



ENSURING FOOD SECURITY THROUGH RESEARCH, EXTENSION AND EDUCATION

Rationale:

Current high food prices and the food shortages that have occurred in several countries during recent years provide a sharp reminder of the fragility of the food security of the United States and the world. The historically productive research, extension and education infrastructure of the U.S. has allowed its citizens to enjoy the safest and most abundant supply of food in the world, contributing to public health. However, the challenge continues. Food demand continues to grow rapidly, making it imperative that we substantially increase public funding for improvements in food production.

The current situation is:

- The world's human population continues to grow, and large numbers of people in developing countries are emerging from deep poverty and demanding improved diets; these factors will challenge the world's food production capacity during coming decades.
- To feed the people of the world sustainably, food producers must continue to increase the efficiency with which they use the earth's limited resources. That includes continued increases in efficiency of livestock production.
- Large amounts of crops are now being diverted from the food chain to produce biofuels, preventing these valuable crops from contributing to food security
- Legitimate societal interest in animal well-being, food safety, food composition and environmental quality expands the scope of research needed.
- State funding for agricultural research has dropped substantially during recent decades, and research funding from USDA has not made up the loss (1); the costs of research addressing issues of societal concern compete for already strained budgets for research on production efficiency, which is critical to sustainable production. At the same time, much research funding has been diverted from food production to biofuels production.
- Funding for research in livestock production is now especially important because of the increased consumption of animal products by people in developing countries, but such funding continues to lag behind the needs.

Policy Statement:

The Federation of Animal Science Societies (FASS) supports increased public funding for research, extension and education related to food production in order to strengthen the food security of the United States and the world.

Policy Objectives:

- FASS supports increased funding within the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture for basic and applied research on food production necessary to sustainably meet the food needs of the world's people.
- FASS supports increased funding for research on production of foods of animal origin, including research on production efficiency, animal well-being, food safety, quality and composition, and environmental quality.

References:

1. Schimmelpennig, David, and Paul Heisey. U.S. Public Agricultural Research: Changes in Funding Sources and Shifts in Emphasis, 1980-2005. EIB-45, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Econ. Res. Serv. March 2009.

Adopted by the FASS Board of Directors on February 2, 2012.

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