



CSREES Administrator's Report to the Partnership

July 2007

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.



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Message from the CSREES Administrator

The American, university-based, agricultural knowledge system and the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) are characterized by many “c” words: cooperative, obviously; coordinated; collegial; collaborative; and, at times, chaotic. From a management point of view, all of these words signal difficulty, because the traditional key to effective management—another “c” word, control—is not among them. We achieve our collective goals by working together, sometimes acting as a team, sharing resources and, in the case of the federal partner, providing financial assistance. In other cases, for example, eXtension, CAP grants, and multistate projects, we literally pool resources to gain and apply knowledge to solve problems. When we team up in these ways, it is easy for us to demonstrate that we are working on national issues for the public good. This is essential to securing and sustaining federal resources in support of an inherently dispersed research, education, and extension system.

CSREES’ basic function is to cooperate with many universities and other institutions that receive grants, formula-based awards, and agreements. However, our growing portfolios of work and, in many cases, sources of support come from our collaboration with other federal agencies. This is nowhere more evident or important than in our collaborations with the Agricultural Research Service (ARS). ARS scientists have a presence on more than one-half of the nation’s land-grant university campuses. Whether at this first-line, scientist-to-scientist level, or at the national program staff level, we not only cooperate, but also jointly listen to stakeholders, set priorities, and work to achieve a common strategic goal. This collaboration is highly visible in projects such as the jointly developed “Blueprint for USDA Efforts in Agricultural Animal Genomics,” or the multiyear effort to better coordinate federal and university germplasm collection efforts.

Similarly, CSREES collaborates closely with the Economic Research Service in areas such as evaluation of nutrition assistance and education programs and assessment of the economic value of federal investments in research.

Gathering stakeholder input is a vital element of our collaborative efforts. In this report, we use examples of agency research, education, and extension projects to detail how stakeholder input influences and helps drive the direction of our programs. Overall, internal coordination and joint planning in USDA research, education, and economics programs, combined with comprehensive and continuing stakeholder input processes, are essential to ensuring that we are using taxpayer resources wisely to address the most critical public needs. Often, this requires far more than simple cooperation, but true collaboration.

Colien Hefferan, Administrator

Stakeholders Share Responsibility For Steering CSREES' Direction

CSREES engages stakeholders to identify priorities for new grant programs and/or modify priorities for existing grant programs. Stakeholders are those who conduct or use agricultural research, education, or extension. The new stakeholder page on the CSREES Web site (www.csrees.usda.gov/business/reporting/stakeholder.html) illustrates the diverse input used to generate new research, education, and extension priorities for CSREES programs.

The CSREES program planning process is multifaceted and includes formal and informal approaches to determine critical areas of program focus. CSREES uses open, transparent, and documented processes to collect stakeholder input. National program staffs from CSREES and the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) coordinate many stakeholder workshops and listening sessions, which help both agencies identify priorities and coordinate program planning.

CSREES national program leaders (NPLs) participate in meetings with representatives of key commodity groups and other user groups to discuss stakeholders' current research, education, and extension priorities, and to determine how CSREES can address those needs. NPLs also review published reports by the congressionally established National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board as well as from various working groups or professional societies.

National Research Initiative (NRI) NPLs rely on stakeholder activities to develop NRI program priorities, which then determine how the NRI can best meet stakeholders' needs. NRI program priorities are evaluated using several criteria, including mission relevance, scientific opportunity, impact to science and society, and linkages to other federal programs.

Section 102(c) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (AREERA) requires 1862, 1890, and 1994 land-grant institutions that receive agricultural research, extension, or education formula funds to establish a process for stakeholder input on the uses of such funds. AREERA also requires the Secretary of Agriculture to solicit and consider input on current requests for applications (RFA). Stakeholders may submit comments on any CSREES competitive program to RFP-OEP@csrees.usda.gov.

Stakeholder input regularly contributes to determining and shaping program priorities. Stakeholder input is also responsible for placing emphasis on bioinformatics research in the Animal Genome program.

For more information, contact Mark Poth, director of research, at 202-401-5244 or mpoth@csrees.usda.gov, or Debora Hamernik, national program leader, at 202-401-4202 or dhamernik@csrees.usda.gov.

