

Minutes
ESCOP Social Sciences Subcommittee Meeting
February 21-22, 2012
Washington, DC

Location

APLU Building (Board Room)
1307 New York Avenue, NW
Phone: 202.478.6040 <http://www.aplu.org>

Members in Attendance:

Don Albrecht, WRDC, Utah State, Rural Sociology
Ntam Baharanyi, Tuskegee University, Ag Economics (ARD Representative)
Bo Beaulieu, SRDC, Mississippi State University, Rural Sociology
Dwayne Cartmell, Oklahoma State University, Ag Communications
David Doerfert, Texas Tech University, Ag Communications
Robin Douthitt (via Skype), University of Wisconsin, Madison, Human Sciences
Jack Elliot, Texas A&M University, Ag Communications (Chair, ESCOP-SSSC)
Matt Fannin Louisiana State University, Ag Economics
Joan Fulton (Beth Forbes alternate), Purdue University, Ag Economics
Chuck Moss, University of Florida, Ag Economics
June Henton, Auburn University, Human Sciences (Liaison to the BoHS)
Travis Park, Cornell University, Ag Education (Liaison to the ESCOP Science and Technology)
Mike Retallick, Iowa State University, Ag Education
John Ricketts, Tennessee State University, Ag Education
Soyeon Shim, University of Arizona, Human Sciences (Liaison to the BoHS)
Bobby Torres, University of Arizona, Ag Education
Bruce Weber, Oregon State University, Ag Economics
Dreamal Worthen, Florida A&M, Rural Sociology

Liaison/Ad Hoc/Ex-Officio Members

Scott Loveridge, Regional Rural Centers
Dan Rossi, Rutgers University, NE Regional Assoc of AES Directors ESCOP S&T Chair
Howard Silver, Executive Director, Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA)
Gina Driokane, Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA)
Tamara Wagester, Council on Food, Agricultural and Resource Economics (C-FARE)
Chuck Fluharty, Rural Policy Research Institute (RUPRI)
Pat Hipple, National Program Leader, Division of Family and Consumer Sciences, NIFA, USDA

Guests (Non-speaking)

Aida Balsano, NIFA NPL

Bonita Williams, NIFA NPL

February 21, 2012

8:00 AM Introductions, Review of Agenda, Committee Focus Subcommittee Membership Update, Jack Elliot, *Chair, SSSC*

Jack Elliot, SSSC Chair, presided over the meeting that began at 8:00 a.m. with introductions and the following agenda:

8:15 AM SSSC Overview: Dr. Pat Hipple, *National Program Leader, Division of Family and Consumer Sciences*

- Pat Hipple provided an overview and the goal of the SSSC—to recommend specific actions to help the Land-Grant system address high priority research and education issues leading to outcomes that deal with social issues in a significant, measurable way and that will generate sustained financial support.
- Provided the reporting hierarchy of the SSSC: SSSC-> Science and Technology Committee->ESCOP->CFERR->A.P.L.U.
- Emphasized the need of “amplified voice” of SSSC to integrate social science perspectives through the hierarchical channel.

8:30 AM NIFA Overview: Dr. Pat Hipple, *National Program Leader, Division of Family and Consumer Sciences*

- See attached fact sheet and accompanying power point presentation (Pat Hipple Feb 21) and NIFA Organizational Chart and NIFA Fact Sheet.
- Pat Hipple presented the overview of the NIFA, the reorganization background (Danforth Study, CREATE 21, REE reorganization plan), the Farm Bill, and five Grand Challenges
 - Climate change
 - Bioenergy
 - Food safety
 - Nutrition and childhood obesity
 - Global food security
- Reported that leadership positions (NIFA Director and four assistant director positions) have been filled or pending final approval before public announcement; Principal scientist positions will not be filled due to the budget and transition of NIFA leadership.

8:40 AM Board on Human Sciences - promote the impact of the human dimension for NIFA/AFRI; and the University of Arizona (Norton School) building capacity to integrate the consumers, families, and environment initiatives to environmental sciences and engineering: Soyeon Shim, *Liaison form the Board on Human Sciences and Director Norton School, University of Arizona*

- Soyeon Shim shared the activities of the Board on Human Sciences (BoHS) to promote the impact of human dimensions for NIFA/AFRI.

- Presented the University of Arizona's initiative, entitled CESI (Consumers, Environment, and Sustainability) to engage both biological and social scientists to have a creative dialogue in search of integrative and interdisciplinary solutions to solving the critical issues facing the nation for sustainability.
- Presented the CESI in introducing human, behavioral and social science based solutions to and collaborating with environmental scientists on campus.
- Discussed new opportunities as well as challenges/barriers for integrating human dimension to biological solutions to food security, food safety, climate, environment, energy, and obesity.

**9:15 AM Dr. Howard Silver, *Executive Director*
Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA)**

- Howard Silver discussed the current state of affairs on the hill, particularly regarding the budgetary concerns and political issues.
- Reviewed the budget situations and priorities at NIH and NSF. Top priorities are on translational research – turning basic research into products and interdisciplinary research.
- Shared two other significant developments:
 - Higher education (e.g., STEM, number of college graduates, cost control, return on investment on basic research or applied research, matrix and measurement for Congress); and
 - Political situations (an election year, a lot of activities trying to figure out increase/continuation of programs in solving the deficit). Farm bill process is underway.

**10:00 AM Dr. Meryl Broussard, *Deputy Director*
National Institute of Food and Agriculture**

- Meryl Broussard provided an update on NIFA's affairs and including NIFA's budget proposal (see NIFA FY2013 President's Budget Proposal).
- Discussed the importance of developing balanced portfolio for sciences. Challenges are how to accomplish efficiencies while protecting legacy programs and looking for consolidation for some programs.
- Discussed the update on NIFA re-organization and new administration Dr. Woteki brought stability to the agency. Getting new leadership in place (assistant director positions & the NIFA director position—waiting for approval); ; it takes time and must endure growing pains.
- Discussed focus (five priorities) and scale (large enough to make significant impact, i.e., big capital grants)
- Understand concerns regarding human/social sciences in solving five challenge areas; Look forward to the outcomes from the Gap Analysis -- what are we missing? What's the impact? Not just the role of social sciences. But more specifically, what are we missing in AFRI and other programs?

- Stated that NIFA needs social scientists to serve on review panel – we hear the complaints but we need solutions; we need to continue dialogue and identify opportunities to move forward.

11:00 AM NIFA Panel (Science Advisory Council) – Challenge to SSSC

Dr. Robert Holland, *Assistant Director, Institute of Food Safety and Nutrition*

- Robert Holland discussed some of the areas that may be emphasized under the IFSN. For instance, ethnic and cultural factors that influence nutrition and obesity among African American families. How to factor in “love effects (i.e., salt, sugar fat with love) in preparing food for families and friends.
- Discussed that we need to do a better job of communicating food safety issues from a systemic standpoint (e.g. i.e., lack studies on chronic/long-term effects of campylobacter infection on people and poor communication to consumers)

Dr. Debby Sheely, *Assistant Director, Institute of Food Production and Sustainability*

- Debby Sheely presented the IFPS organizational chart and IFPS programs and initiatives focusing on:
 - Producing Food for a Hungry World
 - Protecting our Food and Environments from Pests and Disease
 - Improving Biosecurity and Emergency Preparedness
 - Contributing to Economic and Social Well Being
- Encouraged more social scientists to sign up to be on the review panel (contact program leaders). Robin Douthitt asked about the proportion of the social scientists on the panel; Debby said they keep all panel information in the file but it is generally confidential. For any specific information, she needs to check.
- Discussed the efforts that have been made to integrate social and human dimensions into the RFAs; Soyeon made comments that she has observed progress among NIFA NPLs in their efforts.
- Plan to stick to the five Grand Challenges but remain flexible for input from the stakeholders for the content of the programs.
- See ppt slides for more information.

Dr. Frank Boteler, *Assistant Director, Institute of Bioenergy, Climate, and Environment*

- Frank Boteler presented the NIFA organizational chart and the overview and the roles of the IBCE in the NIFA

- Discussed the goals of each of the three divisions (Bioenergy, Climate, and the Environmental System) and Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program.
- Discussed specific grant programs, # of awards (made or to be made) for each grant program, particularly focusing on programs that are relevant to social and human sciences.
- Stated that the grant program, “Socioeconomic impacts of biofuels production on rural communities” didn’t draw a large number of submissions (e.g., 36 letters of interests were submitted; about half were invited for submission, and only about half of those invited submitted full proposal).
- See ppt slides for more information.

Dr. Cynthia Reeves , Senior Research Leads (filling in for Dr. Crocoll) Institute of Youth, Family and Community

- Cynthia Reeves provided an overview of the IFYC’s three divisions, the Division of Youth and 4-H, the Division of Community and Education, and the Division of Family and Consumer Sciences, promote the human dimensions of NIFA’s food and agricultural sciences through research, education, and extension programs.
- The IFYC’s portfolio also includes long-standing and emerging partnerships with the Department of Defense and Military Service Components to support military children, youth, and family on military installations around the world, as well as the families of National Guard, Reserves, and Veterans living in communities far removed from military installations.
- RFAs with a human dimension:
 - Rural Health & Safety Education (approx \$1.4 million in 2012; not in budget for 2013); CYFAR (2012 competition complete)
 - Childhood Obesity Prevention - AFRI
 - Integrated Food Safety Initiative – AFRI
 - National Integrated Water Quality Program (NIWQP)
- Challenges to the SSSC
 - Facilitate understanding of the various science cultures within NIFA and how to interact with each other in a strategic and effective way.
 - Speak in terms of Human Sciences-not just “social” sciences which has an unintended effect of marginalizing us.
 - Help the Human Sciences articulate their role in NIFA priority areas.
- See ppt slides for more information

12:30 PM Working Lunch

**1:15 PM ESCOP Science & Technology Committee Interface with SSSC
Dr. Dan Rossi, Northeastern Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors, Rutgers**

- Dan Rossi provided an overview and update on ESCOP's three major committees (based on major functions of AES):
 - NIFA project related Committees (e.g., budget, program priorities program side – science roadmap providing guidance. Funding mechanism – base fund most important; Farm Bill language. Tweaking this year. Legislation – usually
 - Communication and Marketing Committee– major initiative on marketing; hired a firm, targeted marketing (branding), specific issues targeting decision-makers. Editorials. Newsletter to congressional legislators. New social media (a lot of staffers). New firm – very extensive network/very good at social media. Now looking at identifying key issues to help educate decision makers on priorities.
 - Science and Technology Committee – charged to anticipate opportunities and various policies relevant to science; response to the proposed changes; next 5-10 years, where do we need to focus and enhance the focus in the land-grant system; science roadmap, facilitate multistate programs at the national level as a model for collaboration; USDA/NIFA are proposing changes to science policies and looking for inputs in terms of priorities – this committee responds on behalf of the system.
 - 4th area – national research support project (money is taken off at the top to support research); this committee reviews and make a recommendation.
- Discussed how the SSSC can work more closely with the ST Committee. Dan appreciated the support and involvement of the SSSC for assisting with the process and writing of the Science Roadmap. It was a good model. The Science Roadmap is a good document, involving good science, but not useful for people outside the academe; the ST is now in the process of creating a new one, focusing on cross cutting issues that are readable for non-science communities. SSSC has a representation (i.e., Travis Park) for the ST committee, so be sure to respond to the request for input
- Dan Rossi made two personal (not ST's) suggestions:
 - Seek input from the ST Committee regarding the Gap Analysis outcome (ST's meeting coming up this spring; Remind Travis Park to seek input from the ST Committee).
 - 150th celebration (Morrill Act) – do we need a new model? Are we satisfied? What kinds of decisions are we making to make changes? Is that the best model? At least we should ask the question: Is the model that we use working?

**1:15 PM RFA priorities: Dr. Pat Hipple, *National Program Leader*
*Division of Family and Consumer Sciences***

Pat Hipple provided critical background prior to the Gap Analysis as follows:

- Limited Capacity at NIFA
- Loss of 20 staff on Dec 31, 2011 representing @ 7%
- Loss of several social scientists yet to be replaced (may not be replaced)
 - Janie Hipp, Jane Schuchardt, JH Bahn, Sally Maggard
- Currently: Ag Econ (3): Fen Hunt, Robbin Shoemaker, Siva Sureshwaran (AFRI Assigned); Rural Sociology (1): Pat Hipple; Human Sciences/FCS (7+): Maurice Dorsey, Caroline

Crocoll,, Brent Elrod, Aida Balsano, Susan Shockey, Beverly Samuel, Cindy Reeves, (FCS); 4H and DOCES

- Significant: AFRI funding distributed across 3 of 4 Institutes. IYFC manages no AFRI funding, but has the majority of the social scientists. Why? (Leadership transition due to the leave of absence of the assistant director and a series of acting directors means no consistent voice at the table)
- IYFC now serving on AFRI planning committees
- IYFC co-chair of committee to advise (Suzanne LeMenestral)
- But significant other funding under management by IYFC makes IYFA the largest financial portfolio of the 4 Institutes.
- Significant prolonged attempt to diffuse social science perspectives, approaches, and inquiry throughout the NIFA portfolio. Legacy of “Silo” programs
- Things are getting much better, though AFRI program leaders and NIFA leadership recognize there is more that can be done and they are eager for ideas, suggestions, and feedback.
- Some NPLs feel stymied that their solicitations have not been successful at attracting robust contributions by social scientists.
- Some feel frustrated that their requests to social science professionals for improvement of solicitations have gone unanswered. This has created a credibility gap.
- There are disciplinary language and culture barriers that are difficult to communicate. Not unlike NIFA, there is a growing capacity concern in the social sciences. But also, AFRI has been a moving target and increasingly complicated, so hard to get our arms around to provide succinct guidance or critique.
- Pat passed around – Resources that inform a science agenda for the human and social dimensions of food and agriculture ([An electronic link](#) is available and provided to SSSc members as a “living” document).

Pat provided plan for today as follows:

- GAP analysis – where are the holes/opportunities? To have robust participation of social science in AFRI grants
- Five multidisciplinary working groups—each group one part of 30 page document
- Five sections:
 - Food safety—North Central group
 - Climate -- South
 - Food security -- West
 - Bioenergy -- 1890
 - Foundation – At Large

4:45 PM Officer Elections
Reflection/Implications/Next Steps

- Soyeon Shim, Secretary/Chair-Elect, resigned from the position due to her increased administrative load at the University of Arizona. A nomination for her replacement for her

position (1 year Secretary/Chair-Elect and 2 year Chair commitment) will be accepted for election on the following day.

- Gap Homework -- Each working group is to formulate one page summary of the gap analysis and to be prepared for discussion on the following day.

5:00 PM Adjourned

Wednesday, February 22

7:30 AM Breakfast: Breakfast Sandwiches

8:00 AM GAP Analysis of the AFRI RFA priorities: Dr. David Doerfert, *Professor Texas Tech University*

For detailed information about the Gap Analysis outcomes: [see XXX](#)

Cross Cutting Areas from Five Working Group Reports -- Where do the human dimensions come from in the ____ project?

- Outcomes might be a process and/or a product
- Need social sciences involved in framing problem – not after thought (not buzz words)
- Behavioral change end goal? (adoption/diffusion process) – who/what behavior should change? Choices, decision-making, the role of culture
- Communities: place vs people prosperity
- Systems development – sustainability in terms of adoption measures
- Sustainability – Three-legged stool: social, economics, & environment
- Scholarship is expected – as well as process & product (education/extension)
- Limited resource audiences/stakeholders
- Human behavior and preferences/human brain mapping/motivational research (cognitive, intelligence)
- Interactions among social system factors and external influences need to be examined.
- Feedback loop research and resulting adjustments

Foundational (Bobby Torres on behalf of at-Large Members)

- Plant Health/Products -- Adoption/diffusion component – barriers and enhancers
- Animal Health/Products -- Influence of consumer preferences and expectations
- Food Safety/Nutrition/Health -- Add cultural factors that influence consumer choices and decision-making
- Renewable Energy -- Impact on communities, production operation
- Agricultural economics -- Is this a “catch” bucket? --A bucket for everything else/too broad/too big of issues

Bio Energy (John Ricketts on behalf of 1890 members)

- Stronger, direct language (ex. We will network with the University research, extension, education; instead of “network” – collaborate?)

