



Association of 1890 Research Directors, Inc.

22nd Biennial Research Symposium

***“Innovations in Food, Health & Agriculture: Technological
Advancements, Ecological Resilience, &
Economic Sustainability”***

March 28 – 31, 2026

**Hyatt Regency New Orleans
601 Loyola Avenue
New Orleans, LA 70113**

2026 Sponsorship Booklet

“Celebrating 50 Years of Symposia”

ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION OF 1890 RESEARCH DIRECTORS, INC.

ARD is a federation of 19 autonomous 1890 land-grant universities dedicated to fostering collaboration on research programs and initiatives among its member institutions. In partnership with federal, state, and private entities, ARD focuses on addressing significant challenges in food, agriculture, and natural resources.

MISSION

Provide visionary and enlightened leadership to member institutions as they continually address issues impacting their ability to provide innovative solutions to the food and agricultural research challenges facing the state, region, nation and world-at-large.

VISION

ARD envisions a region and world with a safe and plentiful supply of food, fiber and water for all, where natural resources and businesses are managed in ways that are sustainable, serve the public good and provide innovative solutions to global challenges.

PASSION

ARD's passion is to support our individuals, families, businesses in rural and urban communities.

OUR CORE VALUES

- Collaborate
- Discover and Innovate
- Integrity/Honesty
- Excellence
- Accountability
- Communicate
- Legacy

HISTORY OF THE SYMPOSIA

The first ARD symposium occurred in 1976 to commemorate the U.S. Bicentennial. Plant and animal scientists and administrators primarily attended this event. However, as funding for more programs in the food and agricultural sciences began to increase at the 1890 land-grant universities, the participant characteristics became more disciplinary diverse. The 1890s began to distinguish themselves in providing exemplary programs in research, education, Extension and other public service programs and consistently were at the forefront of producing human capital for the food and agricultural sector. Academic programs became much more varied, research-based and attractive to potential students, who could expect to be a vital part of the research programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. These same students also had opportunities to engage in research programs at the sister 1890 campuses. The 1890s now offer complex, specialized, advanced, technologically oriented, sound and pertinent programs that are relevant and responsive.

The 2026 ARD Research Symposium

The 22nd ARD Biennial Research Symposium in 2026 will mark the 50th anniversary of this landmark event. We anticipate welcoming over 1,500 participants—a significant milestone that reflects the continued growth of the Symposium.

The 2024 Symposium set several records, including the highest attendance to date, and the largest number of undergraduate and graduate student oral and poster presentations, sponsors, and exhibitors.

Please take a moment to review the link below highlighting key moments from the 21st Research Symposium. We are excited about the opportunity to build on this momentum and look forward to even greater participation, engagement, and support in 2026.

<https://wwwcp.umes.edu/ard/1890symposium/>

THE BENEFITS OF YOUR SPONSORSHIP

As a sponsor, you will have opportunities to:

- Check In at the Sponsor/Exhibitor Registration Booth
- Showcase your company, organization, or institution
- Connect with 1890 undergraduate and graduate students
- Engage with
 - 1890 University administrators, faculty, and staff members
 - Federal, state, and local delegates, administrators, and representatives
 - Representatives from universities throughout the country
 - Private industry leaders
- Learn about research being conducted and produce at the 1890 Institutions
- Attend oral and poster presentations provided by 1890 students and faculty
- Participate in special sessions focused on addressing current challenges in food, agriculture, and natural resources.



SPONSORSHIP LEVELS

Bronze Sponsor - \$10,000 and above to include

- One (1) waived registration fee
- One (1) waived exhibit space fee that includes one (1) waived registration fee
- Primary exhibit booth placement
- Name/Logo to be displayed at functions
- Acknowledgement throughout the event
- Whova app presence
- Half page ad in the program booklet

Silver Sponsor - \$15,000 and above to include

- Two (2) waived registration fees
- One (1) waived exhibit space fee that includes one (1) waived registration fee
- Primary exhibit booth placement
- Name/Logo to be displayed at functions
- Acknowledgement throughout the event
- Half page ad in the program booklet
- Whova app presence
- One (1) promotional item or nonfood swag item in the attendee registration bags

Gold Sponsor - \$25,000 and above to include

- Two (2) waived registration fees
- One (1) discounted registration (25% reduced)
- One (1) waived exhibit space fee that includes one (1) waived registration fee
- Primary exhibit booth placement
- Name/Logo to be displayed at functions
- Acknowledgement throughout the event
- Whova app sponsor presence
- Full page ad in the program booklet
- One (1) promotional item or nonfood swag item in the attendee registration bags
- May conduct one of the concurrent special sessions at a designated time during the event that coincides with the 1890 mission and theme

Diamond Sponsor - \$35,000 and above to include

- Three (3) waived registration fees
- Two (2) discounted registrations (25% reduced)
- One (1) waived exhibit space fee to include one (1) waived registration fee
- Primary exhibit booth placement
- Name/Logo to be displayed at functions
- Acknowledgement throughout the event
- Whova app sponsor presence
- Full page ad in the program booklet
- Two (2) promotional items or nonfood swag items in the attendee registration bags
- May conduct one of the concurrent special sessions at a designated time during the event that coincides with the 1890 mission and theme
- Reserve table at the Monday Luncheon and Tuesday evening Banquet

Platinum Sponsor - \$50,000 and above to include

- Five (5) waived registration fees
- Two (2) discounted registrations (25% reduced)
- One (1) waived exhibit space fee to include one (1) waived registration
- Top-tier primary exhibit booth placement
- Reserve table at the Monday Luncheon and Tuesday evening Banquet
- Name/Logo to be displayed at functions
- Acknowledgement throughout the event
- Whova app sponsor presence
- Whova virtual sponsor management assistance
- Full page ad in the program booklet to be placed in prominent location

