. Each Fellow is mentored by:

- A BHNRC scientist who encourages the Fellow's continued scientific development; and
- An ODS scientist who helps the Fellow connect her/his research to practical policy challenges.

The program will be jointly administered and funded by the ODS at NIH and the BHNRC at USDA. Each partner agrees to fund one fellow for a two-year period. The first fellow will be recruited in FY14 and the second in FY15 such that after the first year, there will be two Fellows at any given time.

Applicants for the program will apply to work on a specific research project at BHNRC that is of mutual interest to both the ODS and BHNRC. Potential applicants will be encouraged to contact potential mentors to develop a fellowship proposal. Fellows will also be expected to spend time at ODS and attend their annual Dietary Supplement Research practicum and participate in relevant activities at ODS.



In addition, the International Life Sciences Institute (ILSI) will be invited to provide additional learning opportunities for Fellows. ILSI is a nonprofit research foundation whose operational philosophy is built on academic, government and industry scientists working together in support of the health of the public. Dr. Milner served ILSI and its 16 branches worldwide, being a member of the ILSI Board of Trustees and contributing his expertise to scientific activities organized by ILSI branches, including ILSI North America.

Milner Fellows will be invited to participate in the annual and mid-year meetings of ILSI North America, with registration, travel and housing expenses covered by the organization. As appropriate, Fellows may also have the opportunity to participate in ILSI North America program activities that align with their post-doctoral research program.

Selection of the Fellows will be conducted by a committee composed of representatives of ODS and BHNRC. Criteria for selection will be based on the quality of the proposal, background and training of the applicant, and likelihood of the proposed research in producing research results. Preference will be given for proposals that create a link between USDA and NIH research activities.

Although initially set up between ODS and BHNRC, other institutes at NIH and centers in ARS would be encouraged to participate.

Eligibility and Award Terms

To be eligible, individuals must have completed their doctorate within the past five years, or by the time the award is made. Applicants who have not yet completed their doctorate must clearly indicate on the application the date their degree is expected.

Each Fellow will become employees of the BHNRC and receive an annual salary at the US government's GS-12 level. All applicable federal benefits will be included. The post-doctoral position is expected to run for two consecutive years.

Application Materials

All materials must be submitted electronically in PDF or MS Word format to Dr. Thomas Wang (tom.wang@ars.usda.gov). You may submit materials in separate files or all in one file (PDFs all in one file preferred). Please include your last name in some part of the file name. Letters sent on your behalf should also include your last name and the sender's last name in some part of the file name. Research approaches may include experimental or observational studies, human or animal studies, or any combination. In all cases, the central questions of the inquiry must be clearly articulated. Proposed study sites must be noted; an explanation of how the results will inform nutrition science is required. The research plan must not under any circumstances exceed 8 pages. The cover letter, literature cited, personal statement, and curriculum vitae are not included in the 8-page limit. Font size must be at least 11 point; margins must be at least 2.5 cm; line spacing must be at least 1.5. Deviations from these requirements may be grounds for disqualification.

1. Cover Letter: Applicants should provide a compelling narrative of her/his interest in nutrition science and policy, evidence of leadership and innovation, and how the fellowship could facilitate a unique and interdisciplinary plan for professional development. Applicants should not use cover letters to restate or extend material presented in the proposal or personal statement. Thoughtful, well-crafted cover letters improve the likelihood that competitive proposals will be identified during the initial stages of proposal evaluation.
2. Title Page: Include applicant's name, contact information, project title, and potential BHNRC sponsor (if known).
3. Research Plan: The 8-page research plan should include the following:
 - a) abstract,

- b) background section,
 - c) statement of objectives,
 - d) approaches and methods,
 - e) anticipated results,
 - f) research schedule,
 - g) relevance to nutrition science and policy.
4. Applicant's Curriculum Vitae.
5. Personal Statement: Please address the following questions (<200 words each):
- a) Give an example or examples of an accomplishment you believe demonstrates your leadership skills or entrepreneurial abilities.
 - b) How is your research "cutting edge" or innovative?
 - c) What will be the greatest impact of your research? Who or what will be most greatly affected?
6. Three (3) letters of recommendation addressing the merits of the candidate and the candidate's proposal. Letters should be written by individuals familiar with the applicant's skills, experience, and research. Letters should emphasize the qualifications of the applicant, in particular any unique abilities to contribute significantly to conservation science and practice. Each letter writer must submit an electronic copy of their letter to Dr. Thomas Wang (tom.wang@ars.usda.gov). It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that reference letters are submitted by the deadline.

Deadlines and Contact Information

All application materials, including letters from sponsors and references, must be received by **October 1, 2014**. The selection process begins immediately after this date. There are no extensions to this deadline and incomplete applications may be disqualified. Questions about the application process may be directed to Dr. Thomas Wang (tom.wang@ars.usda.gov).

Selection Criteria, Process, and Notification

Fellows are selected according to three criteria: 1) professional record, 2) perceived potential for innovation and leadership, and 3) the strength of their proposal. An ideal Milner Fellow is an innovative researcher with strong leadership potential. He or she will have excellent communication skills and a keen interest in the interface between

research and policy in nutrition. The ideal proposal will clearly articulate concepts and objectives that are both innovative and feasible. U.S. citizenship is not required.

Unsuccessful candidates will be notified of the status of their application by Dr. Wang. Because of staff limitations we are unable to provide a written critique of proposals.

Funds are available for Fellows to start **December 1, 2014**.