CSREES Collaborates With Partners To Meet Stakeholder Needs

CSREES national program leaders engage widely with other federal agencies using a number of mechanisms to establish priorities, ensure program relevancy, and deliver solutions.

In response to stakeholder input, and recognizing the need to enhance integration of the CSREES and Agricultural Research Service (ARS) programs in Animal Production and Protection, the agencies began sponsoring stakeholder workshops in 2002.

The wide-ranging list of workshop participants includes representatives from the aquaculture, swine, ruminant, equine, and poultry industries; commodity organizations; academia; consumer groups; and other nongovernmental organizations. Participating federal agencies include USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Economic Research Service, and Natural Resources Conservation Service, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

The workshops are part of the CSREES performance planning cycle and the ARS 5-year performance planning and management cycle. ARS develops its 5-year strategic plans and research projects based on knowledge gained from these activities. CSREES uses the priorities to inform the development of competitive programs, including the National Research Initiative (NRI).

The U.S. Veterinary Immune Reagent Network (<http://www.umass.edu/vetimm>) represents the culmination of 3 years of collaboration involving the ARS/CSREES team, along with APHIS, the American Association of Veterinary Immunologists, university partners, and the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD). That network develops critical immunology tools for veterinary species and coordinates with complementary efforts in the European Union (EU) and Australia. There are numerous examples of interagency and interdepartmental working groups that draw a shared vision and pathway to address specific priorities.

As opportunities arise, new coordination networks are formed. For example, interactions with six new NIH Avian Influenza Centers were established in 2007 and will continue monthly with participation from NIH, universities

associated with CSREES' Avian Influenza Coordinated Agricultural Project and the NIH centers, ARS, and APHIS.

The Animal Systems Team is just one of many that illustrate CSREES' engagement with its stakeholders. Across CSREES, each team remains flexible to pursue opportunities that maximize coordination with other agencies.

For more information, contact Meryl Broussard, director of the Animal Systems unit, at 202-401-6438 or mbroussard@csrees.usda.gov; or Peter Johnson, national program leader in the Competitive Programs unit, at 202-401-1896 or pjohnson@csrees.usda.gov.

Stakeholder Input Leads to NRI Coordinated Agricultural Project Success

CSREES National Research Initiative (NRI) Coordinated Agricultural Projects (CAPs) maintain close interaction with stakeholders through CAP Advisory Boards. These boards allow CSREES to respond quickly to emerging needs and opportunities. CAP awards include three grants for Applied Plant Genomics (Barley CAP—<http://barleycap.org/>, Rice CAP—<http://www.uark.edu/ua/ricecap/>, and Wheat CAP—<http://maswheat.ucdavis.edu/>); three grants for Animal Biosecurity (Avian Influenza—www.aicap.umd.edu, Johnes Disease—www.jdip.org, and PRRS Virus—www.prrs.org); and one for Food Safety (<http://www.fsrrn.net>). Stakeholder input was directly responsible for recent impacts in some of these areas.

The Wheat CAP quickly responded to stakeholder needs to protect the United States from Stem Rust, Ug99. Specifically, the Wheat CAP developed an extension fact sheet that is being widely disseminated to increase the awareness of this new virulent strain of Stem Rust <http://maswheat.ucdavis.edu/Education/PDF/facts/rustfacts.pdf>. Wheat CAP members are also implementing marker-assisted selection to incorporate resistance genes that are effective against Ug99. The Wheat CAP works with the Agricultural Research Service's (ARS) Cereal Disease Laboratory to identify markers associated with new sources of resistance against Ug99. These results highlight the value of marker technologies to address disease threats.

Contributions from Avian Influenza CAP participants (e.g., universities, ARS, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, and industry) have resulted in several success stories, including:

- two internationally available diagnostics—FLU DETECT® (Synbiotics) detects all 16 subtypes of influenza type A virus, and ProFLOK® (Synbiotics) detects antibodies to avian influenza;

- a vaccine breakthrough, the development of the first protective avian influenza in ovo vaccination; and
- the National Training Program on Depopulation and Disposal Procedures for Catastrophic Poultry Disease Events brought to 1,800 participants in 26 states, with adoption by Canada and Brazil.