Food Safety (Joan Fulton on behalf of North Central members)

- Needs to have research on what drives consumers’ preferences and behaviors
- Market/social/organizational structures/how they interact each other
- Value chain and critical control points and related costs and benefits

Climate (Chuck Moss on behalf of South members)

- Everything is dynamic (social, econ, environment)
- Where is the market?

Food Security (Bruce Weber on behalf of West members)

- Production increase should not be sole focus
- Creating a new category (by shifting #7) - Improving the food systems by understanding human behaviors and social/economic systems.
- #7 program feels like a “catch bucket” making it unworkable – create a new category.

10:30 AM Tamara Wagester, Executive Director (C-FARE) The Council on Food, Agricultural and Resource Economics

- Non-profit organization that represent Ag Econ professions; based in the DC area
- Three areas of focus – a nexus of new ideas, resources for its members, and a source of economic interpretation and information
- Dealing with various issues such as energy, natural resources/environmental issues, climate, food safety, international development, etc issues
- Facilitate a luncheon seminar for congressional staffers regarding how research funds are used and values that social science research brings to the table
- Conducted Webinar activities – 5 webinars (researchers, multidisciplinary point of view) , ...
- Bringing in research communities together in a unified voice
- The only social science coalition- great value

10:50 AM Tom Van Arsdall, Executive Director (National C-FAR) National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research

Goals:

- Brings together stakeholders in the research, extension and education community and entities representing research customers.
- Complement the efforts of allied groups, such as APLUS, CAST and AFRI Coalition
- Keep member organizations aware of new developments and opportunities to take action.

Action programs:

- Hill Research Seminar Series (i.e., 63 seminars in the past 6+ years, reaching over 3,700 attendees)

- support for increased funding (submits comments to the Administration and congressional appropriations and budget committees in support of maintaining and enhancing public investment in food and ag research, extension, and education)
- Collaboration with APLU-BAA – help leading “customers’ voice their views to the public about the value of federal investments in food and ag research.
- Participation in implementation of Farm Bill & Reauthorization – reaching out to key policy makers and stakeholders to evaluate how best to protect existing funding and increase future funding in the next Administration and Congress.

**11:10 AM *Chuck Fluharty, Vice President for Policy Programs
Rural Policy Research Institute***

- Discussed goals of the Institute briefly focusing on rural issues (Counsel and decision support; Information and analysis; Collaborative engagement; Support for collaborative briefings; Public speaking engagements)
- Would like to have stronger presence of the ESCOP-SSSc in the Institute
- The role of the ESCOP-SSSc is going to be never greater than now because of what’s coming ahead of us once election is over (e.g., tax changes, budget cuts, etc) – what does that mean for programs that matter to rural people?
- We will need to find a new way of doing business. Ag communities are consolidating massively.
- We will have to think much more strongly about ways to align the funding sources with program. Where is the vehicle? Some issues that we are thinking about what you are doing. Appreciate the work you do. We are trying to strengthen it.

David Doerfert provided a brief summary of the Gap analysis to the panel members:

- What’s missing; what’s not right; what can be clarified. The idea is that behavioral changes are not homogenous; very dynamic, feedback loop, shouldn’t be an after thoughts; not another products/widgets, integrate social and human factors in framing the issues; issues are complex.
- Chuck asked Pat to chat with him about the GAP analysis outcomes for the next step.

11:30 AM *Summary Discussion/Implications/Next Steps/SSSC business*

Action Items

- 1) Jack would like to engage the SSSC members throughout the year (e.g., Quarterly call for action items and responses) in addition to the annual meeting in February.
- 2) Pat Hipple suggested that the SSSC showcases the good work going on for social science integration for NIFA NPLs (what’s working or not working); Soyeon suggested a webinar for scientists across the nation.
- 3) Next Step for Gap Analysis:
 - a. All five working groups will submit a one-page report and/or electronic documents with track changes to Pat.

- b. Pat, Jack and Soyeon will review the notes and work on the draft documents and disseminate to the SSSc members for feedback.
 - c. Pat will submit it to NIFA.
- 4) White Paper (Scott Loverridge) working on draft re: Hispanic Serving Institutions.

Jack Elliot's Reflections

- "Thank-you's"
 - Please send a thank-you email to Jack's assistant , Elke Aguilar for her meeting arrangement: elke-r-aguilar@tamu.edu
 - Thanks to NIFA Liaisons, Pat Hipple and Siva Sureshwaran, for helping with the program (Note: Siva is on a travel status and couldn't attend the meeting).
- 2013 SSSC meeting
 - Hold Feb 19-20 (Tue & Wed)/2013 tentatively
 - Will try to align with the Ag Outlook Forum
 - May move up or down a week
- Election for Secretary/Chair-Elect (1 year Chair-Elect; 2-year Chair for a 3 year commitment)
 - Travis Park nominated Bobby Torres
 - Bobby was unanimously voted for the position.

Pat Hipple wrapped up the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

RESOURCES THAT INFORM A SCIENCE AGENDA FOR THE HUMAN AND SOCIAL DIMENSIONS OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

For use in the Division of Family and Consumer Sciences Portfolio

2012

1. [USDA REE Action Plan](#), Research, Education, and Economics Mission Area of USDA, February, 2012.
2. [Feeding 10 Billion: A Dialogue Between Feed the Future and the International Research Community](#). Simon Nicholson, Assistant Professor of International Relations School of International Service, American University, APLU 2012.

2011

3. [Rebuilding the Mosaic: Fostering Research in the Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences at the National Science Foundation in the Next Decade](#). The Directorate for Social, Behavioral and Economic (SBE) Sciences, National Science Foundation's (NSF), December 1, 2011.
4. [Feed the Future: Global Food Security Research Strategy](#), Draft. USG, 2011
5. [Transforming U.S. Agriculture, Agriculture Policy Forum](#). Science Vol. 332, AAS, May 6, 2011.
6. [A Family and Consumer Sciences Survey of National Institute of Food and Agriculture Priorities](#). Board on Human Sciences, April, 2011.
7. [Investing in a Better Future through Public Agricultural Research](#). CAST Commentary, March 2011.
8. [Family & Consumer Sciences AAFCS Co-Branding Toolkit](#). American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, 2011.
9. [Toward an Integrated Science of Research on Families: Workshop Report](#). National Academy of Sciences. 2011
10. [National Research Agenda: American Association for Agricultural Education's Research Priority Areas for 2011 – 2015](#), AAEA, 2011.

2010

11. [USDA Strategic Plan for 2010-2015](#)
12. [A Science Roadmap for Food and Agriculture, APLU Experiment Station Committee on Organization and Policy](#)—ESCOP Science and Technology Committee, November, 2010

13. [Extension Strategic Opportunities](#), APLU Extension Committee on Organization and Policy—ECOP, 2010.
14. [BRIEF: Results of the Family and Consumer Sciences Research, Education, and Extension Stakeholder Input & Strategic Planning Meeting](#), Board of Human Sciences, Washington, DC, February, 2010.
15. [Science of Science Policy: Evidence and Lessons from Studies of Agricultural R&D](#). Julian Alston, Draft Paper for the Workshop on Science of Science Measurement, November 15, 2010.
16. [Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies, Science and Technology Priorities for the FY2012 Budget](#). Executive Office of the President, Office of Management and Budget, July 21, 2010.
17. [Agricultural Productivity Strategies for the Future: Addressing U.S. and Global Challenges, CAST Issue Paper 45](#), Council for Agricultural Science and Technology, January, 2010.
18. [Toward Sustainable Agricultural Systems in the Twenty-first Century, Committee on Twenty-First Century Systems Agriculture, Division on Earth and Life Sciences](#), June, 2010.

2009

19. [A New Biology for the 21st Century: Ensuring the United States Leads the Coming Biology Revolution](#). The National Academies: Advisers to the Nation on Science, Engineering, and Medicine, 2009.

2008

20. [The 30-Year Challenge: Agriculture's Strategic Role in Feeding and Fueling a Growing World](#). Farm Foundation Issue Report. December 2008
21. [Sustainability of Biofuels: Future Research Opportunities](#). Report from the Joint USDA-DOE Workshop, October 2008

2007 and Earlier

22. [CSREES Strategic Plan for 2007-2012](#)
23. [USDA Performance and Accountability Report: Investing in our Nation's Food, Nutrition, Rural Communities and Natural Resources to Create a World of Opportunities](#), 2006
24. [Healthier Lives through Behavioral and Social Science Research](#), Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research, National Institutes of Health, 2005.
25. Giving Voice to a National Research Agenda, ESCOP Social Science Subcommittee, 2003.
26. [The National Academies: Frontiers in Agricultural Research](#) – Food, Health, Environment, and Communities, 2003.
27. [Food and Agricultural Policy: Taking Stock for the New Century](#), September, 2001.

28. A Meta-Analysis of Rates of Return to Agricultural R&D: *Ex Pede Herculem?* Research Report 113, International Food Policy Research Institute, 2000.
29. [A Time to Act: A Report of the USDA National Commission on Small Farms](#), 1998.
30. [A Priority Research Agenda for Agriculture of the Middle](#), Undated.
31. [Agricultural Outlook Forum Paper: Advancing Knowledge and Capacity for Community-Led Development](#)
32. ESCOP Social Science Subcommittee Paper: Homeland Security and the Role of Social Sciences in Securing America's Food and Fiber System
33. ESCOP Social Science Subcommittee Paper: Rural Community Vitality
34. ESCOP Social Science Subcommittee Paper: The Dynamics of Coupled Human Social and Natural Systems
35. [NNFRCYF-CSREES-USDA Paper: Family Resiliency: Building Strengths to Meet Life's Challenges](#)
36. [SRDC Paper: Building Vibrant Economies and Communities in Rural America](#)
37. [CSREES White Paper: Consumer-Driven Agriculture](#)
38. [CSREES White Paper: Cultivating Resilient Communities and Rural Prosperity in a Dynamic and Uncertain Environment](#)
39. CSREES White Paper: Expanding Economic Opportunity for Farms, Families, and Communities in a New Market-Based Economy
40. [CSREES White Paper: Exploring New Opportunities for Extension](#)
41. [CSREES White Paper: Global Opportunities and Partnerships](#)
42. CSREES White Paper: New Products, New Technologies, New Ideas



United States
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

Chavonda Jacobs-Young

ACTING DIRECTOR

cjacobs-young@nifa.usda.gov

tel: 202-720-4423

fax: 202-720-8987

Betty Lou Gilliland

MANAGEMENT AND POLICY OFFICER

bgilliland@nifa.usda.gov

tel: 202-720-5506

fax: 202-720-8987

William Hoffman

PROGRAM AND ANALYSIS OFFICER

whoffman@nifa.usda.gov

tel: 202-401-1112

fax: 202-720-8987

Ven Neralla

DIRECTOR OF CONGRESSIONAL AFFAIRS

vneralla@nifa.usda.gov

tel: 202-720-8187

fax: 202-720-8987

Meryl Broussard

DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

mbroussard@nifa.usda.gov

tel: 202-720-7441

fax: 202-720-8987

Ralph Otto

DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR FOOD AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES

rotto@nifa.usda.gov

tel: 202-720-9278

fax: 202-690-0289

**INSTITUTE OF FOOD
PRODUCTION AND
SUSTAINABILITY**

Deborah Sheely
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

**DIVISION OF
ANIMAL SYSTEMS**

Muquarrab Qureshi
DIVISION DIRECTOR

**DIVISION OF
PLANT SYSTEMS-
PROTECTION**

Michael Fitzner
DIVISION DIRECTOR

**DIVISION OF
PLANT SYSTEMS-
PRODUCTION**

Mary Peet
DIVISION DIRECTOR

**DIVISION OF
AGRICULTURAL SYSTEMS**

Bradley Rein
DIVISION DIRECTOR

**INSTITUTE OF
BIOENERGY, CLIMATE,
AND ENVIRONMENT**

Frank Boteler
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

**DIVISION OF
BIOENERGY**

Mark Poth
DIVISION DIRECTOR

**DIVISION OF GLOBAL
CLIMATE CHANGE**

Luis Tupas
DIVISION DIRECTOR

**DIVISION OF
ENVIRONMENTAL
SYSTEMS**

Ali Mohamed
DIVISION DIRECTOR

BUDGET STAFF

Paula Geiger
DIRECTOR

**COMMUNICATIONS
STAFF**

Ellen Frank
DIRECTOR

**PLANNING,
ACCOUNTABILITY,
& REPORTING
STAFF**

Bart Hewitt
DIRECTOR

**INSTITUTE OF
FOOD SAFETY
AND NUTRITION**

Robert Holland
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

**DIVISION OF
NUTRITION**

Dionne Toombs
DIVISION DIRECTOR

**DIVISION OF
FOOD SAFETY**

Jan Singleton
DIVISION DIRECTOR

**INSTITUTE OF
YOUTH, FAMILY,
AND COMMUNITY**

Caroline Crocoll
ACTING ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

**DIVISION OF
COMMUNITY
AND EDUCATION**

Jermelina Tupas
DIVISION DIRECTOR

**DIVISION OF
YOUTH AND 4-H**

Lisa Lauxman
DIVISION DIRECTOR

**DIVISION OF
FAMILY AND
CONSUMER SCIENCES**

Brent Elrod
ACTING DIVISION DIRECTOR

**OFFICE OF GRANTS
AND FINANCIAL
MANAGEMENT**

Andrea Brandon
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

**AWARDS
MANAGEMENT
DIVISION**

Andrea Brandon
ACTING DIVISION DIRECTOR

**POLICY AND
OVERSIGHT DIVISION**

William Bethel
DIVISION DIRECTOR

**FINANCIAL
OPERATIONS
DIVISION**

Tonya Johnson
DIVISION DIRECTOR

**OFFICE OF
INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY**

Michel Desbois
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

**APPLICATIONS
DIVISION**

Dennis Unglesbee
DIVISION DIRECTOR

**OPERATIONS
AND ADMINISTRATIVE
SYSTEMS DIVISION**

Debra Williams
DIVISION DIRECTOR

**INFORMATION
POLICY, PLANNING,
AND TRAINING
DIVISION**

Jason Hitchcock
DIVISION DIRECTOR

**EQUAL
OPPORTUNITY
STAFF**

Curt Deville
DIRECTOR

**CENTER FOR
INTERNATIONAL
PROGRAMS**

Hiram Larew
DIRECTOR



NIFA FACTSHEET

BACKGROUND

THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (NIFA) addresses many challenges facing the nation through exemplary agricultural science. NIFA works with the best and brightest scientists at universities and colleges throughout the United States and around the world to find innovative solutions to issues related to agriculture, food, the environment, and communities. With a timely, integrated approach and collaboration with other federal science agencies, NIFA also serves as a vital contributor to federal science policy decision-making.

INTEGRATED APPROACH TO SCIENCE

AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE AT NIFA integrates research, education, and extension to ensure that groundbreaking research discoveries go beyond the laboratory and make their way into the classroom and to communities where people can put the knowledge into practice and improve their lives.

RESEARCH provides answers to complex issues facing our nation and the world.

EDUCATION strengthens schools and universities to train the next generation of scientists, educators, producers, and citizens.

