

FANR FOCUS: WHAT'S THE LATEST?

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

FROM DOUG'S DESK

Doug Steele, Senior Vice President

As the 250th Anniversary Great American State Fair closes this week, the National Mall will return to a somewhat normal level of activity. Our nation's capital was proud to host over 150 exhibits, many of which highlighted the role of agriculture across the country and in individual states.

Despite the hot temperatures, weather conditions, and long lines, most events were crowded and showcased the best of the United States. Communities from across the nation came together to celebrate the people, traditions, innovations, and values that have shaped America since the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776. I personally believe that beyond all the festivities, the past two weeks have served as an opportunity for reflection on the nation's journey over the past two and a half centuries. This celebration recognized the achievements, sacrifices, and contributions of generations of Americans while encouraging civic pride and engagement for current and future generations.

As summer is now in full swing, I hope you are finding time to enjoy the season with family, friends, and colleagues while also taking pride in the important work that we do as an association. Recent celebrations reinforce the importance of building connections, fostering collaboration, and investing in our future. Public and land-grant universities' contributions are a testament to the lasting impact on our states, communities, and all the people we serve. As always, thank you for your ongoing engagement, leadership, and support.

Doug

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Washington Update

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

In this edition:

- House Appropriations Committee Advances All 12 FY 2027 Bills, Senate Delays
- Senate Agriculture Committee Releases Farm Bill 2.0 Draft
- NIFA Releases Notice of Funding Opportunity for Research Facilities Act Program
- EPA Releases Request for Information (RFI) on \$30 Million Innovation Challenge for Alternatives to Conventional Pesticides for Crop Desiccation
- USDA Invests \$65 Million in Conservation Innovation Grants to Help Farmers Improve Operations and Conserve Natural Resources

[READ THE FULL REPORT](#)

Senate Agriculture Chairman Boozman Releases Farm Bill Discussion Draft

On June 23, Senator John Boozman, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, released a discussion draft of the Agricultural Act of 2026, or “Farm Bill 2.0.” This discussion draft is the latest progress of the long-delayed Farm Bill and comes as a compliment to the House version, the [Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026](#), which passed the House in April.

Much like in the House version, Title VII—the research title—of the Senate version largely reflects the [requests made by APLU](#). In a [statement](#), APLU President Waded Cruzado, said “APLU appreciates Chairman Boozman’s ongoing support of the critical role that research, education, and Cooperative Extension play in advancing American agriculture innovation. Public and land-grant universities have been engines of agricultural innovation for generations – helping producers tackle challenges, improve yields, and outcompete global challengers. As the legislative process moves forward, bipartisan compromise and action will be needed to ensure passage of another five-year Farm Bill later this year.”

APLU will share additional updates and bill analysis.

Additional resources on the Senate discussion draft are available:

- [Legislative text.](#)
- [Title-by-title summary.](#)
- [Section-by-section.](#)
- [Overview.](#)

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Secretaries Rollins & McMahon Host Land-grant University Presidents

Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) President Waded Cruzado today applauded the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke L. Rollins and U.S. Secretary of Education Linda McMahon for [announcing](#) the opening of an application period for \$125 million in grants to address decades of deferred maintenance and accelerate modernization of agricultural research facilities. The announcement came following a meeting the cabinet secretaries hosted yesterday at the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s headquarters with APLU leaders and more than two dozen land-grant university presidents. During the meeting, the university and government officials had a positive and constructive conversation about a myriad of agriculture and higher education issues, including the need for more federal support to address deferred maintenance at agricultural research facilities.

[Read the full press release.](#)

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Webinar | Bridging Urban and Rural Missions: Creative APLU Partnerships

July 28, 2026 | 3:30-4:45 PM ET

When universities join forces across urban and rural contexts, they pool complementary strengths. The result is greater reach and effectiveness in serving communities. This webinar will highlight collaborations between APLU institutions in different contexts to meet the needs of today's learners and the communities in which they reside. Specific examples will include partnerships in the areas of medicine, dental care, veterinary services, and sustainability efforts. Further, this webinar will address the tension between serving a place-based mission and programming for scope, scale, and maximum state, regional, and national impact as a public research institution. North Carolina State University Chancellor Kevin Howell, chair of CFERR, will welcome participants to this joint webinar. Discussion and insights will be guided by Dr. C. Mauli Agrawal, Chancellor of the University of Missouri, Kansas City (UMKC), which is an urban institution in a predominantly rural state.

Panelists and intuitional topics will include:

- Overcoming rural pharmacist and dentist shortages, partnerships between UMKC, University of Missouri, Missouri State, and Western Missouri State University - *Presented by Dr. C. Mauli Agrawal, Chancellor of UMKC*
- Delivering Rural Medicine, a partnership between the University of Alabama at Birmingham and Auburn University - *Presented by Dr. Alexis Mason, Director, Rural Medicine Program, University of Alabama at Birmingham*

- Community and Sustainability, a partnership between the University of Nevada, Reno and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas - *Presented by Dr. Jacob "Jake" DeDecker, Director of Extension and Associate Dean for Engagement, University of Nevada, Reno*
- Caring for the health of people experiencing homelessness and their pets, a partnership between the University of Washington, Seattle and Washington State University - *Presented by Vickie Ramirez, Program Manager and Senior Research Coordinator, Center for One Health Research, University of Washington*

[See more information and register.](#)

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Resources on OMB's Proposed Changes to Federal Funding

On May 29, the Office for Management and Budget (OMB) released a [proposed rule to update the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards or Uniform Guidance \(found at 2 C.F.R. § 200\)](#). This proposed rule would establish baseline requirements for federal programs including research grants. These requirements will govern how awards are issued, approved, managed, monitored, or canceled.