The Food Safety CAP has allowed CSREES university partners to respond quickly to the Food and Drug Administration's and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's urgent needs for research on recent produce issues of national significance, such as Salmonella contamination in tomatoes. CAP-supported university scientists traveled to industry locations and provided guidance on intervention steps.

The Food Safety CAP also provided leadership in facilitating peer reviews by U.S. and international experts for government risk assessments in emerging food safety issues. The recognized network of experts in food safety has enabled outreach to other consortia for collaborative research. The two main partnerships are with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Food Safety and Defense Center (University of Minnesota) and the European Union's Med-Vet-Net Program.

For more information, contact national program leaders: Peter Johnson, at 202-401-1896 or pjohnson@csrees.usda.gov; Mary Torrence, at 202-401-6357 or mtorrence@csrees.usda.gov; or Ed Kaleikau, at 202-401-1931 or ekaleikau@csrees.usda.gov.

Stakeholder Input Sets Tone For Specialty Crop Strategic Planning

The Specialty Crop Competitiveness Act of 2004 defines specialty crops as "fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruit, and nursery crops (including floriculture)." There is growing recognition within USDA of the importance of these crops to the U.S. agricultural economy.

An analysis of the 2002 Census of Agriculture, compiled by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), illustrates that these crops account for 52 percent of the farm gate value of U.S. crop agriculture. Follow-up surveys by NASS indicate that specialty crops may be growing in value compared to other crops. Strategic planning is essential as CSREES works to make its programs relevant to this important stakeholder sector.

CSREES program staff provides leadership for this process in concert with its land-grant partners. However, the most important participants in the process are the growers and industry leaders, who ensure that the identified goals and

strategies provide the information necessary to remain competitive in a global economy. Strategic plans have been developed for tree fruit, berry crops, table grapes and wine grapes, and vegetables using this format. The American Nursery and Landscape Association and the Society of American Florists collaborated prior to 2003 to create a strategic plan for the nursery and floricultural industries. What is most remarkable about the plans is that, although the crops represented are so diverse, there are many similar research, extension, and education needs among the crops.

Industry leaders have recognized this fact. In response, these leaders formed the Specialty Crops Research Team (SCRT). In their position paper, the SCRT recognized four goals that cut across the diverse crops:

- understanding and improving quality;
- understanding consumer perceptions of specialty crops, the role of nutrition in specialty crops, and the economic contribution of specialty crops to rural economies;
- enhancing processing and production efficiency; and
- developing and promoting sustainable practices.

SCRT also emphasizes that extension and education are essential to ensuring that research results get into the hands of end-users for implementation. The SCRT actively recruits other specialty crop industries to become part of the dialogue. As this process moves forward, it will become an important source of stakeholder input for the land-grant partnership.

For more information, contact Tom Bewick, national program leader for horticulture, at 202-401-3356 or tbewick@csrees.usda.gov.

Honey Bee Die-Off Drives Collaborative Research, Development, and Application Effort

Beekeepers across the continental United States reported significant die-offs of honey bees during the fall and winter of 2006/7. This event is troublesome because honey bee pollination is responsible for more than \$15 billion annually in added crop value, particularly for specialty crops.

Symptoms of the die-off include a sudden loss of the colony's population with only a few bees found outside the hive and a laying queen remaining inside with a small cluster of attendants. This phenomenon, without a recognizable underlying cause, has been termed "Colony Collapse Disorder" (CCD). CCD threatens the pollination industry and production of commercial honey.

USDA's CSREES and Agricultural Research Service (ARS) national program leaders are working closely with land-grant universities and representatives of the beekeeping

industry to respond to the threat of CCD. In February, representatives from university, industry, and beekeeping organizations met in Florida to identify potential causes and research needs. A national working group convened in April to identify urgent and longer term needs for research and extension program implementation and to identify potential funding sources. A multi-agency steering committee developed an action plan to address key research, development, and application within four broad topics, including: survey and data collection; analysis of existing samples; hypothesis-driven research to determine causes and eliminate nonfactors; and implementation, including mitigation and prevention measures.

For more information, contact national program leaders Mary Purcell-Miramontes, at 202-401-5168 or mpurcell@csrees.usda.gov, or Rick Meyer, at 202-401-4891 or hmeyer@csrees.usda.gov.

