**Social Science Subcommittee Virtual Meeting Agenda**

***March 24, 2021 • 1:00-4:00 p.m. Eastern Time***

*Zoom*

***Attendees:*** *Tracy Rutherford, Corinne Valdivia, Kristina Hains, Curt Friedel, Erica Irlbeck, Lindsey Hastings, Rebecca Dudensing, Paul Lewin, Jeff Miller, Matt Fannin, Kevan Lamm, Jeremy Falk, Mike Retallick, Robbin Shoemaker, Brian Myers, Tim Killian, Roberta Riportella, Linda Lobao, Laurie Higgins, Nina A. Lyon Bennett, Cayla Taylor, Becki Lawver, Dreamal Worthen, Kate Fink, Travis Park, Bret Hess (WAAESD Executive Director) and Saige Zespy (WAAESD Recording Secretary)*

**Agenda**

1. [**Welcome, Introductions and Overview**](#Welcome) - Tracy Rutherford
2. [**Association of Public & Land-Grant Universities**](#APLU) - Caron Gala
3. [**Agricultural & Applied Economics Association**](#AgEcon) - Lowell Randel
4. [**Rural Policy Research Institute**](#RuralPolicy) - Jocelyn Richgels
5. [**National Institute for Food & Agriculture**](#NIFACastille) - Carrie Castille
6. [**Experiment Station Climate Survey & Opportunities for Social Science**](#ESSClimateSurvey) - Rick Rhodes
7. [**Discussion with NIFA Science Liaisons & NPLs**](#NIFAScience) - Bill Hoffman, Robbin Shoemaker, and Peter Motavalli
8. [**Consortium of Social Science Associations**](#SocialScience)- Julia Milton
9. [**Farm Foundation**](#FarmFoundation)- Martha King
10. [**Council on Food, Agricultural & Resource Economics**](#CFARE) - Gal Hochman

**Summary**

**Welcome & Overview**

* Dr. Rutherford opened the meeting, welcoming everyone. The meeting will be recorded.
* The agenda is available at <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1xy1Yh0iU1U6dq82K5ykv91-HTOokEvNvGCrwXnVc_1s/edit?usp=sharing>.
* Everyone on the call introduced themselves to the group. A list of attendees can be found above.

**Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities**

*Caron Gala, Director of Governmental Affairs, Agriculture and International Development*

* All appropriations requests from are available at [land-grant.org](https://www.land-grant.org/). A link in the upper right-hand corner has the ask.
  + A unified ask request can be found in that link.
    - A $100 million increase has been asked over those priority lines.
  + There are 47 different lines from NIFA. APLU has identified 9 priorities lines through the Board on Agricultural Assembly (BAA). APLU members can submit requests to congressmen in the House and Senate.
    - The process is currently happening now.
    - Cornerstone develops the document with guidance from BAA Budget and Advocacy Committee.
  + APLU held a virtual fly-in with CARET and shared the request.
* This year has led to unprecedented requests.
  + COVID-19 led to a request for supplemental funding for research and extension within COVID-19 supplemental funding bills.
    - The process was not successful, but provided an initial process to move forward with this year's request for Agricultural Research Infrastructure (ARIA).
  + APLU has undertaken an ask this year for funding to renovate facilities across the nation at Experiment Stations.
    - In 2016, the Experiment Station funded a report through Sightlines, where they found an $8.4 billion deferred maintenance issue across university facilities, which includes member institutions and non-land-grant colleges of agriculture.
    - The Trump Administration was engaged, and there was some success on raising awareness.
      * This request led to a proposal that land-grants receive $50 million, at the detriment at the 1890s.
      * APLU decided to pivot and focus on the unified ask.
  + In 2020, the Experiment Station Section picked up the task and re-engaged Sightlines (now named Gordian), asking for a re-boot of the study.
    - The Rebuild Rural America request includes $11.5 billion in deferred maintenance, with a replacement value of $38 billion.
    - An economic stimulus bill is expected, similar to the bill from President Obama in 2009.
      * APLU determined that the stimulus phase may be the best place to insert the request.
    - ESS, in partnership with BAA and APLU, is asking for an $11.5 billion in agricultural research facilities across the country.
      * This ask benefits 1862s, 1890s, and 1994s are all benefitted, as well as non-land-grant colleges of agriculture.
    - The funds are asked to be put in an authorized line within the Research Facilities Act (a competitive grant line). This authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to provide funding for the purpose of facility upgrades (including everything from re-modeling to rebuilds and upgrades).
* Talking point to justify the request
  + The U.S. is in competition with China and the rest of the world.
    - Slide data ends at 2013. Can this be updated?
    - Other countries far outweigh the U.S.' public and private ability to invest in science.
    - Many facilities are 25-50+ years old, meaning they are rapidly approaching the end of their life cycle and not appropriate for undertaking the latest research efforts.
  + The investment will increase jobs and increase diverse populations we can have in our ag work force.
    - Good facilities allow recruitment of high-quality talent.
* What can we develop a strategic initiative around to help justify investments in facilities for agricultural research, extension, and education?
  + How can we be futuristic, in meeting future needs? Let's talk about bringing things up to date, but also retrofitting to advance to the latest tech and research, rather than just getting "up-to-date." We must meet current and cutting edge needs.
  + What are other countries spending their money on and using to research?
    - It may appeal to our competitive nature to say the U.S. needs to be leading the charge in good facilities and high-quality research.
    - Comparisons would be helpful to have side-by-side photos of Chinese facilities versus U.S. facilities.
      * Photos are difficult to access.
    - Investment in big data capabilities are the top of Chinese efforts. This access is being coordinated throughout the government.
  + In creating this information, who is the target audience?
    - APLU has met with White House Domestic Policy Council, Rural Engagement Director, and Science and Technology Policy currently.
    - That ask will be shifted after the Biden administration submits their infrastructure proposal. Then, the focus will be shifted to engagement of institutions and encouraging institutions to weigh in with their members of Congress.
  + Workforce information?
    - Is there a case for workforce development, productivity, competition and wellbeing. Income inequality is increasing in the U.S., as well as other countries?
      * The information is needed by APLU but aren't sure where to find relevant information that reflects the system across the country.