- Two (2) promotional items or nonfood swag items in the attendee registration bags
- May conduct one of the concurrent special sessions at a designated time during the event that coincides with the 1890 mission and theme
- Reserve table at the Monday Luncheon and Tuesday evening Banquet

Symposium Event Naming Opportunities

Platinum Plus - \$60,000 and above to include

- Five (5) waived registrations
- Three (3) discounted registrations (25% reduced)
- One (1) exhibit space to include one (1) waived registration
- Top-tier primary exhibit booth placement
- Name/Logo to be displayed at functions
- Acknowledgement throughout the event
- Whova app sponsor presence
- Whova virtual sponsor management assistance
- Full page ad in the program booklet to be placed in prominent location
- Two (2) promotional items or nonfood swag items in the attendee registration bags
- May conduct one of the concurrent special sessions at a designated time during the event that coincides with the 1890 mission and theme
- Reserve table at the Monday Luncheon and Tuesday evening Banquet
- Meeting room usage (based on availability)
- Naming of one (1) of the Symposium events below:
 - Ribbon Cutting Ceremony and Welcome Reception (Sunday)
 - Opening Session (Monday)
 - Student Awards Luncheon (Monday)
 - Student Workshops (Monday & Tuesday)
 - Plenary Session (Tuesday)
 - Special Sessions (Tuesday)

Opportunities to Sponsor Registration Items:

- \$3,000 Name on attendee badge lanyard (1)
- \$3,000 Name or logo on water bottle (1)
- \$5,000 Name or logo on small notebook with pen (1)
- \$8,000 Name or logo on conference bag (1)

Terms & Conditions

The Association of 1890 Research Directors, hereinafter referred to as ARD, is hereby authorized to use the name and logo of a sponsor prior to, during, and after the 2026 ARD Research Symposium. Examples include the Whova Event Management app, advertising publications, symposium event book, and the event highlights book. ARD reserves the right to approve all organizations for potential sponsorships to ensure that missions, values, and goals align and are consistent with the 1890 Land-Grant System and its purpose.

Please review all symposium event policies:
<https://wwwcp.umes.edu/ard/1890symposium/policies/>

These sponsorship funds will defray a portion of the overall expenses related to the ARD Biennial Research Symposium. We welcome the opportunity to write letters of request for specific event expenses that may include registration materials and supplies, audio visual, signage and services, document/program printing and mailings, posterboards, food and beverage, student events and activities, internet bandwidth, and other costs associated with the biennial event. In addition, your funding could assist students with travel expenses (e.g., transportation, hotel, registration fee) who otherwise may not be able to attend the Symposium on their own funds.

ARD truly appreciates your time and attention as you decide to sponsor this educational, informational, and impactful event. For further information and to secure your sponsorship opportunity, please contact:

Alton Thompson, athompson1@ncat.edu, 336-285-2955
ARD Executive Director
<https://wwwcp.umes.edu/ard/>

Additional Information

Link to the nineteen (19) 1890 land-grant institutions.

<https://wwwcp.umes.edu/ard/1890-land-grant-universities/>

Link to the 2024 Research Symposium Highlights (including sponsors and exhibitors)

<https://wwwcp.umes.edu/ard/1890symposium/>



ARD SYMPOSIUM SPONSORSHIP FORM

Please complete the following:

Contact Name	
Organization	
Address	
City, State, Zip	
Email	
Phone	

Please select a sponsorship level:

- Bronze \$10,000
- Silver \$15,000
- Gold \$25,000
- Diamond \$35,000
- Platinum \$50,000
- Platinum Plus \$60,000

Other Amount \$ _____

Additional sponsorship opportunities:

- Badge Lanyards \$3,000
- Water Bottle \$3,000
- Small Notebook \$5,000
- Conference Bag \$8,000

Next Steps:

Communicate with Lisa Williamson, lmwilliamson1@ncat.edu

1. Send this completed form
2. State how the organization's name should be listed
3. State if organization needs a specific designated request letter
4. Email a high-resolution logo
5. Confirm exhibitor participation by filling out the exhibitor form (attached)
6. An invoice will be sent to include all payment methods

For additional information, please contact Alton Thompson, ARD Exec. Dir. athompson1@ncat.edu, 336-285-2955 or Lisa Williamson, ARD Exec. Asst., lmwilliamson1@ncat.edu, 304-541-1423.

Thank you for considering being a Sponsor!

**1890 Land Grant Universities
Association of 1890 Research Directors, Inc.**

ARD Research Symposium 2026

*“Innovations in Food, Health & Agriculture: Technological Advancements,
Ecological Resilience, and Economic Sustainability”*

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SPONSOR EXHIBITOR SPACE REGISTRATION FORM

Exhibiting Entity:

Contact Person responsible for managing the exhibit:

Address:

City, State, Zip:

Phone:

E-mail:

The size of the exhibit **space is 8 feet by 10 feet**, each equipped with one 6 ft. table, two chairs, and one wastebasket. Please specify any special requirements for your exhibit space (for these may be an additional cost to the exhibiting entity), such as:

Electrical Outlet:

Internet Access:

Exhibit setup times are 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Saturday, March 28, 2026; and 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Sunday, March 29, 2026.

Each Exhibit Space includes one \$900 early registration fee; however, each additional person is to pay an additional fee according to the Registration Fee payment schedule.

Please return the completed form by February 6, 2026.

Association of 1890 Research Directors, Inc.
Attn: Lisa Williamson, ARD Executive Assistant
lmwilliamson1@ncat.edu