



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Research
Education
Economics

Office
of the Under
Secretary

Room 216W
Jamie L. Whitten Building
Washington, DC 20250-0110

OCT 20 2008

Dear Agricultural Scientists, Educators, and Stakeholders,

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Farm Bill) called for the creation of the National Institute for Food and Agriculture ((National Institute) in the Research, Education, and Economics (REE) mission area by October 1, 2009. We are making every effort to complete this transition of the authorities currently associated with the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) and at the same time strengthening this program area in coordination with the ongoing missions of the Agricultural Research Service, Economic Research Service and the National Agricultural Statistics Service.

Our strategy in achieving these goals is to first establish a set of guiding principles to provide the vision for the National Institute. The REE mission area Farm Bill leadership team has met several times since the Farm Bill was passed and received numerous comments concerning the National Institute. As a result they have developed seven guiding principles for the establishment of the National Institute:

1. Advance knowledge and science of food, agriculture, human health and well being, the environment and communities.
2. Assure relevancy and responsiveness;
3. Promote understanding and appreciation of science in the public sector;
4. Utilize protocols that promote the best science;
5. Promote accessibility;
6. Ensure transparency, accountability, effectiveness, and efficient use of resources; and

7. Enhance the status of food and agricultural science.

The attached paper provides a detailed description of each of the guiding principles. These principles will guide our deliberations as we implement the provisions for the National Institute as outlined in the Farm Bill.

We continue to seek input from all who have interest and ideas they are willing to share. In view of the fact the academic community will receive considerable support from the National Institute; we welcome suggestions at all levels, from faculty and staff to university presidents and all intermediate levels of administration. I would like to emphasize that while we seek input from a wide array of stakeholders, it is the Administration's responsibility to consider all relevant information and ideas and then develop final plans for implementation. We look forward to receiving all suggestions, ideas, and comments.

This legislation is the culmination of a great deal of work on the part of many people and represents an effort to strengthen agricultural research, education, and extension programs. We will be seeking broad stakeholder input through an upcoming federal register notice.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Gale A. Buchanan".

Gale A. Buchanan
Chief Scientist, USDA
Under Secretary, Research, Education, and Economics