

# CSREES Administrator's Report to the Partnership

Summer 2004

Advancing Knowledge for the  
Food and Agricultural System



## CELEBRATING A DECADE OF DISCOVERY

As part of the President's Management Agenda, agencies across the federal government have been reviewing workforce plans and practices. At CSREES we are taking advantage of this effort to broadly review, assess, and integrate several efforts that had been moving forward independently, including strategic planning, development of enterprise architecture to set the framework for IT efforts, and succession planning in recognition that we are all getting older – some more rapidly than others.

We are developing not only a workforce plan built on where we want to go (that is our strategic plan) but also the changing skill sets needed to get us there (our enterprise architecture). For several years we have been working to align the performance plans and evaluation of key staff to the agency's strategic plan. Our new workforce plan will allow recruitment, retention, and other personnel decisions to reflect the same goals and strategies, and anticipate the growing e-nature of government, university, and corporate practices.

At CSREES we have an unusually wide array of tools to build and implement a workforce plan. First, we have insights into how relevant labor markets are changing. We conduct nationwide workforce studies to estimate supply and demand for undergraduates entering agricultural careers. These analyses guide the development and implementation of higher education programs supported through the agency and delivered by university partners. On the staffing side, in addition to traditional hiring tools, CSREES works through university and other agency partners to appoint experts to term assignments for jobs ranging from panel managers, to education advisors, to program leaders, to communication experts. In addition, we hire students who learn about federal science and education management and keep us attuned to new perspectives and needed work skills.

As with many organizations, we are seeing a "flattening" of our structure, movement away from clerical support to program assistance, and growth in the need for middle-level positions to handle the systems we support. As we complete our new workforce plan, we will use our road map to steer personnel actions in the new century — retooled, fully matched to the tasks, and aligned to our strategic plan.

*Colien Hefferan*

The mission of the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) is to advance knowledge for agriculture, the environment, human health and well-being, and communities.



July 2004

## **CSREES' ROLE IN ADDRESSING OVERWEIGHT AND OBESITY IN THE UNITED STATES**

**Susan Welsh, National Program Leader, Families, 4-H, and Nutrition, and Etta Saltos, National Program Leader, Competitive Programs**

Overweight and obesity have reached epidemic proportions in the United States. In 1999-2000, an estimated 34 percent of U.S. adults were overweight, with an additional 31 percent being obese. In the past 20 years, the percentage of overweight children has doubled from 7 to 15 percent, while the percentage of overweight adolescents has more than tripled from 5 to 16 percent. The total annual cost of obesity was estimated to be \$123 billion for 2001 - \$6 billion more than for the year before.

USDA has a mandated, unique responsibility for food and agricultural systems, including food assistance and nutrition education programs, and, therefore, an important part to play in addressing the problem. USDA's Strategic Plan for FY 2002-2007 has specific targets in relation to overweight and obesity and healthy eating (URL:<http://www.usda.gov/ocfo/usdasp.htm>). As the federal partner in the Land-Grant University System, CSREES is addressing the problem of obesity through the joint three-part mission in research, education, and extension.

CSREES supports competitive nutrition research through the National Research Initiative (NRI), and oversees formula-funded and special research grants. In 2003, a new \$8 million integrated research, education, and extension program on obesity was added to the NRI program portfolio. To strengthen the program and gather stakeholder input on how best to use funding, CSREES held a 2-day planning workshop in Washington, DC, chaired by Dennis Savaiano, dean of the School of Consumer and Family Sciences at Purdue University. Participants strongly recommended that CSREES has a unique role to play in the fight against obesity through integrated research, education, and extension programs focused on food and behavior. Two new 5-year Multistate Research Fund projects will address obesity. In addition, an important USDA "National Obesity Prevention Conference" will be held in Washington, DC, October 25-27, 2004. The conference is sponsored by Joseph Jen, Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics, and by Eric Bost, Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services.

In the intervention area, the Cooperative Extension System (CES), unique to agriculture, can reach into every county in every state and territory with relevant and useful science-based education programs for the audiences they serve. A cooperative effort is focusing directly on preventing childhood obesity - Reversing Childhood Obesity Trends: Helping Children Achieve Healthy

Weights. The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), which just celebrated its 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary, is directed to low-income youth and families, who are disproportionately affected by obesity. A recent GAO report on "Nutrition Education" (GAO-04-528) gave EFNEP high marks for its evaluation system, which shows the success of intervention.

