



## FANR FOCUS: WHAT'S THE LATEST?

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

#### FROM DOUG'S DESK

*Doug Steele, Senior Vice President*

The release of the Administration's FY 2027 President's Budget Request (PBR) request marks the start of another consequential appropriations cycle for the nation's food, agriculture, and natural resources research and Extension enterprise. As in past years, the PBR is best understood as a statement of priorities rather than a final outcome. That said, this year's proposal raises significant concerns for the land-grant and public colleges of agricultural, life sciences and natural resources, particularly in how it would restructure federal support for land-grant universities.

The PBR proposes a substantial reduction in funding for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, with discretionary funding declining by nearly one-fifth. Within that topline, the proposal would reduce funding for the National Institute of Food and Agriculture by roughly \$655 million, with the deepest reductions concentrated in capacity programs. Most notably, the budget would eliminate Hatch Act funding entirely and significantly reduce Smith-Lever, Evans-Allen, and McIntire-Stennis accounts. These programs form the backbone of the federal-state partnership that enables land-grant institutions to deliver locally relevant research, Extension, and education in every state and territory.

At the same time, the PBR maintains support for competitive programs such as the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) at reduced levels reinforcing a shift toward competitively awarded funding. While competitive grants play a critical role in advancing innovation, they are most effective when paired with strong institutional capacity—people, facilities, and statewide infrastructure—that allows discoveries to be generated, translated, and delivered.

During the BAA Summer Leadership meeting in July, the Budget and Advocacy Committee will continue our advocacy strategy for APLU's FY 2027 advocacy priorities to reflect this balance, calling for robust investment in both competitive and capacity programs. From the BAA's perspective, these funding streams are complementary, not interchangeable.

We remain vigilant as we monitor FY27 funding and prepare for FY28.

*Doug*

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## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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### **Washington Update**

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

**In this edition:**

- [Trump Administration Releases FY 2027 President Budget Request](#)
- [Administration Announces MAHA Initiative to Strengthen Food Security, Agricultural Innovation, and Health](#)
- [USDA Announces Forest Service Reorganization, Relocations, and Closures](#)

- Biotechnology Regulatory Services Holds Annual Stakeholder Meeting

READ THE FULL REPORT

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**Webinar: A Comprehensive Overview of "A Study of Land-grant University Federal Capacity Funding"**

Thursday, April 9 | 4:00-5:15 pm ET

This [webinar](#) is designed for individuals who have not yet had the opportunity to hear Wendy Fink's presentation on the Tripp Umbach, Phase 1 report on federal capacity funding and would like to learn more about the Board on Agriculture Assembly's Federal Capacity Funding Initiative. The analysis and key findings are based upon survey results from 94 capacity-eligible institutions. The webinar will cover:

1. What are USDA Capacity Funding Grant Programs?
2. What does Capacity Funding Enable?
3. BAA's Capacity Initiative's Three Phases
4. Phase One: Key Takeaways
5. What Can You Do to Help with This Effort?

*Welcome:*

**Christopher Daubert**, Chair, BAA's Administrative Heads Section  
Vice Chancellor and Dean  
College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources  
University of Missouri

**James Pritchett**, Chair, BAA's Communications and Marketing Committee  
Vice President for Engagement and Extension  
Colorado State University

*Presenters:*

**Wendy Fink**

Executive Director - Academic Programs Section, BAA and  
Associate Vice President, Food, Agriculture, and Natural Resources  
APLU

**Marcus Glassman**

Executive Director, Council on Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching (CARET)

Director, Governmental Affairs  
APLU

[Register here.](#)

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### **Webinar: USDA NIFA Terms and Conditions Update**

Wednesday, April 15 | 2:00 pm ET

USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture has adopted the first-ever USDA General Terms and Conditions (GT&Cs). Secretary of Agriculture Brooke L. Rollins established these GT&Cs through the Secretary's Memorandum (SM) SM 1078-021, Establishment of USDA General Terms and Conditions for Grants, Cooperative Agreements, and Similar Arrangements, signed on Dec. 31, 2025.

In accordance with SM 1078-021, [USDA General Terms and Conditions](#) were applied to all NIFA awards issued or significantly modified on or after Feb.14. Additionally, NIFA-specific terms and conditions will update to remove conflicting or duplicative terms. The [NIFA General \(Research, Education, Extension\) Terms and Conditions for Federal Awards](#) supersede the NIFA Research Terms and Conditions and will be applied to all awards supporting research, education, Extension or integrated activities which are issued or significantly modified on or after March 18, 2026.

To support stakeholders in understanding these updates, NIFA will host a webinar on April 15 at 2:00 pm ET via Zoom. The session will provide an overview of the USDA General Terms and Conditions, updates to NIFA agency-specific Terms and Conditions and guidance on SciENcv. Additional details and registration information will be shared soon.

Direct questions regarding the new USDA General Terms and Conditions and the updated NIFA General (Research, Education, Extension) Terms and Conditions to [NIFA.Policy.Support@usda.gov](mailto:NIFA.Policy.Support@usda.gov).