EXTENSION takes knowledge gained through research and education to the people who need it most.

PRIORITY SCIENCE AREAS

FOOD SECURITY AND HUNGER

NIFA supports science to boost domestic agricultural production, improve capacity to meet the growing global food demand, and foster innovation in fighting hunger and food insecurity in vulnerable populations.

CLIMATE CHANGE

NIFA-funded projects help producers adapt to changing weather patterns and sustain economic vitality while also reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing carbon sequestration in agricultural and forest production systems.

SUSTAINABLE ENERGY

NIFA contributes to the President's goal of energy independence with a portfolio of grant programs to develop optimum biomass, forests, and crops for bioenergy production; and produce value-added, bio-based industrial products.

CHILDHOOD OBESITY

NIFA-supported programs ensure that nutritious foods are affordable and available and that individuals and families are able to make informed, science-based decisions about their health and well-being.

FOOD SAFETY

NIFA food safety programs work to provide a safer food supply and reduce the incidence of food-borne illness by addressing the causes of microbial contamination and antimicrobial resistance, educating consumer and food safety professionals, and developing enhanced food processing technologies.

LEADERSHIP

Chavonda Jacobs-Young, *Acting Director*

EMPLOYEES

Approximately 350

STRUCTURE

INSTITUTE OF FOOD PRODUCTION AND SUSTAINABILITY

- Enhancing food security through productive and sustainable agricultural systems

INSTITUTE OF BIOENERGY, CLIMATE, AND ENVIRONMENT

- Ensuring energy independence through clean, biobased energy systems
- Ensuring sustainable and adaptive agro-ecosystems in response to variable climates

INSTITUTE OF FOOD SAFETY AND NUTRITION

- Ensuring a safe food supply
- Improving citizens' health through nutrition
- Reducing childhood obesity
- Improving food quality

INSTITUTE OF YOUTH, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY

- Enabling vibrant and resilient communities
- Preparing the next generation of scientists
- Enhancing science capacity in minority-serving institutions
- Enhancing youth and family development

CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

- Enhancing the global awareness of American students, faculty, and staff
- Sharing benefits of international science through research and extension

BUDGET

Total FY12.....	\$1,358,887,000
Research and Education.....	710,342,000
Extension.....	475,183,000
Integrated.....	21,482,000
Mandatory.....	151,880,000

PARTNER LAND-GRANT INSTITUTIONS

Total	109
1862 Land-Grant Universities	57
1890 Land-Grant Universities	18
1994 Land-Grant Universities	34



United States
Department of
Agriculture

National Institute
of Food
and Agriculture



FY2013

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
FY2013 PRESIDENT'S BUDGET PROPOSAL

NIFA FY2013 PRESIDENT'S BUDGET PROPOSAL

AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE AT THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (NIFA) INTEGRATES RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND EXTENSION to ensure that groundbreaking discoveries go beyond the laboratory and make their way into the classroom and to people who can put the knowledge into practice and improve their lives. **RESEARCH** enables development of the knowledge needed to solve many of the issues facing our nation. **EDUCATION** strengthens schools and universities to train the next generation of scientists, educators, producers, and citizens. **EXTENSION** brings the knowledge gained through research and education to the people who need it most—in the United States and around the world.

NIFA works with the best and brightest scientists in the United States and around the world to find innovative solutions to local and global problems. Collaboration with historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, and tribal colleges ensures the benefits of NIFA's resources extend to all Americans. With a timely, integrated approach and collaboration with other federal science agencies, NIFA also serves as a vital contributor in science policy decision-making.

NIFA supports the nation's food, fuel, and fiber production system and works across the federal science enterprise to provide innovative and needed solutions to these and other critical issues facing rural communities and American consumers.

In Fiscal Year 2013, NIFA seeks to expand the role and influence of science in agriculture, the environment, human nutrition, and communities through focused, problem-solving research, education, and extension activities. NIFA will focus resources on supporting programs that provide foundational knowledge, as well as on programs that will address critical issues that impact the long-term viability of agriculture.

THE AGENCY'S PRIMARY BUDGET INITIATIVES WILL EMPHASIZE:

- targeted efforts that focus on solutions to high priority issues including adapting agriculture to changing weather and climates; reducing childhood obesity; improving food safety and nutrition; and ensuring sustainable agriculture that provides for food security and meets goals for biofuels, while strengthening rural communities;
- support for fundamental and applied research, education, and extension to the nation's best scientists and educators through Agriculture and Food Research Initiative competitive grants;
- consolidated programs to improve the efficiency of program implementation resulting in research, education, and extension investments with greater focus and enhanced impact;
- linkages among producers, scientific discovery, and application of sustainable practices, through the integrated Sustainable Agriculture Federal-State Matching Grant Program;
- efforts to advance agricultural literacy through enhanced agriculture and natural resources education; and
- outreach activities through the Cooperative Extension System.

FY2013 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD RESEARCH INITIATIVE (AFRI)

Funding will support high-priority issues:

BIOENERGY

Sustained funding will support regional projects that link research for sustainable biomass production, logistics of handling feedstocks for biofuels, and education programs to create the needed skilled workforce. Ongoing targeted research will focus on enhanced value co-products and crop protection; land-use changes resulting from feedstock production and conversion; and identification of socioeconomic impacts of biofuels in rural communities in order to enhance sustainable rural economies. Funding will be used for genomics work that optimizes dedicated biofuels feedstocks. Funding also will support one new multi-state regional project that will catalyze development of sustainable bioenergy production systems in a region of the country not covered by previous multi-state regional awards.

GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE

Funding will support activities on adaptive capacities and mitigation potentials of agricultural and natural resource systems to climate variables such as drought, limits on irrigation water supplies, floods and temperature extremes. Efforts will help farmers, ranchers, land owners, and rural communities adapt to climate variation, reduce greenhouse gas emission, and increase carbon sequestration.

GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY

Programs in this priority area will address pressing issues in food production that contribute to national and global food security while helping America promote

sustainable agriculture and agricultural exports. Funding will be used to improve the understanding of genomic information and breeding to develop new and improved animal breeds and crop cultivars for increased food production and quality. Efforts will target activities that address the problems of U.S. agriculture, create mutual benefits domestically and abroad, and allow new opportunities for interdepartmental initiatives as appropriate.

NUTRITION AND HEALTH

Projects will focus on children and youth ages 2-19, to identify the behavioral factors that influence obesity; develop valid behavioral and environmental instruments that measure progress in obesity prevention efforts; and, fund nutrition research to develop and evaluate effective programs to prevent obesity. Funding will support research and outreach efforts to develop and increase consumption of healthy foods that are low in energy (fats and sugars) and salt, and high in nutrient density and that are appealing (to children).

FOOD SAFETY

Funds will be used to improve the safety of the U.S. food supply through new and improved rapid detection methods, pre- and post-harvest epidemiological studies, and improved food harvesting and processing technologies. NIFA will fund critical environmental and ecological research to improve our understanding of disease-causing microorganisms, and of naturally occurring contaminants in meats, poultry, seafood, and fresh fruits and vegetables. Funding will address efforts to minimize antibiotic resistance transmission through the food chain, and microbial food safety hazards of fresh and fresh-cut fruits and vegetables.

FOUNDATIONAL PROGRAMS

Funding will allow substantive research investments in Plant Health and Production and Plant Products; Animal Health and Production and Animal Products; Food Safety, Nutrition, and Health; Renewable Energy, Natural Resources, and Environment; Agriculture Systems and Technology; and Agriculture Economics and Rural Communities.

NIFA FELLOWSHIPS

Funding is proposed for graduate and post-graduate education through awards made to individuals pursuing research careers in NIFA research priority areas.

CROP PROTECTION

NIFA proposes to consolidate funding for Expert Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Decision Support System, IPM & Biological Control, Minor Crop Pest Management/IR-4, Pest Management Alternatives, Smith-Lever 3(d) Pest Management, and Regional Pest Management Centers into a single program called Crop Protection administered under Integrated Activities. This consolidation will enhance NIFA's ability to support research, education, and extension activities needed to ensure global food security and respond to other major societal challenges.

Funded activities will be for IPM projects that respond to pest management challenges with coordinated regional and national research, education, and extension programs, and promote further development and use of IPM approaches. The program will foster regional and national team building efforts, communication networks, and enhanced stakeholder participation. The program will focus on plant protection

tactics and tools; diversified IPM systems; enhancing agricultural biosecurity; IPM for a sustainable society; and development of the next generation of IPM scientists.

GRANTS FOR INSULAR AREAS

NIFA proposes to consolidate funding for “Resident Instruction Grants for Insular Areas” and “Distance Education Grants for Insular Areas” into a single program called Grants for Insular Areas. This consolidation allows for greater efficiency in administering the program.

Funds will enhance resident instruction, curriculum, and teaching programs in food and agricultural sciences located in insular areas of Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands, Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, or the Republic of Palau. It also will support activities to strengthen the capacity of institutions in these insular areas to carry out collaborative distance food and agricultural education programs using digital network technologies.

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Integrated activities will focus on a new Federal-State matching grant program to assist in the creation or enhancement of State sustainable agriculture research, extension, and education programs. Funding will be used for activities that integrate sustainable agriculture in all State research, extension and education projects; support new research at sustainable agriculture centers; build stronger Statewide farmer-to-farmer networks and outreach and technical assistance strategies; and incorporate sustainable agriculture studies and curriculum in undergraduate and graduate degree programs.

HISPANIC-SERVING AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES (HSACU) ENDOWMENT FUND

The Hispanic/Latino community is the fastest growing sector of the American population. This investment in the HSACU is needed to ensure they can compete effectively for NIFA competitive grants. Support for this endowment fund for HSACU will assist in the development of a skilled and marketable Hispanic student population for employment in the food and agriculture sector.

EDUCATION

Funded activities will support training to ensure a vast pool of graduates interested in careers in the biotechnology, food systems, economics, and other fields of agriculture. NIFA is requesting funding for the Graduate Fellowships Grants, Institution Challenge Grants, Multicultural Scholars, and Secondary Education, Two-Year Postsecondary Education and Agriculture in the K-12 Classroom programs.

EXTENSION

Funding is proposed for Smith-Lever 3(d) for the New Technologies for Agricultural Extension Program to support a national web-based information and education delivery system for the Cooperative Extension System (CES), and the Children, Youth, and Families at Risk Program to improve the quality and quantity of comprehensive community-based programs for at-risk children, youth, and families supported by the CES. NIFA also proposes funding to assist forest and range landowners and managers in making resource management decisions under the Renewable Resources Extension Act Program.

OTHER PROGRAMS

Proposed increases in Federal administration will support the modernization of NIFA's grant applications systems and processes. NIFA will continue funding for most other programs, including formula funded and minority-serving programs, in order to serve the nation's needs through exemplary research, education, and extension that address many challenges facing agriculture, the environment, and nutrition. From production, nutrition and food safety to energy independence and the sustainability of our natural resources, NIFA's investment in science helps to secure America's future.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (\$'000)

PROGRAMS

FY 2012
CONSOLIDATED
APPROPRIATION

FY 2013
PRESIDENT'S
BUDGET

DISCRETIONARY FUNDING

RESEARCH AND EDUCATION ACTIVITIES:

Agriculture and Food Research Initiative	\$264,470	\$325,000
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FORMULA PROGRAMS:

Hatch Act	236,334	234,834
McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry	32,934	32,934
Evans-Allen Program	50,898	50,898
Animal Health and Disease, Section 1433	4,000	0

SPECIAL RESEARCH GRANTS:

Expert IPM Decision Support System a/	153	0
Integrated Pest Management & Biological Control a/	2,362	0
Minor Crop Pest Management, IR-4 a/	11,913	0
Pest Management Alternatives a/	1,402	0
Global Change, UV-B Monitoring	1,300	1,405
Other Grants b/	2,700	0

OTHER RESEARCH:

Critical Agricultural Materials	1,081	0
Aquaculture Centers	3,920	3,920
Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program	14,471	14,471
Supplemental and Alternative Crops	825	0
1994 Research Grants	1,801	1,801
Joe Skeen Institute for Rangeland Restoration	961	0
Federal Administration (Direct Appropriation)	10,500	14,229
Farm Business Management and Benchmarking Program	1,450	0
Sun Grant Program	2,200	0
Policy Research	4,000	0
Capacity Building for Non-Land Grant Colleges of Agriculture	4,500	0

HIGHER EDUCATION:

Graduate Fellowships Grants c/	0	3,851
Institution Challenge Grants c/	0	5,643
Multicultural Scholars c/	0	1,239
Institution Challenge, Multicultural Scholars and Graduate Fellowships Grants	9,000	0
1890 Institution Capacity Building Grants	19,336	19,336
Hispanic Serving Institutions Education Grants Program	9,219	9,219
Tribal Colleges Education Equity Grants Program	3,335	3,335
Interest (Est.) Earned on Tribal Colleges Endowment Fund	4,743	5,045
Secondary Educ./2-Year Post Secondary, & Agriculture in the K-12 Classroom	900	981
Alaska Native-serving and Native Hawaiian-serving Institutions	3,194	3,194
Veterinary Medical Services Act	4,790	4,790
Grants for Insular Areas	0	1,650
Resident Instruction Grants for Insular Areas d/	900	0
Distance Education Grants for Insular Areas d/	750	0

Total, Research and Education Activities

	710,342	737,775
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INTEGRATED ACTIVITIES:

SECTION 406 LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY:

Water Quality	4,500	0
Regional Pest Management Centers a/	4,000	0
Methyl Bromide Transition Program	1,996	0
Organic Transition Program	4,000	4,000
Crop Protection	0	29,056

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (\$'000)

PROGRAMS

FY 2012
CONSOLIDATED
APPROPRIATION

FY 2013
PRESIDENT'S
BUDGET

(integrated activities, continued)

OTHER LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITIES:

Regional Rural Development Centers	\$998	\$998
Sustainable Agriculture Federal-State Matching Grant Program	0	3,500
Food and Agriculture Defense Initiative	5,988	5,988
Total, Integrated Activities	21,482	43,542

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

FORMULA PROGRAMS:

Smith-Lever Formula 3(b)&(c)	294,000	292,411
1890 Institutions	42,592	42,592

SMITH-LEVER 3(D) PROGRAMS:

Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program	67,934	67,934
Pest Management a/	9,918	0
Farm Safety and Youth Farm Safety Education and Certification	4,610	4,610
New Technologies for Agricultural Extension	1,550	1,750
Children, Youth, and Families at Risk	7,600	8,395
Sustainable Agriculture	4,696	4,696
Federally-Recognized Tribes Extension Program	3,039	3,039

OTHER EXTENSION PROGRAMS:

Extension Services at 1994 Institutions	4,312	4,312
Renewable Resources Extension Act	3,700	4,060
Rural Health and Safety	1,500	0
1890 Facilities (Section 1447)	19,730	19,730
Food Animal Residue Avoidance Database Program (FARAD)	1,000	0
Grants for Youth Serving Institutions	750	0
Women and Minorities in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Fields	400	400
Federal Administration	7,852	8,544
Total, Extension Activities	475,183	462,473

TOTAL DISCRETIONARY FUNDING e/

1,207,007 **1,243,790**

MANDATORY AND ENDOWMENT FUNDING

Hispanic-Serving Agriculture Colleges and Universities Endowment Fund	\$0	\$10,000
Tribal Colleges Endowment Fund	11,880	11,880
Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative	20,000	f/
Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Program	19,000	f/
Biomass Research and Development	40,000	f/
Specialty Crop Research Initiative	50,000	f/
Biodiesel Fuel Education Program g/	1,000	f/
Agriculture Risk Management Education Program g/	5,000	5,000
Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program g/	5,000	5,000

TOTAL, MANDATORY AND ENDOWMENT FUNDING

151,880 **31,880**

TOTAL, DISCRETIONARY AND MANDATORY FUNDING

1,358,887 **1,275,670**

NOTE: a/ In FY 2013 program is consolidated under Integrated Activities, Crop Protection Program.
 b/ In FY 2012 funding is for Potato Research - \$1,350,000 and Forest Products Research - \$1,350,000.
 c/ In FY 2012 program is consolidated under Research & Education Activities, Institution Challenge, Multicultural Scholars & Graduate Fellowships Grants Program.
 d/ In FY 2013 program is consolidated under Research & Education Activities, Grants for Insular Areas Program.
 e/ Estimated interest on Tribal College Endowment Fund is included in the total.
 f/ Funding for this Farm Bill mandatory program is subject to reauthorization.
 g/ Mandatory program delegated to another USDA agency but administered by NIFA.