EFNEP Partners With 1890s To Expand Nutrition Information

Obesity, poor nutrition, and/or physical inactivity result in total health-related costs of \$117 billion annually. Experts project health care spending in the United States to reach \$4 trillion, or 20 percent of gross domestic product, by 2015. Medicaid spending is expected to remain a strain on state budgets.

However, cost/benefit analyses by CSREES' Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) have shown that improvements in diet quality and food-related behaviors lead to reduced risk of chronic disease, with a benefit of up to \$10 in reduced health care costs for every \$1 spent in delivering the program.

In 2007, the increased EFNEP allocation allowed all EFNEP-serving institutions to receive at least \$100,000. This resulted in a significant boost to EFNEP funding in 1890 institutions. Cindy Tuttle, from CSREES, and Jacqueline McCray, from the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, co-chair a strategic planning committee with members from 1862 and 1890 institutions. This committee will identify best practices, resources, and support systems to assist 1890 institutions in their integration into EFNEP structures and systems.

Contact Helen Chipman, national program leader for Food and Nutrition Education, at 202-720-8067 or hchipman@csrees.usda.gov, for more information.

Stakeholder Input Has Been Vital to PIPE Development

Since its arrival in 2004, Asian soybean rust (ASR) has spread further and faster each year. In 2006, ASR was found in 274 counties across 15 states. Rust was confirmed in Louisiana in the spring of 2007, 53 days ahead of last year's first find in that state. The incidence and severity are low, but the presence of ASR so early in the season is of major concern. Five states already have reported soybean rust infections this year, and soybean growers across the country expect to monitor the disease spread very carefully.

The Pest Information Platform for Education & Extension (PIPE) system was developed under the urgency of the impending outbreak of ASR in the winter of 2004–2005 as a direct result of urgent stakeholder needs and input. The PIPE, which includes a surveillance and monitoring network (including sentinel plots), a Web-based information management system, criteria for deciding when to apply fungicides, predictive modeling, and outreach, was requested by the soybean industry via the United Soybean Board. The concern in 2004 was that, in the absence of accurate and timely information on the spread of soybean rust, all growers across the Midwest would spray fungicides. The USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS) estimated that the PIPE improved the growers' disease management choices and helped growers avoid unnecessary fungicide spraying against soybean rust in 2005 and 2006.

Further development of the PIPE model in 2006 included soybean aphid modeling and monitoring of other legumes that might become infected with ASR.

The success of the PIPE as an integrated pest management (IPM) tool and forum for highly effective and coordinated action has led most IPM practitioners to want to expand and enhance the PIPE to include pests and diseases of many crops. A PIPE steering committee was formed to develop a stable governance, a business plan, and mechanisms to make future selections of new components for implementation in the PIPE. The steering committee is comprised of 20–25 members, including representatives of principal stakeholders.

The task of generating appropriate information for all of these stakeholders is herculean and requires dedicated resource allocation for several years to come. Since 2004, the PIPE has implemented plans to tackle issues of soybean rust and dry bean pests, including viruses; improved education, communications, and data sharing efforts, and designed a review of the information technology system; formalized a steering committee and executive committee,

established a part-time administrator, and convened monthly conference calls and a second face-to-face meeting; formed subcommittees, both ad hoc and continuing; written bylaws; and issued a Call for Concept Notes and finalized a plan to compete new access to the PIPE.

For more information, contact Plant and Animal Systems national program leaders Kitty Cardwell, at 202-401-1790 or kcardwell@csrees.usda.gov, or Martin Draper, at 202-401-1990 or mdraper@csrees.usda.gov.

National Plant Diagnostic Network: Success Comes From Stakeholders

The tragedy of 9/11 led to the creation of the National Plant Diagnostic Network (NPDN) as a key element in protecting American agriculture. It continues through the Food and Agricultural Defense Initiative.

The network protects the food supply and the economic viability of U.S. agriculture against invasive pests that may become a threat through intentional, accidental, or natural introduction. The key to preventing major loss is to recognize problems as quickly as possible and to respond in an appropriate manner. The NPDN addresses early detection through two avenues: improving early recognition by increasing the number of trained observers in the field (first detectors), and providing the capability and process to confirm threats through diagnostic facilities (the NPDN lab network).

