

FANR FOCUS: WHAT'S THE LATEST?

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

FROM DOUG'S DESK

Doug Steele, Senior Vice President

I recently attended the National Extension Directors and Administrators (NEDA) in Seattle, WA, and agInnovation (formerly the Experiment Station Section) in Grand Junction, CO, and was extremely impressed by the discussion topics, forward-focused presentations, and engagement/leadership of section members. As we continue to build out our advocacy message, it is obvious that the true value of agricultural research and Extension is in our ability to transform discovery into impact. Research generates solutions, and Extension delivers those solutions to the people who need them most, as well as to all Americans. Together, we fuel innovation, strengthen our food system, support economic growth, and ensure that universities fulfill their land-grant mission of serving society. We will amplify that message in the coming months as we advocate for additional federal investments in our public and land-grant universities.

I am often asked, "What is it like to live in Washington, DC?" My answer is both personal and professional. Washington, DC, has become more than a place to live. It is a place that inspires me. I enjoy the blend of history, culture, and public service that is woven into everyday life here. From the beauty of the monuments and museums to the diversity of the people and ideas, DC is a constant reminder that each of us can play a role in building a better future (and it has a great food scene). On the professional side, despite the partisan politics, DC has given me a deep appreciation for the people and institutions that shape our nation and future. The city brings together leaders, educators, researchers, public servants, and innovators who are committed to making a difference. Every day offers opportunities to learn, collaborate, and engage in conversations that have a real impact, both nationally and globally.

There are two big meetings occurring before the end of the year: the [APLU Meeting](#) in San Antonio, Texas (November 15-17), and the [Board on Agriculture Assembly's New Administrators Orientation](#), in Alexandria, Virginia (December 8-10). Registration information is available in this Focus newsletter. We look forward to hosting you at these upcoming events.

Doug

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Washington Update

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

In this edition:

- [Farm Bill Advances in Senate as Congress Works Toward Reauthorization](#)
- [White House Proposes \\$810 Million in Rescissions, GAO Weighs In](#)

- Administration Advances Agriculture, Wildlife, Fisheries, and Water Priorities
- DOE Seeks Input on Biotechnology Research Priorities
- Executive Order Targets Tick and Mosquito-Borne Disease Through Biotechnology and Research

[READ THE FULL REPORT](#)

A Landmark Achievement for the Land-grant Community

After a decade of the BAA and member institutions' persistence, partnership, and shared commitment to elevate the critical need for investment in agricultural research facilities, USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture **Research Facilities Act Program (RFAP)** has awarded \$121 million of funding to **36 universities** across the country to modernize, expand and build state of the art agricultural research facilities. These investments will help ensure that our nation's agricultural researchers have the modern facilities required to meet today's challenges and prepare for those ahead.

[Read the full Research Facilities Act Program funding announcement.](#)

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CARET Delegate Registration

It's time to appoint your CARET delegates for 2027!

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. Each year, AHS members appoint or reappoint delegates and register them with CARET. Your delegates are an important extension of your institution's advocacy efforts. CARET delegates engage with Congressional leaders at the CARET/BAA Washington Conference and throughout the year, helping communicate the importance and impact of land-grant university programs.

Please [register your CARET delegates](#) by Monday, December 14. CARET staff will provide onboarding materials and other resources to support delegates as they are appointed.

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2026 New Administrators Orientation: Leading with Conviction, Courage, and Confidence

December 8-10, 2026 | Alexandria, VA

Presented by the APLU Office of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources (FANR), the [New Administrators Orientation \(NAO\)](#) is designed to help new administrators build the knowledge, connections, and leadership skills needed to succeed in their roles.

The program is intended for individuals who are new to administrative leadership positions within colleges and programs related to food, agriculture, natural resources, and the life sciences, including deans, associate deans, department heads, directors, experiment station leaders, and Extension administrators.

No matter your administrative position, NAO provides practical guidance for navigating the responsibilities and opportunities of academic administration.

Through discussions, expert perspectives, and peer engagement, participants will explore topics such as leadership and organizational culture, employee engagement, strategic communication, decision-making, and managing change. Participants will also gain a deeper understanding of the Board on Agriculture Assembly (BAA), including its policy, advocacy, and communications activities, and will have opportunities to engage directly with leaders from USDA.

By the end of the program, participants will have strengthened their leadership capabilities, expanded their professional network, and gained practical insights they can apply immediately to support their institutions' teaching, research, Extension, and service missions.

