

Date: May 26, 2009

To: Colien Hefferan, Administrator, CSREES

From: D.C. Coston, Chair, Farm Bill Committee

Re: Comments on on design and implementation of the 1890 Institution Capacity Building Grants Program

The Farm Bill Implementation Assistance Committee was appointed by the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities' (formerly NASULGC) Board on Agriculture Assembly to work with USDA in implementation of provisions of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 ("2008 Farm Bill"). We wish to offer comments in response to the April 20, 2009, announcement in the Federal Register seeking feedback on design and implementation of the 1890 Institution Capacity Building Grants Program.

The 1890 Institutions are important partners in the Land Grant System in the United States. There is significant, and ever expanding, collaboration among Land Grant universities. Additionally, the 1890 institutions have constituencies which they are best positioned to serve through teaching, research, and extension programs.

The Board on Agriculture Assembly was supportive of the needs of the 1890 universities during the process of development of the 2008 Farm Bill. Several of the provisions in the Bill address enhancing capacity. A major component of this is the 1890 Capacity Building Grants Program. This collective support from throughout the Land Grant community was based on the two facets outlined above: the 1890 Universities need the capacity to work with their constituencies, and they also need the capacity to be partners with fellow Land Grant universities and collaborators.

A number of the 1890 universities are submitting comments in response to this call. Additionally, the Association of Research Directors (ARD), which is the collective 1890 agricultural research leadership, and the Association of Extension Administrators (AEA), which is an organization whose membership includes the Extension Administrators and Associate Administrators who provide leadership for the Extension programs at the 1890 Land-Grant Universities, have each submitted a response.

The ARD comment was signed by Dr. Orlando Means, who chairs the ARD organization and the AEA comment was signed by Albert E. Essel, Chair, AEA. Thus, the commentary submitted by the ARD represents the collective thoughts of the impacted 1890 community.

The Farm Bill Implementation Committee supports the recommendations in the ARD and AEA commentary (copies attached) and recommends that the Cooperative States Research, Education, and Extension Service carefully consider the counsel provided therein as the 1890 Capacity Building Grants Program is designed and implemented.