FASS recognizes the important needs for research, extension and education activities funded by USDA and appreciates the opportunity to provide input on important considerations in each area.

Meeting the needs of a growing global population with high quality, nutritious and safe food is paramount to the research mission of USDA. Producing more high quality food that is easily available to consumers at reasonable prices, while preserving the environment, is also essential. High quality animal products have an essential role in improving the nutrition and health of people worldwide.

Research. New solutions to the pressing problems affecting the world’s food supply are needed. FASS has identified three priority research areas:

- Food Security – assuring an adequate supply of safe and healthy food for a growing world population;
- One Health – all aspects of the intersection between animal and human health;
- Stewardship or caring for the environment and the well-being of animals.

Supporting research efforts to meet these goals is needed. Unfortunately, support of agricultural research by the Federal government has lagged dramatically in recent years. Other countries have surpassed the U.S. investment in agricultural research and we risk becoming reliant on discoveries made by others to support agricultural production in the U.S. Greater investment by USDA in animal research to meet these important needs is desperately needed. Multi-disciplinary research efforts are particularly useful in meeting these important goals.

Extension. Information generated by scientists must be effectively communicated and implemented to have greatest impact. Our Extension system is uniquely suited to disseminate key findings to stakeholders, especially producers and consumers. New methods to communicate effectively are needed. Further, our ability to collect, store and analyze “big data” provides a tremendous opportunity to multiply the return on our research investment.

Education. The population of scientists at most U.S. universities engaged in animal research is declining and ageing. Training new scientists in both classical and new methods of scientific inquiry are needed. We need to prepare the next generation of scientists to lift the mantle of these important endeavors to ensure the stability, safety and availability of our nation’s food supply.