[Register here.](#)

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### **Webinar: Meeting the Need for Postsecondary-to-Workforce Outcomes Data with PSEO**

Friday, April 24 | 1:00-2:00pm ET

As federal and state attention to program-level outcomes increases, post-completion earnings and employment measures are becoming central to accountability conversations—and may influence program eligibility for student aid funding. This webinar will help APLU institutions understand how postsecondary-to-workforce outcomes are currently tracked in some states, the strengths and limitations of commonly used data sources, and how the U.S. Census Bureau’s [Postsecondary Employment Outcomes](#) (PSEO) data can complement existing approaches.

Whether the institution is already included in PSEO or exploring how to get started, the session will provide practical guidance on joining the PSEO and using the dataset and visualization tool in program review and accountability, institutional planning, and other decision-making.

Facilitator:

- **Kristen Govoni**, Chair of APS, Associate Dean for Academic Programs in the College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources, University of Connecticut

Speakers:

- **Amanda Brodish**, Assistant Provost for Institutional Research and Analytics, University of Pittsburgh
- **Gina Johnson**, PSEO Coalition Director, Principal & Cofounder of Data EmpowerED Consulting
- **John Burczek Dreier**, Vice President of Policy and Research, Midwestern Higher Education Compact
- **Mark Wiederspan**, Research Fellow, Midwestern Higher Education Compact

[Register now to learn about this great resource for postsecondary-to-workforce outcomes data!](#)

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### **Growing Together: Conversations with CEOs**

APLU’s Board of Agriculture’s interview series [“Growing Together: Conversations with CEOs”](#) showcases Presidents and CEOs of national agricultural associations, commodity groups, and other organizations and explores their powerful synergies with land-grant universities.

**Colin Woodall, Chief Executive Officer, National Cattlemen’s Beef Association**

Colin Woodall is the Chief Executive Officer of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association and leads the country's oldest and largest national trade association for cattle producers in being the trusted voice and definitive leader of the beef industry.

*"Land-grant universities are leading important work on the future of cattle and beef production...[to] help producers do more with less in a resource-constrained world. Right now, however, the most urgent challenge is finding new ways to combat the New World Screwworm. Land-grant researchers are essential partners in developing innovative control methods, and Cooperative Extension plays a critical role in educating producers about prevention and detection."* - Colin Woodall

[Read the full interview.](#)

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### **USDA Announces the Creation of the USDA National Proving Grounds Network to Strengthen U.S. Farm and Ranch Profitability**

USDA's Research, Education, and Economics Under Secretary Dr. Scott Hutchins announced the launch of the *USDA National Proving Grounds Network* for AgTech (NPG-Ag), a nationwide initiative designed to rigorously evaluate agricultural technologies under real-world U.S. farming and ranching conditions. The initiative has been designed to thoroughly test and validate both existing and emerging tools under real-world production conditions, ultimately providing farmers and ranchers with trusted, practical insights that they can rely upon when making technology-investment decisions.

[Read or watch the full announcement and view FAQs.](#)

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### **USDA Releases Updated New World Screwworm Response Playbook**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is sharing the updated New World Screwworm (NWS) Response Playbook, a comprehensive guide designed to support coordinated, science-based action should NWS be detected in the United States.

"USDA continues to execute Secretary Rollins' five-pronged plan to keep NWS out of the United States," said USDA Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs, Dudley Hoskins. "While we are aggressively safeguarding American agriculture and working with Mexico to

prevent further northward spread, we must also ensure that our domestic response plans are ready for immediate activation. Strong coordination with states, producers, veterinarians, sportsmen, and other partners is essential to achieving that goal.”

[Read the full press release.](#)

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### **Contribute to the National AI Asset Map for Cooperative Extension**

In partnership with the National Digital Extension Education Technology (NDEET) initiative and the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP) Broadband Program Action Team, the Extension Foundation is asking for your help in cataloging efforts related to the use and adoption of artificial intelligence across the Cooperative Extension system.

NDEET is leading the development of a **National AI Asset Map**, a comprehensive inventory of AI-related work happening across Extension.

The survey collects information across a broad range of AI-related activities, including:

- Trainings, workshops, webinars, and presentations
- Publications, papers, and news articles
- Research projects and data sets (e.g., crop data, applied analytics)
- AI specialists and personnel
- Partnerships and collaborative initiatives
- Tools and technologies (e.g., websites, chatbots, applications)
- Governance, ethics, and policy efforts
- Events, videos, and outreach materials

Submissions may serve both internal and external audiences and may span all program areas.

[Learn more and complete the survey.](#)

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## **AWARDS & OPPORTUNITIES**

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## National Cooperative Extension Awards Nominations Open

The following awards are offered by the [Extension Committee on Organization and Policy \(ECOP\)](#) in partnership with USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). Nominations begin February 16. For competitive edge, begin the process of nominating well before the deadline for online submission. 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.

- The [Individual Awards for Excellence in Extension](#) recognize Cooperative Extension Professionals who excel at Extension programming, make a positive impact on constituents served, and provide visionary leadership for the System. It is designed to focus national attention on the role of Extension – one that is fundamental to the lifelong education and development of residents in communities around the nation.
- The [Team Award for Excellence in Extension](#) recognizes excellence of a team of Cooperative Extension Professionals in performing the work of Extension research, technical assistance, and outreach education.

