

Case for Integration

Food, agricultural, and natural resources research, extension, education, and international programs are currently spread over four USDA agencies: (1) Agriculture Research Service (ARS); (2) Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES); (3) Economic Research Service (ERS); and (4) Forest Service R&D (USFS R&D).

As a result, there is frequent programmatic duplication, no clearly identified “lead-agency” to address critical national issues, and a lack of clear and simple integration across agencies.

To appreciate the critical need to integrate the research, extension, and teaching functions dispersed throughout the U.S. Department of Agriculture, it is important to understand how the four key agencies – ARS, CSREES, ERS, and USFS R&D – currently operate:

- ARS is primarily a research agency that maintains a network of laboratories and offices staffed by federal employees. Excluding facilities, the ARS has an annual budget of ≈\$1.123 billion, of which 93% is spent internally. Since it is a scientific research agency, there are no requirements for ARS employees to assume extension (technology transfer) or higher education responsibilities.
- CSREES is the agency that manages the Federal-State and Federal-Tribal Partnerships in food and agricultural research, extension, and teaching.

CSREES has an annual budget of ≈\$1.199 billion, of which 6% is spent internally. Many CSREES programs integrate research with extension and higher education and land-grant employees supported through the Federal-State Partnership often hold joint research, extension, and/or academic appointments.

There is a critical need to integrate the research, extension, and teaching functions dispersed throughout the USDA.

- ERS is an in-house USDA research agency with most personnel located in Washington, DC. This agency has an annual budget of ≈\$75 million, of which 90% is spent internally.
- USFS R&D is one of three principal divisions of the U.S. Forest Service. USFS R&D maintains a network of labs and offices staffed with federal employees. USFS R&D has an annual budget of ≈\$277 million, of which 86% is spent internally. Extension and higher education requirements are also minimal for USFS R&D employees.

The CREATE-21 proposal envisions integration of these four agencies, including



their functions, personnel, programs and activities within a new “National Institute.” Although the Institute will be an independent agency reporting directly to the Secretary of Agriculture, it will incorporate the best elements of the existing USDA organizations:

- The Institute will manage a broad and integrated portfolio of programs to be organized by problem/solution areas and funding mechanisms.
- **Competitive programs** will build upon the Institute’s capabilities – both within USDA and the Partnerships – to help solve problems of pressing multistate, national, or international significance. (These programs will be open to all qualified universities/investigators.)
- **Capacity programs** will maintain and expand the intramural research capability within USDA (e.g. ARS, ERS, and USFS R&D) and the research, extension, education, and international capability of the Federal-State and Federal-Tribal Partnerships.

By continuing appropriate state matching requirements in such key federal statutes as the Hatch Act of 1887, the Smith-Lever Act of 1914, the McIntire-Stennis Act of 1962, the Evans-Allen Act, and 1890s Extension, scarce federal resources will leverage other funds. And, by reducing program duplication, limited federal resources will be stretched further still.

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The Institute will be guided by a diverse National Stakeholder Advisory Council and there will be new mechanisms for input from local, state, tribal, and regional stakeholder groups as to the immediate, emerging, and future needs for research, extension, education, and international programs.

In addition, the Institute will build upon one of the great strengths of the Federal-State and Federal-Tribal Partnerships, namely the tight integration of research with extension and teaching.

CREATE-21 envisions that the National Institute will initially be organized around six critical problem-solution areas:

- Increase economic opportunities in agriculture and natural resources.
- Improve human nutrition and health.
- Support rural and urban community development.
- Protect America’s natural resource base and environment.
- Enhance safety and security of U.S. agriculture and food supply.
- Ensure family, youth, and community success.

The Case for Closer Integration

As outline above, primary responsibility over U.S. food, agriculture, and natural resources research, teaching, and extension is vested within the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

However, this responsibility is spread over: the Agricultural Research Service;

and Extension Service; the Economic Research Service; and the Forest Service.

The weaknesses of the current system?

- An inflexible organizational structure.
- Budgetary inefficiencies.
- Inadequate integration of programs and activities.
- Ineffectual stakeholder input mechanisms.
- An emphasis on “capacity” vs. “competitive” funding.

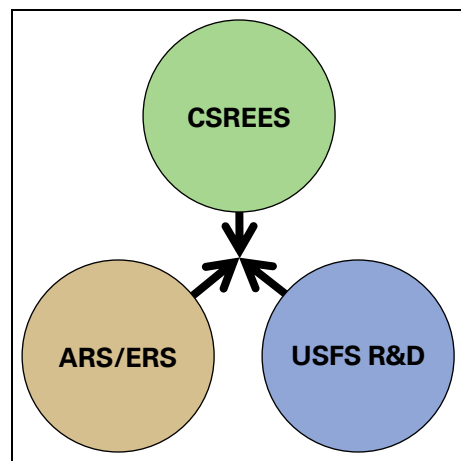
CREATE-21 addresses these problems by integrating the functions, facilities, and personnel of ARS, CSREES, ERS, and USFS R&D into a new “National Institute.”

The Institute will...

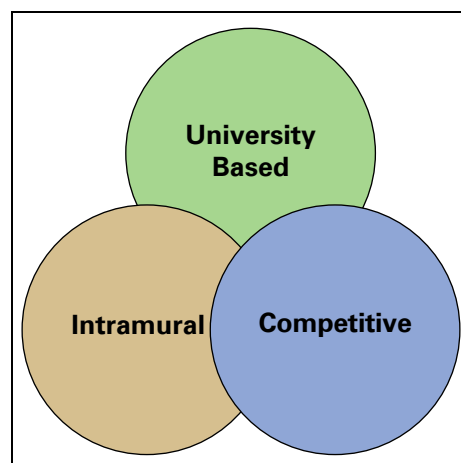
- **Increase organizational flexibility** through a variable structure organized initially around six major problem/solution areas.
- **Improve budgetary efficiency** through elimination of duplicative programs and activities and a streamlined bureaucracy.
- **Enhance program integration** by bringing the intramural research capacity of ARS, ERS, and USFS R&D more closely together with the research, education, and extension capacity of America’s land-grant and related universities/institutions.
- **Boost stakeholder involvement** through a new National Stakeholder Advisory Council and other mechanisms for improved/increased input at all levels.
- **Be authorized to receive increased competitive grant funding.** (Authorized funding for the intramural capacity of ARS, ERS, USFS R&D, and the land-grant

university system will also be significantly enhanced, with special emphasis placed on building capacity at the 1890, 1994, and smaller 1862 land-grant universities).

From Coordination...



... to Integration



For Additional Information:
WWW.CREATE-21.ORG