**Agricultural & Applied Economics Association**

*Lowell Randel, AAEA Representative in Washington, DC*

* AAEA appreciates the opportunity to partner with APLU and other groups to advanced shared goals.
* AAEA adopted a strategic vision in October 2020.
  + The group is focusing on a culture of engagement and inclusion, particularly in light of diversity, equity and inclusion conversations across the country and within the discipline.
  + Part of Engagement and Inclusion efforts may include mentoring programs.
  + Communications through media and government relations will continue to be important.
    - Advocacy and government relations is a new initiative for the group. Prior to Lowell's predecessor, there was no active voice in advocacy.
  + Financial viability will be critical moving forward, as well, to continue the good work in the future.
  + AAEA is also working to be a stronger, more inclusive set of external networks.
  + The strategic vision provides common ground to work collaboratively on policies.
* Inclusion, workforce and pipeline are top of mind.
  + Workforce is continuously a top priority for AAEA, but is not unique to social sciences. Across the economic landscape, there are challenges as a result of a pool of PhDs that is too small.
    - This poses challenges for academic, industry and agencies (like ERS and NIFA).
    - University system should produce adequate numbers of PhDs who fit the landscape of the discipline and society.
    - This effort must include an eye towards diversity and inclusion.
  + AAEA must begin to engage with minority students beginning in undergraduate programs to help support more master's and PhD students.
    - The pipeline should also start even before university level by engaging 4-H and FFA students.
* Policy priorities
  + Funding for agricultural and applied economics is always top of mind. Sufficient funding must be available.
    - As AFRI grows, the social sciences should be included in multi-disciplinary grants.
    - Social sciences must also be recognized in big initiatives like climate change and infrastructure to inform policy makers.
  + AAEA is advocating for the rebuilding of ERS and NIFA.
    - Currently, progress is being made, but AAEA should be on top of supporting rebuilding.
* AAEA is looking forward to the start of an ongoing dialogue as both groups move forward.
  + There may be great opportunities to collaborate on shared goals and priorities to make progress.

