



Honoring the Land-Grant University Covenant

The United States has a unique national partnership with its public universities. This partnership—which dates back to the Land-Grant Acts of 1862, 1890, and 1994—represents a covenant among the federal government, the state governments, and America's land-grant universities.

- The land-grant universities provide a rich, robust, and affordable education for undergraduate and graduate students.
- These universities also operate a *national* network of scientific research stations and a *national* extension service that disseminates practical, science-based knowledge.
- The federal government provides base funding to support the national research and extension networks and to educate future scientists, extension specialists, teachers, and others.
- The state governments are required to match the federal contributions.

The President's FY 2006 Budget Request would breach the land-grant covenant without prior dialogue with the partnership.

- The Hatch (agriculture) and McIntire-Stennis (forestry) research programs would be cut by 50 percent in FY 2006 and "zeroed out" in FY 2007.
- The Animal Health and Disease research program would be eliminated in FY 2006.

Administered by the USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES), these three programs provide essential "base funds" for agriculture, nutrition, food safety, forestry, natural resources, and animal health and disease research at land-grant universities within the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories.

The President's Budget Request attempts to "soften the blow" by adding money to the USDA's National Research Initiative and creating a new "State Agricultural Experiment Stations Competitive Grants Program" within the CSREES budget. However useful and well-meaning these efforts may be, they cannot replace the existing programs that ensure a reliable level of base funding for each and every land-grant university.

America's land-grant universities vigorously oppose elimination of funding for the Hatch, McIntire-Stennis, and Animal Health and Disease programs. We are open to suggestions as to how partnership funding mechanisms can be improved, but the President's Budget Request goes too far.

If Congress were to acquiesce to the President's Request:

- Thousands of professors, research scientists, extension specialists, faculty, and staff would lose their jobs;

- Thousands of graduate student fellowships would be cancelled and hundreds of agriculture and natural resource undergraduates would undoubtedly switch to other majors;
- Dozens of laboratories, farms, and experimental forests would shut down;
- Hundreds of cutting-edge, nationally important research programs would abruptly end; and
- America would be deprived of the scientific breakthroughs and valuable knowledge that can quite literally improve lives, strengthen our economy, protect the security of our food supply, and enable us to remain competitive in international food and fiber markets.

Members of Congress should remember that the world-renowned success of U.S. agriculture is not the product of chance but a dividend from the continuous investment in America's land-grant university system.