



The 2008 Farm Bill: What It Means for the University of Wisconsin – Madison¹



- The Farm Bill will provide generational change in how research, teaching and extension are organized and administered in the USDA and funded by Congress.
- The Farm Bill includes \$500 million in new mandatory competitive research over five years. It also authorized an additional \$190 million per year in new discretionary spending subject to the annual congressional appropriations process. All of these new funds are to be used for targeted research and development programs administered by the National Institute for Food and Agriculture [NIFA] and distributed through peer-reviewed, competitively awarded grants.
 - For the first time (as part of that \$500 million), \$230 million are available to support research on specialty crops such as fruits, vegetables and nursery crops – critical for Wisconsin's farmers. An additional \$100 million per year is authorized for appropriations spending subject to the annual congressional appropriations process. Wisconsin leads the nation in production of specialty crops, including cranberries, potatoes, snap beans, green peas and ginseng.
- The bill also supports the very successful collaborative work of researchers, Extension specialists and educators working through UW–Madison's agricultural experiment stations and the UW Extension offices to reach out and engage citizens in addressing complex agricultural, food and environmental issues. The details of the Farm Bill provide for a minimum number of integrated proposals (i.e., blending research, teaching and extension) and multistate efforts.
- Without this funding, UW–Madison's ability to address these critical areas would be curtailed.
- At UW–Madison and our colleague institutions, we are proud that our research, education and Extension programs have helped to resolve past food crises across our state, nation and around the world. As we face new challenges in providing nutritious food not only to our neighbors down the street but also around the world, the investment that this Farm Bill makes in our colleges and universities will pay off in knowledge that will help us fight this fight.
- Organic research: \$78 million total over fiscal years 2009-2012 in mandatory funding and an additional \$25 million per year authorized for appropriations.

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- Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program: \$75 million total over FY 2009-2012 in mandatory funding and an additional \$30 million per year authorized for appropriations.
- Biomass research and development: \$118 million total over FY 2008-2012 in mandatory funding and an additional \$35 million per year authorized for appropriations.
- USDA Science Road Map. The undersecretary will be charged with preparing an annual "road map" to guide all of the USDA science agencies. It will emphasize competitive programs and efforts to strengthen the small 1862, 1890 and 1994 land-grant institutions and the non-land-grant colleges of agriculture.
- National Institute for Food and Agriculture. The conferees agreed with the suggestion of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC) to increase the standing and visibility of USDA extramural science programs by reconstituting the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES) as the National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA). NIFA will assume all of the authorities, duties and responsibilities of the former CSREES.
- The NIFA director will be a distinguished scientist nominated by the president and confirmed by the Senate for a six-year term with the option for a second six-year reappointment. The director will report to the secretary or his designee. The director will manage NIFA in coordination with the undersecretary, implement the extramural components of the road map created by the undersecretary, and create and organize offices for basic and applied research, extension and education.
- Agriculture and Food Research Initiative. The agency's flagship competitive grants program – currently called the National Research Initiative – will be renamed the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI). Funding for the AFRI will be authorized at \$700 million per year, with 60 percent of appropriated funds going to basic research and the remaining 40 percent to applied research programs. Within the total funding for AFRI, a minimum of 30 percent must be for integrated projects -- those that integrate research with extension and/or teaching -- thereby providing a newly elevated role for extension and education within AFRI.
- Strengthened undersecretary. The research, education and extension undersecretary will become the USDA's chief scientist and retain jurisdiction over the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), the Economic Research Service (ERS) and the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). To ensure greater collaboration among these agencies and NIFA, the undersecretary will have an expanded staff to be housed within a new Research, Extension and Education Office (REEO). The REEO will have six divisions, each led by a qualified division chief reporting to the undersecretary:

- Renewable Energy, Natural Resources and Environment.
- Food Safety, Nutrition and Health.
- Plant Health and Production.
- Animal Health and Production and Animal Products.
- Agriculture Systems and Technology.
- Agriculture Economics and Rural Communities.

For information on the Budget and Advocacy Committee's priorities for the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) for FY 2009, view the [House Agriculture Subcommittee Markup of F.Y 2009 Bill](#)