**Rural Policy Research Institute (RUPRI)**

*Jocelyn Richgels, Director of National Policy Programs*

* The hottest topic of today and this year is COVID. The Center for Rural Health Policy Analysis has been tracking COVID since March 2020.
  + The group tracked both caseload and deaths. The middle of the country and southeast has shown the highest incidence of non-metropolitan COVID deaths.
  + Rural pharmacy access and vaccine availability is the next topic of focus.
    - 9,826 3ligible pharmacies are operating in 1,962 counties.
    - The U.S. government is partnering with chain and
    - 110 nonmetropolitan counties in the U.S. have no pharmacy to administer vaccine. (Vaccine is still being delivered in hospitals, but pharmacies are critical.)
    - 688 nonmetropolitan counties do not have any partner or chain pharmacies that HHS is partnering with to deliver vaccine.
      * There is no pharmacy that would be partnering the federal government.
      * There is a lot of red.
  + Work will continue until COVID is under control to stop tracking.
* Comprehensive Rural Wealth Framework has been a topic of conversation at RUPRI for many years.
  + Eight central premises are the core of this.
    - Human
    - Social
    - Political
    - Intellectual
    - Financial
    - Natural
    - Physical
    - Cultural
  + Three central premises underly the framework.
    - Comprehensive wealth is the sock of all assets; well-being depends on benefits that flow from these various assets.
    - All wealths are interconnected- changing one impacts others.
    - Community well-being is based in a comprehensive understanding of wealth, including how wealth interacts with each other.
  + Multi-faceted work is being conducted around the framework, with a lens of sustainability and resiliency for rural communities.
    - Understanding how rural communities use these eight capitals to enable sustainability and resiliency is important, including ideas of how they can be built upon to ensure resiliency.
    - Foundation of capitals allows communities to weather instability.
  + The work is being conducted through the RUPRI Center for State Policy and Population and Place Analytics Panel.
  + Biden administration priorities (including climate change, environmental justice, equity, and health) should be utilized by rural communities to secure funding, program delivery, etc. to encourage sustainability and resiliency.
    - What capitals can be tapped into?
* Cultural capital is a top focus, as well.
  + The role of arts and cultural capital is critical to many rural communities to creating a sense of being, a sense of community and a sense of quality of life.
    - There is a lack of research on rural cultural capital compared to urban cultural capital.
  + The RUPRI Rural Cultural Wealth Lab and funding through USDA is taking on the effort to fill the research void.
    - A conference was held in February 2021 on the Role of Arts and Cultural Capital in Rural Innovation and Entrepreneurship Research Conference.
      * The goal was to find new and emerging scholars to talk and think about research priorities for rural communities.
    - In fall 2021, Kauffman Foundation will fund a Community Collaboratives Convening in Kansas City.
      * The meeting will focus on connecting researchers and community practitioners to build a better research base around the role of arts and cultural capital innovation in entrepreneurship in rural communities.
    - The work will continue and the RUPRI Rural Cultural Wealth Lab will hopefully develop a better understanding of cultural capital in rural America.
* Targeting and population thresholds
  + RUPRI continues to think about definitions for targeting, population thresholds, etc., including different definition codes.
  + Recent news from OMB following a review asked to increase the minimum urban area population, for metropolitan statistical areas, from 50,000 to 100,000 as a metropolitan area.
    - RUPRI recommendation and review led to believe that the recommendation SHOULD NOT be implemented until three considerations should be reviewed:
      * Should OMB hold metro to a 1950s era worldview of metropolitan?
        + Assuming contemporary validity of this 1950 view of metro may not reflect today's reality.
      * A piece-meal approach of only changing core/central counties is insufficient. OMB should look at a comprehensive review.
        + More than just commuting patterns should be reviewed.
      * OMB should re-think the position of the impact of these rules.
        + OMB notes these designations shouldn't be used for anything other than statistical applications.
        + However, they are used for funding and targeting, and it is unrealistic to think the designation would not impact funding and targeting.
    - If the proposal goes through, 144 communities would be downgraded from metropolitan, adding more competition for an already small pot of money from micropolitan areas.
  + RUPRI has worked with Sen. Gillibrand's staff on the Rebuild Rural America Act.
    - This would create a $50 billion Rural Future Partnership Fund.
      * Provides non-competitive, five-year, renewable block grants.
    - Eligible regions are micropolitan regions including 10,000 to 50,000 people.
    - This is the first time a significant chunk of money would go to rural, nonmetropolitan, micropolitan counties not directed by state priorities.
      * Typical, the state decides who gets the funds.
      * This effort would allow rural communities to think strategically long term about their communities, rather than conforming with state priorities.
  + American Rescue Plan Act
    - There is $19 billion for non-entitlement units of local governments that is also not overseen by the states.
    - This effort may be a great place to see how well the money is distributed and how well
* Rural Health Economic Dislocation and Equity
  + Additional work in the health space includes release of a paper on meeting the mental and behavioral health needs of farm families during times of economic distress.
    - The characteristics of economic disruption in farming industries; characteristics that contribute to mental and behavioral health challenges/consequences; ad exacerbated access challenges will all be explored.
  + The paper has been very interested, but there isn't a lot of data and research, but there is hope that the paper will be able to contribute to the body of research.
  + Equity work will be done, as well, to update the papers and framework to more directly address equity for rural healthcare services.
* Questions
  + What are the implications of making a change to the size of metropolitan regions?
    - Rural development/USDA funding is not tied to non-metro and metropolitan status, so this wouldn't apply as much to those programs.
    - The CDDG program is a significant amount of money, and 70% of funding goes to metropolitan communities. If, suddenly, there are 144 more communities that no longer receive that funding, their lifeline is no longer available.
      * Rural would have the same pot of money, with more communities competing for it, including much larger communities that have a greater capacity to apply for funding.
    - It's hard to imagine how this is implemented without a change in targeting funding.