**Applications are due Friday, May 1, 2026.**

- The [National Extension Award for Innovative Programming that Addresses New Audiences](#) is for Extension efforts that go above and beyond in reaching new audiences. It recognizes innovative teaching models and techniques that ensure Extension programs reach all audiences, especially new and those that have not been participating in traditional Extension education.

**Applications are due Monday, June 1, 2026.**

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## 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. Now in its 13th year, the Challenge was the first national business competition of its kind focused exclusively on rural entrepreneurs.

The American Farm Bureau Federation, in partnership with Farm Credit, is 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, and entrepreneurs who are addressing new challenges facing farmers and rural communities.

The overall winner of the competition will receive \$100,000 in startup funds, the runner-up will be awarded \$25,000 and two additional business owners who advance to the final four round will receive \$10,000.

Farm Bureau is offering a total of \$145,000 in startup funds throughout the course of the competition. After the application period closes on June 5, 10 semi-finalist teams will be selected and announced on Sept. 2. Next, the 10 semi-finalist teams will pitch virtually to compete for a spot in the final four round of the contest.

[See more information and apply.](#)

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### **NIFA Launches New Rapid Response Grant Opportunity to Combat Emerging Agricultural Threats**

NIFA has launched a new competitive grant opportunity designed to rapidly address emerging and re-emerging pest and disease threats across the nation's food and agricultural systems. The program, [Rapid Response to Emerging and Re-emerging Pest and Disease Events Across Food and Agricultural Systems](#), aims to deliver timely, science-based solutions that protect agricultural productivity, ecosystem health and food security.

With awards of up to \$500,000 and project durations of 12 to 24 months, this opportunity supports research, Extension and integrated projects. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis within 180 days of a qualifying pest or disease event, ensuring that resources can be mobilized quickly when new threats arise. [Read more about this new funding opportunity.](#)

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### **APLU Announces 2025 Board on Health and Human Sciences Award Winners**

The APLU Board on Health and Human Sciences (BHHS) recently recognized four public university scholars at their spring meeting.

These awards support the development and stewardship of academic excellence in human sciences; elevate and leverage resources to support human sciences research, outreach, and teaching programs; and educate leaders regarding the capacity of human sciences to solve human problems. These honors are part of the broader BHHS mission of promoting the intellectual integrity and stature of the human sciences at APLU member institutions.

This year's award recipients are:

2025 Outstanding Engagement Award

**Dr. Kale Monk**, Associate Professor, Department of Human Development and Family Science, University of Missouri.

2025 Undergraduate Research Mentor Award

**Dr. Lindsey Weiler**, Associate Professor, Department of Family Social Science, University of Minnesota.

Ellen Swallow Richards Public Service Award

**Dr. Cathy Hockaday**, Human Sciences Extension and Outreach Specialist, Iowa State University.

Lifetime Achievement Award

**Dr. Carolyn Dunn**, William Neal Reynolds Distinguished Professor Emerita, Department of Agricultural and Human Sciences, North Carolina State University.

[Read the full award announcement press release.](#)

[Read more about the 2026 BHHS Spring Meeting.](#)

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## MEETINGS & EVENTS

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### Save the Date: 2026 BAA Summer Leadership Meeting

Portland, OR | July 13-15, 2026

Please "SAVE THE DATE" for the 2026 BAA Summer Leadership Meeting: Attendees include appointed and elected leadership representing a BAA Section or Member of a BAA Committee.

This meeting will be held from July 13th to July 15th in Portland, OR. ECOP, the Budget and Advocacy Committee, and the Communications and Marketing Committee will be meeting starting at 3:00 pm PST on the 13th. The meeting will begin that night for the rest of the leadership groups at the Joint Opening Reception at 5:30 pm PST. The meeting will conclude on the 15th at 10:00 am PST. Hotel booking information and a full agenda is pending and will be available soon.

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## PARTNER EVENTS

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### **National 4-H Conference**

The 2026 National 4-H Conference will take place April 10-15 at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City Hotel in Arlington, Virginia.

Bringing hundreds of 4-H'ers to the nation's capital each spring, the National 4-H Conference is the flagship youth development opportunity of USDA, hosted by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). By providing opportunities for young people between the ages of 15 and 19 to share their voices with the federal government, this nationally recognized event is developing the next generation of leaders.

[See more information.](#)

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### **JCEP Public Issues Leadership Development Conference**

The Joint Council of Extension Professionals (JCEP) Public Issues Leadership Development Conference (PILD) will take place April 20-22, 2026, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Bethesda, MD.

[See more information.](#)

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### **2026 National Extension Directors & Administrators Annual Meeting**

The 2026 NEDA meeting is scheduled for September 15-17 in Seattle, WA. Monday, September 14 will be a travel day for those attending the ECOP meeting on Tuesday, September 15. New administrator orientation will take place the afternoon of Tuesday, September 15, followed by a reception and dinner featuring a 4-H speaker.

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## RESOURCES

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## 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.

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*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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