[See more information about the NAO and register here.](#)

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National Land-grant Impacts Database: Call for Submissions

The [National Land-grant Impacts Database \(NIDB\)](#) helps showcase how land-grant universities are improving lives through research, Extension, and education. These stories demonstrate how institutions are addressing local challenges, advancing innovation, strengthening communities, and delivering impact across the country.

Why it matters: Every impact statement helps strengthen our collective ability to tell the land-grant story. The database serves as a resource for communicators, leaders, and advocates

looking for compelling examples of how land-grant universities are making a difference in the communities they serve.

Our ask: Institutions are encouraged to submit their strongest impact statements in the NIDB's [six core focus areas](#) and [2026 priority areas](#) aligned with national initiatives and emerging issues.

Deadline: Impact statements submitted by **January 15, 2027** will be considered for **2027** feature stories, summaries, and other communications products developed by the NIDB Communications Team.

Resources: Access [submission guidance](#), [impact-writing tips](#), [database how-to guides](#), and [FAQs](#) on the Land-grant Impacts website.

[See the full NIDB Call for Submissions.](#)

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Remembering Claud Evans

The Council for Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching (CARET) mourns the passing of Dr. Claud Evans, a longtime delegate and steadfast advocate for the land-grant university mission. Dr. Evans served as the CARET delegate for Oklahoma State University from 1999 to 2024, providing 24 years of dedicated service and leadership, including as CARET Chair and in leadership roles within CARET's southern region.

A proud Oklahoma State University alumnus, Dr. Evans served two terms as a Governor-appointed Regent for the Oklahoma State University/A&M System and twice as Board Chair. He was a respected advisor and advocate for Oklahoma State's Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources and was a strong voice for serving communities and farmers who have historically been underserved.

In recognition of his extraordinary contributions, Dr. Evans received the 2025 Lifetime Service to CARET Award. His leadership, wisdom, and commitment to agriculture, education, and the land-grant mission left a lasting mark on CARET and the institutions and communities he served.

We extend our deepest condolences to Dr. Evans' family, colleagues, and many friends. His legacy of service will continue to inspire the CARET community.

[Learn more about Claud's legacy.](#)

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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.

Corey Rosenbusch, President and CEO, The Fertilizer Institute

Corey Rosenbusch serves as The Fertilizer Institute's (TFI) President and CEO, where he is responsible for leading efforts to advance the fertilizer industry. Since joining TFI in 2020, Rosenbusch has spearheaded several initiatives aimed at strengthening TFI's voice with the agriculture community and increasing member value through innovative programs, such as the Biostimulant Certification and low-carbon ammonia manufacturing standard.

"Land-grant universities are essential partners in advancing solutions that help producers remain competitive while meeting the challenges of a rapidly changing agricultural landscape. The greatest opportunities exist where research, education, and implementation come together." -

Corey Rosenbusch

[Read the full interview.](#)

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AWARDS & OPPORTUNITIES

Board on Health and Human Sciences (BHHS) Award Nominations Open

Nominations for the Board on Health and Human Sciences (BHHS) Awards are now open and will continue to be accepted until October 12, 2026. Recipients of these prestigious national awards will be recognized at a special luncheon at the BHHS Spring Meeting hosted by Florida State University in March 2027.

[See additional information on the awards and instructions for submitting a packet.](#)

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Employment Opportunity: agInnovation Northeast Executive Director

agInnovation Northeast, one of five regional associations in the national agInnovation network, represents the directors of all 15 state agricultural experiment stations at the Northeast's 13 Land-grant Universities. As federal agricultural research enters a period of significant change, the association seeks a visionary, collaborative, action-oriented leader to serve as its next Executive Director.

Reporting to the Chair of agInnovation Northeast, the Executive Director provides strategic leadership for the association and administers the Northeast's Multistate Research Program. The Executive Director serves as the region's principal advocate, building partnerships with federal agencies, industry, and research stakeholders; representing Northeast priorities before USDA, NIFA, Congress, and allied organizations; convening committees and task forces; and preparing strategic communications and responses to federal requests for information. The position may be based at any member university or approved Northeast regional host.

Applications accepted through November 30, 2026.

[Read the full position description.](#)

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New Technologies for Ag Extension Funding Opportunity

The Extension Foundation (EXF) is pleased to announce a funding opportunity for Incubation and Accelerated projects across the Cooperative Extension System (CES). This funding opportunity is made available through NTAE (New Technologies for Ag Extension), a grant from USDA-NIFA (United States Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture) to fund new and high impact potential projects within CES. Projects should have focus areas that lead to local impact and align with [USDA Research Priorities](#). Project leaders can apply for one of the two types of projects this grant will support: Incubation and Acceleration.

