



The Challenge of Change: Engaging Public Universities to Feed the World

Charge for the Commission

1. Identify and prioritize the key challenges that our public universities can successfully address that will advance food security in North America and the world.

Food security is a term that encompasses a broad range of disciplines and fields of interest. Through the proposed process, the Commission will identify a considerable number and diverse sets of challenges. The undertaking of the Commission will be to determine from these challenges those that are most important to create food security, and at the same time focus on the challenges our institutions are best suited to address.

2. Recommend how best our public universities can align their resources to address the challenges identified by the Commission.

The Commission will assess the nature of the problems identified and assess how best to organize their resources, structure and research function to accomplish these challenges. Many of the challenges likely to be identified may be interdisciplinary, involve large amounts of data and use an array of new technologies that may push our institutions to consider new forms of organization and faculty engagement. A wide array of approaches already exist that may be instructive in this regard and new approaches may emerge that will increase the effectiveness of our efforts. Universities may be the only place where all relevant disciplines come together to address these complex, systemic issues.

3. Determine the resources required for our public universities to address the challenges identified by the Commission.

It is widely acknowledged that the current public funding of agricultural related research is not sufficient and may need to be refocused as indicated by the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST). PCAST "calls for a strategic investment that will create the path toward an improved innovation ecosystem for the U.S. heartland, enhancing the economy and harnessing the power of U.S. innovation in science and technology to address this set of great challenges to the Nation." The Commission report can and should build on previous recommendations, but with a focus on the role of our public universities and on a commitment to address the identified challenges. The report should be focused, unique and compelling.