



Competitive Research: The Key to Future Health and Prosperity

The United States has the world's most advanced university-based network of basic and applied scientific research. While this system has produced countless discoveries, there are millions of mysteries that only further research can hope to explain.

Unfortunately, research into vital food, agriculture, natural resources and human health disciplines is limited by inadequate funding for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES). Of particular concern to NASULGC are the National Research Initiative (NRI) and other competitive grant programs administered by CSREES.

The Problem

CSREES has received less attention and funding support than other comparable federal science research agencies, such as the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Science Foundation (NSF). A few facts:

- CSREES can provide funding for only 15% of the NRI research ranked by the agency as most promising. NIH and NSF typically fund more than 30% of such high-quality research proposals.
- Base funding at CSREES (which supports the research infrastructure), has fallen steadily over the past decade, by almost 15% in real terms.

As a result of the funding shortfall:

- America's farmers and foresters are missing key genomic data and biotechnology tools necessary to open new horizons for food and fiber production, processing and international trade.
- U.S. healthcare professionals don't have the best possible understanding of the relationships between diet and health.

The Solution

Funding for CSREES competitive grant programs must be increased. After all, such research:

- helps shows linkages between food and health to combat obesity and stave off chronic diseases;
- shows us new ways to combat insects, weeds, plant and animal diseases in the fields and ranches;
- establishes new crops, improved livestock and economic opportunities;
- creates new food and processing techniques, producing greater value and profitability; and
- helps keep pathogens and other dangers out of our air, water, soil, plants and animals.

Inadequate funding at CSREES is limiting developments in all of these critical research areas.

Modest Funding Increases are Crucial

NASULGC supports the president's FY 2005 budget request, which requests a ten percent increase in the National Research Initiative. We also support slight increases to two other programs:

- *Institution Challenge Grants* help cultivate the next generation of agriculture scientists, food producers and business professionals.
- *International Science & Education Grants* allow faculty and students in U.S. food, agriculture and natural resources to learn more about living, competing and working in an increasingly interdependent world.

NASULGC's Priority Requests for FY 2005:

- National Research Initiative \$180.0 m
- Institution Challenge Grants..... \$6.0 m
- International Science & Education Grants \$1.5 m

NASULGC represents 213 American universities and has members in all 50 states, D.C. and the U.S. territories. For more information about this fact sheet, see: www.nasulgc-bac.com or call Fred Hutchison at 202.551.1440.