

FANR FOCUS: WHAT'S THE LATEST?

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

FROM DOUG'S DESK

Doug Steele, Vice President

For the last edition of FANR Focus for 2025, I want to express our heartfelt gratitude for your leadership and engagement to advance the mission of our public and land-grant university missions across a broad spectrum of programs supporting research, academic programs, Extension, health and human sciences, natural resources, and community prosperity.

Together, we've had a major success this year that substantially increases federal support of agricultural research infrastructure through the Research Facilities Act (\$1.125 billion --- \$125 million annually for 9 years). This is evidence of what we can accomplish together with purpose, vision and a unified voice. While there have been major challenges in 2025, we remained committed to clearly articulating the many ways in which public and land-grant universities work to extend knowledge and provide solutions to our constituents, stakeholders, and all Americans in every state and across the nation.

May this season of holidays and the start of a new year bring you joy, peace, and prosperity. Here's to a New Year filled with fresh opportunities, growth, and success!

Doug

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Washington Update

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

- Congress Ends Historic Shutdown but Faces Uncertain Path on Remaining FY 2026 Appropriations Bills
- Department of Energy Reorganizes Post-Government Shutdown
- NSF Introduces Updates to NSF Research Security Policies
- Office of Personnel Management Moves to Finalize Schedule Policy/Career Rule
- BIOTech Caucus Introduces Legislation Amidst New NSCEB Paper
- White House OSTP Requests Input on Accelerating the American Scientific Enterprise

[READ THE FULL REPORT](#)

2026 CARET Delegate Registration

It's that time of year-- appointing CARET delegates for 2026! The Council for Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching (CARET) is a national voluntary citizens' organization whose grassroots membership supports advocacy for the land-grant university system's agricultural

research, Extension, and teaching programs. Every year, Administrative Heads members appoint/reappoint and register delegates.

CARET delegates will engage with Congressional leaders at the 2026 CARET/BAA Washington Conference and throughout the year in their advocacy.

Please [register your CARET delegates](#) by **Wednesday, December 31**. CARET staff will provide onboarding materials to support the delegates as they are appointed.

While appointing/reappointing delegates, we encourage you to review the [CARET Delegate Handbook](#) (pages 9-12) for the delegate job description and best practices. Please note that:

- Delegates shall be volunteer citizen advocates who have a vested interest in advocating on behalf of the land-grant university system and priorities of the Board on Agriculture Assembly.
- Every AHS member institution should have at least one delegate.
- Individuals currently on the appointing institution's payroll are ineligible to serve.

Timely solicitation and registration of your delegates will ensure that they do not miss the orientation sessions that will occur in the coming months. Please register your CARET delegates [here](#).

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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.

Adam Putnam, Chief Executive Officer, Ducks Unlimited

Ducks Unlimited CEO Adam Putnam is a fifth-generation Floridian and a graduate of the University of Florida where he obtained a bachelor's degree in Food and Resource Economics. He has also been awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws degree and served as a Rodel Fellow at the Aspen Institute. In 2010, he was the E.T. York Distinguished Lecturer at the University of Florida. Putnam and his wife of 20 years, Melissa, reside in Memphis, Tenn. with their four children.

He is a hunter, angler, conservationist, and third-generation farmer who owns Putnam Groves Inc. Putnam Groves is a family owned and operated citrus farm and cattle ranch located in Central Florida.

“I consider myself to be a land grant baby – I was a 10-year 4-H'er, grew up on a family farm, got a degree from the University of Florida, and truly benefited from all three legs of the stool - teaching, research, and Extension. I truly believe the U.S. land grant model should be replicated around the world.” - Adam Putnam

[Read the full interview.](#)

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Extension Foundation Releases National AI Report Highlighting Systemwide Priorities for Cooperative Extension and agInnovation

The Extension Foundation has released the [2025 National AI Report](#), presenting a comprehensive picture of how Cooperative Extension and agInnovation leaders across the Land-grant system are preparing for artificial intelligence. The report synthesizes a national landscape assessment, virtual focus groups, and an in-person convening in 2025, engaging leaders across the Land-grant system.

[Read more.](#)

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National Impacts Database (NIDB) Call for Submissions

The [National Impacts Database \(NIDB\)](#) is an important platform for documenting and demonstrating the collective impacts of land-grant university teaching, research, and Extension.

