



EXTENSION COMMITTEE ON ORGANIZATION & POLICY (ECOP)

**Public Comment to the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology
Presented by Jane Schuchardt, Executive Director, Cooperative Extension
Washington, DC, March 15, 2013**

Cooperative Extension, the nation's premiere transformational education system working through the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture, the land-grant university system, and local offices, appreciates this opportunity to make public comment on the *PCAST Report to the President on Agriculture Preparedness and the Agriculture Research Enterprise (December 2012)*. The Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP), the national representative leadership and governing body of Cooperative Extension, supports the following:

Provide additional funding for research, extension and education, but not at the expense of capacity funding, which also needs to be increased -- Capacity funding, contrasted with the start and stop nature of competitive funding, enables the persistent, pervasive and trusted intervention necessary for transformational learning to take place over time, multiple locations and targeted audiences. See <https://www.aplu.org/document.doc?id=4197>.

Include Cooperation Extension as a critical component of any strategy to address key challenges in agriculture -- Cooperative Extension's contemporary role is to translate research findings, engage target audiences and provide sustained educational programs that result in changed practices and behavior. The success of the US model is the collaborative effort between the research and extension functions of the Land-grant university system, not two unrelated endeavors. An educational program that effectively engages producers and/or consumers and leads them through the adoption process to behavioral change is necessary to realize the full value of research.

Conduct workforce training through the Extension function -- Financial support of programs such as 4-H, training for crop consultants, and community and economic development programs are important in the food and agriculture enterprise in both rural and urban communities.

To summarize, ECOP agrees with the need for enhanced funding to support the research, extension and education enterprise in agriculture in order to solve challenges that are increasingly critical to US society and the world. ECOP also supports a balanced increase in both competitive and capacity funds for research, extension and education. Finally, ECOP calls attention to the importance of Cooperative Extension's contemporary role of education that leads to adoption. This adds value to research, and in collaboration with research, contributes to the success of the agricultural research innovation ecosystem, and its application, to feed America and the world.

ECOP is the representative leadership and governing body of Cooperative Extension, the nationwide transformational education system operating through land-grant universities in partnership with federal, state, and local governments.