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Overview of NIFA's Institute of Bioenergy, Climate and Environment

Presentation to:

ESCOP Social Science Subcommittee

Franklin E. Boteler

February 21, 2012





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2008 Farm Bill Created New Agency—

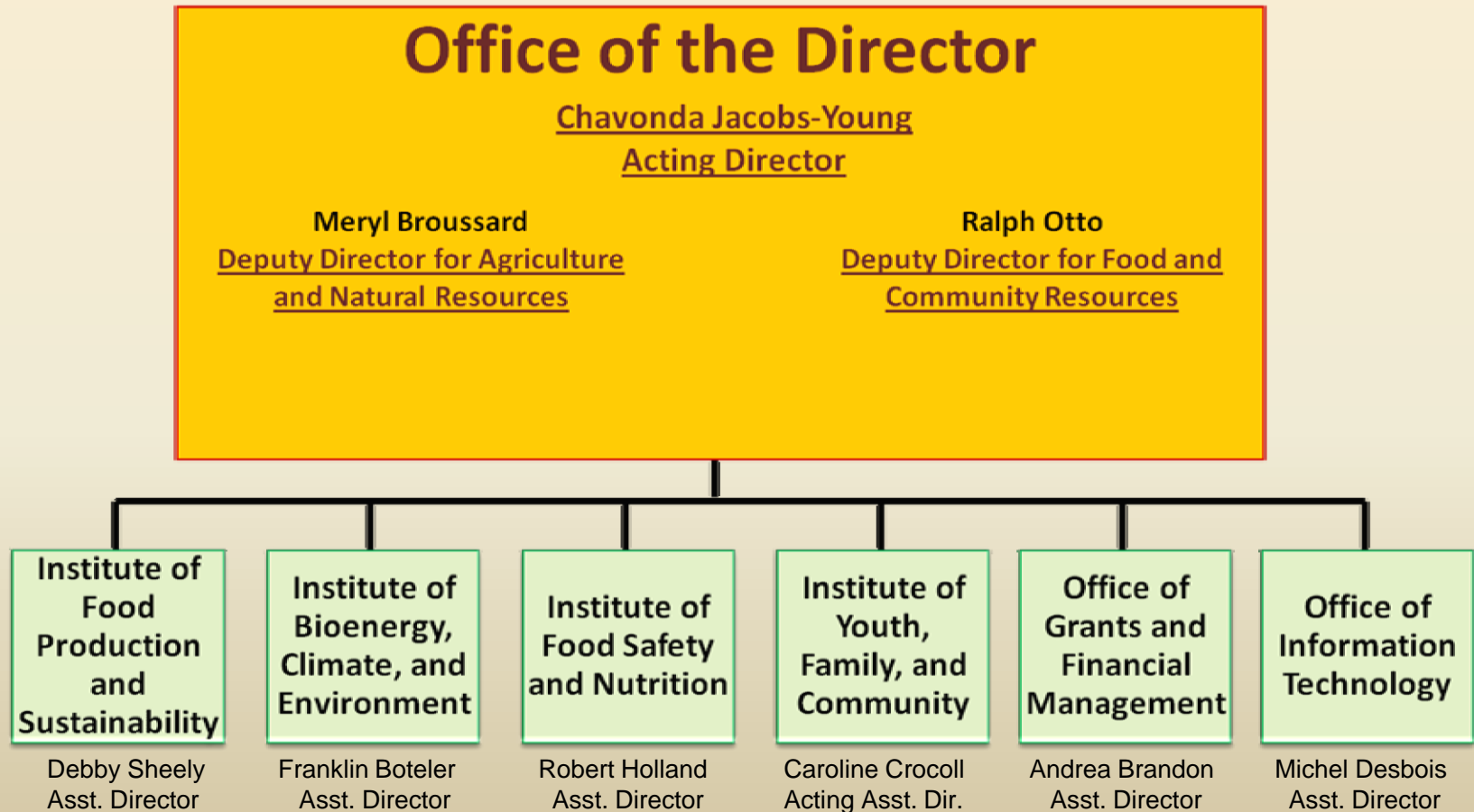
National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)

Purpose: Advance science.

Science: Research, Education, Extension
(both independently and integrated)

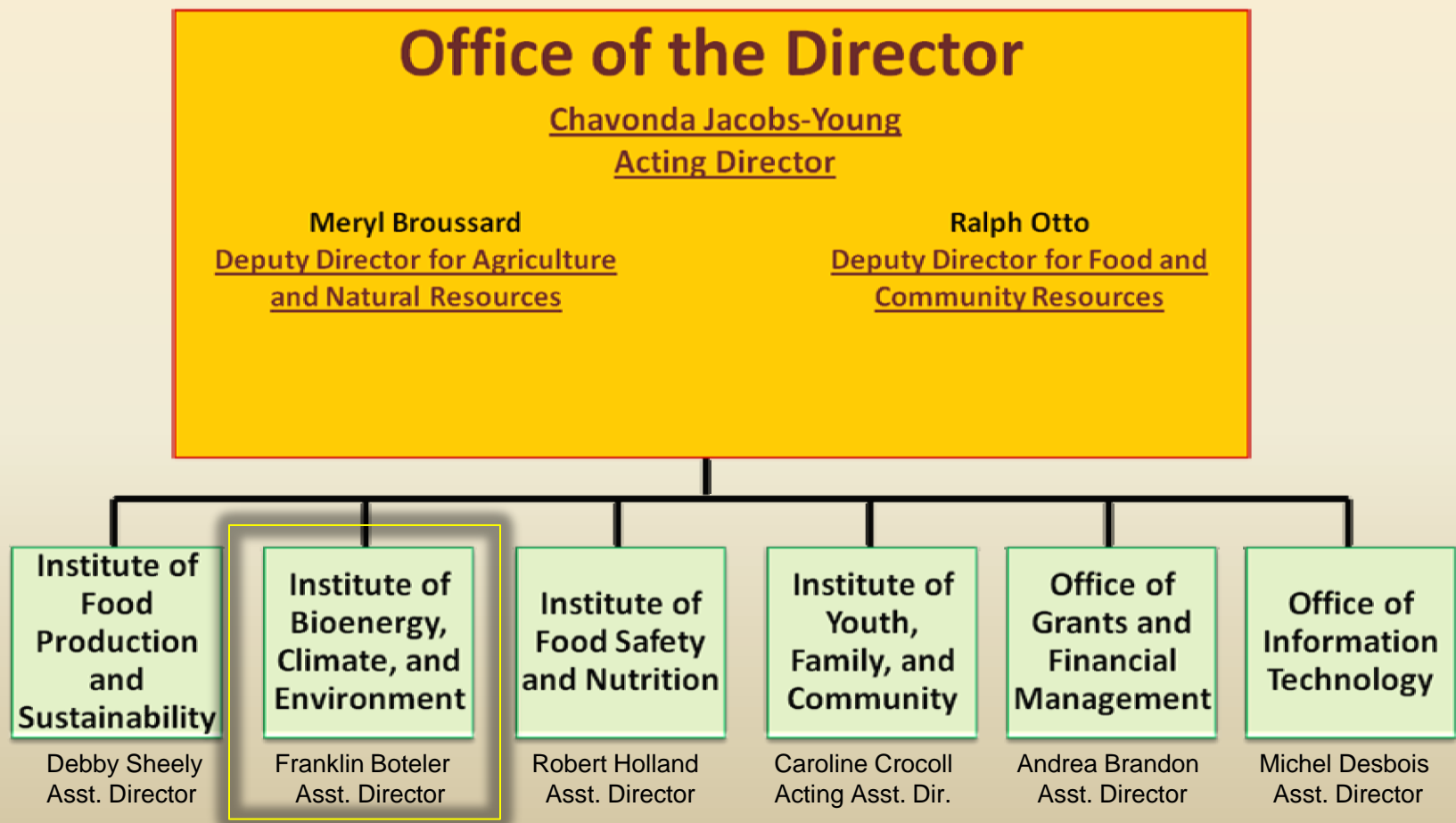


NIFA Organization Chart





NIFA Organization Chart





Institute of Bioenergy, Climate, and Environment

The Institute of Bioenergy, Climate, and Environment (IBCE) is one of four NIFA institutes that fund transdisciplinary, outcome-driven programs to address national science priorities. IBCE programs advance energy independence and the adaptation of agricultural, forest, and range production systems to climate variables. The institute's core programs address basic natural resources—including air, water, and soil—to advance sustainable forest, range, and agricultural production. IBCE comprises three divisions: the Division of Bioenergy, the Division of Climate Change, and the Division of Environmental Systems. The divisions promote transdisciplinary, seamless integration of research, extension, and education efforts across NIFA programs.

Division of Bioenergy

The Division of Bioenergy supports the development of regional systems that produce sustainable bioenergy and biobased products. The goal of these systems is to deliver liquid transportation biofuels to help meet the nation's goal of 36 billion gallons per year of biofuels by 2022 and reduce our national dependence on foreign oil. The division administers grants that support sustainable biomass production, genomic improvements of bioenergy feedstocks, the logistics of handling feedstocks, biomass conversion, product development, and programs that facilitate and clarify land-use changes resulting from feedstock production. Other programs seek to identify the environmental and socioeconomic impacts of biofuels in rural communities.

Division of Climate Change

The Division of Climate Change supports activities that help agricultural and natural resource systems adapt to climate variables such as droughts, floods, and temperature extremes. The division focuses on challenges that are fundamental to sustainable agricultural production and the management of healthy forests and rangelands. Long-term outcomes include developing new varieties of plants and animals that can adapt to climate variability; increasing carbon sequestration; identifying new strategies for agriculture and forest production systems that are adapted to climate variability; advancing the sustainable use of natural resources; and improving conservation activities in the use of energy, nitrogen fertilizer, and water.

Division of Environmental Systems

The Division of Environmental Systems advances knowledge in the areas of natural resources, environment, and conservation. The division supports scientific work that involves air, water, soil, and wildlife resources in order to advance the sustainability of agricultural, forest, and range production systems. Increasing water shortages, loss of topsoil, reduced biological diversity, and loss of habitat are among the issues that may significantly impact the sustainability of agriculture and slow or reverse the expansion of agricultural goods and services. Program priorities include improving air and water quality; developing sustainable ecosystem services; wildlife damage management; maintaining soil health and soil restoration; and improving the management and sustainable use of forests, wildlife, and rangelands. Grant programs develop innovative ways to achieve sustainable use of natural resources and develop educational and extension programs that implement best management practices to enhance environmental, social, and economic benefits.

USDA's **Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR)** program is housed within the Division of Environmental Systems. SBIR grants:

- stimulate technological innovations in the private sector;
- strengthen the role of small businesses in meeting federal research and development needs;
- increase private sector commercialization of innovations derived from USDA-supported research and development efforts; and
- foster participation by women-owned and socially and economically disadvantaged small business firms in technological innovations.



Program Description	Date Published	Proposal Submission Due Date (Estimated)	#of Awards (Estimated)	Program Contact
AFRI Climate Variability and Change 2012	9/21/2011	see below	17-19	Michael Bowers lead, Louie Tupas
AFRI Climate Variability and Change Regional Climate CAPS (A3101)	9/21/2011	1/13/2012	2	Ray Knighton lead, Michael Bowers, Louie Tupas
AFRI Climate Variability and Change Adaptation and Mitigation (A3142)	9/21/2011	12/16/2011	11	Diana Jerkins lead, Michael Bowers, Louie Tupas
Water Sustainability and Climate (A3151: Joint with NSF and DOE)	6/16/2011	10/19/2011	2-3	Mary Ann Rozum lead, Nancy Cavallaro, Louie
Earth System Modeling 2 (A3151: Joint with NSF and DOE)	12/21/2011	5/11/2012	2-3	Nancy Cavallaro lead, Mary Ann Rozum, Louie
AFRI Foundational Program: Renewable Energy, Natural Resources, & Environment	TBA	TBA	TBA	A. Mohamed--M. Poth
Biomass Research and Development Initiative	9/21/2011	12/15/2011	9	C.Bailey
AFRI Sustainable Bioenergy--Regional Approaches	11/1/2011	12/15/2011	1	W.Goldner
AFRI Sustainable Bioenergy--Policy Options for and Impacts on Regional Biofuels Production	11/1/2012	12/15/2011	5	F. Hunt
AFRI Sustainable Bioenergy--Feedstock Production on Biodiversity (Pollinators and		12/15/2011	6	D. Cassidy
AFRI Sustainable Bioenergy--Socioeconomic Impacts of Biofuel Production on Rural Communities		12/15/2011	5	F. Hunt
AFRI Sustainable Bioenergy--Environmental Implications of Director and Indirect Land Use		12/15/2011	6	N. Cavallaro
Feedstock Genomics (AFRI Joint with DOE)	Winter '12		2	E. Kaleikau
Biodiesel Fuel Education Program	TBD	TBD	2	C. Bailey
Critical Ag Materials	Summer '12			C. Bailey
SBIR (Commercialization Assistant Program, CAP)	TBD		1	C. Cleland
SBIR (Phase II)	12/12/2011	3/1/2012	38	C. Cleland
SBIR Phase 1	7/13/2011	9/2/2011	92	C. Cleland
Sun Grants	TBD	TBD	1	C. Bailey
406 Water Quality	TBD			M. O'Neill
Forest Products Research (Wood Utilization Research)	Winter '12		7	Catalino Blanche
Rangeland Research Program	Spring '12		2	J. Dobrowolski
Capacity Programs: McIntire Stennis Cooperative Forestry Program RREA and RREA National Focus Funds	2/1/2012, 06/01/2012, and 3/1/2012, respectively	04/15/2012, 09/15/2012, and 4/19/2012	165	Catalino Blanche, Eric Norland, and J. Dobrowolski



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Overview of NIFA's Institute of Bioenergy, Climate and Environment

Questions?

Frank

Franklin E. Boteler, Ph.D.

