



FANR FOCUS: WHAT'S THE LATEST?

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

FROM DOUG'S DESK

Doug Steele, Vice President

After months of public listening sessions, congressional meetings, and a lot of behind the scenes work, the 2024 Farm Bill (previously known as the 2023 Farm Bill) is seeing movement in both the Senate and House.

Both bodies of Congress have released preliminary language on the Farm Bill with more details coming in the days ahead. The most encouraging news is that both the Senate and House has recommended funding for the **Research Facilities Act** (ag research infrastructure) to address the growing concern over aging physical properties and equipment. We will receive more details about the funding proposals as the Farm Bill moves to debate in Congress.

At the same time, we remain focused on FY25 federal appropriations, which will be an extremely challenging year for funding. We will provide more details, along with how you can support our advocacy messaging, as final Farm Bill language is released.

Doug

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Washington Update

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

Farm Bill Update: After Months of Delay, Action in Both Chambers

Six months after passing a Farm Bill extension, both the House and Senate Agriculture Committees are moving forward with their own versions of the Farm Bill with the majority party in each chamber releasing details of their respective Farm Bills on May 1. The House is planning to markup its version of the bill in Committee on May 23; however, a timeline for Senate consideration is unknown.

NIFA Seeks Feedback on Grants Modernization Initiative

The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) is **seeking community feedback** to optimize its grants management systems, process, and policies as part of its Grants Modernization Initiative. This initiative is a top priority for NIFA and seeks to improve the user interface for both customers and staff; enhance their tracking and reporting capabilities; and increase efficiency and effectiveness.

NSF and USDA Release Foundational Research in Robotics Program Solicitation

The National Science Foundation (NSF) and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) released a new **Dear Colleague Letter** (DCL) seeking proposals to advance research in agricultural robotics. NSF and USDA are looking to support collaborative research to develop revolutionary agricultural robots.

Appropriations Update: House Champions Support Research Facilities, Capacity, AFRI and AGARDA

As part of the appropriations process Members of the House of Representatives circulate “Dear Colleague Letters” or DCLs amongst their colleagues to encourage them to sign-on in support of

a particular agency and/or priority. For fiscal year (FY) 2025, we have outstanding bipartisan support for our priorities, represented in part by two DCLs.

- The first is focused on funding the Research Facilities Act (RFA) and was led by Reps. Tracy Mann (R-KS) and Kim Schrier (D-WA).
- The second DCL is in support of robust funding for capacity funding, the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI), and the Agriculture Advanced Research and Development Authority (AGARDA). This letter was led by Reps. Jim Baird (R-IN) and Jimmy Panetta (D-CA).

[READ THE FULL REPORT](#)

APLU Endorses Bipartisan Family Farm and Small Business Exemption Act

APLU endorsed the bipartisan [Family Farm and Small Business Exemption Act](#), led by Sens. Tester (D-MT) and Ernst (R-IA), and Reps. Mann (R-KS) and Panetta (D-CA), H.R. 1250 and S. 1237. The bill would restore the family farm and small business asset exemptions from the need analysis formula.

In the past, when a student living on a family farm or with a family-owned small business completed the FAFSA to apply for federal student aid, they were able to shield these assets from consideration in the federal student aid need analysis formula. The FAFSA Simplification Act of 2020 expanded federal student aid eligibility broadly, which could result in hundreds of thousands more students receiving a Pell Grant. However, to pay for this expansion, among other changes, the 2020 law required that family farms' and small businesses' assets be included in need analysis, beginning in the 2024-25 award year. APLU has heard from institutions with large rural populations about the financial hardship this change will bring to students from farm families.

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Ahniwake Rose Named New President of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium

The American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) has announced that Ahniwake Rose is the organization's new president and CEO, effective July 1, 2024. Ms. Rose, a citizen of the

Cherokee Nation and of Muscogee (Creek) descent, brings over two decades of experience in tribal policy and with state, national, and tribal mission-driven nonprofit organizations. She most recently served as AIHEC's vice president of congressional/federal relations. Ms. Rose succeeds Dr. John Phillips, who will remain AIHEC's interim president and CEO until June 30, 2024.

[Read the full press release.](#)

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New Report: Analysis of Successful Extension Efforts between 1890 and 1862 Land-Grant Institutions

Over the late spring and summer months of 2023, the Southern Rural Development Center (SRDC) worked with 1890 and 1862 Cooperative Extension Service leaders across the Southern Region to gain insights from collaborations that work among the South's 1862 and 1890 Land-Grant Universities. Using a mixed methods approach, insights were gained from Extension leaders as well as from project leaders that had successfully collaborated across institutions on an Extension effort. [Read the report.](#)

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IN REMEMBRANCE

The FANR team extends our deep sympathy to the family, friends, and colleagues of Ivory Lyles who recently passed away. Throughout his career, Dr. Lyles was fully committed to advancing the land-grant university system. We greatly appreciate his dedication, contributions, and achievements that will have lasting positive impacts.

For a tribute to his life, [see Dr. Lyles' obituary.](#)

Donations in Dr. Lyles' memory may be made to the [Ivory and Paulette Lyles Endowed Scholarship Fund](#) at Alcorn State University

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AWARDS & OPPORTUNITIES

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.](#)

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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. 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.](#)

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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.

Members of the above groups will receive an email with registration information in the coming weeks. Please direct all questions to Suzette Robinson, srobinson@aplu.org.

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2024 Regional Summer Meetings

The Regional Summer Meetings present opportunities for CARET and AHS to conduct regional business, engage with one another and other BAA members, and go on tours to see the activities of local research and Extension offices. We encourage you to attend.

Northeast Regional Meeting: June 3-5, Providence, Rhode Island

- [Registration](#)
- [Hotel](#) (Please reserve by May 10th)

Western Regional Meeting: June 25-27, Fairbanks, Alaska

- [Registration](#)

- [Hotel](#)

Southern Regional Meeting: July 26-28, Lexington, Kentucky

- [Registration](#)
- [Hotel](#)

North Central Regional Meeting: August 4-6, East Lansing, Michigan

- [Registration](#)
- [Hotel](#)

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Save the Date: APLU Annual Meeting

Mark your calendars: the 2024 APLU Annual Meeting will be November 10-12 in Orlando, Florida!

More information will be released late spring, including:

- Registration
- Hotel reservations
- Draft agenda
- And more!

Sponsorship opportunities will be available mid-2024. Interested sponsors should [email the APLU sponsorship team](#).

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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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