**National Institutes of Food and Agriculture**

*Carrie Castille, Director*

* Ms. Castille has been director for about 2 months.
* It's important to hear from SSSC in early weeks to hear how NIFA can better serve its
* USDA priorities are changing and moving quickly at NIFA, now that Secretary Vilsack is in place.
  + Identified as:
    - Containing the pandemic;
    - Ensuring racial justice and equity;
    - Ensuring food and nutrition security;
    - Rebuilding the rural economy; and
    - Addressing the impacts of climate.
  + USDA will focus on transforming the food system with an emphasis on developing more resilient local food production; creating fair markets for all producers; ensuring access to healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and income streams for farmers using climate-smart food and forestry practices; making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capability in rural America; committing to equity across the agency; speeding transformation of the food system.
    - Food promotes health.
    - Communities where food, fiber and energy production occurs must be strengthened.
  + COVID response has wide-reaching implications for the agriculture community, including social scientists.
    - Containing the virus is the first step.
    - Helping families and communities recover is next.
      * Students, staff and communities must be all engaged in working together to find opportunities and barriers in consumer behavior while also promoting acceptance of practices.
      * It's most important to prevent people from feeling helpless. People must be provided with action steps to restore their sense of power in their lives.
      * Pandemic experiences have made it more and more clear that science is integral in solutions for protecting the health of communities, particularly rural communities.
    - Scientists are an integral part of the solution.
      * Help understand impacts of stress and more
      * NIFA asks for help and guidance as they seek new and innovative ways to rise after the COVID-19 pandemic.
      * Provide strength in developing programs across all levels to improve stronger funding in NIFA programming
* NIFA is committed to equity and inclusion, pledging to address discrimination in all forms. Programs should be equitable and accessible to all Americans. Equity will be present in programs, peer review panels, and in processes.
  + NIFA needs the input of land-grant universities to identify areas where equity is not present.
  + Understanding the implications and translation of NIFA actions can be improved by social scientists to ensure fair access.
  + NIFA must be held accountable by everyone in the system.
* Ensuring food and nutrition security and rebuilding the rural economy are at the heart of NIFA's work, as well as the work of the land-grant community systems
  + Program should address the needs of low-income, underserved communities, as well as on farm profitability and sustainability. Housing, finance, community development, training, and support are all targets of national focus by USDA.
    - SSSc can also be helpful in meeting these goals.
  + Nationally, chronic disease is also a priority because of its prevalence.
    - Good health begins with the food on our plates, and the attitudes, behaviors and social context behind making those food choices.
  + All voices and all cultures must be considered.
* Rural development
  + Sound programming in finance, housing literacy, education, and communication build the foundation of rural developments.
  + Programming must be research-based and include information on what drives behavior, change, and adoption.
  + Ag Economics and Rural Community Programs area of AFRI was established to promote economically, socially and environmentally sustainable ag and resilient, rural communities.
  + Challenges are vast in these communities, including food consumption and production, show that the need for natural resource management is growing.
    - Limited resource and climate change have implications for use of resources, development of healthy diets, make investments in science and ensure equal opportunities in America.
    - Research options are expanded in many areas because of this research.
  + Social Implications of Emerging Ag Technologies program is designed to advance the understanding of how new technologies are accepted, as well as the communication of technologies.
    - Support is also needed from social scientists, but the program has been dwindling in participation. How can that program be more effective?
* NIFA's funding priorities
  + Three key focus areas have been identified for FY2022 funding: increasing capacity funding; increasing competitive funding; and rebuilding NIFA's workforce.
    - Capacity funding is important to NIFA and vital to land-grant institutions.
      * The importance of capacity funding will be a focus moving forward, and telling the story about capacity funding is very important.
      * The value of Extension and Experiment Stations must be highlighted.
    - Competitive funding is also important. AFRI saw an increase in FY 2021 budget, and there are opportunities are being sought consistently to incorporate all aspects of research and Extension programs. Programs have been continually expanded to capture new opportunities. For example:
      * COVID Rapid Response projects were supported in March 2020, totally $13 million, all with significant social and behavioral science components.
      * $4 million was added to the National 4-H Council for 4-H at Home to increase technology and create new resources for programming.
      * Purdue University received $2.2 million to carry out a national implementation and address disruption in youth development, education, and workforce development cause by COVID-19.
      * A new dimension has been added to AFRI's Education and Workforce Development RFA for food and educational non-formal education. Content development and activities for non-formal education will be supported for youth in science areas to enhance food and agriculture.
* NIFA staffing update
  + Approximately 221 staff, 7 NPLs and 10 program specialists have a background in social science, with more to come.
    - NIFA needs assistance in recruiting social science NPLs, including 3 current openings.
* NIFA is embracing its opportunity to tackle the important work for agriculture, communities, and youth.
  + Science will position NIFA and land-grant universities partners as leaders in their field around the world.
* Questions
  + Communities has started to connect education with certifications. Rural counties must continue with data-driven evaluation, but individuals in communities need tools they can use.
    - Hearing priorities from USDA and how they can be incorporated in very important.
  + Changes seeing in the importance of well-being integration, rural development, and diversity are issues that are increasingly important. Research is necessary so the information can turn into action in rural communities.
  + Are there plans to look at grant programs to look at adoption and evaluation of adoption of programs? This could create partnerships with social sciences and the chemical/physical sciences.
    - NIFA is going into a deep dive of all programs.
    - As a new director, she is looking at ways to improve programs by listening and learning to NIFA's staff but also externally.
      * RFAs should be in line with what is needed in the communities across the country.
    - Carrie is one of the first non-biological scientists to lead the agency.
      * Looking at changing behaviors and encouraging conservation practices to
      * How can social sciences play a role in this field? What can be done to play a role and influence behavior?
        + There are opportunities to look at how policy is developed and implemented to see meaningful results.
        + From a rural development perspective, it is important to begin to understand and influence/incentivize behaviors to ensure people aren't leaving rural communities permanently.
  + Challenge: Think about measuring the impact of social science contributions in competitive grants, as well as how to lead, instead of being an add-on component at the end.
    - USDA's priorities include social sciences already.
    - Vision can be developed based on the comments from NIFA stakeholders.
      * Ms. Castille is listening and changing based on what she hears from researchers and those at land-grant universities.
      * She strives to support and incorporate the feedback from land-grant universities and researchers.