Assistant Director, Institute of Bioenergy, Climate, and Environment

National Institute of Food and Agriculture

1400 Independence Ave., SW Mail Stop 2210

Washington, DC 20250-2215

Phone: (202) 720-0740

FAX: (202) 720-7803

fboteler@nifa.usda.gov



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Institute of Youth, Family, and Community

Cindy Reeves, PhD MPH

February 2012



IYFC Overview

- Through key partnerships and collaborations, IYFC efforts focus on:
 - *Enabling vibrant and resilient communities*
 - *Preparing the next generation of scientists*
 - *Enhancing science capacity in minority-serving institutions*
 - *Enhancing youth and family development*



Office of the Director

**Institute of Youth,
Family & Community**

Assistant Director
(Acting)
Crocoll

**Division of Youth and
4-H**
Lauxman

**Division of Community
and Education**
Tupas

**Division of Family and
Consumer Sciences**
Elrod (Acting)



Division of Youth and 4-H

- Positive Youth Development Focus
- Programming bridges the gap between formal & non-formal education through supporting:
 - Experiential Learning
 - Leadership Development
 - Environmental and Agricultural Project Management
 - Community Engagement



Division of Youth and 4-H Programs

- 4-H Youth Development Program
- 4-H Afterschool
- Children, Youth, and Families At-Risk (CYFAR)
- Serving the Needs of Military Youth
- Agriculture in the Classroom





Division of Youth and 4-H

- Director: Lisa Lauxman
- P 202-690-4568
- F 202-720-9366
- lilauxman@nifa.usda.gov



Division of Community and Education (DOCE)

Areas of Focus:

- Developing Human Capital & Expertise in Food and Agriculture
- Increasing Capacity of Minority-Serving Institutions



DOCE Programs

- Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Grants
- National Needs Graduate Fellowship
- NIFA Fellowship Grants
- Higher Education Challenge Grants
- STEM



Division of Community and Education

- Director: Jermelina Tupas
- P 202-720-1973
- F 202-720-9366
- jtupas@nifa.usda.gov



Division of Family and Consumer Sciences (DFCS)

- Promoting the Social/Behavioral Dimensions of NIFA Sciences through:
 - scientific research and its application;
 - strategic partnerships;
 - Extension education; and
 - the preparation of the next generation of Family and Consumer Sciences professionals.



DFCS Programs

- Regional Innovation
- Enhancing Rural Prosperity
- Agricultural Risk Management
- Financial and Health Literacy
- Nutrition, Health & Wellness
- Promoting Healthy Homes
- Opportunities/NIFA Priorities



Division of Family and Consumer Sciences

- Director: Caroline Crocoll-Elrod Acting
- P 202-720-4795
- F 202-720-9366
- ccrocoll@nifa.usda.gov





Select RFAs With a Human Dimension

- Rural Health & Safety Education (approx \$1.4 million in 2012; not in budget for 2013)
- CYFAR (2012 competition complete)
- Childhood Obesity Prevention - AFRI
- Integrated Food Safety Initiative – AFRI
- National Integrated Water Quality Program (NIWQP)



Challenge to SSSC

- Facilitate understanding of the various science cultures within NIFA and how to interact with each other in a strategic and effective way.
- Speak in terms of Human Sciences-not just “social” sciences which has an unintended effect of marginalizing us.
- Help the Human Sciences articulate their role in NIFA priority areas.
- The AFRI Challenge



AFRI Grants shall be awarded to address priorities in US agriculture in the following areas:

A) **Plant health** and production and plant products;

B) **Animal health** and production and animal products;

C) **Food safety, nutrition, and health**;

D) Renewable energy, natural resources, and environment;

E) Agriculture systems and technology; and

F) Agriculture economics and rural communities.



Food Safety Challenge Area, 2011

A) Prevention and Control of *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* in Poultry Flocks and Poultry Products, including Eggs

B) Addressing Critical and Emerging Food Safety Issues: supporting research focused on identifying and characterizing emerging food-borne human pathogens and other contaminants in foods



Food Security Challenge Area, 2012

- A) Translational Genomics for Disease Resistance in Animals
- B) Extension-driven Disease Prevention and Control in Animals
- C) Translational Genomics for Improved Fertility of Animals
- D) Minimizing Diseases due to Fungal Pathosystems
- E) Management of Arthropod- or Nematode-vectorized Plant Pathogens
- F) Enhanced Implementation of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) for Vectored Pathogens
- G) Sustainable Food Systems to Improve Food Security



The AFRI Funding Challenge

A) Where is AFRI funding for the legislative priority for Human Health?

B) What role might ESCOP stakeholders and others in areas of the social, behavioral and life sciences, have in advocating for change in AFRI funding allocations and priority setting with NIFA leadership?



NIFA

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AFRI STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Results of an AFRI Gap Analysis conducted by the ESCOP Social Science Subcommittee on February 21-22, 2012.

Introduction

In response to NIFA's call for stakeholder feedback to the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI), the ESCOP Social Science Subcommittee (SSSc) conducted a gap analysis of recent AFRI RFA's to identify ways these could solicit more robust contributions from social scientists. Suggestions are provided to help AFRI envision the signature and foundational programs in ways that better address the human and social dimensions of the grand challenges and foundational research that shape AFRI priorities.

The purpose of the ESCOP SSSc is to "Recommend specific actions to help the Land-Grant system address high priority research and education issues leading to outcomes that deal with social issues in a significant, measurable way and that will generate sustained financial support." The SSSc hopes that this gap analysis will produce results not only for AFRI, but for the many other science initiatives at NIFA and within the Land-Grant system that can benefit from the body of work, perspectives and approaches, and skill sets that social scientists bring to solving some of our most vexing food, agricultural, and rural problems.

The SSSc reviewed the science priorities of available 2012 RFAs, including Food Safety, Agricultural and Natural Resources Science for Climate Variability and Change, Food Security, and Sustainable Bioenergy, as well as the 2011 RFA for foundational programs, including Plant Health and Production and Plant Products; Animal Health and Production and Animal Products; Food Safety, Nutrition, and Health; Renewable Energy, Natural Resources, and Environment; Agricultural Systems and Technology; and, Agriculture and Rural Communities.

The SSSc conducted their review by organizing into five small multidisciplinary working groups, each tasked with a different RFA. This was done to divide the labor and focus the attention and expertise of participants on a specific set of challenges. The SSSc defined the scope of their work by focusing exclusively on those 30 pages extracted from the five RFAs which articulated the science priorities in each of the challenge and foundational areas. No other facets of the solicitation or competitive process were reviewed.

Instructions for the gap analysis were open-ended and non-prescriptive, so each group was able to tailor their responses and recommendations as best suited the needs of their work. As a result, working groups reported back in a variety of ways; this will be evident in the various ways that feedback is presented below.

There are, however, general themes, cross-cutting issues, and overarching concerns that are presented first. Then, attention is focused on the specific science priorities of each RFA. The ultimate purpose of this gap analysis and stakeholder feedback is so NIFA may reap greater benefits from their social science investments to solve the grand and foundational challenges identified within AFRI.

Cross-cutting Areas from the Five Working Groups

The SSSc has high regard for the work done by NIFA and the RFA developers in reshaping the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative. As a result of your efforts, important work is being done by the land grant partners and other AFRI awardees. No recommendation made in this SSSc review is meant as a criticism of this hard work. Rather, our comments and suggestions are offered as a means to continually improve the science enterprise and to assist NIFA to remain nimble in response to dramatic changes in food, agriculture, natural resources, and the environment, and the coupled natural and human systems we are all trying to better understand.

Hundreds of pages of RFA text were sifted through to distill the 30 pages of science priorities that were their focus. This burdensome task hints at a challenge that all social scientists may face when trying to respond to NIFA solicitations. The human and social dimensions are diffused throughout NIFA programming (as we believe they should be), but this means that social scientists must work much harder to identify competitive opportunities in NIFA RFAs. We would recommend that NIFA create some mechanism to provide a summary of the human and social dimensions solicited by the aggregate of NIFA RFAs. We believe this would facilitate more robust contributions from social scientists in the competitive process and, ultimately, to the outcomes of AFRI investments.

The problems to be addressed in each RFA are almost always framed from a technological perspective, rather than from human needs perspective. Most RFAs are quite prescriptive, requesting an assumed solution to a problem rather than eliciting projects that propose a new way to solve the problem or that represent an array of potential solutions. Moreover, the assumed solutions solicited by the RFAs are almost always of a technological nature, which do not derive from an understanding of social systems and human behavior. If the human needs are assumed, they are implicit, not explicit, as though all RFA developers agree on the problem. The outcome of science application may be a product OR a process. Examples of some vexing paradoxes that require research on the human and social dimensions rather than technological fixes include: food processers and preparers frequently neglect even basic food safety practices; farmers do not automatically switch production to a carbon sequestering cultivar; consumers often do not select the healthiest foods on the grocery shelf; and, increasing the food supply does not ensure food security or feed the hungry.

RFA developers need to integrate the social sciences in the framing of the issue, rather than bringing them in at the end to evaluate behavioral change. Ask “How does this RFA address the human condition?” And make the answer explicit in the solicitation and in the proposed projects. USG solicitations for international development work require that all proposals include a social impact assessment (SIA). Inclusion of an SIA requirement for AFRI-funded projects would go a long way to strengthening the human and social dimensions of AFRI investments and solving human problems.

The RFAs frequently rely on social science buzzwords without defining them. For example, what is meant by cost-benefit analysis or social, economic, and environmental sustainability? What are the components? What are the benchmarks? Costs to whom? Benefits for whom? How will we know when we've achieved sustainability? Without defining and providing benchmarks, how can we evaluate whether a proposed project is designed to achieve it? This repetition of buzzwords gives the impression that RFA developers don't understand the incredible potential of social science research or the nuanced approaches that each science can contribute. The social sciences can do so much more than cost/benefit analysis!

If behavior change is an end goal, it is essential to understand the drivers of human decision-making, adoption and diffusion, and action to change conditions. Where do the RFAs (and the proposed projects they solicit) consider producer or consumer adoption? What cultural elements contribute to variability in acceptance, response, choice, etc.? What are the barriers that thwart and enhancers that facilitate changes in human behaviors, policies and institutions, and social systems?

There seems to be a disconnect in the RFAs between the science being solicited and those who hold a stake in its success, especially farmers and consumers. For example, is it implicit or explicit that a market exists for the technology developed or practices recommended as a result of AFRI investment? Assessing producer and consumer needs prior to developing new agricultural technologies and practices will be essential.

RFA developers need to consider a number of questions, including: Who are the intended users of AFRI-developed technologies? Who will adopt this technology? Is this a farmer decision, consumer decision, voter decision, manufacturer decision? Whose behavior needs/is going to change? Who will implement this change? And what are the implications of these changes for individuals, communities, institutions, governments, and social systems? What will be the impact on agriculture? What will be the impact on communities? Does the technology contribute to people prosperity or place prosperity? What conditions will change as the result of diffusion of these technologies, and how will they impact quality of life?

We were pleased to see that a number of RFAs solicit systems analyses. Their presentation in the text, however, appeared quite linear, rather than iterative. We could not detect whether a feedback loop was considered. If so, we would recommend that this be made more explicit in RFAs that solicit systems analyses. If not, we would recommend its inclusion.

In many solicitations, the evaluation component is missing or invisible. A three-year award constrains the ability to measure outcomes, and science can't verify impacts by the end of five years. Is AFRI considering extending the timeframe of awards to allow more robust evaluation of results?

The RFAs should solicit education research, not just education doing. Education and extension is not just an activity or a product, it is a researchable science. Education and Extension scholarship should be expected and invested in.

We didn't see much in the way of addressing the needs of limited-resource producers, communities, and populations, including the 1890 institution stakeholders. This could be addressed by insistence on involvement of minority-serving institutions, 1890, 1994, and HSIs. Proposed project should be able to demonstrate how all partners were involved in the development and integration of the project and will contribute to its outcomes.

Finally, is there a way for NIFA (or Congress) to define Hispanic-serving institutions that would allow focused partnerships with the Land Grant system? Defining them by enrollment figures creates a "moving target," which thwarts meaningful long-term collaborations. This is compounded because HSIs are NOT structurally similar to Land Grants, as they have no colleges of agriculture or Extension services. If NIFA could designate a number of HSIs it seeks to support and identify them, this would help the Land Grant system establish working relationships that are easier to sustain.

FY 2012 Food Safety (AFRI)

General Observations and Reflections

The RFA does not question how consumers and producers will respond to changes in food safety. That is assumed. But if erroneously assumed, the investment may be wasted. Food safety needs to include research on what drives consumers' preferences and behaviors. Such research would examine motivation, affective and cognitive development, and emotional intelligence, among other things. This would attract other social sciences (psychology, e.g.) to make contributions to solving food safety problems.

Social structures, social and economic systems, the market and organizational structures (ownership, contracts, organizational literature on how business, industry, & gov't interaction, incentives) and how they interact among one another are key dynamics that should be among the subjects solicited for food safety science.

The supply chain is NOT a buzzword. We recommend the RFA encourage examination of the entire value chain in terms of food safety, especially critical control points, broadly defined. This would require looking at potential breakdowns in technology and behavior and what the costs and benefits of success or failure are. Food safety behaviors of farmers and producers and processors and manufacturers are all significant areas of inquiry. The food processing and production links in the chain are essential to include, as are interactions among social system factors and external influences.

We did not see food safety priorities related to potential contaminants in the food supply. Is there a way to incorporate issues related to antibiotics, pesticide residue, food irradiation, and/or biotechnology in the solicitation?

The RFA did not seem to provide a way to evaluate how people assess their food safety risk. An informed choice is not correlated to a change in behavior. How are consumers responding to food safety information? What are their perceptions of food safety risk? These are important areas of inquiry for food safety.

In the RFA, education appears to simply be an add-on. There is no attention given to education scholarship or education science. Simply "educating" the public is not the solution; labels don't elicit consumer response. A perfect food safety system is cost prohibitive. What is needed is better understanding of which food safety practices are more economically important to focus on. Which gives the greatest margin for safety? Of all the potential problems and solutions, which gives us the greatest bang for the buck?

Specific Suggestions are embedded below **in bold** in the text of the Food Safety RFA. Extracts of Program Priorities from the Food Safety RFA follow.

Background

While the U.S. food supply is generally considered to be one of the safest in the world, food-borne illness continues to be a source of concern for the American consumer, federal government, and industry. The Food Safety Challenge Area promotes and enhances the scientific discipline of food safety, with an overall aim of protecting consumers from microbial, chemical, and physical hazards that may occur during all stages of the food chain, from production to consumption. This requires an understanding of the interdependencies of human, animal, and ecosystem health as it pertains to food-borne pathogens.

To meet these identified needs, the long-term outcome for this program is to reduce food-borne illnesses and deaths by improving the safety of the food supply, which will result in reduced impacts on public health and on our economy. Projects are expected to address one of the stated Program Area Priorities which collectively contribute to the achievement of the following goals:

1. Improve the safety of the food supply through developing and implementing effective strategies that prevent or mitigate food-borne contamination, including food processing technologies, resulting in a reduction in the incidence of food-borne illness, while preventing future food-borne outbreaks. **In addition, identifying and promoting the development of incentives, organizational structures, and contracts that lead to behavior on the part of producers and consumers that promote food safety.**
2. Promote the development, adoption **and diffusion** of detection technologies for food-borne pathogens and other contaminants in foods, which are sensitive, specific, rapid, economical, easily-implemented, and usable under a variety of conditions, including use in the field. **This will involve the need to understand what factors influence producer and consumer behavior and how they respond to incentives. Topics that are important are cultural values, social structures and organization, brain mapping, etc.**
3. **Evaluating the value chain to identify the critical control points (with costs and benefits broadly defined to incorporate the values of the participants). Contracting will also be important. Another area is a reporting system where consumers are able to report problems with food illnesses – thus there will be a need for a data repository (data – information – knowledge). Reduce** negative public health and economic impacts through the development and demonstration of effective traceability systems that track the source, movement, critical tracking events (CTEs), storage, and control of contaminated food and food ingredients from production to consumption.
4. Increase the number of food safety scientists, as well as scientists who are cross trained in environmental science, animal science, microbiology, genetics, epidemiology, economics, social science, food science, engineering, and public health, to provide a holistic approach to ensuring the safety of the food supply, from pre-harvest through consumption.

