

FANR FOCUS: WHAT'S THE LATEST?

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

FROM DOUG'S DESK

Doug Steele, Senior Vice President

It is shaping up to be a very interesting time in our nation's capital. Major events include UFC Freedom 250 (major fight event at the White House), State Fair on the Mall, 250th anniversary celebrations, and F-1 Racing in downtown DC. We are getting ready for massive crowds, traffic jams, and no available parking.

As our nation marks its 250th year, we gather in a spirit of pride, reflection, and renewed purpose. This remarkable milestone is more than an anniversary—it is a testament to the enduring ideals of liberty, justice, and opportunity that have guided the United States since its founding. And I am personally proud of the role and impact of agriculture and higher education in bolstering our nation.

At APLU, we recognize that our strength lies both in our history and our shared commitment to the future. We honor those who came before us by continuing to innovate, serve, and uphold the values that define us. Together, we celebrate the achievements that have brought us here and recommit ourselves to the mission of public and land-grant universities that impact our country daily.

On this historic 250th anniversary, let us stand united—honoring our past, embracing our present, and inspiring future generations to carry forward the promise of America.

Happy 250th Birthday to the United States of America!

Doug

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Washington Update

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

In this edition:

- FY 2027 Agriculture Appropriations: House Advances, Senate Delays
- Senate Farm Bill Outlook
- House and Senate Agriculture Committees Hold Oversight Hearings with Secretary Rollins
- Senate Agriculture Committee Holds Hearing with Forest Service Leadership

[READ THE FULL REPORT](#)

USDA Updates General Terms & Conditions

On Wednesday, June 3, the U.S. Department of Agriculture published an [approved deviation](#) to its [General Terms & Conditions](#) that amends text impacting research security policy on campuses that receive funding from the agency. This deviation addresses a few limited concerns raised by APLU and member institutions concerning research security; it does not address the challenged conditions within Section 13, "Compliance with Executive Orders and Other Presidential Actions," which are subject to [ongoing litigation](#) by 20 state attorneys general.

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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*
- Human Health: Presenter to be confirmed
- 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*
- 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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Scoops of Science: APLU Hosts Capitol Hill Reception Showcasing the Impact of Public Universities' Agriculture Programs

APLU hosted a Capitol Hill reception on June 2 showcasing the joys and real-world impact of public and land-grant university creameries. The reception featured ice cream and cheese products from public and land-grant university colleges of agriculture, highlighting the societal benefit of university-based research, teaching, and Extension in food and agricultural sciences. Nearly 1,000 congressional staff, members of Congress, and other stakeholders attended the event. View a [roundup of photos](#) from the event.

Lawmakers and congressional staff had the opportunity to sample ice cream and cheese from 20 university creameries. The showcase included classics like cookies and cream and flavors highlighting state agricultural products. such as muscadine from Mississippi, pecans from New Mexico, and even sweet corn from Iowa and Nebraska all spun into bite-sized scoops.

[Read the full press release.](#)

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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.

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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.

Neil Caskey, Chief Executive Officer, National Corn Growers Association

As CEO of the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA), Neil not only manages the organization's day-to-day operations but also works in concert with the NCGA officer team and the board of directors to establish NCGA's strategic goals and direction.

"[To strengthen strategic collaboration between NCGA and land-grant universities] help us create our very own SiliCORN Valley of innovation and opportunity for America's corn farmers right here in America's heartland. More specifically, help us create new corn-based solutions to consumer problems through the world-class network of research and development that is the American land-grant university system." - Neil Caskey

[Read the full interview.](#)

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Extension Foundation Releases Updated 2026 National AI Report with New Workforce-Level Insights

The Extension Foundation has released the updated 2026 National AI Report, expanding the original 2025 report with new workforce-level findings from Extension professionals across roles, program areas, and career stages. The original report, released in December 2025, synthesized findings from a national AI landscape assessment, virtual focus groups, and in-person convenings with Cooperative Extension and agInnovation leaders. That work identified systemwide priorities around AI governance, public trust, workforce development, shared infrastructure, and responsible use across the Land-grant system.

The 2026 update builds on that foundation by adding a fifth phase of engagement conducted in February 2026 during the Joint Council of Extension Professionals national conference in

Savannah, Georgia. This phase brought direct workforce perspectives into the study, capturing how AI adoption is being experienced by Extension agents, educators, specialists, and other professionals working in communities.

[Read the full press release.](#)

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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

Western Region Joint Summer Meeting

June 22-25, 2026 | Hilo, Hawai'i

[Registration](#)

Southern AHS/CARET Conference

July 24-26, 2026 | Athens, Georgia

[Registration](#)

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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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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 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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