**Experiment Station Climate Survey and Opportunities for Social Sciences**

*Rick Rhodes, Executive Director of the Northeast Region Experiment Station Directors (rcrhodes@uri.edu, 401-874-2498)*

* Each researcher and individual has an anecdote or factoid associated by climate change.
  + During the course of 2020, a new record was set in climate. There were 22 storms that caused in excess of $1 billion each of damage, including 7 hurricanes.
    - That exceeded previous year's records by 4 events, but was the 6th consecutive year with 10 or more $1 billion events.
  + Washington has heard this clarion.
* Biden administration view climate change as an existential threat, and an Executive Order was issued to tackle the climate crisis at home and abroad.
  + Climate change has a multitude of dimensions, including national security, foreign policy, transportation, energy, economic and agriculture.
  + The Global Change Research Needs and Opportunities for 2022-2031 (from National Academies) highlights accelerated research and multi-directional relationship.
    - This includes the interaction between human systems and natural system.
* Regional Executive Directors agreed to assess climate research capacity to:
  + Attract funding;
  + Build and re-build infrastructure (ARIA);
    - $11.5 billion
  + Cultivate collaboration.
* Assessment instrument has 7 alternatives and 3 open-ended questions.
  + Was circulated to five regions, including 1862 and 1890 universities.
  + Reponses rate was 80%.
  + Results
    - 93% have a climate change portfolio
    - Directors are engaged in different domains at various levels:
      * Sustainable ag, food security and food safety (90%)
      * Natural resources, biodiversity and water resources (77%)
      * Carbon emissions, carbon sequestration and carbon banking (60%)
      * Efficiency of nutrient use in managed livestock or agronomic systems (55%)
      * Climate change sciences and modeling (55%)
  + Conclusions: We have the capacity for meaningful impact in climate science.
  + Takeaways:
    - 86% of respondents have competitive grant funding for climate research (including USDA, NSF, DOE, and NOAA).
    - 87% of directors were interested in participating in a national effort to address climate change. (No one said no.)
      * Stations are interested in working collectively to address the challenges of climate change.
    - Directors were polled for unique research capacities. While many unique responses were included (ridge to reef evaluation, climate smart farms, industry relationships, field instrumentation, etc.), the most common answer was human infrastructure and the internationally/nationally known faculty.
  + Gaps and opportunities
    - Domains for which 20 percent of the system indicated having capacity included equity and climate impact on communities of color; social change and impacts; and human health and urban environments.
    - Take home message: Social science and policy domains are targets for growth and investment.
      * There are opportunities to work with experts outside of traditional areas and traditional disciplines within ESS.
    - Less than 50% of institutions have labs specifically for climate change research.
      * Lots of opportunities for facilities and instrumentation for investment. (This is consistent with the ARIA effort.)
    - Directors are looking and recommend seeking new avenues for competitive grant funding to support science.
      * Interagency agreements that foster collaboration, cooperation and innovation is important.
  + What does it mean? "We live in an era of multiple possibilities," which means a wide range of scientists can come together to assist on moving the needle on climate change.
    - Everyone (natural scientists and social scientists) must all be involved to address climate change.
* Questions
  + Research programs must come together from the beginning, not in pieces, to include everyone. How much of this has been identified in the US? The work is being done internationally, but not domestically.
    - Social scientists should be incorporated when writing the proposal. There is a human dimension to all problems.
    - ESS has heard loud and clear that the human dimension is an important part in developing these proposals.
    - National Academies report looking at research needs for the decade identified a focus on preparing and avoiding the worst potential consequences of climate change," which opens the door for human dimension of all sciences.
    - We need to figure out where the door is (or go through the window) to sit together.

**Discussion with NIFA Science Liaisons and NPLs**

*Bill Hoffman, Acting Chief of Staff (whoffman4@usda.gov)*

*Robbin Shoemaker, National Program Leader (robbin.shoemaker@usda.gov)*

*Peter Motavalli, Division Director, DOCE (peter.montavalli@usda.gov)*

* NIFA is a $1.95 billion operation in FY2021.
  + Approximately 54% is competitive and 46% is capacity. Capacity programs include Hatch, Smith-Level, B&C, 1890s Extension, Evans Allen, McIntyre-Stennis, and .
  + COVID fund tipped the scales to slightly more competitive than capacity.
  + Funds are supported by 70 different programs lines. Most of those are integrated capacity programs.
  + Largest line item is Agriculture and Food Research Initiative ($435 million), at over 20 percent of the budget.
    - Overlooked non-AFRI Regional Grantmaking programs
      * [Extension Risk Management and Education Program](http://extensionrme.org/) funds projects to help farmers manage their risk and the stability of operations.
        + Grants are made to regional centers, and awards range up to $100,000 from regional centers.
        + There is not an RFA published in this area.
      * Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program
        + Includes three pillars of profit, stewardship, and quality of life
        + Every regional SARE committees include social scientists.
    - AFRI RFAs
      * The larger an award gets, the more vital social science is for its success.
      * Foundational and Applied Sciences are usually characterized as largely single-investigator awards, that's not completely accurate. There are many places where it takes more than one investigator in order to be successful. Other call for teams.
        + 15 integrated programs would benefit from greater survey research.

