

Core Messages: CSREES Program Funding Mechanisms and Administration

Beyond making recommendations for program funding levels for the USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES), the President's F.Y. 2007 Budget Request included several proposed changes to key CSREES programs:

- The Animal Health and Disease program, which provides essential base funds for colleges of veterinary medicine and agricultural experiment stations across the United States, would be eliminated (zero-funded).
- The Hatch Act program, which provides vital base funds for state agricultural research stations across the country, would also be changed drastically. A new multistate, competitively-awarded proposal program would be instituted and by 2011, 55 percent of Hatch funds would be allocated through the new methodology. (Under current law, 25 percent of Hatch monies must be spent on multistate projects.)
- The McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry program—which provides base funds for forestry research—would be altered fundamentally through *immediate* imposition of a requirement that 60 percent of available funds be allocated through a new multistate, competitively-awarded proposal program.
- Seven programs funded under the authority of §406 of the Agricultural Research, Extension and Education Act of 1998 (including Water Quality and Food Safety) would be moved to the National Research Initiative for funding and administration.

The National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges opposes all of these proposed changes in funding levels, mechanisms, and administration:

- The proposed changes to the Hatch and McIntire-Stennis programs alter the fundamental nature of these programs. If such changes are warranted, then they should be made by the House and Senate Agriculture Committees in the context of the next Farm Bill.
- We recognize that the Administration put forward these proposed changes to increase competitiveness, improve efficiency, and bring greater integration to CSREES base fund programs. America's land-grant and related universities have been working on a proposal—the CREATE-21 concept—aimed at accomplishing these very same results.
- But instead of unilateral changes to the Hatch, McIntire-Stennis, and Animal Health and Disease programs (as proposed in the President's Budget Request), we support a process to bring CSREES and university officials together to develop consensus alternatives that might be incorporated in the next Farm Bill.
- And as for the §406 programs, these are well managed and meeting their original objectives. In our opinion, the agency has failed to articulate a compelling reason why funding for and administration of these programs should be shifted to the National Research Initiative.