

FANR FOCUS: WHAT'S THE LATEST?

APLU's Food, Agriculture, and Natural Resources (FANR) Update

FROM DOUG'S DESK

Doug Steele, Vice President

Like most of you, I make daily decisions on how to best allocate my time for efficiency and productively. For me, this includes finding the optimal balance between traveling to participate in meetings with BAA members and external constituents, and time in the office to ensure strategic alignment with the FANR team and APLU overall.

This can be challenging in the early spring because most of the BAA regional meetings are held in-person and represent research, Extension, academic programs, and CARET delegates. By attending regional meetings and affiliate conferences in person, I have great opportunities to hear first-hand about BAA member institutions' outstanding work while also strengthening relationships with many national partners.

This week, I was fortunate to attend the **Association of 1890 Research Directors (ARD) biennial conference** in Nashville, TN. The Symposium's theme this year is ***"Climate, Health and Cultivating the Next Generation of Agriculture Leaders: Creating Solutions in Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources."***

All 1890 land-grant universities were represented with almost 1,600 attendees, including 800+ students and national scholarship winners. The symposium's goal is to provide a forum for interactions, knowledge sharing, building networks for expanded partnerships and to showcase the talents and achievement of the 1890 community. This is accomplished through plenary sessions, panel discussions, research findings, Extension engagement and student involvement in topical presentations and posters. **My congratulations to the 1890 leadership and ARD office** for another outstanding biennial conference. It gets better each time!

The mission of our land-grant and public colleges of agriculture, natural resources and life sciences is strong and vital. While it may appear that progress on annual appropriations and the farm bill are not moving forward at this time, I am heartened by how our BAA members serve

stakeholders and make a difference in agriculture innovation, Extension engagement and student success. Thank you for representing the best of higher education!

In this edition:

- [Washington Update](#)
- [Awards & Opportunities](#)
 - [USDA Teaching Awards Request for Applications](#)
 - [National Cooperative Extension Award Nominations](#)
 - [Joint Council of Extension Professionals Extension Engagement Award](#)
 - [Farm Bureau Ag Innovation Challenge](#)
 - [2024 CARET Award Recipients](#)
- [Webinar | Navigating Mentorship: Empowering Tomorrow's Leaders](#)
- [2024 BAA Summer Leadership Meeting](#)
- [Partner Events](#)

Washington Update

Prepared for the Board on Agriculture Assembly by Lewis-Burke Associates

Secretary Vilsack Testifies Before House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee on USDA Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Request

Last month, Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack testified before the House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee on the fiscal year (FY) 2025 budget request for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). During his testimony, Secretary Vilsack spoke about the importance of passing a Farm Bill reauthorization, emphasized USDA's continued efforts in promoting research and clean energy initiatives, and highlighted the need to support farmers by creating multiple streams of income that can be accomplished on their own farmland.

House Agriculture Committee Holds Hearing on "The Danger China Poses to American Agriculture"

On March 20, the House Agriculture Committee convened a hearing titled "The Danger China Poses to American Agriculture," where the Committee brought together witnesses ranging from current political leaders and agricultural experts to farmers. The hearing began with remarks from Committee Chairman G.T. Thompson (R-PA), who emphasized the need for a coordinated response and collaboration between both sides of the aisle. He highlighted intellectual property

theft, cybersecurity breaches, and strategic acquisitions of American farmland as key issues impacting national security and rural communities.

NIFA Research Facilities Act Program Solicitation: Due May 13

The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) released the Research Facilities Act Program (RFAP) solicitation for fiscal year (FY) 2024. The FY 2024 solicitation intends to provide \$1 million, half the amount available in FY 2023. [An informational webinar](#) will take place on April 15.

READ THE FULL REPORT

AWARDS & OPPORTUNITIES

2024 USDA Teaching Awards Request for Applications

The USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) is accepting nominations for the [2024 USDA Excellence in Teaching Awards](#). To find information about the awards, please refer to this [resources page](#) and the [2024 awards guidelines](#). Nominees may find [this webinar](#) helpful when thinking about how to prepare their [nomination packets](#).

All nominations must be submitted electronically, and arrive no later than 5:00pm ET on April 15, 2024.

Please contact Wendy Fink (wfink@aplu.org) with questions about the nomination process.

[Back to Top](#) ↑

National Cooperative Extension Award Nominations

The Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP), in partnership with USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), offers the following awards:

- National Extension Diversity Award

- Individual Awards for Excellence in Extension
- Team Award for Excellence in Extension

Online submissions are required by May 1, 2024. Winning Cooperative Extension professionals from [these land-grant colleges and universities](#) are selected by the end of July and will travel to the APLU Annual Meeting in November to receive their awards. For more information, please visit <https://awards.extension.org/>.

[Back to Top ↑](#)

Joint Council of Extension Professionals Extension Engagement Award

The JCEP Excellence in Extension Engagement Award recognizes high quality, evidence-based Extension work that has documented outstanding outcomes and impacts with clientele and strengthens the Extension profession. The selection committee considers individual or team applicants that documents an engagement program that is local needs driven, grounded in scholarly practice, has adequate program evaluation, adoption beyond the initial audience, strengthens professionals within or across states, and shows innovation that brings something new to Extension professionals.