Surveys are difficult to formulate and social scientists are necessary to develop and conduct those properly.

* + - * + Some program area priorities (particularly integrated areas) provide opportunities for social science involvement in particular as the main aspect of a project, rather than a sub-segment.
        + [New investigator workshops are available on demand](https://nifa.usda.gov/2021-afri-ni-webinar-series).

NIFA is encouraging new investigator grants.

The agency is seeking to fund more new investigators.

NIFA is also investigating seed grants that new investigators may use to gather data for a bigger project.

Conference grants are available, as well. Letters of Intent can be sent any time of year (no deadline), with a full proposal required 150 days prior to the conferences.

* + - * Sustainable Ag Systems
        + These are the largest awards with a cap of $10 million.
        + Transformational, system-wide projects and solutions always include humans.
      * Education and Workforce Development
        + Projects are aimed at filling the pipeline, as well as new programs.
* Agricultural Economics and Rural Communities (AERC) - Robbin Shoemaker
  + This is one of the six large AFRI programs.
    - For FY 2021, approximately $34 million is allocated to be set in four program areas.
    - All programs have a cap of $650,000
  + Small and Medium-Sized Farms
    - The purpose is to focus on development and adoption of new models to assist ag producers to scale appropriate management strategies and technologies to enhance economic efficiency and sustainability.
  + Economics, Markets and Trade
    - The program supports research on development of theories, methods and applications of agricultural economics.
  + Rural Economic Development
    - This growing and expanding program looks at creating and examining innovative approaches for advancing economic opportunities, focusing beyond the farm gate.
  + Social Implications of Food and Agricultural Technologies
    - The program is relatively new, and includes both research and integrated programs.
    - Several years ago, as gene drives and genome editing emerged, this program was developed.
    - The program explores social implications of technologies, while considering the unintended consequences of tech innovations.
  + Sustainable Ag Systems
    - This is a large, relatively new program. For FY 2021, there is $150 million budgeted, with awards up to $10 million. The FY 2021 program is closed but the program will likely be available next year.
    - The projects are intended to be systems-wide approaches to support multidisciplinary projects.
  + Other areas of interest:
    - Inter-Disciplinary Engagement in Animal Systems
      * The IDEAS program was developed to begin to engage other scientists (particular social sciences) with animal sciences and to look beyond more narrowly defined programs.
    - Critical Agriculture Research & Extension (CARE)
      * CARE was designed to get technologies developed on the ground in short duration
    - Data Science for Food & Systems (DSFAS)
      * DSFAS develops data science capabilities and a variety of tools.
    - Tactical Sciences for Agricultural Biosecurity
  + There are opportunities for people (particularly early career individuals) to serve on a NIFA panel.
* Educational Programs in the Division of Community and Education - Peter Motavalli
  + 33 education and capacity building programs are included, at about $300 million in annual appropriations.
  + Goals including improving scientific and ag literacy; workforce development; greater learning and engagement, both formally and non-formally; advancement of science through graduate and post-doctoral fields; and increasing capacity of minority-serving institutions.
  + [A summary of specific education programs can be found here](https://nifa.usda.gov/resource/nifa-reinforces-agricultural-education-pipeline).
  + Several new programs exist within AFRI EWD portfolio
    - Food and Agriculture Non-Formal Education (FANE)
      * The deadline for these programs is May 6, 2021 at 5 p.m. ET.
      * Approximately $750,000 is available per project for 3-4 years. The project looks at enhancing youth understanding of new technologies.
        + The program highlights use of non-formal education to help young people become award of these technologies.
    - Civic Engagement Experience for Youth (CEEY)
      * CEEY grants of $ 1 million for four to five years seek to
* Question
  + Integration of newcomers, their families, and their children to communities is a priority. Where is youth development and education, along with the pathway to careers and fields that needs research in terms of efficacy, persistence and efficiency in development?
    - Look in Educational Programs in the Division of Community and Education programs, as well as Division of Family and Consumer Sciences to find these programs. There are a number of programs looking at youth development.
  + As a suggestion, NIFA is at an important inflection point in rebuilding ERS and NIFA. There is an opportunity to look at the structure and function of the agency, as well as the human capital.

