



National Research Initiative

The United States has a university-based system that integrates agriculture, health, and environmental research with higher education and public outreach activities. This unique system is a partnership between America's land-grant and related universities and the USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES).

Some CSREES programs are administered under formulae that provide each state and territory with sufficient funds to underwrite vital agriculture and natural resource research stations and extension offices. However, many other programs—most notably the National Research Initiative (NRI)—require scientists and professionals from universities across the nation to compete directly against each other in peer-reviewed competitions.

Both Congress and the administration have recognized the enormous value of CSREES competitive programs in recent years by providing modest increases to the NRI. However, much more must be done:

- America's farmers and foresters need additional genomic data and biotechnology tools to expand food and fiber production, processing, and international trade.
- U.S. healthcare professionals need greater insight into the relationships between diet and health.
- Extension specialists and their clients need expanded knowledge about water quality to help protect the environment and safeguard our food system.
- University educators need additional funding to train new generations of food, agriculture, and natural resource scientists (many of whom are turning to better-funded disciplines).

NASULGC believes that the NRI must continue to expand to address such urgent unmet needs. This program supports leading-edge research, extension, and teaching efforts that:

- Explore the linkages between food and health, thereby helping to combat obesity and chronic diseases.
- Provide innovative new methods to fight insects, weeds, and plant and animal diseases on farms, forests, and ranches.
- Establish new crops, improve livestock, and establish new economic opportunities through genomics and molecular biology.
- Create better food and processing techniques, leading to higher values and greater profitability.
- Help keep pathogens and other dangers from our air, water, soil, plants, and animals.
- Generate new economic opportunities to sustain and grow rural communities.

NASULGC supports the President's FY 2008 Budget Request of \$256 million for the National Research Initiative, including \$45.13 million for programs currently administered under the "Integrated Activities" budgetary heading.