In the area of formal education, CSREES plays a unique role in supporting higher education programs that train the next generation of researchers and educators to become capable of addressing complex problems such as obesity. CSREES and its university partners, with their existing infrastructures and networks, are uniquely positioned to apply research, education, and extension tools to develop a holistic, food-focused approach to addressing the multifaceted problem of obesity. For more information, see CSREES' Obesity and Healthy Weight Web page [www.csrees.usda.gov/obesityhealthyweight.html](http://www.csrees.usda.gov/obesityhealthyweight.html). CSREES' white paper on obesity will soon be posted on this site.

## **CSREES: A VITAL HOMELAND SECURITY LINK** **William Hoffman, Program Specialist, Plant and Animal Systems**

Events in Europe, including the foot-and-mouth disease outbreak in Great Britain in 2001, have shown the devastating effects that can occur from even a slight delay in detecting a highly infectious animal disease agent in the livestock population. Plant diseases caused even more devastation in Europe in the 19th century, creating the Irish Potato Famine that caused the ancestors of many Americans to flee to the United States to avoid starvation. Avoiding such a plant or animal disease in our country during the 21st century will require a cooperative effort among the federal and state governments, our universities, and the public. CSREES provides funding and leadership to further this effort through three national networks:

- The National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN),
- The National Plant Diagnostic Network (NPDN) and
- The Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN).

The NAHLN is a network of animal disease diagnostic laboratories that enables a rapid response to animal health emergencies, including foot-and-mouth disease and other foreign animal diseases. It is conducted at 12 locations (the University of Georgia, Texas A&M University, the University of California at Davis, the University of Wisconsin, Colorado State University, Cornell University, the Rollins Laboratory in North Carolina, Louisiana State University, the Florida Diagnostic Laboratory, the University of Arizona, Washington State University, and Iowa State University).

The NPDN is a network of plant diagnostic laboratories that enables a rapid response to plant diseases and other pests, including soybean rust and sudden oak death. It is conducted at five locations (Cornell University, the University of Florida, Michigan State University, Kansas State University, and the University of California at Davis).

The primary objective of the NAHLN and NPDN is to establish coordinated national networks of existing diagnostic laboratories to rapidly and accurately detect and report animal diseases and plant pests of national interest, particularly pathogens that have the potential to be intentionally introduced through bio-terrorism. Such arrangements will enhance the nation's plant and animal health diagnostic services and speed response efforts if a foreign plant pest or animal disease is detected in the United States. This is being accomplished by establishing and maintaining effective communication networks of regional expertise, developing harmonized reporting protocols with the national diagnostic network participants, and cataloging pest and disease occurrences in national databases. A course of future expansion and increased capabilities of these networks has been charted, and individuals throughout the partnership are committed to their long-term utility.

The Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN) is a collaborative multistate effort by extension services across the country to improve the delivery of services to citizens affected by disasters. CSREES leads this effort. EDEN's mission is to provide encouragement and support to local extension workers across the U.S. as they:

- build working relationships with local and state emergency management networks,
- provide educational programs on disaster preparation and mitigation,
- assume locally appropriate roles during disasters, and
- collaborate in recovery efforts.

EDEN links extension educators across the United States and various disciplines, enabling them to find and share educational resources.

In addition to creating these national networks, CSREES is leading many individual scientific and educational projects that address prevention, preparedness, and mitigation of threats to the nation's agriculture. These include National Research Initiative (NRI) projects that address plant and animal biosecurity, formula-based multistate research projects that address invasive species, and agricultural homeland security integrated extension and research efforts by the Regional Integrated Pest Management Centers.

## E-EXTENSION UPDATE

### **Gregory Crosby, National Program Leader, Natural Resources and Environmental Unit**

e-Extension is closer to becoming a reality. Start-up was approved by extension directors and administrators by an almost 5-1 margin. The Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP) approved a governing committee structure to establish and govern policy decisions. The committee includes one representative from each National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC) region, one chosen by CSREES, the NASULGC director of extension and outreach, and the ECOP program subcommittee chair. Members identified at this time are Dalton McAfee, 1890 region; Elbert Dickey, North Central region; Karen Hinton, Western region; Lavon Bartel, Northeast Region; Linda Williams Willis, Chair, ECOP program subcommittee; Dick Wootton, director, extension and outreach, NASULGC; Greg Crosby, CSREES; and Ron Brown, who will temporarily represent the Southern Region until a permanent representative is selected. The group may decide to include some at-large members. Their first meeting is the week of July 25.