5. The role of contaminants in our food supply is another question of importance here.

In order to achieve these program goals, the Food Safety Challenge Area will address several focused objectives over the next three years. These specific objectives are intended to allow for a stepwise progression toward effective strategies for prevention and mitigation of contamination, evaluation and demonstration of effective food processing technologies, rapid detection of food contaminants, and development of effective traceability systems for food and food ingredients. In FY 2010, the AFRI Food Safety program focused on the following priority areas: shiga-toxin producing *Escherichia coli* (STEC) in beef, food processing technologies, food-borne viruses, food safety education and emerging food safety issues. In FY 2011, the AFRI Food Safety Program will solicit new grant applications that address *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* in poultry products. In addition and like the FY 2010 priority areas, the AFRI Food Safety Challenge Area will request applications for critical and emergent food safety research needs to prevent and control threats to the safety of the U.S. food supply. Contingent upon the availability of new funds, in FY 2012, the priority areas will include: microbial ecology of food-borne pathogens and control of other food-borne pathogens of concern, e.g., *Listeria monocytogenes*.

Comment: This suggests that the entire problem relates to food contamination, and if we just educate people all will be solved. However people respond in sometimes seemingly irrational ways – so further understanding of human behavior on the part of all players in the value chain will be essential.

1. Prevention and Control of Salmonella and Campylobacter in Poultry Flocks and Poultry Products, including Eggs

Comment: Why is the focus on such a specific example when there are food-borne illnesses from many food sources (e.g.; other animal products; fruits and vegetables?)

Program Area Priority – Applicants must address the following:

Projects in this priority area should generate information and/or strategies critical to the reduction of *Campylobacter* and/or *Salmonella* in poultry and poultry products. Projects are encouraged to identify risk factors and develop intervention and risk management strategies for reducing *Campylobacter* and/or *Salmonella* contamination in the pre-harvest and/or post-harvest environments and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies using a risk-informed approach. Highly focused projects that include two of three functions (research, education, extension) will be considered for funding.

Applications are encouraged to include one or more of the following topic areas:

Comment: This sort of evaluation will be incomplete without an understanding of the systems, and the incentives that result from those systems, and how those incentives lead to particular behavior (with respect to taking on risk) that decision makers will use.

- Develop new and improved methodologies for monitoring poultry flocks for the presence of *Campylobacter* and/or *Salmonella*. Monitoring and surveillance should target both chicks known to be pathogen-negative, and suspected targets of vertical transmission from grandparent, to parent, to offspring (or to egg).
- Develop improvements in slaughter hygiene and technology that are effective for reducing contamination of poultry products. Improvements should address a combination of control factors that provide a series of “hurdles” to minimize the risk of poultry meat contamination.
- Develop and implement guidelines for taking appropriate action when finding positive flocks.
- Develop novel technologies to reduce human pathogens in live birds and/or poultry products, including eggs.
- Develop guidelines and recommendations for best practices to reduce human pathogen loads in poultry flocks.
- Investigate improvements in control technologies that promote protective mechanisms in individual live birds, such as vaccinations, and optimization of the intestinal flora of poultry.
- Develop effective and efficient processing and packaging methods for prevention, control, and elimination of contamination of poultry products.
- Design effective training, education (graduate and undergraduate), and outreach programs for industry, veterinarians, producers, processors, and others who are critical influencers of effective infection control and prevention of contamination, both for live animals, poultry meat, and eggs.
- **There may be a need to study the impact of scale of operation on the propensity for problems with food safety in production operations. On the one hand a large scale poultry operation may be safer because that organization can afford to have a veterinarian on-site to watch for problems and have them treated before they become severe. On the other had, if there is an outbreak that quickly spreads through the flock there are many more animals affected and that can affect consumer safety.**
- **Sometimes consumer response to a food safety crisis is to “buy local” or “buy organic” or “grow your own” and the relative safety of these approaches is unknown. This is another area in need of study.**
- Design new, innovative, and effective consumer education programs that focus on the best ways to avoid infection, including safe handling and preparation and proper cooking instructions (for example, proper temperature and time controls) for poultry and poultry products. **Identify and develop knowledge diffusion systems for the 21st century. How do we inform consumers and producers in a manner that is effective and wide-spread?**

- **Use school based (formal) education for safety education and take a lesson from the positive experiences with recycling and farm safety.**
- **Cultural sensitivity, norms and traditions play a very large role here. More study is needed to identify how these factors are influencing consumer behavior and how educational programs might be structured.**
- Determine the most effective and practical methodologies for measuring and evaluating the impact of potential interventions on preventing and controlling infections associated with poultry products.
- Conduct economic analyses that compare the costs and benefits of implementing various prevention and control measures from farm to fork. These measures should be developed for small, medium, and large producers and/or processors. There is a need to broaden this to incorporate the impact of different organizational (different market structures, different ownership organization) and contract structure on incentives and behaviors.

Other Program Area Requirements:

- *Detail Removed*
- To increase the potential impact of projects on control of *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella*, inclusion of animal scientists, food microbiologists, poultry plant operators, veterinarians, engineers, economists, epidemiologists, social scientists, educators, extension educators and specialists, and statisticians to the project team is highly recommended, where applicable.

Comment: In order to understand the cultural and social factors it will be important to expand this list to include other social scientists (anthropology, sociology, psychology) among others, including other life sciences for investigations that include bio-chemistry, brain mapping, etc.

2. Addressing Critical and Emerging Food Safety Issues

Program Area Priority – Applicants must address the following:

- Research generated in this priority will reduce the burden of food-borne illness by supporting a wide range of critical and emerging food safety research needs. Emerging pathogens and contaminants are defined in this program as being potential food safety hazards where little to no science-based information is available demonstrating that the hazard is a cause of food-borne disease. This program will support both fundamental and applied research focused on identifying and characterizing emerging food-borne human pathogens and other contaminants (*e.g.*, chemicals, nanoparticles, and toxins) in foods; development of concentration and purification methods for isolating pathogens and contaminants from foods; identification and evaluation of under-researched food vehicles that harbor or support pathogen growth and transmission; and/or

novel and practical processing, mitigation, and control strategies that reduce the transmission, growth, and survival of pathogens in food environments.

Applications are encouraged to include one or more of the following topic areas:

- **Evaluate the value chain to identify the critical control points – using broad based measures of cost and benefits and return on investment (ROI).**
- Identify and characterize emerging human food-borne pathogens and contaminants of significance to the food supply.
- Develop novel intervention strategies in live animals for emerging human food-borne pathogens and/or contaminants, with special emphasis on the critical period leading up to, and ending with presentation for slaughter and hide removal (meat) or collection (milk).
- Conduct pre-harvest basic and applied studies to develop sensitive, accurate and validated pen-, chute-, or animal-side emerging food-borne human pathogen detection tests that are cost-effective and amenable to high-throughput scaling.
- Develop and statistically validate an improved method for the detection of *Brucella* in cheeses or *Mycobacterium avium* or *bovis* in dairy products including cheese. The method should be rapid, specific, practical, and sensitive. Determine the incidence of these pathogens in these products.
- Develop and statistically validate and improved method for the detection of, and if possible to distinguish between, the meat-associated and feline-associated *Toxoplasma gondii*. The method should be rapid, specific, practical, and sensitive.
- Determine the incidence of *Toxoplasma gondii* in live food animals and identify interventions to reduce contamination of meat and/or produce.
- Develop novel concentration and purification procedures for isolating human pathogens or contaminants from foods.

Other Program Area Requirements:

- *Detail Removed*
- To improve the potential impact of projects on enhancing food safety, inclusion of engineers, food microbiologists, economists, epidemiologists, social scientists, animal scientists, and statisticians to the project team is highly recommended where applicable.

Comment: Include other disciplines as well, such as psychology.

3. Research Projects

Single-function Research Projects will be support fundamental or applied research conducted by individual investigators, co-investigators within the same discipline, or multidisciplinary teams.

Fundamental research means research that (i) increases knowledge or understanding of the fundamental aspects of phenomena and has the potential for

broad application and (ii) has an effect on agriculture, food, nutrition, or the environment.

Applied research means research that includes expansion of the findings of fundamental research to uncover practical ways in which new knowledge can be advanced to benefit individuals and society.

Multidisciplinary projects are those in which investigators from two or more disciplines collaborate closely to address a common problem. These collaborations, where appropriate, may integrate the biological, physical, chemical, or social sciences.

4. Integrated Research, Education, and/or Extension Projects

An Integrated Project includes at least two of the three functions of the agricultural knowledge system (*i.e.*, research, education, and extension) within a project, focused around a problem or issue. The functions addressed in the project should be interwoven throughout the life of the project and act to complement and reinforce one another. The functions should be interdependent and necessary for the success of the project and no more than two-thirds of the project's budget may be focused on a single component.

- 1) The proposed research component of an integrated project should address knowledge gaps that are critical to the development of practices and programs to address the stated problem.
- 2) The proposed education (teaching and teaching-related) component of an Integrated Project should develop human capital relevant to overall program goals for U.S. agriculture. An education or teaching activity is formal classroom instruction, laboratory instruction, and practicum experience in the food and agricultural sciences and other related matters such as faculty development, student recruitment and services, curriculum development, instructional materials and equipment, and innovative teaching methodologies.

Educational activities may include any of the following: conducting classroom and laboratory instruction and practicum experience; faculty research internships for curricula development; cutting-edge agricultural science and technology curriculum development; innovative teaching methodologies; instructional materials development; education delivery systems; student experiential learning (student led-research; internships; externships; clinics); student learning styles and student-centered instruction; student recruitment and retention efforts; career planning materials and counseling; pedagogy; faculty development programs; development of modules for on-the-job training; providing knowledge and skills for professionals creating policy or transferring to the agriculture workforce; faculty and student exchanges; and student study abroad and international research opportunities relevant to overall program goals for U.S. agriculture. Educational activities must show direct alignment with increasing technical competency in AFRI priority area(s) to ensure that U.S. agriculture remains globally competitive in the knowledge age.

Educational components must address one or two of the following key strategic actions:

- Train students for Associate, Baccalaureate, Master's or Doctoral degrees; and/or
- Prepare K-12 teachers and higher education faculty to understand and present food and agricultural sciences.

These projects should synthesize and incorporate a wide range of the latest relevant research results. Note that routine use of graduate students and postdoctoral personnel to conduct research is not considered education for the purposes of this program.

- 3) The proposed extension component of an Integrated Project should conduct programs and activities that deliver science-based knowledge and informal educational programs to people, enabling them to make practical decisions. Program delivery may range from community-based to national audiences and use communication methods from face-to-face to electronic or combinations thereof. Extension Projects may also include related matters such as certification programs, in-service training, client recruitment and services, curriculum development, instructional materials and equipment, and innovative instructional methodologies appropriate to informal educational programs.

Extension activities address one or more of the following key strategic actions:

- Support informal education to increase food and agricultural literacy of youth and adults;
- Promote science-based agricultural literacy by increasing understanding and use of food and agricultural science data, information, and programs;
- Build science-based capability in people to engage audiences and enable informed decision making;
- Develop new applications of instructional tools and curriculum structures that increase technical competency and ensure global competitiveness;
- Offer non-formal learning programs that increase accessibility to new audiences at the rate at which new ideas and technologies are tested and/or developed at the community-scale; and
- Develop programs that increase public knowledge and citizen engagement leading to actions that protect or enhance the nations' food supply, agricultural productivity, environmental quality, community vitality, and/or public health and well-being.

These projects should synthesize and incorporate a wide range of the latest relevant research results. Please note that research-related activities such as publication of papers or speaking at scientific meetings are not considered extension for the purposes of this program.

Integrated Projects aim to resolve today's problems through the application of science-based knowledge and address needs identified by stakeholders. Integrated Projects clearly identify anticipated outcomes and have a plan for evaluating and documenting the success of the project. These projects should lead to measurable, documented changes in learning, actions, or conditions in an identified audience or stakeholder group.

**Agricultural and Natural Resources Science for
Climate Variability and Change (AFRI)**

General Observations and Reflections

Everything is dynamic (social, economics, environmental) so there is no firm target for a sustainable climate. Costs are going to rise. People's choices will be influenced. Food access/security is the key question with climate change. What are the responses? The market will respond to climate change because people will react and adjust. But where is the market? And how does it respond? Answers to such questions are not solicited by this RFA.

Does the RFA consider a feedback loop in all systems analysis? It's not explicit, but it should be.

The evaluation component is invisible, due to the contracted timeframe for measuring outcomes within 3 years. Researchers can't verify impact by end of 5 years. The intermediate or long-term outcomes can't be measured within timeframe.

Specific Suggestions are presented below **in bold**:

- 1. General Frame Question: The basic formulation of the RFA is on the production/technology side of the problem:**
 - a. For example, maybe the optimal response to rising seawater is to move rice production inland and use the freed land for something else.**
 - b. A larger/regional response to climate change.**
- 2. General Frame Question: The RFA focuses on place prosperity rather than people prosperity.**
- 3. General Frame Question: These decisions may imply that people have to make different consumption decisions than they did before – some commodities may become more expensive – does this impact food security?**
- 4. With regard to 5.1 – Assess the existing and potential market for ecosystem services focusing on carbon sequestration.**
- 5. With regard to 5.4 and 5.5 – This may not be attainable given the lifespan of the projects. An instrument may show a difference, but we cannot show impact [Pic 1,2, or 3 and then 4 or 5].**
- 6. What is the difference between 5 and 6? Is the focus in 6 on increased variability or regional shifts?**
 - a. They use the term ecosystem services in the individual objectives.**
 - b. Regional changes in production/mitigation.**
- 7. How would supply chains have regional context?**
 - a. Clarification of the economic dimension of the second bullet point on 6.**

- 8. Why do producers decide to participate in decision-making, management practices, and supply chains on second bullet point on 6?**
- 9. What is the educational research content? It seems to be more a delivery of service instead of research.**
- 10. More detail on collaboration between education and research would be helpful.**

FY 2012 Food Security (AFRI)

General Observations and Reflections

The focus of the RFA is on increasing food production, but food security is about more than producing more food. The paradox is that hunger goes up as production goes up. Consequently, the science of food security needs to be reframed. What are the human issues causing food insecurity and how do we address these? Create new category in the RFA—on the food system. Refocus the new program priority on the food system and human behavior; neither animal nor crop, but instead looking at human factors—the behavior of people. People will have to behave differently. Not everything is amendable to a technological fix. Food access and affordability, and public and private food distribution systems are essential areas of inquiry, as are economics, logistics, infrastructure, etc.—to improve food security. It is not essential to have social scientist on every project, but researchers do need to recognize the human dimensions of these problems. The RFA needs to facilitate this, so it is not simply tacked on to the end of any project.

Human behavior is affected by information and policy. How will we use the information generated by the program to implement change? This suggests that policy analysis should be built into the RFA as essential area of inquiry for food security, too. Likewise, how will the knowledge generated be disseminated? Considering how information will be disseminated should be part of RFA, to initiate discussion and development of food system that ensures food security.

Specific suggestions are presented below **in bold**:

The Food Security Group was struck by several things in critiquing the Program Priorities of the 2012 AFRI RFA. The first would be that the RFA focused on increasing food production as a primary way of increasing food security. The primary assumption for this “production focused” proposition seems that food insecurity occurs largely because of lack of food, ignoring myriads of other social and human consumption issues. We recognize that the food security issues being addressed are global as well as national and support research that enhances production. But we note, for example, the RFA indicates that between 2007 and 2008, food insecurity increased 30 percent in this country. Food production during the same period increased and the food system became more efficient: food production increased by 2 percent, and total agricultural inputs decreased by 2 percent. We argue that increased food production and food production efficiency alone does not lead to reductions in food insecurity. Therefore, we suggest that the introductory section of the RFA broadens the assumption underlying as well as causes of food insecurity.

