



*Farm and Food Policy
Diversity Initiative*

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On behalf of the Farm and food Policy Diversity Initiative, we submit the following comments with reference to the Roadmap process.

1)Types of current and future critical issues (including those affecting citizens, communities and natural resources) agriculture faces that no USDA entity could address individually?

There are many communities of color that are not reached by the present county-based delivery system thus a delivery mechanism to these very communities must be designed. The design and focus of these programs must include the input of those communities to insure success.

Most of the county-based programs have become urban horticulture landscape specialist or family relationship specialist that is outside of the purpose of Extension. The purpose was to provide an integral link between the land grant university agriculture research and the community.

2) Major opportunities and gaps that no single entity within the Department of Agriculture would be able to address individually;

Current research being completed at the land grant universities is primarily being funded by chemical companies or pharmaceutical companies and centers around monoculture maximization of the use of petrochemicals.

Safe healthy food production requires that we move from centralized maximized production to production levels with value added products consumed within the local community.

Land grant research with Extension delivery must focus on safe, culturally appropriate and healthy food, grown, processed and consumed locally.

The needs of socially disadvantaged producers, Indian Tribes, low income communities and farmworkers need special attention in research and extension as they face more needs that research and extension can and should address.

3) Recommendations on the involvement of interested parties from

a) the Federal Government and nongovernmental entities; and

The Executive Order on the Tribal Consultative Process must be integrated into regular process of the agency.

CBO's representing the respective agriculture communities must be a part of this planning effort.

b) the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board established under section 1408 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3123)

Tribes and CBO's representing the respective agriculture communities must be represented.

4) Recommendation on funding levels for areas of agricultural research, education, and extension, including—

A) competitive programs;

Peer review panels must truly represent the communities the grant is intended to benefit. If producers of color make up 75% of small farms then the panel should be made up with 75% producers of color or organizations representing them.

The agency should report on the final disbursement of grants according to Section 10708 requirements.

B) capacity and infrastructure programs, with attention to the future growth needs of—

(i) small 1862 Institutions, 1890 Institutions, and 1994 Institutions;

CSREES should facilitate professor exchange programs to assist in the academic growth of those institutions providing education to primarily the socially disadvantaged community and Indian Tribes, develop collaboration with CBOS and provide equitable funding of Extension.

Farm and Food Policy Diversity Initiative

- *Rural Coalition/Coalición Rural*
- *Land Loss Prevention Project*
- *Intertribal Agriculture Council*

- *Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund*
- *National Latino Farmers and Ranchers Trade Association*
- *California Black Farmers and Agriculturalists*
- *Farmworker Association of Florida*
- *National Hmong American Farmers*
- *Organización en California de Líderes Campesinas*

Cc: The Honorable Tom Vilsack, Secretary of Agriculture

*The **Farm and Food Policy Diversity Initiative (FFPDI)** includes diverse partner organizations with deep roots in the civil rights and rural and urban movements to secure land and justice. They work to ensure that organizations serving people of color in the food system have the opportunity to develop and support their own initiatives to improve equity in food and farm policy. The DI has successfully advocated for policies to increase USDA transparency and accountability, halt land and farm loss by eliminating the factors that cause it, and to increase prosperity in the food system by expanding opportunities and access to agriculture programs for the nation's diverse farmers and farmworkers.*