

ACTION OPPORTUNITY
FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS TO EXPRESS SUPPORT
FOR STRONG RESEARCH & EXTENSION TITLE
IN NEXT FARM BILL

Producers who choose to submit farm bill comments to the House Agriculture Committee are encouraged to include a statement of support for a strong research, extension and education title (Title VII).

The House Agriculture Committee is inviting comments via the Committee's web site from producers around the country about current farm policy, and what is working and what could be improved. While the information submitted on the website will not be part of the official Congressional record, the Committee indicates the feedback will be helpful as the farm bill debate moves forward in 2007.

- The web address is: <http://www.agriculture.house.gov/inside/feedbackform.html>.
- Comments will be accepted through December 31, 2006.

SUGGESTED POINTS

- **I support a strong research title** in the next farm bill.
- **I am concerned that recent funding levels in basic and applied research and extension have been inadequate** to help us maintain our leadership role in agriculture.
- **I need the results** that research and extension can deliver to me to help me meet a range of ever changing challenges including—developing new markets and increasing the value of my products, addressing pest and invasive species challenges, responding to conservation and environmental challenges, and sustaining our rural communities.

Personalize comments to your needs and operation as appropriate.

Additional Background

- Our unparalleled success story in American agriculture to date has been possible in part by past federal investments in research and extension.
- Federal funding for food and agricultural research, extension and education has been **flat for over 20 years**, while support for other federal research has increased substantially.
- Public funding of agricultural research in the **rest of the world** during the same time period has reportedly increased at a nearly **30 percent faster** pace.
- Societal demands and expectations placed upon the food and agricultural system are ever-changing and growing. Simply stated, **federal funding has not kept pace with identified priority needs**—bio-security, farm income and rural revitalization, renewable energy markets, biotechnology.
- Food and agricultural research, extension and education to date have helped provide the United States with an agricultural system that consistently produces high quality, affordable food and natural fiber, while at the same time:
 - *Creating jobs and income.* The food and agricultural sector and related industries provide over 20 million jobs, about 17 percent of U.S. jobs, and account for nearly \$1 trillion or 13 percent of GDP.
 - *Helping reduce the trade deficit.* Agricultural exports average more than \$50 billion annually compared to \$38 billion of imports, contributing some \$12 billion to reducing the \$350 billion trade deficit in the nonagricultural sector.
 - *Sustaining important strategic resources.* This nation's abundant food supply bolsters national security and eases world tension and turmoil. Science-based improvements in agriculture have saved over a billion people from starvation and countless millions more from the ravages of disease and malnutrition.
 - *Providing many valuable aesthetic and environmental amenities to the public.* The proximity to open space enhances the value of nearby residential property. Farmland is a natural wastewater treatment system. Unpaved land allows the recharge of the ground water that urban residents need. Farms are stopovers for migratory birds. Farmers are stewards for 65 percent of non-federal lands and provide habitat for 75 percent of wildlife.
- Publicly financed research, extension and education are **necessary complements to private sector research**, focusing in areas where the private sector does not have an incentive to invest, when 1) the pay-off is over a long term, 2) the potential market is more speculative, 3) the effort is during the pre-technology stage; and 4) where the benefits are widely diffused.
- Analysis by the International Food Policy Research Institute 292 studies of the impacts of agricultural research and extension published since 1953 showed an average annual rate of **return on public investments in agricultural research and extension of 81 percent!**
- If similar research dividends are to be realized in the future, then the nation must **commit to a continuing investment** that reflects the long-term benefits of food and agricultural research, extension and education.

National C-FAR

The National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research (National C-FAR) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, consensus-based and *customer-led* coalition established in 2001 that brings food, agriculture, nutrition, conservation and natural resource organizations together with the food and agriculture research and extension community. National C-FAR serves as a forum and a unified voice in support of sustaining and increasing public investment at the national level in food and agricultural research, extension and education. More information about National C-FAR is available at www.ncfar.org.