A finance task force is focusing on four funding avenues: redirection of funds provided by the director/administrator assessment, funds committed by CSREES, establishment of a new 3(d) line in the federal budget, and grant and foundation funding opportunities. Chaired by Larry Cote, other task force members include Jack Payne, Joe McGilberry, Larry Turner, Tom Henderson, Larry Arrington, Keith Smith (Gwen Wolford), Chester Fehlis, Arlen Leholm, Mike Tate, Nancy Bull, Dick Wootton, Linda Benning, and Carl O'Connor (staff).

Full-time positions of director, associate for content development, and associate for information technology are being advertised. See <http://e-extensionproject.info/>. Interviews were scheduled for July with the roles to be filled as soon as possible.

Dan Cotton (NE) and Fred Piazza (LA), respectively, are leading the content development and information technology work groups. More than 30 people from more than 15 universities are participating in weekly electronic meetings.

The content development work group expects to complete version 1.0 of an e-Extension metadata element set and an RFP to establish e-Extension content teams in early August. The metadata element set will establish needed standards for organizing and sharing information within the system.

The information technology work group expects to develop an RFP to provide the physical infrastructure. Discussion topics include the use of technological tools and mechanisms necessary to facilitate data transport between participating institutions and collaborative technologies that will give geographically dispersed teams of experts the ability to create content in a virtual working environment.

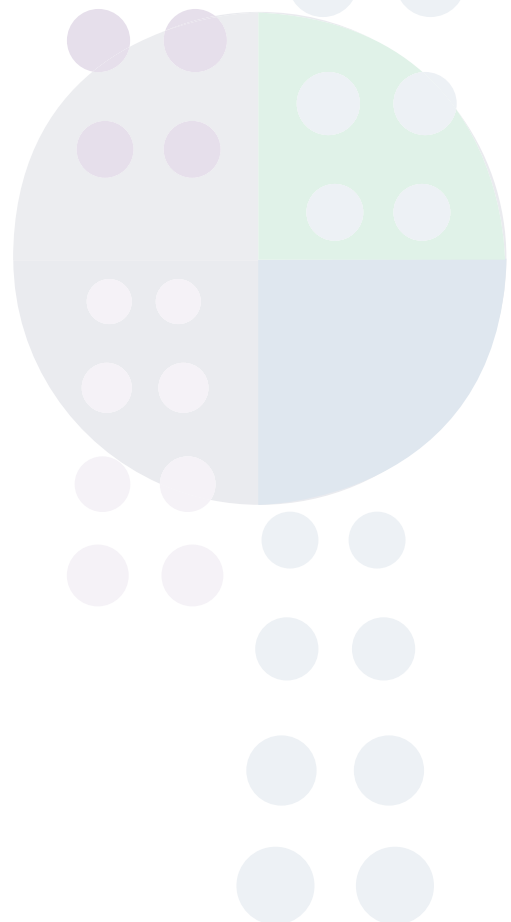
An ad hoc communication support group is forming to assist in market analysis, communication strategy development, and specific internal and external communications efforts. Terry Meisenbach (CSREES) and Dave King (IN) are project coordinators. For more information, contact Terry Meisenbach, USDA – CSREES, [tmeisenbach@csrees.usda.gov](mailto:tmeisenbach@csrees.usda.gov).

## THE 2004 NATIONAL PUBLIC POLICY EDUCATION CONFERENCE

The “Strengthening the Art of Public Policy Education” Conference will be held at the Millennium Hotel, St. Louis, MO, September 19-22, 2004. This conference provides extension educators and other professionals with research-based information they need to work with citizens on controversial public issues. The conference offers a variety of topics. In each session, experts will discuss current issues and provide participants with materials they can use in public education programs. The combination of research-based information and educational materials and techniques to be provided at this conference is unique among training opportunities for policy educators. Register online at [www.farmfoundation.org/nppindex.htm](http://www.farmfoundation.org/nppindex.htm). Contact: Maurice W. Dorsey, USDA/CSREES – [mdorsey@csrees.usda.gov](mailto:mdorsey@csrees.usda.gov).

