

**2013 WSSA Committee Report  
Summary for 2012 and Action Plan for 2013**

**Committee Code and Name:** (E2) Science Policy Committee (SPC)

**Committee Chair:** Donn Shilling

**Director of Science Policy (DSP):** Lee Van Wychen

**Committee Members - 2012:**

**APMS President:** Tyler Koschnick (rotated off in July 2012)

**APMS Rep:** John Madsen

**NCWSS President:** Bryan Young (rotated off in Dec. 2012)

**NCWSS Rep:** Mark Bernards

**NEWSS President:** Toni Ditommaso

**NEWSS Rep:** Jacob Barney

**SWSS President:** Tom Mueller (rotated off in Jan. 2013)

**SWSS Rep:** Darrin Dodds

**WSWS President:** Vanelle Peterson (rotated off in Mar. 2012)

**WSWS Rep:** Kirk Howatt

**WSSA Past-President:** Michael Barrett

**WSSA President:** Rod Lym

**WSSA President-Elect:** Jim Kells

**WSSA Vice President:** Joe DiTomaso

**WSSA EPA SME:** Jill Schroeder

**WSSA S-71 Chair:** David Shaw

**WSSA CAST Rep:** Jeffrey Derr

**WSSA At-Large:** John Jachetta

**WSSA At-Large:** Harold Coble

**WSSA At-Large:** Janis McFarland

**WSSA At-Large:** John Soteres

**Board Coordinator:** Mike Barrett – Past President

<b><u>Committee Members Rotating Off:</u></b>	<b><u>Appropriate Replacements:</u></b>
<b>APMS President:</b> Tyler Koschnick	Terry Goldsby
<b>NCWSS President:</b> Bryan Young	David Johnson
<b>NEWSS President:</b> Toni Ditommaso	Dwight Lingenfelter
<b>SWSS President:</b> Tom Mueller	Steve Kelly
<b>SWSS Rep:</b> Darrin Dodds	Robert Loring Nichols
<b>WSWS President:</b> Vanelle Peterson	Kai Umeda
<b>WSSA Past-President:</b> Michael Barrett	New WSSA Vice President

## Summary of Activities since last year

1. Generated support for USDA research funding through competitive grants (AFRI) and formula funds (Hatch, Smith-Lever) as well as integrated programs (Regional IPM): met with House and Senate committee staff and wrote coalition letters on behalf of the National and Regional Weed Science Societies. FY 2013 budget is in limbo and a continuing resolution based on FY 2012 may fund the entire FY 2013. The current funding for FY 2013 is funded through March of 2013.
  - a. President's Council of Advisors for Science and Technology (PCAST) recommended to the President that the U.S. increase its investment in agricultural research by a total of \$700 million per year:
    - i. \$180 million for new graduate and post-doctoral fellowships;
    - ii. \$235 million for new competitively funded research at USDA AFRI;
    - iii. \$130 million for basic research at NSF; and
    - iv. \$150 million for new public-private institutes.
  - b. Top challenges they listed for 21<sup>st</sup> century agriculture:
    - i. Managing new pests, pathogens, and invasive plants.
    - ii. Increasing the efficiency of water use.
    - iii. Reducing the environmental footprint of agriculture.
    - iv. Growing food in a changing climate.
    - v. Managing the production of bioenergy.
    - vi. Producing safe and nutritious food.
    - vii. Assisting with global food security and maintaining abundant yields.
2. Worked to prevent EPA from finalizing a rule which would allow fuel made from two known noxious weeds, *Arundo donax* (giant reed) and *Pennisetum purpureum* (napier grass or elephant grass), to count toward federally-mandated renewable fuels targets. We need more research on *Arundo* and *Pennisetum* before incentivizing their production. If OMB signs off on EPA releasing the rule, we requested to see a complete assessment of the costs and benefits, as outlined in Executive Order 13112. Additionally, if EPA approves *Arundo donax* and similarly high risk feedstocks, we believe that the rule must include – at the very minimum— guidelines on stringent best management practices to reduce the risk of escape. These guidelines should be written with the guidance of the National Invasive Species Council and relevant federal agencies.
3. Worked with interested coalitions to get support in both the House and Senate for the NPDES legislative fix bill, H.R. 872 and S. 3605. However, legislation remains blocked by Sen. Boxer (CA). Submitted letters of support on behalf of the National and Regional Weed Science Societies. New legislation will have to be reintroduced in the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress.
4. Generated support for the Pesticide Safety Education Program (PSEP) through a technical paper, and a joint press release with entomology and plant pathology. Currently participating in a national stakeholder group to find more permanent funding mechanisms at the federal and state level for PSEP.
5. Generated support for Army Corps of Engineers Aquatic Plant Control Research Program (APCRP) and sent letters to House and Senate Energy and Water appropriations committee members. FY 2013 funding in limbo again for APCRP. Senate has proposed \$4 million, but