Successes of the network of labs and first detectors include:

- developing six base training modules and several pest-specific modules;
- training more than 6,000 first detectors;
- scenario training through 42 events involving 44 states;
- training diagnosticians in current techniques for soybean rust detection and confirmation of pathogens causing soybean rust, Sudden Oak Death, southern bacterial wilt, citrus greening, and other diseases; and
- developing new online training modules (funded through the NRI Crop Biosecurity program), which will debut in summer 2007.

The NPDN just completed its first 5 years, and preliminary reports from an external review of the system were complimentary. The NPDN system is ever evolving with changing threats, developing technology, and dynamic staffing.

For more information, contact Marty Draper, national program leader for the Plant and Animal Systems unit, at 202-401-1990 or mdraper@csrees.usda.gov.

Stakeholder Input Leads to Extension Success

STAKEHOLDER INPUT—EXTENSION

As a federal agency charged with financial assistance and program leadership, CSREES must communicate with its stakeholders, beginning at the community level; simply gathering feedback is not sufficient—it must be used.

CSREES enjoys the distinct advantage of, and responsibility for, maintaining strong partnerships with land-grant universities (LGU) and the extension services in those institutions. As universities carry out their extension outreach missions, they are committed to gathering information about citizens' needs relative to programs in youth development, agriculture, leadership, natural resources, family and consumer sciences, and community and economic development.

CSREES has taken several steps to strengthen its relationship with its university partners to obtain and use information about the needs of Americans. To the greatest extent possible, partners participate in CSREES strategic development exercises that help partners and CSREES coordinate what is done at the local level.

Peer panels for grant reviews, planning committees for national conferences and trainings, and task forces for program development purposes are examples of stakeholder input at all levels and evidence of expanded two-way communication. CSREES sponsors conferences, meetings, and professional development and training opportunities to provide information to LGU extension partners and to learn about the needs of the institutions and their customers.

eXtension is an example of CSREES support of an initiative, built with input from partners, that uses cutting-edge technology and coordinates resource development and program delivery across the system. Americans are changing the ways they seek information to guide their daily living; eXtension is a coordinated, Internet-based information system where customers have around-the-clock access to trustworthy, balanced views of specialized information and education. For customers, the value is personalized, best-of-the-best, validated information that addresses their specific questions, issues, and life events in an aggregated, nonduplicative approach. Stakeholders obtain the information they need, when they need it, and provide feedback in the process.

By continually seeking stakeholder input and then using the information in program and policy decisions, CSREES supports the Cooperative Extension Service's mission to solve public problems and meet citizen needs using research and knowledge resources of the entire Land-Grant University System.

STAKEHOLDER INPUT—4-H

4-H Youth Development is the non-formal, youth development educational program of CSREES, USDA, and the Cooperative Extension System. 4-H applies LGU research to design programs that meet the needs of young people—to experience belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity. 4-H uses a variety of strategies and forums to identify the interests, concerns, and needs of young people.

Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns compares the National 4-H Conference to his listening sessions, where he gathered citizen input from across the country for developing the Farm Bill. Young people from all states are invited to come to the National 4-H Conference in Washington, DC, each year to learn and to share their ideas about change and new direction for the 4-H program. Secretary Johanns receives youth recommendations on the final day of the conference for use in subsequent 4-H program planning.

The National 4-H Headquarters staff participates in meetings and conference calls with state 4-H leaders to learn of program needs in all regions. They sponsor meetings to obtain information, ideas, and recommendations from all sectors of 4-H—youth, volunteers, county, and university faculty—as they plan new initiatives. To obtain information about needs and issues of high-risk/low-income youth and adults, 4-H conducts an annual Children, Youth, and Families at Risk (CYFAR) program conference and supports CYFAR liaisons who make regular contacts with, and visits to, local CYFAR program sites.

STAKEHOLDER INPUT—

OPERATION: MILITARY KIDS AND DEPLOYMENT

Operation: Military Kids (OMK) is a collaboration of Army Child and Youth Services, National 4-H Headquarters, National Guard, Army Reserve, American Legion, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, and Military Child Education Consortium to support children and youth whose parents deploy in support of the Global War on Terrorism. OMK programs educate the public on the impact of deployment and help communities build support networks to deliver educational, recreational, and social outreach programs to their military youth. OMK is committed to help “suddenly military” youth cope with the stress of parental deployment in the National Guard and Army Reserve. OMK works with schools and community organizations to ensure sensitivity and responsiveness to the unique needs of these kids.