**Consortium of Social Science Associations**

*Julia Milton, Director of Public Affairs*

* COSSA is an advocacy group for social sciences.
  + The group is made of associations, with 16 governing members. In addition to those members, approximately 100 miscellaneous members, including universities, research institutes, smaller societies and publishers are also involved.
  + COSSA advocates for shared policy interests of all fields of social and behavioral science research.
    - The aim is to serve as an umbrella group for all advocacy. This tends to look like more money for social sciences, more money for agencies that produce the data used by social sciences, and policies that positively affect the conduct of social and behavioral science research.
    - The primary audiences are Congress and the Executive branch, along with the scientific and high ed communities.
      * COSSA also does work in advocating to the public, proactively promoting the benefits of social sciences.
* Three-legged stool of work
  + Direct advocacy includes two of three staff members who are registered lobbyists.
  + Staff also look more broadly at coalitions and partners to identify more generally where issues line up with other groups.
  + COSSA provides resources to its membership to enhance advocacy efforts.
* 2021 agenda
  + Several documents guide advocacy efforts of the next year or two.
    - A [transition document](http://www.cossa.org/policy/2021-transition/) and legislative agenda say similar things, spun for two different audiences.
      * These are recommendations for what social science needs to see in the next couple of years.
    - In speaking to the transition team, Biden's administration understands that social science is important. The science teams get it, but they want shovel-ready ideas to improve social science.
      * 10 individual recommendations and 32 action items were identified, under three categories:
        + Restoring trust in science and data
        + Enhancing diversity, equity and inclusion
        + Use of social science in decision-making

This was further divided into COVID-19 response, evidence-based policy making, and support of research and infrastructure.

* + 2021 Wins
    - Largest win in the first week or two of Biden Administration was an Executive Order on restoring trust in Government through Scientific Integrity and Evidence-based Policymaking.
      * The memo centralizes the idea of evidence-based policymaking in government, establishing scientific integrity procedures.
        + This dovetails with the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act, signed in 2018, which implements evidence-building into the everyday work of government.
      * Memo also complements the federal data strategy to ensure agencies are generating evidence and asking questions in a data and science-based way.
    - Executive Orders
      * Executive Order affirmed that citizenship information would not be included in Census data, which was a priority for the science and data community.
      * Executive action was taken to advance racial equity, and action reversed the Race and Sex Stereotyping EO from the Trump Administration.
      * The Interagency Working Group on Equitable Data was also established to standardize data collection.
      * An Executive Order on a data driven response to COVID-19 was signed.
      * Climate change related Executive Orders were changed, including directives to revise the social cost of carbon calculations, as well as calculations for nitrous oxide.
      * Several White House offices and task forces were established that will hopefully be used to drive the agenda of mitigating climate change.
    - Key appointments and nominations
      * Eric Lander as the OSTP Director/President's Science Advisor was elevated to a cabinet position.
      * Alondra Nelson was appointed as a new and expanded position as Director for Science and Society.
      * Francis Collins stayed ono as NIH Director adds to stability in the administration.
      * There are more appointments to watch for.
  + Congressional agendas for 117th Congress
    - COSSA is advocating to integrate social science into confirmation hearings; agency oversight hearings; FY 2022 funding; and a broader, infrastructure-focused relief bill.
  + Short-term agenda
    - COSSA is focused on meeting the new congress and making sure social science champions have the information they need.
    - They also look at incorporating and focusing the need for social sciences across all the near-term priorities of the Biden administration.
    - Relevant legislation continues to come forward.
      * RISE Act is a bill that would provide $25 billion in research relief funding to researchers whose work was disrupted by pandemic. COSSA hopes to see this attach to a COVID relief bill.
      * The Endless Frontier Act is a China-competitiveness bill that would re-shape the National Science Foundation, creating a new technology directorate (funded at $100 billion over five years), dwarfing the NSF investment in basic research compared to tech research.
        + There is room to ensure NSF maintains its role as basic research agency.
    - [April 27, 2021 - Social Science Advocacy Day](http://www.cossa.org/event/2021-advocacy-day/)
      * This is an annual event bringing social scientists together to talk about social scientists. 2021 is virtual.
      * Social scientists from across the country.
        + Two weeks of training materials are provided.
    - Other areas of concern:
      * There are many nominations and appointments moving forward.
* Staying engaged
  + COSSA provides a bi-weekly newsletter (COSSA Washington Update).
    - This is the go-to update on what is happening in the agency. It includes analysis of legislation and upcoming policy changes.
  + COSSA monthly webinar.
    - COSSA Headlines provides a quick summary on the prior month's social science news, as well as a deep dive on one issue.
    - Webinars are available only to members, but are recorded and made available broadly later on.
  + [Why Social Science](https://www.whysocialscience.com/) posts are short blog posts for a public audience on why social science is important.
  + Members receive breaking news updates.