Applications are due November 11, 2026.

[See the full announcement.](#)

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USDA, Cooperative Extension, & APLU Award Top Honors in Extension Excellence

The US Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), Cooperative Extension, and the Association of Public and Land-grant University (APLU) announced the following winners for the 2026 national Excellence in Extension awards. These awards are given annually and recognize Cooperative Extension individuals and teams demonstrating outstanding community leadership, innovative programming, and measurable impact. This year's winners are as follows:

- Excellence in Extension Award for an Individual: **Paul Goeringer**, *University of Maryland*
- Excellence in Extension Team Award: **Resilient Engaged Active Community Health (REACH)**, *West Virginia University*
- Excellence in Extension for Innovative Programming that Addresses New Audience Award: **Mynda Tracy**, *University of Illinois- Urbana Campaign*

NIFA, Cooperative Extension, and APLU will also present four regional awards to individuals. This year's recipients are:

- 1890s Region: **Niki Whitley**, *Fort Valley State University*
- Southern Region: **Daryl Brian Arnall**, *Oklahoma State University*
- North Central Region: **Timothy McDermott**, *Ohio State University*
- Western Region: **Steven Worker**, *University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources*

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

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2026 agInnovation Award Recipients Announced

The agInnovation Excellence Awards recognize collaborative spirit, visionary leadership, and groundbreaking research across the Land-Grant university system. From next-generation watershed management to agricultural resilience and transformative innovations in livestock and agroecosystems, these awardees embody a powerful commitment to addressing global challenges—from climate impacts and environmental stewardship to equitable, sustainable food systems.

At their annual meeting, agInnovation announced the winners of the 2026 Excellence in Multistate Research, Excellence in Leadership, and Excellence in Agricultural Innovation Research awards.

Excellence in Multistate Research:

- National: **Reproductive Performance in Domestic Ruminants (W4112)**
- Northeast Region: **Collaborative Potato Breeding & Variety Development Activities to Enhance Farm Sustainability in the Eastern US (NE2231)**
- North Central Region: **Optimizing Forage and Grazing Cattle Management (NC1181)**
- Southern Region: **Sustainable Practices, Economic Contributions, Consumer Behavior, & Labor Management in the US Environmental Horticulture Industry (S1087)**

Excellence in Leadership:

- Association of 1890 Research Directors: **Louis Whitesides**, *South Carolina State University*
- Northeast Region: **Margaret Smith**, *Cornell University*
- North Central Region: **Shibu Jose**, *University of Missouri*
- Southern Region: **Scott Senseman**, *Oklahoma State University*
- Western Region: **Chris Pritsos**, *University of Nevada, Reno*

Lifetime Award: Excellence in Agricultural Research Innovation

- Association of 1890 Research Directors: **Ali Fares**, *Prairie View A&M University*
- Western Region: **Rachel Novotny**, *University of Hawai'i at Mānoa*
- North Central Region: **Ed Cahoon**, *University of Nebraska-Lincoln*
- Southern Region: **Peggy Ozias-Akins**, *University of Georgia*

Mid-Career Award: Excellence in Agricultural Research Innovation

- North Central Region: **Ozan N. Ciftci**, *Purdue University*
- Southern Region: **Haibo Huang**, *Virginia Tech*
- Western Region: **Mohsen B. Mesgaran**, *University of California, Davis*

Early Career Award: Excellence in Agricultural Research Innovation

- Association of 1890 Research Directors: **Oluwatoyin Sangokunle**, *Florida A&M University*
- North Central Region: **Barney A. Geddes**, *North Dakota State University*
- Southern Region: **Vitor S. Martins**, *Mississippi State University*

- Western Region: **William Norris**, *New Mexico State University*

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

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MEETINGS & EVENTS



2026 APLU Annual Meeting

With record-setting registration for the 2026 APLU Annual Meeting, [reserve your spot](#) now for the meeting in San Antonio, Texas, on November 15-17! The conference will explore how Our Enduring Mission continues to guide and strengthen the work of public and land-grant universities.

The meeting will also give individuals involved in any APLU council or commission the opportunity to connect, share, and learn with colleagues at other public and land-grant universities on an array of critical topics.