To obtain stakeholder input and to ensure that the needs of these military youth are known, OMK requires national,

state-, and community-level collaboration to include National Guard members and spouses and children of deployed soldiers. Military spouses and children of soldiers help build statewide systems of support and training. OMK uses information from the family members to train community groups in military culture and the effects of deployment, extended deployment, reunions, and the increasing frequency of deployments to war zones upon not only the military youth and families, but also on other components of the community.

For more information, contact Sharon Wright, national program leader for the Families, 4-H and Nutrition unit, at 202-720-5075 or swright@csrees.usda.gov.

NPL Liaison Program Update

“Now I have a face to connect with the agency,” one university administrator commented regarding the impact of the new National Program Leader (NPL) Liaison program to the states.

CSREES Administrator Colien Hefferan inaugurated the program at the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC) Annual Meeting in 2006. The NPL Liaison program is yielding positive results for both the agency and the partnership. In spite of tight budgets in Washington that have made travel plans challenging, NPLs have found a number of methods to communicate with and obtain feedback from their assigned institutions.

NPL liaisons and university representatives are communicating through phone conferences using Breeze technology, campus visits connected with previously approved travel to national conferences or site meetings, and scheduled visits of university representatives to Washington. With very few exceptions, NPLs continue to be “very satisfied and motivated” by their interactions with the universities as reported on their feedback forms. Moreover, the NPLs increasingly are bringing suggestions to the agency for discussion and problem solving.

Requests or topics for further discussion at CSREES include: criteria for initial selection on panels; clearer information about grant writing; earlier notification of grant writing workshops; multistate approval processes; effective methods of linking 1862, 1994, and 1890 institutions; faster communication on critical hot topics; and more clarification of foci of NRI categories for the future.

Liaisons have visited campuses in all regions of the country, ranging from 1-day meetings with central administrators to a weeklong road trip across Montana, and plane flights

between islands in the Virgin Islands. It is extremely important to schedule these visits with a realistic view of budgets and use alternative methods of communication to stay in touch.

The NPL Liaison Development Committee plans ongoing professional development for the agency liaisons. Seminars, informal discussions, and teleconferences have been held over the past year. In a seminar in February 2007, regional research Executive Directors Michael Harrington (Western), Eric Young (Southern), Arlen Leholm (North Central), and Dan Rossi (Northeast), and CSREES Educational Adviser (and dean/director of Nebraska Cooperative Extension) Elbert Dickey discussed regional and national interests and recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of liaisons with the partnership. In May, Alton Thompson (dean and director of research at North Carolina A&T) and L. Washington Lyons (executive director of 1890 extension administrators) provided a seminar on the historic background, funding streams, and program foci of the 1890s system for the agency. In addition, the CSREES administrator has scheduled quarterly noontime seminars with NPL liaisons to discuss agency issues and concerns identified by NPL liaisons from their partners.

Liaisons meet periodically with the deputy administrator responsible for the agency relationship with their regions. Since the NPL liaisons have just completed their review of the Plans of Work (POW) from the system, a great deal of discussion has involved suggestions for enhancing communication and planning of this reporting requirement. The agency values suggestions and further comments from the partnership about enhancing this joint effort.

For more information, contact Mary McPhail Gray at 202-720-2326 or at Mgray@csrees.usda.gov, or find your regional CSREES liaison at http://www.csrees.usda.gov/business/other_links/npl_liaisons.pdf.

Agency Welcomes New Faces to Leadership Positions

The agency has filled several leadership positions—associate administrator; science adviser; director of Nutrition and Family Consumer Science programs; national program leader (NPL) for the Food and Nutrition Education program; NPL for Risk Management Education, Farm Management, and Trade Adjustment Assistance programs; and NPL for Rangelands and Grasslands Resources programs—and said goodbye to another.

Ralph A. Otto became CSREES' associate administrator on February 4, 2007. Otto had been the CSREES deputy administrator for Plant and Animal Systems since March 2002 and was the CSREES deputy administrator for Natural Resources and Environment from 1995 to 2002. He served as the assistant deputy administrator for Natural Resources and Rural Development with the Extension Service from 1990 until it became part of CSREES in 1994. From 1980 through 1989, Otto worked with USDA's Office of International Cooperation and Development. Otto has a B.S. from Rutgers University, an M.S. from Virginia Tech, and a Ph.D. from Rutgers.

