



NERA News & Notes

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From the Office of the Executive Director

Time to be Counted and Accountable!

By now you have all heard about the President's recommendations for the research formula funds: FY 06 50% reduction in Hatch; 50% reduction in McIntire – Stennis; elimination of Animal Health and Disease funding; and in FY 07 the elimination of all Hatch and McIntire – Stennis funding concomitant with the creation of a new SAES Competitive Grant fund. Between the time of the release of the President's budgetary recommendations (February 7) and the present there has been a flurry of activity by the Experiment Stations collectively and individually to demonstrate what such a cut to these formula funds would mean to the partnership system (with CSREES) and to individual stations.

The Executive Directors asked each Experiment Station to describe quantitatively what such dramatic and sudden changes in formula funds would do to their programs. The results have been collected and are accessible on the NASSULGC Budget and Advocacy Website at nasulgc-bac.com/budget_cuts.html. I had summarize in an earlier memo the impacts that might accrue in the NE region if this should come to pass, but suffice it to say, these cuts would be devastating. The 12 states and the District of Columbia in the NE region annually receive over \$32M in Hatch, McIntire Stennis and Animal Health and Disease funding, conservatively leveraging this to over \$83M with state matching funds. The directors estimated that the impact of these cuts in the region would result in the elimination of over 200 faculty and 335 staff positions, along with the elimination of over 400 graduate assistantships. In addition, there are descriptions of farm facilities that would have to be closed, and some laboratory activities severely curtailed.

Now what can you do to assist? For one thing, as an administrative advisor to a regional committee, it is important that the scientists on your committee's realize the impact that these formula funds have on programs at the experiment station level. You can remind them of this through the data at this above mentioned website. Even more importantly, you can remind them that they need to be very diligent in describing the outputs and outcomes of their research activities funded by formula funds. This information is reported through the CRIS system. Finally, as a director and administrative advisor, you can emphasize that each multistate project also receives funding through the Hatch Act, and the result of the multistate projects is reported through the SAES 422 form.

As the Administrative Advisor to a regional activity you can play a key role in demonstrating the effectiveness of formula funds as one of the funding mechanisms in a balanced portfolio of funding schemes (federal competitive grants, formula funds, state matching funds, etc.).

Taken in part from D. Lund, NCRA Regional Update, Winter 2005



New Homeland Security Report “Much is Being Done to Protect Agriculture from a Terrorist Attack, but Important Challenges Remain”

If you have not seen this latest report of the Government Accountability Office (GAO), I recommend it to you.

The GAO found that after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, federal agencies' roles and responsibilities were modified in several ways to help protect agriculture from an attack. First, the Homeland Security Act of 2002 established the DHS and, among other things, charged it with coordinating U.S. efforts to protect against agroterrorism. The act also transferred a number of agency personnel and functions into DHS to conduct planning, response and recovery efforts. Second, the President signed a number of presidential directives that further define agencies' specific roles in protecting agriculture. Finally, Congress passed legislation that expanded the responsibilities of USDA and HHS in relation to agriculture security.

In carrying out these new responsibilities, USDA and other federal agencies have taken a number of actions. The agencies are coordinating development of plans and protocols to better manage the national response to terrorism, including agroterrorism (and along with several states), have conducted exercises to test these new protocols and their response capabilities. Federal agencies have also been conducting vulnerability assessments of the agriculture infrastructure; have created networks of laboratories capable of diagnosing animal, plant, and human diseases; have begun efforts to develop a national veterinary stockpile that intends to include vaccines against foreign animal diseases; and have created new federal emergency coordinator positions to help states develop emergency plans for the agriculture sector.

However, the United States still faces complex challenges that limit the nation's ability to respond effectively to an attack against livestock. For example, USDA would not be able to deploy animal vaccines within 24 hours of an outbreak as called for in a presidential directive, in part because the only vaccines currently stored in the US are for strains of foot and mouth disease, and these vaccines need to be sent to the United Kingdom to be activated for use. There are also management problems that inhibit the effectiveness of agencies' efforts to protect against agroterrorism. For instance, since the transfer of agricultural inspectors from USDA to DHS in 2003, there have been fewer inspections of agricultural products at the nation's ports of entry.



National Academy Recommendations to Increase Interdisciplinary Research

A new report is available from the National Academies that should be of interest – **Facilitating Interdisciplinary Research**. Advances in science and engineering increasingly require the collaboration of scholars from various fields. This shift is driven by the urgent need to address complex problems that cut across traditional disciplines, and the capacity of new technologies to both transform existing disciplines and generate new ones. At the same time, however, interdisciplinary research is impeded at many institutions by policies on hiring, promotion, tenure and resource allocation that favor traditional disciplinary approaches.

The report urges academic institutions to explore new models that foster and reward interdisciplinary interactions. Industrial and national laboratories have traditionally operated successful interdisciplinary programs because their research goals are established and pursued in terms of projects rather than by disciplines. Teams of research from various fields are formed to solve particular problems, an approach that stimulates interdisciplinary interactions. Academic institutions should revise recruitment and hiring practices to reach across departments, placing greater emphasis on people with valuable interdisciplinary backgrounds; promotion criteria should include methods to evaluate interdisciplinary faculty and programs. The committee which wrote the report also concluded that the process by which institutions evaluate people and programs is often imperfect. The peer-review process for both people and programs should include researchers with interdisciplinary expertise, in addition to experts in single disciplines.