APLU has [summarized](#) some major issues that could impact member institutions. Additionally, APLU, the Association of American Universities, and COGR have jointly developed a [high-level brief](#) highlighting five key issues for institutions to begin considering as they evaluate the White House Office of Management and Budget's (OMB)'s proposed [revisions](#) to Uniform Guidance.

[Read more.](#)

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2026 New Administrators Orientation

The Board on Agriculture Assembly (BAA) is hosting a New Administrators Orientation on December 8-10, 2026 in the D.C. metro area.

This event is intended for individuals on the Board on Agriculture Assembly and their supporting administrators or faculty, who have entered an administrative position recently and any others who would like to learn more about APLU, the Land-Grant University System and the BAA. Information presented will be particularly useful to administrative heads, deans/directors, and associate/assistant deans/directors.

Learning objectives include: Gaining an understanding of the Board on Agriculture Assembly and APLU, including how national priorities are set by organizational committees and how you can become involved; gaining valuable tips from experienced administrators about what they wish they had known when they were hired; and hearing from senior university leadership about their career pathways.

[Please indicate your interest here.](#)

For questions, please contact Sophia Baker at [**sbaker@aplu.org**](mailto:sbaker@aplu.org).

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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.

Gary M. Adams, President and Chief Executive Officer, National Cotton Council of America

Gary Adams assumed the position of President and Chief Executive Officer of the National Cotton Council in 2015. He plays a key role in guiding the industry's seven segments to reach consensus on critical policies affecting U.S. cotton, with the mission of helping all U.S. cotton industry segments compete effectively and profitably in global markets.

"The National Cotton Council's mission is to ensure the ability of all U.S. cotton industry segments to compete effectively and profitably in the raw cotton, oilseed and U.S.-manufactured product markets at home and abroad. I believe this very much aligns with the mission of land-grant universities. Research, education and outreach are foundational components of ensuring that the U.S. cotton industry can compete in highly integrated global fiber markets." - Gary M. Adams

[Read the full interview.](#)

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AWARDS & OPPORTUNITIES

GCHERA World Agriculture Prize

The GCHERA World Agriculture Prize is an international award established by the Global Confederation of Higher Education Associations for the Agricultural and Life Sciences (GCHERA).

The Prize recognizes outstanding individuals whose work has significantly strengthened the mission of higher education institutions in education, research, innovation, and outreach within the agricultural and life sciences. Through this recognition, GCHERA seeks to encourage continued leadership and excellence that address global challenges related to agriculture, food systems, and life sciences.

Two World Agriculture Prizes will be awarded in 2026 each to an individual academic/faculty member from a higher education institution in recognition of the academic/faculty member's lifetime achievements working in the disciplines relating to the agricultural and life sciences – including but not limited to agriculture, forestry, natural resources, food, bio-based products, bioenergy, rural development, and the environment. At least one recipient will be from a country NOT classified as having a developed economy. [See the list of those countries with a developed economy.](#)

The 2026 GCHERA World Agriculture Prize Award Ceremony will be held on October 28, 2026 in Nanjing Agricultural University, Nanjing, China.

Nominations are due July 15, 2026 5:00 pm GMT.

[See the full call for nominations.](#)

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MEETINGS & EVENTS

2026 BAA Summer Leadership Meeting

Portland, OR | July 13-15, 2026

This meeting brings together elected and appointed leaders of the:

- Academic Programs Section,

- Administrative Heads Section,
- agInnovation,
- Association of 1890 Research Directors,
- Board on Health & Human Sciences,
- Budget and Advocacy Committee,
- CARET Executive Committee,
- Committee on Legislation and Policy,
- Communications and Marketing Committee,
- Cooperative Extension System, and
- International Agriculture Section.

Attendees will meet in person to discuss sectional business, provide program and partnership updates, set advocacy priorities, and identify strategic opportunities for the Board on Agriculture Assembly. The meeting will emphasize advocacy priorities with an in-depth presentation of Phase 2 of the BAA Capacity Initiative and the work of Adaptive Roots on the Land-grant Roadmap. Participants will also hear from USDA NIFA leadership. Discussions will focus on drafting a comprehensive strategy for FY2028, Farm Bill update, and a long-term approach to increasing federal funding.

Invited attendees should have already received an invitation to register via Cvent. Please contact Sophia Baker at sbaker@aplu.org with any questions.

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Regional Summer Meetings

Southern AHS/CARET Conference

July 24-26, 2026 | Athens, Georgia

[Registration](#)

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2026 National Extension Directors and Administrators Meeting

Join us in Seattle, WA, from September 15–17 for the 2026 National Extension Directors and Administrators Meeting. This year's theme is *Lessons from the Field: Learning from Each Other*. The program will feature engaging sessions centered around meaningful discussion and provide

opportunities for professional growth designed to support leaders across the Cooperative Extension System.

In keeping with this year's theme, participants will explore effective approaches to current issues, consider challenges facing the field, and exchange ideas drawn from practice and experience. The meeting will also provide space to strengthen relationships, broaden professional networks, and learn about emerging work across Extension.

[Learn more and register.](#)

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Save the Date

2026 APLU Annual Meeting

San Antonio, TX

November 15-17, 2026

New Administrators Orientation

D.C. Metro Area - Final Location TBA

December 8-10, 2026

2027 CARET/BAA Washington Conference

Washington, D.C.

March 1-4, 2027

2027 BHHS Spring Meeting

Florida State University | Tallahassee, FL

March 2-4, 2027

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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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