

Comments on Draft REE Action Plan Goals and Strategies

SAAESD and ASRED Directors

April, 2011

General

- A clear role for education and Extension should be articulated in each goal's strategy
- CES should be recognized as the primary extension/outreach partner when extension activities are mentioned in the strategies. One simple way to accomplish this goal would be that on first reference of extension, there be a footnote that reads: The term extension in this document refers to the Cooperative Extension System. USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture is the federal partner. See <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/Extension/index.html> or www.extension.org for more information.
- Youth development as a whole is missing as a goal
- Certain key terms need to be well defined and used consistently, particularly science, research, education, and extension. Some uses of "science" and "research" seem to include education and extension and others do not
- Definitional/contextual problem – science and research seem to be used interchangeably in some instances and to represent the functions of research, education and extension; in other cases it appears to refer to the research function only.
- While related and complementary, the three functions of research, education and extension are not the same; goals may include all three functions, but strategies and activities need include all three functions and to take in to account their differences. Treating all three functions as if "one size fits all" or as if they are the same or all subsumed in the "research" function is a significant obstacle to fulfillment of the three functions and of achieving impact with the end-customer in mind.
- Extension should be part of the K-12 strategy, i.e., Ag Awareness, recruitment, etc.

Goal 1 – Education and Science Literacy

- Include enhancing graduate enrollment
- Include 4-H STEM programs
- Include a pre-collegiate diversity enhancement program
- Focus on developing a pipeline for recruiting all students, not just minority students
- Recommend programs like the Young Scholars Program (YSP) to increase awareness to all youth about career opportunities within agriculture, and encourage instituted such a program at every Land Grant University

Goal 2 – Rural Prosperity

- Include Broadband connectivity
- Last strategy listed, "provide statistical data and analysis...", is the most important and fundamental to achieving the others
- Are there other statistical data that is needed in rural areas, that is not now available?
- Research and extension activity on rural infrastructure
- Strengthen rural and economic development
- Stronger partnerships with USDA/Rural Development

Goal 3 – Biofuels

- Goal title should be Biofuels and Bioproducts
- Include "forestry" along with agriculture and agroforestry systems in second strategy
- Farm and home energy conversion should be included

- Include biobased chemicals, materials, other components and co-products
- Collaborations with conversion technology providers to ensure feedstocks developed are acceptable for processing
- Biological conversion processes for producing biofuels from biomass

Goal 4 – Climate Change

- Partnerships with Sea Grant, NOAA, EPA, etc
- Adjusting and developing disaster management should be a strategy

Goal 5 – Water Availability and Quality

- These strategies are good examples of a clear role for education and Extension
- EPA and USGS need to be heavily involved

Goal 6 – Landscape Scale Conservation and Management

- Role of Extension and education is not clear
- Significant overlap with Goal 5
- First and third strategies address economics, but this aspect needs to be strengthened, particularly related economic viability of ecosystem services
- Linking animal protein consumption to obesity should be considered under Goal 10, it does not seem an appropriate strategy for this goal, particular since Goal 10 does not include a strategy to reduce protein consumption

Goal 7 – Food Security

- Add “breeds” to list in first strategy
- Add “crop production” to second strategy

Goal 8 – Linking Ag Production and Trade

- First four strategies refer to developing, using, and preserving genetic resources while the last two are focused on global trade and market; the connection between these disparate strategies should be more clear
- Partnerships with internationally focused agencies, e.g. USAID
- Fair trade across US borders
- Producers and industry should be kept a forefront of any trade negotiations

Goal 9 – Food Safety

- Food processing, not just safety aspects, should be included somewhere in the Action Plan
- All aspects of abiotic contamination should be included, not just microbial pathogens
- How does IPM fit into these strategies?

Goal 10 – Nutrition and Childhood Obesity

- Greater emphasis on models and data
- 4-H, EFNEP, and SNAP-Ed as vehicles to gain adoption and behavior changes
- More emphasis on education and Extension
- Standard metrics for evaluation of obesity, e.g., weight, BMI, etc.
- Invest in data development, analysis, and dissemination to improve understanding
- Make research outcomes readily available to public/consumers
- Research strategies, models, and data that identify and characterize effective strategies and incentives
- Include early childhood education and childcare/daycare strategies

Goal 11 – The Fundamentals: Crop and Livestock Production

- Delete “The Fundamentals” from title and move this goal nearer to top of the list
- Adaptations to changing climates
- Production impacts on environmental quality
- Include reproductive efficiency along with feed efficiency
- Include plant nutrient use efficiency
- Role of biotechnology

Goal 12 – USDA Science is Recognized and Used

- Goal title should be “Science Communication and Outreach”
- Include the role of Extension in informing Congress strategy
- Educate general public about what agriculture is and why it is important
- Extension, including *eXtension*, is a good “front door” to the agriculture private sector and the public
- Much of the success of USDA science is due to the long-standing partnership between USDA and the Land Grant University system
- Strategies should include listening, not just informing