

Item 4.0: CSREES Report

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Update on Farm Bill Implementation Activities

IMPLEMENTATION

A USDA implementation team, with representatives from each USDA mission area, meets weekly. The top priorities are those provisions that have specified deadlines or are essential to enable continuity of ongoing programs. An example for CSREES is the specialty crop research initiative which provides \$30 million and must be awarded before September 30, 2008. For the REE mission area, the start of a roadmap has a specific deadline and is referred to later.

New Farm Bill programs have been assigned to appropriate agencies and the delegations of authority are nearing completion, with the exception of a very few programs. Each agency has set a timeline for what is needed and how they plan to implement each program for which they are responsible.

The REE Under Secretary has established a REE Farm Bill Implementation team that usually meets on Mondays. In addition to staff from the Under Secretary's office, it includes the four REE agencies' Administrators and Associate Administrators and others as determined by each agency.

CHANGES

First and foremost, with the exception of Initiative for Future Agricultural and Food Systems (IFAFS), all funded programs that have been administered by CSREES have been reauthorized. If you cannot find a program reauthorized or repealed in Title VII of the new Farm Bill, this does not mean it is gone. It just means the program did not require reauthorization.

AFRI: The National Research Initiative (NRI) has been modified and renamed the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) and will be the core competitive grant program for research, education and extension. AFRI combines features from the NRI and IFAFS programs, and authorizes \$700 million in grants for FY 2008-12, of which the Secretary can retain no more than 4% for administrative costs. Funds are available for obligation for a 2-year period beginning in the fiscal year for which the funds are first made available. Grants are awarded on the basis of merit, quality, and relevance and may have terms of up to 10 years. (We expect to apply the 10-year award authority very judiciously.)

Of the AFRI funds allocated to research activities, section 7406 directs 60% toward grants for fundamental (or basic) research, and 40% toward applied research. Furthermore, of the AFRI funds allocated to fundamental research activities, 30% of AFRI grants will be directed toward research by multidisciplinary teams. In addition, the law specifies that of the total amount appropriated to AFRI, not less than 30% is to be used for integrated programs.

NIFA: All programs currently administered by CSREES will be transferred to a newly named National Institute of Food and Agriculture (the National Institute). This new agency will have a director, appointed by the president for a six year term with a second six year term possible. This politically appointed director will report directly to the Secretary or the Secretary's designee. The National Institute will be the only research agency in the Department required to have a politically appointed director rather than a career executive as administrator. The National Institute must be established no later than October 1, 2009.

Chief Scientist: The Under Secretary for Research, Education and Economics will also hold the title of Chief Scientist of the Department. This change should significantly increase the visibility of Research, Education and Extension.

REEO: The Under Secretary's office will establish the Research, Education, and Extension Office (REEO) to coordinate Agricultural Research. There will be six divisions:

- 1) Renewable Energy, Natural Resources, and Environment;
- 2) Food Safety, Nutrition, and Health;
- 3) Plant Health and Production and Plant Products;
- 4) Animal Health and Production and Animal Products;
- 5) Agricultural Systems and Technology; and,
- 6) Agricultural Economics and Rural Communities.

It is expected that directors for each division will be in place in early October, 2008. Their initial responsibility will be the development of a Roadmap for Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education. The Roadmap is to identify major opportunities and knowledge gaps; receive stakeholder recommendations; incorporate other roadmaps; and recommend funding levels. This Roadmap is mandated to be started by September 15, 2008 and completed one year after that date.

NEW PROGRAMS

Specialty Crops: New mandatory funding totaling \$230 million is provided for Specialty Crop Research, with \$30 million for 2008. The RFA for this Program has been released. In 2009 through 2012 \$50 million is provided each year.

Organic Agriculture: For The Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative in 2008 the Farm Bill lets stand \$3 million mandatory funding and also provides \$18 million in mandatory funding in 2009 and \$20 million mandatory in each of 2010 through 2012.

Beginning Farmers/Ranchers: The Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Program receives \$18 million in mandatory funding in 2009 and \$19 million in each of the years 2010 through 2012.

NOTEWORTHY PROGRAM CHANGES

EFNEP: Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program has its authorization level raised to \$90 million per year. The legislation sets a floor allocation of \$100,000 per recipient institution. It also creates a formula for 1890 Land-Grant Institutions to receive a base allocation plus 10 percent, increasing to 15 percent of appropriations above the FY07 level, and authorizes UDC to participate in the program.

HSACUs: The Farm Bill establishes a new category of Hispanic Serving Institutions addressing agriculture: Hispanic-Serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities (HSACUs). The law also establishes five new programs for HSACUs: (1) Endowment, (2) Equity, (3) Capacity, (4) Extension, and, (5) Research, and expands eligibility in several ongoing programs to HSACUs. The latter three programs are competitive.

Mcintire-Stennis: The McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Act is amended to include 1890 Land-Grant Institutions.

Ten year duration for certain grants: New authority allows the agency to make some competitive grants awards for up to ten years.

ONGOING ACTIVITIES

OEP will continue to conduct and provide critical analyses and take necessary actions to keep us abreast of – and compliant with – new authorities, legislation, regulatory title status, RFA expected release dates, other policies and procedures (and their timing), and other activities that emanate from the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008.

Statement regarding Family and Youth Development and 4-H

The language in the legislation does not specifically mention the role of family and consumer sciences, youth development, or 4-H in any new or amended provisions or law, including those related to the REEO or the National Institute. These focal areas, however, are included in the unamended legislation which established many current and ongoing programs, such as Smith-Lever formula and Smith-Lever 3(d) programs, and as such will continue be part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture research, education, and extension portfolio. In addition, expanded flexibility in administration of other programs, particularly competitively awarded grants, could provide avenues for expansion of support to these activities, depending on priority development and appropriations.

Family and youth development and 4-H programs will be included within the National Institute staffing and structure. CSREES is working with extension directors and other leaders to clarify roles and expectations for these programs, and will convey the perspectives and concerns of these constituents to transition planners.

Colien Hefferan
Administrator