House and President proposed \$0. Senate support from Schumer (NY), Leahy (VT) and Cochran (MS) will be key again. I will need to send another letter to House and Senate appropriators prior to the end of the FY 2013 continuing resolution at the end of March.

6. Coordinated and co-organized support for National Invasive Species Awareness Week activities which occurred Feb. 26 to March 3, 2012. Rod Lym gave a presentation to Capitol Hill staffers at the House Ag Committee titled: *Invasion Persuasion: Review of a Successful USDA program for defeating a wide-spread invader: TEAM Leafy Spurge*. Planning for NISAW 2013 is in the final stages. WSSA is hosting a presentation on Capitol Hill on Mar. 4, 2013 regarding invasive plants and biofuels. Dr. Jacob Barney is the tentative speaker. We are also working with other NGO's to introduce a Congressional resolution in the House and Senate supporting NISAW.
7. Supported Public Awareness Committee activities and responded to press inquiries. Recent headlines include:
  - a. WSSA Pesticide Stewardship Series – The Importance of Reading the Pesticide Label
  - b. Three Leading Scientific Societies take an Objective Look at the Issues Associated with “Least Toxic Pesticides” Applied as a “Last Resort”.
  - c. WSSA Pesticide Stewardship Series – Hiring a Pest Management Professional
  - d. Team of Stakeholders Join to Promote Funding for PSEP.
  - e. Annual Meetings of Weed Science Societies to Highlight Latest Developments in Research and Management of Weeds and Invasive Plants.
  - f. Decades Old Weed Seeds Trigger New Outbreak of Devastating Plant Parasite.
8. Continued educating Federal agency and NGO stakeholders on herbicide resistance management. Watched and listened for any legislation that would attempt to regulate herbicide resistance or restrict the interstate movement of herbicides due to resistance issues.
9. Helped plan and coordinate 2012 EPA Herbicide Resistance Education Tour on the Delmarva Peninsula in August. The tour report is on the WSSA website.
10. Participated in Farm Bill stakeholder meetings and advocated for the following provisions where differences existed between the House and Senate:
  - a. Support the Senate provision that establishes the Foundation for Food and Agricultural Research (FFAR), a new nonprofit corporation designed to supplement USDA's basic and applied research activities, and provides total mandatory funding of up to \$100 million, to the extent that the foundation secures an equal amount of non-federal matching funds for each dollar of expenditure. The foundation will solicit and accept private donations to award grants or enter into agreements for collaborative public/private partnerships with scientists at USDA and in academia, non-profits, and the private sector.
  - b. Strongly oppose the House provision that require matching funds for applied research and extension that is commodity or state specific.
  - c. Support the Pesticide Registration Improvement Act (PRIA III) in the House bill. PRIA was set to expire on Oct. 1, 2012, but separate legislation was introduced and passed and signed into law in Sept 2012.
  - d. The NPDES fix language (H.R. 872) is in the House version and we support it.

- e. Support reauthorization of the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act through FY2017 in the Senate bill. Increases mandatory funding to \$70 million annually (FY2013 - FY2017), which would also raise the minimum grant amount received by each state/territory. Of the funds provided, allows for multistate project grants involving food safety, plant pests and disease, crop-specific projects addressing common issues, and any other area as determined by USDA.
- f. WSSA supports conservation compliance, but only if exemptions are granted for herbicide resistance management. Conservation compliance is when a producer agrees to maintain a minimum level of conservation on highly erodible land. Producers in conservation compliance are then eligible for commodity support programs, conservation programs, disaster payments, and operating loans

The DSP and Science Policy Committee were active with many other issues on a continuous basis in 2012. Notable issues that arose during the past year that required support through letters, phone calls, and meetings included:

