

National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education and Economics Advisory Board

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To: Dr. Catherine E. Woteki
Undersecretary, REE
Chief Scientist, USDA

From: Dr. Milo J. Shult
Chair



RE: NAREEE Advisory Board's Recommendations for the Establishment of National
Priorities, Section 7128 of the *Agricultural Act of 2014*

As you are aware, section 7128 of the *Agricultural Act of 2014* (Farm Bill) requires recipients of many National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) competitive grant awards to provide matching funds unless their institution falls into one of the several excepted categories or the grantee receives a waiver from the Secretary. The specific language for granting such waivers (section 1408(c)(1)(B)) states that the grant "involves research or extension activities that are consistent with the priorities established by" the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board (NAREEEAB) for the year involved.

The NAREEEAB wishes to provide input on the establishment of these national priorities in a way that will give the greatest flexibility to fund high priority and emerging research and extension activities. We believe that we have a very dynamic process for working with the Research, Education, and Economics (REE) Mission Area through our mandated review of the Relevancy and Adequacy Funding Report of REE programs; our oversight of specific committees identified in the Farm Bill; and through continuing dialogue(s) with you and your administrative leadership team. We are currently engaged in a set of discussions to enhance our R&A evaluation process and to establish an even stronger blueprint for developing these reports.

Our recommendation for establishing national priorities, and thereby honoring the Farm Bill language in Section 7128, is to utilize the priorities established in the 2014 REE Action Plan as the foundation for considering such waivers and any additional priorities identified in the (proposed) 2012 Relevancy and Adequacy Funding Report. We believe using these established

evaluation and strategic planning processes will provide the most efficient and effective way to address the needs for continuity for ongoing priorities and also to provide the capacity to deal with new and emerging needs.

We ask that you convey our recommendation to the Secretary and we look forward to working closely with you on this important issue.