## NEW CSREES EXHIBIT HONORS 10 YEARS OF LAND-GRANT UNIVERSITY STATUS FOR TRIBAL COLLEGES

CSREES created a new exhibit, the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1994 land-grant institutions, which commemorates 10 years since authorizing legislation made eligible tribal colleges part of the Land-Grant University System. The small freestanding exhibit features photo images from tribal college campuses. The exhibit will be used by CSREES staff members who administer programs for tribal colleges when they do site visits to tribal colleges or attend meetings and conferences about tribal college matters. CSREES administers 4 programs that build capacity in higher education, research, and outreach programs through partnerships with 32 tribal colleges and universities that have 1994 land-grant status. CSREES also administers the Extension Indian Reservation Program which conducts extension education programs on Indian Reservations and tribal jurisdictions through partnerships with the 1862 Land-Grant institutions. Another version of the exhibit will be placed on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of USDA’s Whitten Building in the CSREES Administrator’s office and in the lobby of CSREES Headquarters at the Waterfront Centre. Contact: Terry Meisenbach, USDA/CSREES – [tmeisenbach@csrees.usda.gov](mailto:tmeisenbach@csrees.usda.gov).



## CSREES/ANR LEADER EXCHANGE PROGRAM CONTINUES

Eric Norland, CSREES national program leader for forestry, spent a week at the University of Arizona under the CSREES/ANR Leader Exchange Program.

His visit was hosted by Deborah Young, associate director, programs, Cooperative Extension Service. Young will complete the exchange in the future with a week at CSREES in Washington, DC.

Norland's schedule included a firsthand view of the devastating aftermath of wildfires and the impact of illegal immigration transit on rangeland and livestock.

The Leadership Exchange Program between CSREES national program leaders and their agriculture and natural resources land-grant counterparts features 1-week reciprocal visits with a wide range of activities that give partners the opportunity to become more familiar with each other's organizational structures; position responsibilities; and research, extension, and education activities.

University ANR leaders interested in the exchange program should contact Dan Kugler, CSREES Natural Resources and Environment deputy administrator, at [dkugler@csrees.usda.gov](mailto:dkugler@csrees.usda.gov), or Ralph Otto, CSREES -Plant and Animal Systems deputy administrator, at [rotto@csrees.usda.gov](mailto:rotto@csrees.usda.gov).

## CSREES GLOBAL CHANGE AND CLIMATE NATIONAL PROGRAM LEADER TUPAS JOINS NRE STAFF

Louie Tupas is the new CSREES national program leader for global change and climate. Tupas comes to CSREES from the National Science Foundation, where he was the associate director for the Arctic System Science Program in the Office of Polar Programs. In Polar Programs, he managed the 2 newest research and education initiatives in global and climate change. His NSF experience was made possible through a two-year intergovernmental personnel act assignment. Since 1994, Tupas has been an assistant research scientist, Department of Oceanography, School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology, at the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

Tupas brings experience as a research scientist, expeditionary chief scientist, and scientific administrator. He also taught at the graduate and undergraduate levels. Tupas has a Ph.D. and M.S. in marine science from the University of Tokyo and a B.S. in marine science from University of the Philippines. Contact: Louie Tupas, USDA/CSREES - [ltupas@csrees.usda.gov](mailto:ltupas@csrees.usda.gov).

## COLLABORATION YIELDING IMPORTANT NEW BIOBASED PRODUCTS

A USDA/ARS, CSREES, Department of Defense (DoD), and Gila River Indian Community collaboration is yielding important new biobased products ready to be commercialized. On June 9, 2004, the History Channel on cable television aired a Modern Marvels episode on rubber, an agricultural raw material that has many important industrial applications. The USDA perspective was presented by Carmela Bailey, CSREES national program leader, who described current efforts to commercialize a natural rubber industry based on a Southwestern desert shrub called guayule. A small company, Yulex, has licensed ARS technology to extract rubber from the shrub and is investigating the applications of guayule rubber for hypo-allergenic latex products in the medical market.