We further noted that the RFA summary was structured into two sections that address the production side: the first dealing with “increasing animal health and production” and the second with “increasing sustainable crop production. The

first section had three programs that focused on animals and the second section had four programs, three of which focused on crops and the last of which dealt with “sustainable food systems to improve food security”. We believe that the section “sustainable food systems” should be treated as a separate category, dealing with the human factor. Therefore, we suggest restructuring the seven programs into three major categories: food systems (dealing with the human factor), animal systems, and crops systems.

Based on the above observations, we identified several ways in which the RFA categories can be improved and the social sciences and human dimensions can be incorporated into the AFRI process:

1. The human dimensions need not be explored in every priority: economic impacts have some relevance to many programs, but analysis of human behavior and social systems has marginal relevance to 5 of the 7 programs priority reviewed.
2. Consider taking advantage of the human and social science expertise in the system by refocusing existing programs or focusing new programs on human behavior and the food system, broadly conceived.
3. Specifically, we’d recommend a new category on “improving food systems through understanding human behavior and economic/social systems” (in addition to the sections on “increasing animal health and production” and “increasing sustainable crop production”) that draws on the strengths of the human and social sciences as well as the agricultural production sciences. And bring this category to the front of the description of Food Security research.
4. The program under Food Security that fits in this new category and that most heavily draws on this expertise was Number 7 on “sustainable food systems to improve food security”. This program supported analysis of food access and affordability issues, the public and private and nonprofit food distribution system and the production and value chains embedded in this system.
5. Human behavior is changed by new information as well as policies. (Think about how new information and policies about smoking and health affected tobacco use over the last 50 years.) This program can contribute to information about human behavior related to food choices, food system functioning, and policies that affect the food system and human health in a way that can lead to improvements in global and national food security. Requests for proposals should encourage analysis of policies that affect food systems and plans for getting the information to potential users.

FY 2012 Sustainable Bioenergy (AFRI)

General Observations and Reflections

This RFA needs to be more prescriptive in inclusion of social & human dimensions of bioenergy and the participation of social scientists. Researchers responding to the RFA should demonstrate a foundational understanding of what a human system is and what it encompasses.

The RFA needs to articulate the sustainable dimensions of each of the three legs of the stool: environmental, economic, and social. What are the social pieces that have to be in place before a sustainability goal can be achieved? Sustainability analysis should reach down to the social components.

Specific suggestions are presented below and embedded below **in bold**.

Comment: In framing and shaping the science for sustainable bioenergy, as well as for developing the program description, it would be advantageous to also view the challenges through the lens of farmers and communities.

Extracts of Program Priorities from the Sustainable Bioenergy RFA follow:

Sustainable Bioenergy Challenge Area:

- *Detail Removed*

Background

The AFRI Sustainable Bioenergy Program will fund grants that target vital topical areas related to the development of regional systems for the sustainable production of bioenergy, biopower and biobased products. These programs will, where appropriate, align with existing Regional Bioenergy Coordinated Agricultural Projects (CAP) to promote NIFA's goal and mission of economic, environmental, and rural community sustainability **through research, education, and outreach**.

Comment: Extension scholarship should be a requirement, especially with regard to goals 7 and 8 below.

Demand for biomass continues to increase as additional targets for heat, transportation fuels, power, and biobased products are realized. Current policies are designed to provide agricultural support, rural enhancement, reduced dependence on foreign sources of energy, climate change mitigation/adaptation, and environmental sustainability. Policy developments often are identified as drivers of production decisions in the biofuels and bioenergy industries. New policies will need to take into full account associated risks/uncertainties and unintended consequences of feedstock production systems on natural resource and ecosystem service sustainability. Research

is not well developed around the implications of current and alternative regulatory policies, fuel and portfolio standards, market distorting and other production subsidies, tax credits, and agricultural assistance programs on both bioenergy and agricultural markets and production decisions, which are subject to further evaluations of environmental and other indirect effects.

To meet these identified needs, the long-term outcome for this program is to implement regional systems that materially deliver liquid transportation biofuels to help meet the Energy Independence and Security Act (EISA) of 2007 goal of 36 billion gallons/year of biofuels by 2022 and reduce the National dependence on foreign oil and, as appropriate, produce biopower and biobased products. Projects are expected to employ a systems approach to address the stated Program Area Priorities which collectively contribute to the achievement of the following goals:

1. Deployment of superior genotypes of regionally-appropriate dedicated energy crops.
2. Refinement and implementation of sustainable regional feedstock production practice.
3. Seamless feedstock logistics.
4. Scalable, sustainable conversion technologies that can accept a diverse range of feedstocks.
5. Regional marketing and distribution systems.
6. Regional sustainability analyses, **procedures of policy analysis and community engagement**, data collection and management, and tools to support decision-making, **system-development, and transitional science; initial data collection should include limited-resource bio-energy producer and consumer concerns.**
7. **A workforce well-educated and prepared through formal and informal education from secondary through post-secondary to adult level** with the capacity to fill the cross-disciplinary needs of the biofuels industry.
8. **Build capacity in minority-serving institutions for research, education, and outreach in sustainable bio-energy.**

In FY 2010, NIFA solicited for the establishment of three Regional Bioenergy CAPs that focus on dedicated energy crops including energy cane, perennial grasses, sorghum, woody biomass, and oil crops (oilseeds and algae). These sustainable crops serve as feedstocks for the production of advanced non-ethanol, infrastructure-compatible fuels and biobased products through a systems-oriented approach that links feedstock development, production, logistics, conversion and markets. NIFA supports programs that are trans-disciplinary and integrate genetic crop development; sustainable agronomic and silvicultural practices; pest and beneficial species management; coordinated energy-efficient logistics; flexible and scalable sustainable conversion and refining technologies; effective marketing and distribution systems; provide sustainable ecosystem services and rural community prosperity. In FY 2012, NIFA will support one additional Regional Bioenergy CAP that focuses on the production and delivery of Regionally Sustainable Biomass Feedstocks. While the focus will be on feedstocks,

competitive proposals will present their feedstock development and production concepts in the context of a complete regional supply chain.

The FY 2010 Request for Applications received useful stakeholder input which helped to identify the specific areas of research for FY 2012. These topics increase NIFA's pursuit of sustainability by focusing on the interplay between policy, **planning and implementation**, the environment, and bioenergy and protecting and providing habitats for wildlife and beneficial insects. Each topic has strong ties to the environment, economic efficiency, and rural community life. The topics are important to achieving National goals and can span borders creating the potential of international collaboration and learning.

Comment: We added planning and implementation as important areas of inquiry. These currently go unaddressed in the solicitation, but we would recommend their inclusion and see a number of opportunities for research in these areas.

Comment: Here is a great place to introduce the capacity-building suggestions made previously.

5. *Development and Sustainable Production of Regionally-appropriate Biomass Feedstocks*

Program Area Priority – Applicants must address the following:

- Present a coordinated plan for developing a regional approach for feedstock development, production, and delivery to ensure the sustainable production of biomass to be used for conversion to advanced liquid transportation fuels, and if appropriate, biopower and biobased products. These systems should have net positive social, environmental, and rural economic impacts and be specifically targeted to an industrial, **cooperative, or government** partner or platform. It is expected that the Regional Feedstock CAP will network with and leverage existing efforts within USDA; university research, education, and extension **faculty and resources**; other federal agencies; and the private sector by taking multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches.

Comment: The word “network” isn’t very descriptive. We would suggest substituting “partner” or “collaborate”.

Other Program Area Requirements:

- *Detail Removed*

Comment: Has the program defined what they mean by “sustainable”? How will the program be able to evaluate sustainable production and delivery systems? How will the program insure sustainability?

- This program is focusing on the development of sustainable production and delivery systems around five groups of dedicated energy feedstocks: Energycane, perennial grasses, sorghum, woody biomass, and oilseed crops. For this solicitation, projects targeting algae are not eligible given that recently awarded grants from the Department of Energy has strongly supported algae. Certain specific woody biomass feedstocks are also not eligible given that recent awards from NIFA have strongly supported work in this area, including; western species of Abies, Alnus, Larix, Picea, Populus, Pseudotsuga, and Tsuga. The regional CAP should focus on one or more feedstocks as regionally appropriate. These systems should focus on producing the feedstock in areas with high net primary production; where inputs, such as water and fertilizer, are at their minimum; and where land is available that will not displace existing productive agricultural sectors or harm existing rural economics or environmental conditions. Applicants can determine what area comprises a region.
- Applicants **must** to consider developing approaches, practices, and technologies that allow small and medium-size landowners **and limited-resource farmers** to participate and contribute to the regional feedstock system.
- Transdisciplinary studies that **include** social, behavioral, and biological/chemical/physical sciences into comprehensive study designs at an accelerated rate are highly desired.
- Education activities should:
 - develop human capital relevant to program goals
 - **educate** students for Associate, Baccalaureate, Master’s or Doctoral degrees; and/or prepare K-12 teachers and higher education faculty
 - synthesize and incorporate a wide range of the latest relevant research results for outreach materials
 - lead to measurable, documented changes in learning, actions, or conditions in an identified audience or stakeholder group
- Extension activities should:
 - conduct programs and activities that deliver science-based knowledge and informal educational programs to people, enabling them to make informed decisions

Comment: Informed decisions about what?

- include program delivery that may range from community-based to national and from face-to-face to electronic or combinations thereof
- synthesize and incorporate a wide range of the latest relevant research results
- lead to measurable, documented changes in learning, actions, or conditions in an identified audience or stakeholder group

- **engage limited-resource populations.**
- The Regional CAP supported under this RFA must direct integrated research, education, and/or extension activities to the biomass supply chain segments where USDA has a lead national role. Feedstock conversion research is being supported by the Department of Energy and not requested in this NIFA AFRI priority area. However, applicants must document partnerships with an end-user who anticipates a sustainable supply of feedstock to ensure that feedstock development and production are well-aligned with appropriate conversion technologies. The following descriptions highlight aspects of the biomass supply chain segments that applicants must address:
 - 1) *Feedstock Development*: Optimize yields and allow for reduced inputs.
 - Maximize the range of feedstock phenotypes, through advanced genomics, breeding, and systems integration.
 - Increase the geographic range where dedicated feedstocks may be grown with high yields and low inputs.
 - Maximize year-around photosynthetic efficiency and net carbon fixation.
 - Minimize water usage and nutrient, pesticide, and herbicide inputs through genetic improvement.
 - 2) *Sustainable Feedstock Production Systems*: Optimize yields with minimal environmental impact.
 - Identify management practices that minimize water usage, and nutrient, pesticide, and herbicide inputs.
 - Evaluate (from field-to-watershed scales) impacts of bioenergy feedstock production on food, feed, or fiber production, and identify strategies to minimize adverse impacts.
 - Optimize agronomics, cropping systems, and silviculture.
 - 3) *Feedstock Logistics*: Develop equipment with the scale and efficiency required for sustainable biomass production.
 - Harvest and collection – Operations to acquire biomass from the point of origin and move it to a storage or queuing location. Examples include cutting, harvesting, collecting, hauling, and often some form of densification, such as baling or bundling.
 - Storage – Operations essential for holding biomass material in a stable form until preprocessing or transport to the processing facility. Storage could be at locations near the harvesting areas, at the industrial facility, or both.
 - Preprocessing – Processes that physically, chemically, or biologically transform biomass into a state more suitable for transport or for product conversion. Examples include densifying, thermochemical processing, grinding, drying, chemically treating, ensiling, fractionating, and blending.
 - Transportation – Movement of biomass through the logistics system from harvest and collection to the processing facility. Biomass transport options are generally constrained to existing transportation

infrastructure, such as truck, rail, barge, or pipeline. Develop new transportation technology, **transport models and modes**, including improved containers and lighter vehicles to reduce truck traffic and transportation costs, reduce impact on roads and bridges, and reduce undesirable social impacts, such as, for example, bankruptcy and small business foreclosure, loss of productive or legacy land, etc..

- Health and Safety issues as they pertain to new systems integration and equipment.
- 4) *System Performance Metrics, Data Collection, Modeling, Analysis, and Decision Tools*: Generate social, environmental, and economic metrics and data to evaluate the sustainability as well as production performance of a regional system.
- Develop region and feedstock specific data management plans for Sustainability Performance Metrics and Data Acquisition methods.
 - Validate region and feedstock specific sustainability performance metrics.
 - Use existing and initial data to determine if performance metrics are valid and support sustainability performance objectives.
 - Data Collection and Management
 - Environmental Impact Evaluation
 - Soil Quality
 - Greenhouse gas emissions and carbon sequestration
 - Pollinators, Wildlife, and Habitat
 - Land-use Change
 - Water quality and availability
 - Economic Impact Studies
 - Socioeconomic Impacts
 - Develop decision-making tools

Sustainable Bioenergy Research

These Program Areas support research with high relevance to the development of sustainable regional systems for the production of bioenergy and biobased products. In order to attain the greatest benefit from biomass-based energy, the nation must consider the many environmental, social and economic benefits and trade-offs associated with decisions and policies regarding the where, when, how and who of national and regional biofuels development. USDA is dedicated to developing our Nation's biomass based energy resources in a socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable manner. Applicants must address one of the priority areas listed below. These Program Areas are dynamic and interdisciplinary, spanning ecological, biogeochemical, and social science inquiries. Consequently, applications focused on one Program Area may logically incorporate concepts or elements from other Program Areas listed. For example, applications for Program Area A6122 that address land use impacts of agricultural, biofuels, or other policies may also include aspects of Program Areas A6125, which focuses on the environmental impacts of land

use changes resulting from feedstock production. Applicants must indicate in their Letters of Intent the one Program Area that is the primary focus of their proposal.

6. *Policy Options for and Impacts on Regional Biofuels Production Systems*

- This priority seeks research findings that evaluate and develop policy options for achieving sustainable regional biofuels/bioenergy production and commercialization. Proposals should address a diverse range of agricultural, biofuels, or environmental policy options and opportunities (*e.g.*, standards, mandates, subsidies, tax credits, trade, and agricultural assistance programs) that may impact economic, environmental, social, and other prospects. Proposals may include the compatibility and challenges between Federal and state policies. Proposals may also address the indirect consequences of changes in agricultural markets and production decisions that policies may have.

Other Program Area Requirements:

- *Detail Removed*

7. *Impacts of Regional Bioenergy Feedstock Production Systems on Wildlife and Pollinators*

Program Area Priorities – Applicants must address the following:

- This priority seeks proposals that focus on issues such as fragmentation of habitat, edge-effects, migratory and breeding patterns, predator-prey interactions, and other wildlife issues impacted by biomass development. The potential for land-use change with respect to the production of feedstocks for biofuels and bioenergy will have an unknown effect on sustainable wildlife habitat and pollinator species. Research should focus on the development of best-management practices to minimize adverse effects on wildlife and pollinators.

Other Program Area Requirements:

- *Detail Removed*

8. *Socioeconomic Impacts of Biofuels on Rural Communities*

Program Area Priorities – Applicants must address the following:

- This priority seeks research findings that enhance scientific knowledge of socioeconomic behaviors, potential direct and indirect impacts, and implications of sustainable regional production of biofuels and biobased products. Proposals should address the nexus of social, economic, legal, or institutional factors; production or markets constraints and vulnerabilities at different scales; or

temporal dynamics leading to long-term sustainable biofuels production and commercialization. Examples include assessing technology adoption; social acceptability; income and welfare effects; implications for small-scale and minority producers; rural economic diversification and development; public health, employment and human capital issues; the role of agricultural cooperatives; risks and uncertainties management; the linkage among food, feed, fiber, and biofuels production; or the U.S. role in global food and feed markets.

