



# AREERA State Plans of Work

**T**his Plan of Work (POW) newsletter will focus on the impact of the current Farm Bill on the Plan of Work and Annual Report and explore reporting during these current state budget challenges.

## The Farm Bill and the Plan of Work

The 2008 Farm Bill (H.R. 6124) contains a provision which states in Section 7505 that “The Secretary shall work with university partners in extension and research to review and identify measures to streamline the submission, reporting under, and implementation of plan of work requirements, including those requirements under – (1) sections 1444(d) and 1445(c) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3221(d) and 3222 (c) respectively); (2) section 7 of the Hatch Act of 1887 (7U.S.C. 361g); and (3) section 4 of the Smith-Lever Act (7 U.S.C. 344). ... In carrying out the review and formulating and compiling the recommendations, the Secretary shall consult with the land-grant institutions.”

By 2010 CSREES will become the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). In 2010, NIFA will convene a Panel of Experts chosen with input from the Regional Executive Directors for Research and Extension. The panel will be run in a manner similar to the external Portfolio Review panels CSREES convenes every five years to assess specific program portfolios, except as a collaborative effort with

members from both the Land-Grant Universities and NIFA.

This Plan of Work and Annual Report of Accomplishments panel of experts will assess the relevance, quality, and usefulness of the performance data received from the Plan of Work and Annual Report of Accomplishments and Results beginning with the FY 2007 Plan of Work. Moreover, the panel will focus on recommendations for improving and further streamlining the Plan of Work and Annual Report. These improvements could include, but will not be limited to, citing specific data elements for inclusion and exclusion. The panel will complete a written report to NIFA with these recommendations for implementation. Every five years a panel of experts will reconvene to further assess the relevance, quality, and usefulness of the performance data received from the Plan of Work and Annual Report of Accomplishments and Results and make recommendations to further its improvement if necessary.

We have worked with the Task Force on Systems Integration within the Policy Board of Directors of the Board on Agriculture Assembly of the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities (APLU) on putting together these recommendations and this panel. The panel will be nominated through the Regional Executive Directors for Research and Extension, and a designee appointed to represent the Northeast Region Extension Directors.

This membership on this panel will include a total of approximately ten persons from the Land-Grant University partners; at least two from each of the five regions for both research and extension. Of the approximately 10 regional representatives, the panel will include at least two directors of research and two directors of extension. Other regional members of the panel from the Land-Grant University partners will include persons responsible for writing the Plans of Work in the state from research and extension, accountability and evaluation specialists, and budget officers. Membership on the panel from NIFA will include Office of Planning and Accountability staff, Policy staff, National Program Leaders, and Information Technology staff for a total of five persons. The Accountability and Reporting Leader from the Office of Planning and Accountability will provide primary panel support.

### **How to Plan and Report During Budget Challenges**

Shrinking or flat-lining budgets can provide planning and reporting challenges. We understand that. The Plan of Work and Annual Report allows for augmenting your plan and reporting on unplanned cuts in programs because of shrinking budgets.

If you have had to make program cuts during the current year, you have the opportunity to explain these cuts in the next Annual Report. The appropriate section to explain this in each planned program affected is the “External Factors Which Affected Outcomes” section. There is a text box there for brief explanations. If you expect your budget, and thus the programs, to be restored in the next few years, this is all that is needed to document the changes.

If you think these budget challenges are going to be with your State’s program for the long-term it may be appropriate to make changes to your 5-Year Plan of Work for next year’s 2011 – 2015 Plan of Work Update to reflect

these cuts. When you make these changes, please explain in your narrative section the major changes being made and why (i.e., because of budget cuts).

### **Reporting Web Conference Series Update**

The CSREES Reporting Web Conference Series is going to take a break this summer. Thus, there will not be an August web conference. We will start back up with our next web conference on Thursday, October 8, 2009, at 2:00 pm Eastern Time. We will announce the topic and registration information in August.

This series originated from requests for more information on various topics identified at the 2007 CSREES Planning and Accountability Mini-Conference. A RWC e-mail list will notify interested parties on news, schedules, and other issues relating to the series. Interested parties may subscribe to the list by sending an e-mail message to: [lyris@lyris.csrees.usda.gov](mailto:lyris@lyris.csrees.usda.gov). Skip your subject line and in the body of your message type: subscribe reportingwc - then hit your send button. Be sure you receive an e-mail confirming your subscription.

A CSREES Reporting Web Conference web page is at: <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/rwc>. Here you will find links to recordings of past web conferences as well as information for a future web conference.

### **The Next Newsletter**

If you have suggestions for the next Plan of Work newsletter please contact us at the e-mail address below. Past newsletters can be found at: [http://www.csrees.usda.gov/business/reporting/planrept/pow\\_newsletters.html](http://www.csrees.usda.gov/business/reporting/planrept/pow_newsletters.html).

**For more information on the Plan of Work, e-mail the Plan of Work staff at [pow@csrees.usda.gov](mailto:pow@csrees.usda.gov), or call Bart Hewitt, 202-720-0747.**