Both CSREES and ARS have supported guayule research and development for almost two decades. In the late 1980s through the mid 1990s, USDA and DoD jointly funded a program to establish a source of natural rubber in the United States. The growing area for guayule in the U.S. is the Sonoran Desert, and the Gila River Indian Community, south of Phoenix, AZ, played a key role in this program. DoD entered into a contract with the Gila River Indian Community, with traditional agriculturists who grow cotton, to grow and harvest the shrub. The Gila River Indian Community subcontracted with Firestone Tire and Rubber Company to extract rubber from the plant for the manufacture of military tires, which were subsequently and successfully tested on military trucks and aircraft. In addition to rubber, guayule was found to produce a resin that repels termites, and that now looks promising as a substitute for the toxic chemicals that are currently used for wood treatments. Both past and current efforts have resulted in useful new products that are poised to enter commercialization. Guayule may offer limited-resource farmers on Native American reservations in the Southwest another cash crop for added tribal or individual income. Contact: Carmela Bailey, USDA/CSREES [cbailey@csrees.usda.gov](mailto:cbailey@csrees.usda.gov).

## **CROP PROTECTION, ANIMAL HEALTH AND FORESTRY COMPENDIA FROM CAB INTERNATIONAL AVAILABLE ON-LINE**

The CAB International's Crop Protection, Animal Health, and Forestry Compendia are now available online to land grant university employees at [www.ipmcenters.org/cabi](http://www.ipmcenters.org/cabi). The compendia are similar to encyclopedias and synthesize a wide range of scientific information that is useful for scientists and extension educators, particularly when they are called upon to provide fast and accurate information regarding newly emerging animal diseases and plant pests. The regularly updated compendia are comprised of peer-reviewed and edited information from thousands of specialists throughout the world.

The Regional Integrated Pest Management Centers and the National Plant Diagnostic Centers are making the three compendia available to land-grant university faculty and staff members, free of charge, with funding provided by CSREES. Contact Bill Hoffman, USDA – CSREES, [bhoffman@csrees.usda.gov](mailto:bhoffman@csrees.usda.gov).

## **AGRICULTURE SECRETARY RENEWS FORESTRY RESEARCH ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman announced the renewal of the Forestry Research Advisory Council (FRAC) for another 2 years and the appointment of 11 new members, bringing the total to 20. FRAC provides advice to the Secretary on USDA forestry research programs and reports on forestry research within federal and state agencies, forestry schools, and forestry industries. CSREES and the Forest Service reviewed the nominations for new members.

Catalino Blanche, CSREES national program leader, and Hao Tran, staff assistant to the Forest Service deputy chief for research and development, serve as co-coordinators of the council. Blanche also serves as the designated federal officer for the council. Dan Kugler, CSREES Natural Resources and Environment deputy administrator, and Ann Bartuska, Forest Service deputy chief for research, serve as executive secretary of the council on an alternate-year basis. Now that FRAC has a full complement of members, its first meeting will be held this August. Contact: Catalino Blanche, USDA/CSREES - [cblanche@csrees.usda.gov](mailto:cblanche@csrees.usda.gov).

New FRAC members are Charles T. Smith, Jr., head, Department of Forest Science, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas; David Reed, vice president for research, Michigan Tech University, Houghton, Michigan; Claire Williams, professor, Forestry Genetics, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas; Richard Brinker, dean, School of Forestry, Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama; Steve Brink, deputy regional forester, U.S. Forest Service, Juneau, Alaska; Theodore Wegner, assistant director, Forest Products Laboratory, U.S. Forest Service, Madison, Wisconsin; James Rakestraw, forest manager, International Paper Co., Savannah, Georgia; Alan Lucier, senior vice president, National Council of the Paper Industry for Air and Stream Improvement Inc., Research Triangle Park, North Carolina; Malcolm Guidry, consulting arborist, self-employed, Covington, Louisiana; John M. Hagan, senior scientist and director, Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences, Brunswick, Maine; Jeb Barzen, director of field ecology, International Crane Foundation, Baraboo, Wisconsin. FRAC is chaired by Greg Johnson, director of research at Weyerhaeuser Corporation in Albany, Oregon.

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