Otto replaced **Larry R. Miller**, who was the acting associate administrator from November 2005 to February 2007. When tapped for the head office, Miller was serving as an NPL in the Plant and Animal Systems unit with emphasis on meat and animal sciences. Miller completed his career at USDA on July 3, 2007.

Miller leaves after serving for nearly 38 years at USDA, including positions with the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), the Science and Education Administration, the Joint Council on Food and Agricultural Sciences, the Cooperative State Research Service, and CSREES. He is a native of Illinois and a graduate of Western Illinois University, with emphasis on animal science, biology, and agricultural economics. He worked for FS Services, an agricultural cooperative, for a short period before deciding to pursue graduate education. Miller attended Kansas State University and Purdue University, where he received his M.S. and Ph.D. degrees, respectively, with emphasis on animal breeding, growth and development, and statistics.

Miller accepted a part-time role as the director for DISCOVER Conferences, supported by the American Dairy Science Association, and assumed leadership

responsibilities in July 2007 for this unique forum. Miller and wife Ellen plan to remain in the Washington, DC, area in the near future.

Larry Robinson is the new CSREES science adviser in the Competitive Programs unit. Robinson is a professor in the Environmental Sciences Institute at Florida A&M University (FAMU). His career highlights include positions as environmental chemist at Oak Ridge National Laboratory; director of the Environmental Science Institute at FAMU; and FAMU provost. He is currently the director of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Environmental Cooperative Science Center at FAMU.

Cynthia Tuttle is the new director for Nutrition and Family Sciences in the Families, 4-H, and Nutrition unit. Tuttle led the extension and research programs in the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program and other low-income nutrition education efforts, general nutrition, housing and the indoor environment, family development, and health and well-being. She leads efforts to link the unit's family and community-based programs with other social and biological science-related programs in CSREES, USDA, and other federal agencies. In her previous position as director of research at the Bread for the World Institute in Washington, DC, she directed research, grant writing, and marketing communications in support of hungry people in the world. She was a health educator for California Public Health; assistant professor of nutrition at University of Otago, New Zealand; and assistant professor and state extension specialist in nutrition at the University of Maryland. Tuttle received a B.S. in zoology from the University of Nevada, Reno; her MPH in nutrition from the University of Hawaii, Manoa; and a Ph.D. in international and community nutrition from the University of California–Davis.

Helen Chipman is the NPL for the Food and Nutrition Education Program, with special responsibilities for low-income audiences, in the Families, 4-H, and Nutrition unit. She will lead national and Land-Grant University System planning processes for both the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) and Food Stamp Nutrition Education. This is a new combined position which focuses on creating efficiencies. Chipman has a B.S. degree in nutrition and food science from Utah State University, and a Masters and Ph.D. in food science and human nutrition from Colorado State University. She is a registered dietician and has been employed in hospital dietetics and as a faculty member at South Dakota State University, providing leadership to the EFNEP, Nutrition Network, and Food Stamp Nutrition Education programs.

Janie Simms Hipp is the new NPL for Risk Management Education, Farm Management, and Trade Adjustment Assistance programs in the Economics and Community Systems unit. Hipp holds the Juris Doctor degree from Oklahoma City University and received specialization in agricultural law from the University of Arkansas–Fayetteville School of Law. She served within the National Center for Agricultural Law Research and Information for many years and recently was a faculty member with the University of Arkansas, Division of Agriculture, with the Cooperative Extension Service and the University of Arkansas–Fayetteville Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness Department.

Jim Dobrowolski is NPL for the new Rangelands and Grasslands Resources program in the Natural Resources and Environment unit. Dobrowolski will develop and establish a national rangelands and grasslands strategy for CSREES. He worked with the Natural Resources and Environment unit for nearly 2 years in an interagency personnel agreement and a shared faculty position through Washington State University. He received his B.S. in range and wildlands science from the University of California–Davis; his M.S. in rangeland ecology is from Washington State University; and his Ph.D. in hydrology and watershed management is from Texas A&M University.