- a) asked USDA NIFA to rethink their “Crop Protection Program” funding line item and explore options on how to maintain equal funding for the six programs involved, especially IR-4, the Regional IPM Centers, and Extension IPM.
  - b) Supported a letter to Congress asking them to avoid legislation that would place severe restrictions on government employees' abilities to attend meetings and conferences.
  - c) asked APHIS BRS to support the determination of nonregulated status for Roundup Ready sugar beets. However, we also stressed the need to mitigate the evolution of glyphosate resistance through BMP's.
  - d) asked EPA OPP to support the use of MSMA in turf weed control
- What information was posted on the WSSA website? Science Policy Reports are posted to the WSSA Website at <http://www.wssa.net/WSSA/SciPolicy/SciPolicyReports.htm>. In addition, the DSP provides newsletter reports to each of the weed science society affiliates. Transcripts of the SPC's quarterly conference calls are also posted.
  - What amount of funds were requested? How much was spent? \$5000 was requested, which is the historical allocation for the committee. \$3268.96 was spent during 2012, with most of that being allocated for WSSA Board member travel to Washington DC for meetings and presentations on Capitol Hill and at Federal Agencies. \$600 was used to co-sponsor a Capitol Hill luncheon for 50 Congressional staffers during National Invasive Species Awareness Week.

## **Science Policy Committee Meeting Agendas During 2012**

### **Feb. 6, 2012**

1. USDA Weed Science Issues
  - a. NIFA AFRI
  - b. Smith-Lever, Hatch Act, Formula Funds
  - c. Regional IPM Centers
  - d. IR-4
  - e. APHIS
  - f. Jim Parochetti position
  - g. ARS Lab Closures
2. Herbicide Resistance Education and Outreach
  - a. NAS Herbicide Resistance Summit, May 10, 2012, Washington DC.  
[nas-sites.org/hr-weeds-summit/](http://nas-sites.org/hr-weeds-summit/)
3. NPDES Permits- Continue push for passage of H.R. 872 while educating stakeholder community about existing permit requirements
4. Aquatic Plant Control Research Program- FY 2013 funding will be similar situation to FY 2012 as Administration's rumored intentions is to zero it out again.
5. Pesticide Safety Education Program – PRIA II reauthorization will keep \$500K in PSEP, but no long term funding solution is on the table. AAPSE goals & recommendations?
6. National Invasive Species Awareness Week – NISC/FICMNEW relations

Discussion of Draft MOP for nominating members for federal advisory committees

1. Identify Advisory Committees of interest
  - a) NAREEE
  - b) ISAC
  - c) PPDC
  - d) FIFRA-SAP
  - e) others

### **May 2, 2012**

1. Prep for NAS Herbicide Resistance Summit
  - a) Pre-summit meeting(s)?
  - b) Additional seminars at EPA/USDA?
  - c) Difficult questions that will come up during the Summit panel discussions on “Impediments of using best management practices” and “What approaches are most likely to encourage adoption of BMP’s”?
2. Farm Bill research title update
3. FY 2013 budget update for weed science programs
4. NPDES update
5. NISAW 2012 recap

## **Aug. 15, 2012**

1. Farm Bill:
  - a. discussion of weed science issues
  - b. differences between the House and Senate version – PRIA III, NPDES fix
  - c. matching funds requirements for research grants in the House version
2. National Invasive Species Awareness Week:
  - a. March 3 – 8, 2012
  - b. Congressional declaration against invasive species
  - c. discussion on how to estimate or determine which 10 Congressional Districts (or 10 states) have the worst invasive weed infestation
3. Aquatic Plant Control Research Program
  - a. \$4 million in Senate FY 2013; \$0 in House.
  - b. Another letter to Mary Ellen Darcy and Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittees
  - c. Need the support of constituents for Cochran (MS), Schumer (NY) and Leahy (VT) who have supported the program in the past
4. EPA Herbicide Resistance Tour
  - a. Aug. 21, 2012 on eastern shore of MD and DE
  - b. Organized by VanGessel, Schroeder, Barrett, Van Wychen, Lym. Lancaster
5. NPDES permits
  - a. “Fix language” in House Farm Bill, not Senate.
  - b. Please let us know if there are delays in getting NPDES permits that results in greater weed infestations or any lawsuits against a NPDES permit applicant
  - c. Several cases around the country (CA, TX, MA) where emergency exemptions needed for mosquito control
6. USDA-NIFA & FY 2013 Appropriations
  - a. Discussion of the Plant Protection Program funding line proposed by USDA last year. House and Senate both rejected the proposal that combined funding the 6 programs (IR-4, Extension IPM, Regional IPM centers, etc). The Senate funded those programs individually at last year’s funding level. The House did the same except 2% below last year’s level.
  - b. Approx. 35% of AFRI grant money is already locked in/mortgaged off thru 2014. Large CAP grants of \$40 million will not happen anymore. There is a chance for smaller CAP grants of up to \$10 million

## **Nov. 14, 2012**

1. Election impacts. Expect the next 2 yrs to be the same as the last 2 yrs.
  - a. Fiscal cliff
  - b. FY 2013 Appropriations
2. Farm Bill: might be extended a year
3. NISAW: March 3 – 8, 2012
  - a. Congressional declaration against invasive species (draft attached)
  - b. WSSA presentation on Capitol Hill on March 4, 2013 from 12 – 1 pm. Speaker and topic TBD. (see next item)
4. Invasives and biofuels: Letter to EPA, USDA, DOI, DOT, DOE signed by about 30 weed scientists (attached)
5. NPDES Permits
6. USDA-ARS Weed Science NPL position

7. Other Business
  - a. Joint press release with APS and ESA on IPM and pesticides as a last resort. Distributed Nov. 12 (attached). Thanks to Carol Somody for her diligence and patience.
  - b. Report on EPA Tour of Weed Resistance Management Challenges in the Mid-Atlantic Region: August 21, 2012 (attached). Special thanks to Mark VanGessel and Jill Schroeder for their work on this.
8. Next Meeting – WSSA annual meeting: Monday, Feb. 4, 2013 from 1-3 pm
  - a. USDA NIFA Director, Sonny Ramaswamy, will be joining us during the first hour.

### **2013 Plan for Committee Activities**

- Discuss weed science priorities with NIFA Director, Sonny Ramaswamy and generate support for USDA to fund a \$10 million CAP grant for weed resistance management.
- Investigate the “fine print” of provisions that get incorporated in the 2013 Farm Bill.
- Investigate FY 2014 federal budget proposal for programs affecting weeds and invasive plants
- Support funding for the Aquatic Plant Control Research Program
- Monitor any new Renewable Fuel Standard proposals that try to add invasive plants as biofuels.
- Continue support for an NPDES Fix bill in the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress.
- Advertise and hire a new EPA Subject Matter Expert (SME) to replace Jill Schroeder.
- Explore the possibility of establishing a similar SME position within USDA
- Engage in formal discussions with USDA-ARS leadership on the importance of refilling John Lydon’s position of National Program Leader for Weed Science.
- Work with new APHIS PPQ leadership to reestablish federal funding for noxious weed control and eradication. The witchweed eradication program is the only funding that has survived.
- Hold a successful National Invasive Species Awareness Week (NISAW)

### **Recommendations for Board/Society Action:**

- Funds requested for 2013: \$5000. The Science Policy Committee’s historical budget allocation includes support for any activities that promote the goals and mission of the National and Regional Weed Science Societies.
- Other requests for the Board: Please let me know if you have ideas or an interest for a weed science educational tour for EPA and USDA officials for 2013.

## **Minutes from the 2012 Science Policy Committee Meeting**

**Recorded by Janis McFarland**

**Attendees:**

Donn Shilling  
Bryan Young  
Barb Glenn  
Jacob Barney  
Cody Gray  
David Shaw  
Jill Schroeder  
John Jachetta  
Lee VanWychen  
Janis McFarland  
James Kells  
John Madsen

Brief review of Lee's January 1, 2012 Washington report with additional discussion on the following topics:

- Budget for NIFA and AFRI, \$264 million; Senator Cole leaving Appropriations Committee; continue to support resources for Extension/IR-4 support/Smith Lever/Hatch as well as a National Program Leader/Director and other positions in Weed Science; supported Aquatic Plant Management funding.
- Pesticide Safety Education Program - budget crisis; impacts training in every state; work on-going to improve sustainable funding mechanisms (through PRIA or other government line items)
- Discussion of the committee reviewing lobbying regulations and criteria (provide overview to Lee, Joyce and Donn).
- NPDES - Educating extension personnel on individual state permitting (except for 6 states with Federal permit); obtaining permits and NOIs; CropLife and others continue to improve legislation through HR 872
- Policy board will work with Lee to arrange meetings with EPA and USDA during NISAW
- EPA literature review on crops and invasiveness followed by risk modeling, short rotation woody crops and perennial grasses; potential Farm Bill proposal that includes criteria to ensure a review of crops that are potentially noxious and invasive
- APHIS 2 going to the board February 9<sup>th</sup> for official endorsement by WSSA; ready for May 10<sup>th</sup> summit
- Action item-The policy committee will propose to the board to form ad hoc committee to work with APHIS/APM on behalf of WSSA to develop a framework of methodology and information important for science based criteria to predict the potential invasiveness of plants used as bioenergy crops as case studies; if this goes forward, Jacob will take a lead in coordinating and send to other key experts
- WSSA to provide comments to APHIS to support de-regulation of certain traits



- Establishment of a CAP (Coordinated ag program) under NIFA program on herbicide resistance
- WSSA to develop a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) defining the process for identifying and nominating WSSA members to serve on Federal Advisory Committees (such as Science Advisory Panels or Science Advisory Boards or other review panels relevant to the WSSA mission).

**The WSSA Science Policy Committee agreed to add the following responsibility:**

The WSSA Science Policy Committee will identify opportunities where members could serve on advisory panels and make this known to the SPC and the WSSA BOD.

**Washington Report for 2012**

Submitted by Lee VanWychen

**Most Farm Bill Provisions Extended Nine Months**

In the strangest New Year's Day since I've been working in Washington, DC, the House and the Senate were both in session. Congress managed to compromise on fiscal cliff legislation to avoid an economic meltdown. Buried deep within the –American Taxpayer Relief Actll were provisions extending most Farm Bill programs through Sep. 30, 2013.

Two research programs whose legislative authority expired in 2012 where the Specialty Crop Research Initiative and the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative. Both programs were ‘revived’ in the farm bill extension legislation that provided them \$100 million and \$25 million, respectively, for 2013. Most biomass research programs in the energy title were extended as well. In the conservation title, however, the Wetlands Reserve Program and the Grassland Reserve Program were not reauthorized.

The 113<sup>th</sup> Congress, sworn in on Jan. 3, 2013, will be responsible for reintroducing and passing legislation for a 2013 Farm Bill that would reauthorize programs for five years. However, don't expect to see any Farm Bill legislation in the next couple months as Congress will be focused on sequestration and the debt limit ceiling issues that were not resolved in the fiscal cliff compromise.

**New Ag Appropriations Committee Chairman**

With the new Congress, comes new chairman of both the House and Senate Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittees. On the House side, Rep. Bob Aderholt from Alabama's 4<sup>th</sup> Congressional District will take over as chair from Jack Kingston of Georgia. Rep. Aderholt will be serving in his 9<sup>th</sup> term from northern Alabama and served as chair of Homeland Security Approps in the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress. Prior to his election to Congress, Aderholt served as an aide to Governor Fob James and as a Municipal Judge in Haleyville, Alabama. Educated through Alabama's public school system, Aderholt went on to graduate from Birmingham Southern College and from the Cumberland School of Law at Samford University.

On the Senate side, Sen. Herb Kohl from Wisconsin has retired from Congress after 24 years in office. That leaves the Senate Ag Approps Subcommittee chair open. As of press time, the Senate Appropriations committee had not officially named its twelve appropriation subcommittee chairs, but a likely replacement for Kohl is Sen. Tim Johnson from South Dakota.

There will also be a few changes on the authorizing side of ag policy in the next Congress. Most notable is that Sen. Thad Cochran from Mississippi will take over as Ranking Member on the Senate Ag Committee for Pat Roberts of Kansas. Sen. Cochran previously served as Chair of the Senate Ag Committee from 2003-2005 before going on to serve as Chair and Ranking Member of the full Senate Appropriations committee.

On the House Ag Committee, while Chairman Lucas (OK) and Ranking Member Peterson (MN) will remain the same, there are a number of new subcommittee chairs and ranking members. Most notably is new subcommittee chair Austin Scott from Georgia, who will have jurisdiction over research, education and extension, biotechnology, horticulture, pesticides and organic agriculture. Rep. Scott is in his second term as a Congressman. He graduated from the University of Georgia with a B.B.A. in Risk Management and Insurance, and owned and operated an insurance brokerage firm for nearly twenty years before his election to Congress in 2010.

### **Administrator Jackson Leaves EPA**

EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson announced she is leaving EPA, about a month after it was revealed she was using an alias email account to conduct official business. Jackson used a private email under the alias —Richard Windsor— to correspond with EPA colleagues, a decision her staff defended by saying that her official email account received too many messages for her to use it efficiently. Jackson spearheaded efforts to begin regulating greenhouse gas emissions, including setting new standards to clean up mercury and other toxic emissions from coal power plants, and established new fuel economy standards for motor vehicles.

Quick Senate confirmation of any successor appears unlikely, given that Republicans have long complained that Jackson's aggressive approach to the job has hampered business and impeded job creation. Obama will be under pressure from his own party to name someone acceptable to environmentalists, but Republican senators and some Democrats from coal- and oil-producing states are likely to oppose confirming an activist to succeed Jackson.

In the mean time, EPA Deputy Administrator Robert Perciasepe will take over as acting administrator when Jackson steps down after the State of the Union address, assuming that a successor has not been named and confirmed by the Senate.

### **EPA Considering Invasive Weeds as Biofuel Crops**

EPA has been working on finalizing a rule which would allow fuel made from two known noxious weeds, *Arundo donax* (giant reed) and *Pennisetum purpureum* (napier grass or elephant grass), to count toward federally-mandated renewable fuels targets. The WSSA is opposed to the current proposed rule and has been working with other stakeholder groups to prevent the rule from becoming law. We need more research on *Arundo* and *Pennisetum* before incentivizing their production, otherwise the U.S. will make the same mistake it did in the 1930's when it used taxpayer dollars to fund kudzu plantings across the south.

In October, more than 200 scientists from across the country, including many weed scientists, sent a letter to the Obama administration urging them to rethink their approach to potentially invasive plants grown for bioenergy. The National and Regional Weed Science Societies were also signatories on a letter to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), which is reviewing the EPA proposed rule. Under Executive Order 13112 (regarding invasive species), EPA should not provide production incentives for high risk feedstocks such as *Arundo donax* without determining that the benefits –clearly outweigh the costs.

If OMB moves forward with releasing the rule, we requested to see a complete assessment of the costs and benefits, as outlined in Executive Order 13112. Additionally, if EPA approves *Arundo donax* and similarly high risk feedstocks, we believe that the rule must include – at the very minimum— guidelines on stringent best management practices to reduce the risk of escape. These guidelines should be written with the guidance of the National Invasive Species Council and relevant federal agencies.

### **President's Science Advisors Recognize the Importance of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Pest Management Challenges**

The President's Council of Advisors for Science and Technology (PCAST) recommended to the President that the U.S. increase its investment in agricultural research by a total of \$700 million per year. This report has been in the making for a couple years and is really the first significant report on agriculture ever done by PCAST. The link to the report is at: [http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/pcast\\_agriculture\\_20121207.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/pcast_agriculture_20121207.pdf)

The \$700 million per year recommendation is broken down as follows:

- i. \$180 million for new graduate and post-doctoral fellowships;
- ii. \$235 million for new competitively funded research at USDA AFRI;
- iii. \$130 million for basic research at NSF; and
- iv. \$150 million for new public-private institutes.

The most positive aspect of the report is the challenges they listed for 21st century agriculture:

- i. Managing new pests, pathogens, and invasive plants.
- ii. Increasing the efficiency of water use.
- iii. Reducing the environmental footprint of agriculture.
- iv. Growing food in a changing climate.
- v. Managing the production of bioenergy.
- vi. Producing safe and nutritious food.
- vii. Assisting with global food security and maintaining abundant yields

As you can see, weed science pretty much fits into all those challenges, especially their #1 challenge. However, it's not all peaches and cream as the report –recommends that the focus of USDA research funding shift toward competitive grants, gradually rebalancing the research portfolio for intramural funding and funding for land grant institutions to incorporate incentives for innovation consistent with other research agencies across the Federal Government. In other words, they don't like capacity funds that support the Ag Experiment Stations and Cooperative

Extension, or USDA-ARS funding.

The National and Regional Weed Science Societies are opposed to any shifts in funding towards competitive grants that results in cuts or reductions in capacity funds . Our position has been to support funding for both intra-and inter-mural USDA research, extension, and education. There seems to be a bias in the report that competitively funded research in other federal agencies somehow produces more innovation and that USDA's research funds allocated through non-competitive means is somehow inferior. Yet few would argue that USDA's funding for research, education and extension has been an unparalleled success for food and ag production. If you are aware of any peer-reviewed, credible studies that have actually demonstrated otherwise, please let me know.

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