

HRI Labs

The Health Research Institute and HRI Labs

Worldwide, the public, independent scientists, innovative businesses and public policy visionaries are calling for healthy, environmentally sensitive and humanely produced foods. People are seeking a higher standard from farmers, food companies, grocers, and restaurants. In service to these goals, the Health Research Institute (HRI) carries out scientific research, education and communication to support large-scale improvement in the sustainability of food and agricultural systems, the environment and social and environmental practices. HRI achieves this by linking sustainability of food and agricultural systems to health and well-being. HRI applies advanced analytical tools to create transparency, making visible that which is invisible in our food and environment. In particular, we focus on constituents that are more nourishing, nutritious and health-promoting and other constituents that are directly or indirectly harmful to health.

Authoritative laboratory testing is a powerful tool that has been used to detect and quantify the presence of pesticides, GMOs, antibiotics and other ingredients, often in foods that are portrayed as healthy and natural. Testing is also increasingly used to evaluate the contribution of regenerative and sustainable agricultural practices to improved nutritional value of crops. However, these tools are often not readily available, either because of high costs or because commercial and academic labs prioritize service to industry partners who are their primary clients.

To address the challenges regarding access to highest quality and rigor in testing, HRI will launch HRI Laboratories in early 2016. HRI Labs will operate as a non-profit and will offer affordable testing, using the most advanced technologies for highly sensitive and highly reliable testing for the widest possible range of nutritional components and food and environmental contaminants. In addition to instrument-based testing, the lab will bring a spirit of collaboration to create effective testing programs that advance the sustainability of food and agricultural systems.

The lab will feature:

- The same advanced analytical equipment found in the best research and commercial laboratories.
- Accreditation to the globally respected and accepted ISO 17025 and CLIA standards.
- Scientific staff with experience in performing a wide variety of advanced analytical procedures, who are committed to collaborative approaches that can lead to new advances in the sustainability of food and agricultural systems.
- Sliding price scale that makes rigorous testing available to a much wider range of stakeholders.
- Policies to assure the lab will consistently provide impartial analytical services to all who request them.
- Testing for nutritional content and quality, contaminants, authenticity, soil carbon content and soil microbial diversity, and physiological indicators of contamination and/or health.

The laboratory will be led by molecular biologist and biochemist Dr. John Fagan and former NASA engineer Larry Bohlen. A lab team is being organized with strong analytical skills as well as a history of commitment to transparency and public service. An interdisciplinary advisory board will guide the lab in fulfilling its mission to advance regenerative, sustainable agriculture and assure pure, safe healthy food for all.

Funding for the Health Research Institute Laboratories will be from financially disinterested sources including foundations, non-profit associations, individual donations, crowd sourced initiatives and fees for services.

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