**Farm Foundation**

*Martha King, Vice President of Programs and Projects*

* Farm Foundation focuses on accelerated people and ideas into action.
  + Mission is to build trust and understanding at the intersections of agriculture and society.
  + Founded in 1933 by co-founders in different political parties with a vision for cutting through partisan policies. It is a 501(c)3, and all information is available on YouTube, for free.
  + Everything is multi-stakeholder, with a history of working with government, academia, farmers and ranchers, as well as other stakeholders. Projects attempt to build on these foundations to make solutions happen.
  + Consider spaces of economics, environmental and social issues in forums, dialogues, research papers, etc.
  + Projects tend to be inter-generational, with a focus on building trust and understanding within agriculture and society.
  + Strategic priorities
    - Farmer health
    - Digital agriculture
    - Conservation and sustainability
    - Market development and access
  + Current projects
    - Farmer Health: Iowa Farm Family Wellness Alliance
      * Free resources (provided by project funding) that includes direct coaching, mental health counseling via tele-medicine, nutrition, legal counseling, marriage counseling, etc. to bring innovative mental health care to farm families.
      * Seeking research opportunities to build on this project.
    - Digital Agriculture: Advancing Data Interoperability in the Great Pork Hackathon
      * There are many different players working on data interoperability. Farm Foundation is working with National Pork Board and others to try to start solving challenges practically and on the ground.
      * In November, the pork supply chain was mapped, focusing on data handoffs and data gaps.
        + Identified a gap in shipping when the pig leaves the farm to getting to the process.
        + The first hackathon seeks to solve this issue.

A team of people has worked from March 24-26 developing open access code and apps, with solutions creating an advanced shipment notification for pork producers.

Did have a slight touch on blockchain, but not a big focus.

* + - * Other groups are interested in tackling similar challenges.
    - Market Development and Access: Supporting Beginning Farmers and Ranchers
      * Working with USDA ERS, Farm Foundation has looked to support beginning farmers and ranchers. The effort started with a research-based conference.
        + Discovered that many practitioners need the research and new tools to advance their work.
        + A second conference was developed to address that issue.
    - Conservation: Soil Health Economics
      * In wrapping a Conservation Innovation Grant, the Farm Foundation has been looking at the economic impact of adopting soil conservation practices.
      * Additional variations and publications will be held.
  + Monthly (ish) Forums
    - Webinar based conversations (held on Tuesday, 9-11 Central) are held free and live. Presentations are held from 45-60 minutes, followed by an hour of question-and-answer with the audience.
    - Topics are always sought, and speaker suggestions are always welcome.
  + Next Generation Programs
    - The second prong is accelerating people through next generation programs. Many multi-stakeholder and multigenerational programs strive to accomplish this goal.
    - Cultivators invited undergraduates to attend the invite-only Round Table event and interface with industry leaders and academic heads.
    - Agricultural Scholars are graduate students in ag economics (in partnership with ERS). The program makes connections and opens dialogue between industry and government professionals.
    - Congressional Fellows program sends young congressional staff and sends them on farm tours.
    - Other programs focus on young professionals (Young Farmers, Young Agri-Food Leaders)
    - Ag Econ Fellow is a new program designed to nurture emerging ag economists at the PhD level. Accepted fellows will be paired with a mentor from the Office of the Chief Economist.
      * The position is paid and can be virtual.
      * The upcoming deadline is April 9, 2021.
  + Overall, strives to take passions and priorities and turn them into practical work with tangible outcomes
* Questions
  + Are farmers sharing information? Are there assessments of trust and privacy issues?
    - This is a big part of the challenge. Farm Foundation has project proposals to do surveys and studies on the issue of farmer trust.
    - Initial study (Farm Journal's Trust in Food) provided an initial benchmark, but Farm Foundation hopes to do more work on questions of privacy and trust.
    - Philosophically, data is privately owned, and Farm Foundation doesn't seek to end that.
    - There is a lot more work to be done.

**Council on Food, Agricultural & Resource Economics (C-FARE)**

*Gal Hochman, Board Chair*

* The team is led by a Board of Directors that rotates annually.
  + The Board is representative of the national ag community. This representation is also reflected in activities.
* The mission of C-FARE is to translate knowledge from ag and applied economics into educational programs directed at policymakers, congressional staff, stakeholders, and leaders in the federal administration.
  + The group doesn't focus on advocacy, but seeks to inform and education.
* Four main programs are run throughout the year.
  + Webinars and Hill Briefs (pre-COVID) on topics in ag and applied economics.
    - Webinars are hosted monthly on timely topics, with schedules published ahead of time. Webinars cover a variety of topics.
    - Flexible schedules allow for pivoting to topics that are of top interest.
    - C-FARE focuses on collaboration with other organizations in bringing webinars and hill brief events.
    - All webinars are recorded and posted on YouTube.
  + Capitol Hill visits are conducted in partnership with AAEA.
    - Enables conversation to discuss needs of the ag sector.
  + The [Brandt Forum](http://www.cfare.live/) is the signature event of C-FARE, scheduled for April 2021.
    - The event is focused on Digitally Driven Global Economy.
    - The annual forum directly communicates with policy makers.
    - A follow-up is held in November.
  + Social media channels are utilized, as are development of a monthly newsletter and other platforms to disseminate information.
* Implementation is done through three committees: Finance, Communications, and Programs.