The report calls for professional societies to serve as incubators for generating and facilitating interdisciplinary programs and projects. These organizations could produce intersociety reports on cutting-edge research developments, offer opportunities for researchers from

different fields to interact, and publish more interdisciplinary journals that recognize excellence in interdisciplinary research. In addition, the report calls for undergraduate, graduate students, and postdoctoral scholars to actively seek our interdisciplinary experiences, and to pursue training and study in one or more fields in addition to their own. Junior and early career scientists should take advantage of networking opportunities and identify more with mentors favorable to interdisciplinary research.

The report, **Facilitating Interdisciplinary Research** is available from the National Academies at: <http://books.nap.edu/catalog/11153.html>



Leadership Development for the 21st Century - LEAD 21

Just a remainder that program information and application materials for the LEAD 21 program are available at: <http://www.fanning.uga.edu/LEAD21/>

Application deadline is April 1, 2005, with the first class of LEAD 21 to begin June 2005. More detailed program information and a downloadable application form is available on the LEAD 21 web site at the above website.

LEAD 21 (**Leadership Development for the 21st Century: Linking Research, Academics, and Extension**) has been approved to replace the ESCOP/ACOP and NELD programs as the primary national-level leadership development program serving the needs of land grant universities' colleges of agricultural, environmental, and human sciences and CSREES. This program will provide leadership development for faculty, specialists, program and team leaders, research station and center directors, district and regional directors, department heads and chairs, and others.

LEAD 21 involves three on-site sessions and an independent learning experience over a period of approximately one year beginning in late June. The

enrollment fee of \$8000 will cover all instructional costs, educational materials, and assessment instruments, as well as all meals and lodging during the three on-site sessions (total of 12 days). The only cost the fee does not include is transportation to the on-site sessions.

If you have any specific questions you should either contact Eric Young (Interim Chair of the LEAD 21 Board of Directors) at eric_young@ncsu.edu or 919-513-1746 or Jessica Garris-Miller (Fanning Institute for Leadership, UGA) at jgarrismiller@fanning.uga.edu or 706-542-1108.



CSREES Program Reviews

Having just participated on a CSREES Review, I am reminded of the recent announcement and memo from CSREES which constituted an invitation to submit requests for reviews. While CSREES issues an annual invitation to submit requests for reviews, the agency will accept requests throughout the year based on need and availability. In early February CSREES forwarded an invitation to each of you to submit your requests for university program reviews to be conducted October 1, 2005 through September 30, 2006.

Program review is a voluntary activity on the part of eligible institutions. CSREES believes that program reviews: 1) are important in assessing current strengths, identifying future opportunities, and recommending appropriate strategies for enhancing university-based programs; 2) have a positive impact on land-grant program quality; 3) provide CSREES staff with an important understanding of the dynamics of programs and program changes; 4) encourage program advancement for those undergoing the review; 5) expose review team members to new ideas in program management and resource utilization; and, 6) provide CSREES with current and comprehensive information useful in responding to Congressional inquiries related to the investment of Federal funds in the support of

excellence in research, extension and higher education programming.

In recent years and in my experience, most of the program reviews have been comprehensive and focused on all mission areas, research, education and extension, in the department or unit being reviewed. CSREES is committed to continuing with the comprehensive review format as appropriate in meeting university, department, and/or program needs. In addition, CSREES is encouraging issue-based reviews to involve collaborative units and cooperative activities. This approach reflects the increased Federal emphasis on high-priority problems and issues, while reviewing current resources, future needs, and considering the needs of constituents.

Recognizing the mutual benefit derived from the review process, CSREES will pay the travel cost of half of the review team, up to a maximum of three team members, including the CSREES team member. To initiate the planning process for a review, CSREES is asking that the requesting institution provide the agency with the following background information: Reasons for the review, objectives and or expectations of the review, sources expressing need for a review, planning context for the review, comprehensiveness of the review, along with three suggested review dates. A copy of the Request for a CSREES Review should be in your state AES office or can be obtained directly from CSREES.

For planning purposes, CSREES requests that requests be forwarded to the agency (attn: Dr. Gary Cunningham) by no later than April 29th to facilitate the planning process. For those seeking to undergo a review, CSREES anticipates being able to discuss the objective(s) for the review, potential dates for the review and name the CSREES Team Leader by June 30, 2005.



NERA Website

The NERA website www.agnr.umd.edu/users/nera is continually changing. Recently and in light of the President's Budget that calls for the eventual elimination

of Hatch, McIntire–Stennis and the Animal Health and Disease formula funds as we currently know them, I have populated this site with a number of papers that should be of interest. Click on the box labeled '**In Support of Formula Funds**' to find the following papers of interest:

- Potential Impacts in the NE Region from the Elimination of Hatch, McIntire-Stennis and Animal Health Federal Formula Funds (pdf)
- A Nation at Risk!
- The Hatch Act
- A Drift Toward Elitism by the 'Peoples' University' by Dr. Mike Martin, President of New Mexico State University, published earlier in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Vol. 51, Issue 25.
- Honoring the Land Grant University Covenant
- The FY 2006 Budget Request for CSREES, March 2005
- NASULGC Budget and Advocacy Committee – Impact of Budget Cuts, State-By State Assessments