See [featured speakers](#), view the [agenda](#), and [register now!](#)

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2026 New Administrators Orientation

Presented by the APLU Office of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources (FANR), the [New Administrators Orientation \(NAO\)](#) is designed to help new administrators build the knowledge, connections, and leadership skills needed to succeed in their roles.

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[See more information about the NAO and register.](#)

To maximize the in-person experience, **a series of zoom meetings will be held prior to the DC meeting.** Recordings will be available to all registrants.

All virtual sessions will run from 4:00-5:30pm ET.

- Thursday, **November 5**: APLU and FANR Overview
- Thursday, **November 12**: Advocacy 101
- Thursday, **December 3**: Communication Strategies for New Leaders: Building Trust, Alignment and Impact

Space is limited, so please [register](#) as soon as possible.

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2027 Academic Programs Staff Development Workshop

Please save the date for the 2027 Academic Programs Staff Development Workshop, to be held in Tucson, Arizona, February 8–10, 2027. We hope you will join colleagues from colleges of agriculture, human sciences, natural resources, and related fields for a valuable opportunity to connect, share ideas, and learn from one another.

Academic Programs' professionals play an important role in supporting students, faculty, and institutional success through work such as recruitment, advising, career services, study abroad, undergraduate research coordination, and scholarship administration. This workshop is designed to create space for meaningful conversation, practical professional development, and the exchange of ideas among peers who understand the unique opportunities and challenges of this work.

Additional details, including registration information and the call for oral and poster abstracts, will be shared soon.

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2027 CARET/BAA Washington Conference

The [2027 CARET/BAA Washington Conference](#) is upon us!

The meeting will be held March 1-4, 2027 in Washington, DC and bring together CARET delegates, Board on Agriculture Assembly members, land-grant university leaders, and agricultural stakeholders to engage and advance priorities for agricultural research, Extension, education, and the broader land-grant university system.

This year's theme, "Capacity to Deliver: Investing in America's Land-grant System," will emphasize the importance of sustained federal investment, particularly capacity funding, in enabling universities to maintain investment in research and Extension, support faculty and students, and serve farmers and all communities who benefit from the land-grant mission.

The conference will strengthen relationships among CARET delegates, AHS members, BAA leaders, and broader stakeholders, and reinforce the value of a coordinated national voice in advocating for the future of the land-grant university system. Attendees will then go to Capitol Hill to communicate the funding requests of the Board on Agriculture Assembly to members of Congress and congressional staff.

Note: The meeting will take place March 1-4 but, consult with your school delegation/the agenda when booking flights. APLU programming concludes the evening of March 3rd.

We look forward to seeing you in DC!

[See more information and register.](#)

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2027 Board on Health and Human Sciences (BHHS) Spring Meeting

Join colleagues from across public research universities for the [2027 Board on Health and Human Sciences \(BHHS\) Spring Meeting](#), March 2–4 at Florida State University in Tallahassee. This annual convening brings together deans, associate deans, administrators, faculty leaders, and partners from across the health and human sciences to exchange ideas, strengthen connections, and explore how our disciplines can respond to emerging opportunities in higher education, research, policy, and public engagement.

Under the theme *Driving Discovery, Delivering Impact*, the 2027 meeting will examine how health and human sciences leaders are strengthening research, expanding interdisciplinary opportunities, responding to emerging policy and funding priorities, and increasing the visibility and influence of the field across public research universities and the communities they serve. The meeting will also create dedicated opportunities for leadership development and peer exchange, including conversations across career stages and administrative roles, small-group discussions, regional connections, and programming designed to welcome and engage those attending a BHHS meeting for the first time.

[See more information and register.](#)

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Save the Date

The **2027 National Extension Director and Administrator Annual Meeting** will take place the week of September 13 in Charlotte, NC.

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PARTNER EVENTS

2026 AAAS Charles Valentine Riley Memorial Lecture

Thursday, November 19, 2026 | Washington, DC and Virtual

The [AAAS Charles Valentine Riley Memorial Lecture](#) is an important opportunity to explore the environmental and societal challenges facing our planet through the lens of agricultural innovation and its applications in a global context.

- Policy Roundtable and Poster Session: 2:30-4:00 pm ET
- Lecture: 5:00-6:30 pm ET
 - Dr. Jo Handelsman, Director of the Wisconsin Institute for Discovery at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Vilas Research Professor, and Howard Hughes Medical Institute Professor.
- Reception: 6:30-8:30 pm ET

[See more information about the AAAS Charles Valentine Riley Memorial Lecture.](#)

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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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