Other Program Area Requirements:

- *Detail Removed*

9. *Environmental Implications of Direct and Indirect Land Use Change*

Program Area Priorities – Applicants must address the following:

- This priority seeks research to enhance understanding of the environmental implications of direct or indirect land use change as a result of biofuels feedstock production. The overall goal is to maximize the benefits of biofuel and feedstock production while minimizing potential negative environmental consequences of biofuels-induced land use change. This includes potential risks to ecosystem services; issues of water availability; issues of soil, water and air quality; and indirect land use change with potential cascading environmental effects.

Other Program Area Requirements:

- *Detail Removed*

FY 2011 Foundational Programs (AFRI)

General Observations and Reflections

What does “foundational” mean? Each of these research areas has essential practical application, which suggests that integration of education and extension scholarship is warranted. But these foundational programs appear to focus on research exclusively. Why?

Applicants should be required to discuss the human dimensions of their proposed projects. What is the social, economic, and environmental relevance of their research and intended results? What, for example, are the implications of their research and intended results for human health, consumers, community development, capacity-building, and the three facets of sustainability—social, economic, and environmental?

Specific suggestions are presented below **in bold**:

Plants Health and Production and Plant Products

Consider a research priority to examine the adoption and diffusion process for technologies and innovative practices. What are the human, social, cultural, and economic factors that impede or facilitate and enhance adoption and diffusion of the technologies and/or innovative practices proposed by the research?

Animal Health and Production and Animal Products

Consider research priorities that focus on the implications of animal health, production and products on domestic and foreign markets and trade. These would include such things as:

- **Producing to consumer specifications; eg., the impact of size and/or composition of animal produced and processed in response to consumer needs or preferences for optimal market appeal.**
- **The implications of specified products on export markets and/or marketability.**
- **The effects of research results on commodity markets and feeding operations.**

Food Safety, Nutrition, and Health

Consider research priorities that examine:

- **Cultural factors influencing food choices**
- **Consumer choices to maximize health outcomes from good nutrition**
- **Complexities of the hunger/obesity paradox**
- **Body image effect on eating behaviors**
- **Impact of mass media on nutritional/eating behavior**

- **Models to achieve an abundant supply of safe, nutritious, appealing food**
- **Enhancing economic value**

Renewable Energy, Natural Resources, and Environment

Consider research priorities that examine the effects of renewable energy from agriculture or agricultural lands on agricultural production systems, farming and ranching operations, and rural communities.

Agricultural Systems and Technology

Consider research priorities that examine:

- **Adoption and diffusion issues.**
- **Workforce implications of the research and intended results.**
- **Risk assessment from a consumer perspective.**
- **Behavioral assessments of the consequences of change in agricultural systems and technology.**

Agricultural and Rural Communities

This solicitation is much too broad. It reads like a catch-all for the human and social dimensions neglected in other RFA program solicitations. It appears that everything “social” has just been an add-on, but this does not seem “foundational” and we would encourage more critical thinking in this area. Furthermore, the solicitation appears to be discipline-oriented, rather than issue-driven as it should be.

We believe that Community Development should be separated out, as should Markets and Trade. These are quite disparate areas of science and need to be stand-alone programs.

With the creation of these as separate stand-alone programs, we would also recommend that NIFA consider infusing priorities related to agricultural markets and trade and rural communities throughout the foundational programs as suggested above. For example, consideration of globalization and markets and trade should be included with plant and animal production, processing, and product categories above. Research on adoption and diffusion should be a part of any program that proposed technology development. This done, the Agricultural and Rural Communities programs can focus on critical areas of concern, including:

- **Sustainable agriculture and its implications for communities.**
- **The impact of federal and state policies on agriculture and rural communities.**
- **Economic development policies and practices.**
- **Finance and taxation issues as they related to food and agriculture.**

- **The implications of demographic shifts and diversity for agriculture, rural communities, and food security.**
- **Immigration and the agricultural workforce.**
- **Rural communities and capacity-building for business development, job creation, health care, schools and education, youth development, etc.**
- **Community and regional innovation, workforce development, human capital challenges, poverty, income and inequality, broadband expansion, agri-tourism, STEM/STEAM, and rural livelihoods.**
- **Transportation decisions and their implications for agricultural and rural communities.**

Members of the ESCOP Social Science Subcommittee sincerely appreciate this opportunity to provide feedback on AFRI solicitations. We stand ready to assist NIFA as the agency strives to promote better understanding of coupled natural and human systems and to advance science along the human and social dimensions of food, agriculture, natural resources and the environment, and agricultural and rural communities. We hope you will call on us if you have any questions as you proceed.

END

**ESCOPE Social Sciences Subcommittee
Membership Status as of April 2012 (three-year renewable terms)**

Discipline	Northeast	North Central	South	West	1890	At Large
Ag Communication	Ann Dodd (^10) Penn State	Beth Forbes (^11) Purdue	Dwayne Cartmell (^12) Oklahoma State	David Doerfert (^11) Texas Tech	Beverley Kreul (invited) Tennessee State	Tracy Irani (^12) Univ. of Florida
Ag Economics	Stephan Goetz (^11) NERDC, Penn State	Scott Loveridge (^13) NCRDC Michigan State	Chuck Moss (^11) University of Florida	Bruce Weber (^10) Oregon State	Ntam Baharanyi (^11) Tuskegee University	Matt Fannin (^11) Louisiana State
Ag Education	Travis Park (^10) Cornell	Mike Retallick Iowa State University	Jack Elliot (^13) Texas A&M	Brenda Seevers (^10) New Mexico State	John Ricketts (^11) Tennessee State	Bobby Torres (^11) Univ. of Arizona
Human Sciences	Daniel Perkins (^11) Penn State	Robin Douthitt (^11) Wisconsin	Marshall Stewart (^11) North Carolina State	Soyeon Shim (^11) University of Arizona	Nina Lyon Bennett (^12) U. Maryland Eastern	June Henton (^10) Auburn
Rural Sociology	Carolyn Sachs (^10) Penn State	Gary Green (^10) Wisconsin	Bo Beaulieu (^13) SRDC, Mississippi State	Don Albrecht (^11) WRDC, Utah State	Dreamal Worthen (^11) Florida A&M	Vacant

Subcommittee Chair: Jack Elliot (through 2013 meeting)

Subcommittee Secretary and Chair-Elect: Bobby Torres (secretary through 2013 meeting, chair through 2015 meeting)

Liaison to the ESCOP Science & Technology Committee: Travis Park

USDA NIFA Liaisons: Pat Hipple, Siva Sureshwaran

ESCOPE Liaison: Dan Rossi, Northeastern Regional Association of Experiment Station Directors, Rutgers University

ESCOPE Science & Technology Committee Chair: Bill Ravlin, The Ohio State University

ARD Representative: Ntam Baharanyi, Tuskegee University and Alton Thompson, Provost, Delaware State University

Ex-Officio (non-voting)Members:

Regional Rural Development Centers: Scott Loveridge, Bo Beaulieu, Stephan Goetz, and Don Albrecht

Neil Conklin, Farm Foundation

Chuck Fluharty, Rural Policy Research Institute (RUPRI)

Board on Human Sciences Liaisons: Soyeon Shim, University of Arizona; June Henton (alternate), Auburn University

Howard Silver and Gina Drioane, Consortium of Social Science Associations

Tamara Wagester, The Council on Food, Agricultural and Resource Economics (C-FARE)

R. Thomas (Tom) Van Arsdall, National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research (National C-FAR)

Don Albrecht, Director
Western Rural Development Center
Utah State University
8335 Old Main Hill
Logan, UT 84322-8335
435-797-9732
don.albrecht@usu.edu

Ntam Baharanyi, Professor
Agricultural and Resource Economics
Cooperative Extension Program
Morrison-Mayberry Hall
Tuskegee University
Tuskegee, AL 36088
334-724-4840
baharany@mytu.tuskegee.edu

Bo Beaulieu, Director
Southern Rural Development Center
Box 9656
190 Bost Extension Bldg.
Mississippi State, MS 39762
662-325-3207
ljb@srdc.msstate.edu

Nina Lyon Bennett, PhD
Acting Chair
Department of Human Ecology
University of Maryland Eastern
Princess Anne, MD 21853
(410)651-6056
(410)651-6285 (fax)
nlbennett@umes.edu

Dwayne Cartmell, Professor
Dept. of Agricultural Education,
Communications, & Leadership
Oklahoma State University
448 Agricultural Hall
Stillwater, OK 74078
405-744-0461
dwayne.cartmell@okstate.edu

Neil Conklin, President
Farm Foundation
1301 West 22nd St.
Suite 615
Oak Brook, IL 60523-2197
630- 571-9393
neil@farmfoundation.org

Ann Dodd, Assistant Dean
Planning & Assessment
College of Agricultural Sciences
The Pennsylvania State University
217 Ag Admin Bldg.
University Park, PA 16802
814-865-3136
ahd2@psu.edu

David Doerfert, Associate Chair and
Professor
Dept. of Agricultural Education and
Communications
Texas Tech University
MS 42131
Lubbock, TX 79409
806-742-2816
david.doerfert@ttu.edu

Robin Douthitt, Dean
School of Human Ecology
University of Wisconsin-Madison
3107 Mechanical Engineering Building
1513 University Ave
Madison, WI 53706
608-262-4847
douthitt@wisc.edu & jaander8@wisc.edu

Gina Drioane
Consortium of Social Science Associations
1701 K Street, N.W.; Suite 1150
Washington, DC 20006
202-842-3525
gsdrioane@coffa.org

Jack Elliot, Head
Dept. of Agricultural Leadership, Education,
& Communications
Texas A&M University
250 AGLS, TAMU 2116
College Station, Texas 77843-2116
979-845-6944
jelliot@tamu.edu

Matt Fannin, Associate Professor
Dept. of Agricultural Economics and
Agribusiness
Louisiana State University
130 Ag Admin. Bldg.
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
225-578-0346
mfannin@lsu.edu

Chuck Fluharty, President and CEO
Rural Policy Research Institute
214 Middlebush Hall
University of Missouri-Columbia
Columbia, MO 65211
573-882-0316
cfluharty@rupri.org

Beth Forbes, Head
Department of Agricultural
Communications
Purdue University
615 W. State St.
West Lafayette, IN 47907
765-494-8403
forbes@purdue.edu

Stephan Goetz, Director
Northeast Regional Center for Rural
Development
The Pennsylvania State University
7 Armsby Bldg.
University Park, PA 16802-5602
814-863-4656
sgoetz@psu.edu

Gary Green, Professor
Dept. of Community and Environmental
Sociology
University of Wisconsin
346D Agricultural Hall
1450 Linden Drive
Madison, WI 53706
608-262-2710
gpgreen@wisc.edu

June Henton, Dean
College of Human Sciences
Auburn University
210 Spindle Hall
Auburn, AL 36849
334-844-3790
hentoju@auburn.edu

Pat Hipple, National Program Leader
Division of Family and Consumer Sciences
National Institute of Food and
Agriculture/USDA
4429 Waterfront Centre
800 9th St., SW
Washington, DC 20024
202- 401-2185
phipple@nifa.usda.gov

Tracy Irani, Professor
Development Director, Center for Public
Issues Education in Agriculture and Natural
Resources
Co-Director Scientific Thinking Educational
Partnership (STEP)
AEC Department 220 Rolfs Hall University of
Florida GNV, FL 32611
Ph- 352-273-2588
Fax - 352-392-9585

F. Larry Leistritz, Distinguished Professor
Dept. of Agribusiness and Applied
Economics
North Dakota State University
Barry Hall 516
Fargo, ND 58108-6050
701- 231-7455
f.leistritz@ndsu.edu

Scott Loveridge, PhD
Director, North Central Regional Center for
Rural Development
Professor, Dept. of Ag., Food, and Resource
Economics
Michigan State University
66 Agriculture Hall
East Lansing, MI 48824
loverid2@msu.edu

Chuck Moss, Professor
Food and Resource Economics Department
University of Florida
1155 McCarty Hall
Gainesville, FL 32611-0240
352-392-1845 x404
cbmoss@ufl.edu

Travis Park, Associate Professor
Department of Horticulture
Cornell University
110 Plant Science Building
Ithaca, NY 14853
607-255-8122
tdp9@cornell.edu

Daniel Perkins, Professor
Dept. of Agricultural & Extension Education
The Pennsylvania State University
107 Ferguson Bldg.
University Park, PA 16802
814-865-6988
dfp102@psu.edu

Bill Ravlin, Associate Director
Ohio Agricultural Research and
Development Center
209 Research Services Bldg.
Wooster, OH 44691
330-263-3705
ravlin.1@osu.edu

Michael S. Retallick
Assistant Professor
Agricultural Education and Studies
Iowa State University
206 Curtiss Hall
Ames, IA 50011-1050
Voice: 515.294.4810
Fax: 515.294.0530
msr@iastate.edu

John Ricketts, Associate Professor
Agricultural & Extension Education
Tennessee State University
203 Lawson Hall, 3500 John A. Merritt Blvd.
Nashville, TN 37209
615-963-7620
jricket1@tnstate.edu

Dan Rossi, Executive Director
Northeastern Association of State AES
Directors
Rutgers University
59 Dudley Rd.
New Brunswick, NJ 08901
732-932-9375 X337
rossi@njaes.rutgers.edu

Carolyn Sachs, Professor of Rural Sociology
& Head
Women's Studies Department
The Pennsylvania State University
111C Armsby Bldg.
University Park, PA 16802
814-865-3746
csachs@psu.edu

Brenda Seevers, Professor
Department of Agricultural and Extension
Education
New Mexico State University
P.O. Box 30003, MSC 3501
Las Cruces, NM 88003
505-646-4511
bseevers@nmsu.edu

Soyeon Shim, Professor & Director
Norton School of Family & Consumer
Sciences
McClelland Park Room 401E
650 N. Park Ave.
University of Arizona
Tucson, AZ 85721-0078
520-621-7147
sshim@email.arizona.edu

Howard J. Silver, Executive Director
Consortium of Social Science Associations
1701 K Street, N.W.; Suite 1150
Washington, DC 20006
202-842-3525
silverhj@coossa.org

Marshall Stewart, Jr., Head
Dept. of 4-H Youth Development
North Carolina State University
512 Brickhaven Dr., Box 7606
Raleigh, NC 27695
919-515-1681
marshall_stewart@ncsu.edu

Siva Sureshwaran, National Program Leader
Division of Agricultural Systems, Institute of
Food Production and Sustainability
National Institute of Food and
Agriculture/USDA
3240 Waterfront Centre
800 9th St., SW
Washington, DC 20024
202-720-7536
ssureshwaran@nifa.usda.gov

Alton Thompson, Provost and Vice
President for Academic Affairs
Delaware State University
1200 N. PuPont Highway
Dover, DE 19901
303-857-6100
Fax 303-857-7410
athompson@desu.edu

Bobby Torres, Head
Dept. of Agricultural Education
University of Arizona
205 Saguaro Bldg.
Tucson, AZ 85721
520-621-7173
rtorres@cals.arizona.edu

R. Thomas (Tom) Van Arsdall, National C-
FAR Executive Director
Van Arsdall & Associates Inc.
National Coalition for Food and Agricultural
Research
(703) 509-4746
tom@vanarsdall.com

Tamara Wagester, Executive Director
The Council on Food, Agricultural and
Resource Economics
900 Second Street, NE
Suite 205
Washington, DC 20002
202-408-8522
tamarawagester@cfare.org

Bruce Weber, Director
Rural Studies Program
Dept. of Agricultural and Resource
Economics
213 Ballard Extension Hall
Oregon State University
Corvallis OR 97331-3601
541-737-1432
bruce.weber@oregonstate.edu

Dreamal Worthen, Associate Professor
College of Engineering Sciences, Technology
and Agriculture
Florida A&M University
116 B. Perry-Paige Bldg.
Tallahassee, Florida 32307
850-599-3400
dreamal.worthen@fam.u.edu
diw116@hotmail.com