As 2025 comes to a close, we request that each **institution begin planning and finalizing their 2025 submissions.**

In early 2026, a group of land-grant university communicators will review all 2025 submissions and create [educational materials](#) highlighting exemplary impact statements.

To be included for consideration in this team's efforts, please submit your statements by **Thursday, January 15, 2026**. Any statements received after this date will be considered for the **2027** materials.

Please see these resources for inputters:

- [2025 Inputter Training Presentation | Recording](#)

- [Impact Writing Resources](#)
- [2025 Priority Topic Areas](#)
- [Full Call for Submissions](#)

Please contact Kim Scotto at agcomms@aplu.org with questions or authorized inputter update requests.

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AWARDS & OPPORTUNITIES

APLU Food Systems Leadership Award Nominations Open

The Association for Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) Food Systems annually recognizes a leader who has made an extraordinary impact on the food system through leadership and service and who exemplifies the core principles established by the Food Systems Leadership Institute (FSLI), including personal leadership, organizational leadership, and food systems leadership. The award also recognizes the leadership, innovation, engagement, and service that APLU promotes through its programs.

The APLU Food Systems Leadership Award will be presented at the APLU Annual Meeting held in November. The recipient will be invited to address the current cohort of FSLI Fellows during one of the webinar sessions.

The criteria for the award, the directions for submitting it, and the nomination form can be found on the FSLI website [here](#). To get a sense of the caliber of the person who would be competitive for this award, you can visit the [FSLI website](#).

The deadline for submittal is February 27, 2026.

Please don't hesitate to contact Dr. Sarah Kotzian, FSLI Program Manager, with any questions. Sarah can be reached by email at sarah_kotzian@ncsu.edu.

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Golden Goose Award Seeks Nominations

The Golden Goose Award is accepting [nominations](#) for the 2025 award cycle through **Friday, December 12, 2025**. The [award](#) celebrates silly-sounding or serendipitous research that has led to significant societal impact. It is intended to demonstrate that scientific outcomes build upon each other and celebrate projects that contributed to scientific advances which could not have easily been predicted at the outset of the research project.

This year's [awardees](#) were honored at the Library of Congress for their NIH- and NSF-funded research that led to improved [disease diagnostics techniques and insights on aging](#), and a [testicular cancer drug that increased survival rates from 10% to 90%](#).

[See more information.](#)

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Food Systems Leadership Institute Fellows Honored by APLU

Twenty-nine Fellows of the Food Systems Leadership Institute (FSLI) were honored during a ceremony at the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) annual meeting. The Fellows were recognized for their achievements in completing the FSLI executive leadership development program and for their contributions to their organizations as well as the broader higher education and food systems.

The FSLI is a two-year program tailored for experienced leaders in academia, government, and industry. Featuring a dynamic curriculum that includes three executive-style residential sessions, individual coaching, mentoring, and personal projects, the FSLI aims to strengthen personal leadership skills, equip participants with knowledge for organizational change, and expand their perspectives on integrated food systems.

[Read more.](#)

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MEETINGS & EVENTS

Save the Date: 2026 CARET/BAA Washington Conference

Grand Hyatt Hotel, Washington, DC | February 22-25, 2026

The event features food and agriculture thought leaders, advocacy workshops, keynote speakers from government and leading partner organizations, networking with BAA stakeholders, and opportunities to connect with champions on the Hill. More information about registration and hotel blocks will be announced later this fall.

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Save the Date: 2026 Board on Health and Human Sciences (BHHS) Spring Meeting

Denver, CO | March 24-26, 2026

Mark your calendars for the 2026 Board on Health and Human Sciences (BHHS) Spring Meeting, hosted by College of Health and Human Sciences at Colorado State University. This year's gathering will bring together leaders from across the country to share insights, strengthen connections, and advance the impact of health and human sciences at our public and land-grant universities.

Event Locations:

Colorado State University Spur Campus: 4777 National Western Drive, Denver, CO 80216
Vtb Hotel by Best Western Denver RiNo: 2560 Brighton Boulevard, Denver, CO 80216 (Lodging will also be at this hotel)

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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 and the Budget and Advocacy 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 11:00 am PST. Hotel booking information and a full agenda is pending and will be available soon.

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PARTNER EVENTS

JCEP Public Issues Leadership Development Conference Save the Date

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.

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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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