Applications are due May 31, 2024. [See more information and apply.](#)

[Back to Top ↑](#)

Farm Bureau Ag Innovation Challenge

The Farm Bureau Ag Innovation Challenge is a national business competition that showcases U.S. startups developing innovative solutions that address challenges facing America's farmers, ranchers, and rural communities. The Challenge was the first national business competition of its kind focused exclusively on rural entrepreneurs.

Now in their eleventh year, the American Farm Bureau Federation in partnership with Farm Credit, are looking to identify the top entrepreneurs who are addressing both traditional challenges farmers face on their operation, such as access to labor, optimizing yield and reducing operating costs, to entrepreneurs who are addressing new challenges facing farmers and rural communities.

Farm Bureau will award \$145,000 in startup funds to four businesses, culminating at a live pitch

competition and networking event at the AFBF Convention in January 2025 in San Antonio, TX. The Ag Innovation Challenge Winner will be awarded a total of \$100,000 in startup funds provided by our sponsors.

Applications are due June 15, 2024. [See more information and apply.](#)

[Back to Top ↑](#)

CARET 2024 Award Recipients

Congratulations to the recipients of the 2024 CARET Awards. Award recipients were recognized at the CARET/BAA Washington Conference in February 2024.

- **2024 Lifetime Service Award Recipient (posthumously)**

Robert (Bob) Kidd
University of Wyoming

[Read Robert \(Bob\) Kidd's bio.](#)

The Lifetime of Service to CARET Award is an award given to a longstanding CARET delegate who has concluded their service to CARET and who has made significant contributions to CARET over many years to enhance the national support and understanding of the importance of the land-grant university system's agricultural research, extension, and teaching programs.

- **2024 Meritorious Service to CARET Award**

Dr. Mortimer H. Neufville
Maryland

[Read Dr. Mortimer H. Neufville's bio.](#)

The Meritorious Service to CARET Award is an award given to an individual who has supported CARET and the land-grant university system. The award also may be given to a CARET delegate who has concluded their service to CARET or other individual who has made significant contributions to CARET to enhance the national support and understanding of the importance of the land-grant university system's agricultural research, extension, and teaching programs.

[Back to Top ↑](#)

WEBINARS

Navigating Mentorship: Empowering Tomorrow's Leaders

April 24, May 1, and May 8, 2024 | 12:00 - 12:45 PM ET

The Missouri [Mentorship Project Team](#) is hosting a new webinar series featuring leaders from across Extension.

April 24, 2024: Culturally Responsive Mentorship

Dr. Dawn Mellion will share her pearls of wisdom, her approach to mentorship as a leader within the 1890 land grant system, and how she inspires her mentees through the Extension Foundation.

May 1, 2024: Tailoring the Mentoring Experience

Victor Villegas, Oregon State University, will share his passion for mentorship and how he creates a unique experience for each of his mentees so that he can create an impactful experience.

May 8, 2024: Continued Growth and Capacity Building at 1994 Tribal Land Grants

Brian Kowalkowski, College of Menominee Nation, will share how he strives to build capacity within and across the 1994 land grant system and how he strives to create the next generation of leadership.

[See more information and register here.](#)

[Back to Top ↑](#)

MEETINGS

2024 BAA Summer Leadership Meeting

Formerly known as Joint COPs

July 16-18, 2024 | Providence, Rhode Island

Save the date! We will begin on July 16 at 8:00 am and adjourn on July 18 at 10:00 am.

Who should attend: Elected and appointed leaders of all BAA sections; liaisons to sections and the Policy Board of Directors; and members of the Budget and Advocacy Committee, Committee on Legislation and Policy (Farm Bill), and Communications and Marketing Committee.

More details on logistics and draft agendas will be forthcoming.

[Back to Top ↑](#)

PARTNER EVENTS

National 4-H Conference

April 19-24, 2024 | Arlington, VA

Bringing hundreds of 4-H'ers to the nation's capital each spring, National 4-H Conference is the flagship youth development opportunity of USDA, hosted by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). From April 19-24, 2024, the nationally recognized event is developing the next generation of leaders alongside more federal partners than ever before. Experience unparalleled discovery, learning, professional development, and networking with 4-H'ers from around the world. The event features Conference roundtable sessions, Youth Career Fair exhibitions, special events, assemblies and much more.

[See more information and register here.](#)

National Health Outreach and Engagement Conference

May 13-15, 2024 | Greenville, SC

The National Health Outreach and Engagement Conference is a premier conference for research, Extension presentations, and networking.

[See more information and register here.](#)

[Back to Top ↑](#)

RESOURCES

Public and Land-grant University Job Board

The APLU [job board](#) is a free resource available to member institutions. Post your own job or find open positions at public and land-grant universities across North America.

FOCUS is an update from the Food, Agriculture, and Natural Resources office of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) to provide timely, relevant information and actions items to the membership of the Commission on Food, Environment, and Renewable Resources (CFERR) and its member boards and sections. [Join the FANR Focus Mailing List.](#)

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