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## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board

**AGENCY:** Research, Education, and Economics, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice of Solicitation of Advisory Board Recommendations.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Pub. L. 92-463), the United States Department of Agriculture announces a solicitation of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board members for recommendations on the reauthorization of the Title VIII—Research, Extension, and Education of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (FAIR Act).

**DATE:** Deadline for Advisory Board Comments, February 27, 1997.

*Comments:* The public may file written comments before or after the **DATE** above with the contact person listed below.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Deborah Hanfman, Executive Director, National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board, REE Office of the Advisory Board, Room 3918 South, U.S. Department of Agriculture, STOP: 2255, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-2255. Telephone: 202-720-3684; Fax: 202-720-6199.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board has been asked by USDA to give general comments on some or all of the issues provided below regarding reauthorization of the

Research, Extension, and Education Title.

#### Recurring Questions

(1) What is the appropriate mix of funding among intramural funds, formula funds, competitive grants, and special grants?

(2) Is stakeholder input into research and extension priority setting working?

(3) What is the role of the university system in terms of ARS agenda?

(4) What is the role of the Federal Government?

(5) What are the priorities for the Extension Service?

(6) What is the appropriate role for Special Grants?

#### Context for Research Title Reauthorization

Many changes have taken place in the agricultural sector. The FAIR Act of 1996 provides the following changes:

(1) Contract payment provisions in lieu of traditional support programs,

(2) A deregulated domestic economy—U.S. ratification of GATT means producers now compete in a deregulated global economy as well, and

(3) Significant policy decisions affecting natural resources & the environment.

#### Principles Guiding USDA's Approach to Research Title Reauthorization

(1) Use existing legislative & administrative authorities whenever possible.

(2) Improve efficiency throughout the research system—and re-invest in REE research, education, and extension programs.

(3) Encourage multi-functional, multi-regional, and multi-institutional activities to achieve maximum leverage of federal, state, and local dollars.

(4) Support a range of funding mechanisms and the current structure of intramural and extramural research. Must maintain long-term high-risk research as well as shorter term investigator-initiated research.

(5) Support the use of formula funds for research and extension activities at the land-grant universities, while providing greater accountability.

(6) Support merit review with peer evaluation in all research programs with

competitively-awarded programs, as appropriate. We will improve merit review and peer evaluation in the intramural programs.

(7) Value an active federal-state-local partnership in setting priorities, conducting the work, and evaluating the results, as is consistent with Administration's position on states' roles. USDA will work in partnership with state and local entities where we have concurrent jurisdiction and build better accountability.

(8) Strengthen public sector/private sector partnerships.

(9) Be responsive to national and regional needs as the first guideline in priority setting.

(10) Improve communication with the public.

(11) Overarching Principle: Work to maintain world leadership in agricultural science and education.

Comments on the above issues will be consolidated by the Office of the Advisory Board at the direction of the Executive Committee and used in a statement of recommendations to the Secretary of Agriculture on Title VIII reauthorization.

Done at Washington, DC this 21st day of February, 1997.

Bob Robinson,

*Administrator, Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service.*

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## Forest Service

### Revised Land and Resource Management Plans for Some National Forest System Lands in Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming

**AGENCY:** Forest Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice of intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement in conjunction with the revision of land and resource management plans for several National Grasslands (NG) and Forests (NF) on the Northern Great Plains.

The "planning area" includes these National Forest System lands: