

## F I N A L   R E P O R T

### COORDINATION OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND FUNDING STUDY COMMITTEE

February 1989

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Coordination of Agricultural Research and Funding Study Committee was established by the Legislative Council and directed to conduct hearings to obtain public response on the scope and quality of current agricultural research, how it is funded, where it is conducted, and who gains from its application. The Study Committee was directed to report its findings to the 1989 House and Senate Appropriations Committees and the Citizens Postsecondary Education Task Force which is scheduled to report in 1990. The Study Committee was granted four meeting days for the public hearings. The meetings were held on September 21, October 5, November 13, and December 8, 1988.

Members of the Study Committee were as follows:

Senator Richard Varn, Co-Chairperson  
Representative David Osterberg, Co-Chairperson  
Senator Leonard Boswell  
Senator Linn Fuhrman  
Representative Jane Svoboda  
Representative Wendell C. Pellett

#### MEETING: SEPTEMBER 21

At its September 21 meeting, the Study Committee met at the University of Iowa, Oakdale Campus, and at Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids. At the Oakdale Campus, the Committee visited the Institute of Agricultural Medicine and Occupational Health and received a briefing regarding the Comprehensive Occupational Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Program and the Worksafe Iowa Information Network (WIIN). The Committee also received an overview of the Iowa Agricultural Health and Safety Service Pilot project which was funded by the General Assembly for a two-year program.

Following the Oakdale campus visit, the Committee attended a luncheon which was part of a technical seminar of the Agricultural Occupational and Environmental Health Conference hosted by the University of Iowa. The Study Committee members were able to meet and discuss health and safety issues affecting agricultural producers with seminar participants from the United States and Europe.

At the Kirkwood Community College, the Study Committee met with administration and faculty members including Larry Statler, Director, Rural Diversified Enterprise Center. The Committee received a briefing on the programs offered by the Rural Diversified Enterprise Center.

At each of the public hearings, the Study Committee asked three principal questions to which the participants responded. The questions were as follows:

1. What direction should state-funded agricultural research take and who should be the beneficiaries?
2. What are the potential or actual conflicts of interest in agricultural research?
3. What should be the state's role in agricultural safety?

At the Kirkwood public hearing, there were approximately forty persons attending the hearing and eleven participants. In general, the participants urged greater funding of all aspects of agricultural research from general revenue sources. Participants noted that physical research facilities as well as general research funding has suffered in recent years. More diversification of agricultural production and increased emphasis on horticulture was advocated.

#### PUBLIC HEARINGS: OCTOBER 5

On October 5, the Study Committee held two public hearings, one during the afternoon in Creston and one in the evening in Council Bluffs. At the Creston hearing, there were approximately twenty persons in attendance including Representatives Jack Beaman and Horace Daggett. Eleven persons participated with testimony and invited comments. The testimony again urged additional state support of agricultural research programs and facilities and more attention to unique problems of agricultural producers in Southern and Southwestern Iowa such as alternatives to returning Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) land to row crop production.

At the Council Bluffs hearing, there were approximately fifteen persons in attendance including Representative Joan Hester and six participants provided testimony and invited comments. The participants urged that the state provide a long-term commitment of \$3 million to \$5 million per year for production and utilization research. They urged the development of a research farm facility in Southwestern Iowa to study production methods and soil erosion problems unique to the area. Also, recognition and support was urged for fruit and vegetable production which has been struggling to gain market and profitability. Support was requested from the Committee to urge the Department of Agriculture and Land

Stewardship to adopt rules establishing standards and grades for Iowa apples.

MEETINGS AND PUBLIC HEARING: NOVEMBER 13 AND 14

The third public hearing was held on the evening of November 14, 1988. On the preceding evening, the Study Committee met with President Gordon Eaton, principal members of his administrative staff, and college deans to discuss the role of the University in agricultural research and the challenges of the future to return profitability to agricultural production in Iowa.

During the morning and afternoon of November 14, the Committee met with approximately sixty ISU researchers who responded to questions posed by members of the Committee regarding their particular research interests, opportunities for research funding and grants, their physical research environment, and related factors concerning their research community.

At the public hearing, approximately forty persons attended and ten persons presented testimony. The participants' remarks were similar to the preceding hearings. Additional long-term commitments to funding agricultural research should be provided by the General Assembly and the funding should come from general revenue sources. Also, Iowa State University should give additional attention to providing production and marketing support to fruit and vegetable operations as well as other alternative crop opportunities. The need for better quality crop harvesting and handling equipment was emphasized along with equipment which is safer to operate.

MEETING: DECEMBER 8

At its final meeting, the Committee received testimony from a representative of the California Rural Legal Assistance who described a lawsuit brought in California to redirect agricultural research toward the objectives of small family farms. The lawsuit is based on interpretation of federal law, including the Hatch Act which establishes land grant colleges. In essence, the federal district court ruled that agriculture research institutions, when using Hatch Act funds for research projects, must consider the extent to which all congressionally intended beneficiaries are favorably or unfavorably affected by the research project, and in that process primary consideration must be given to family farmers. The ruling is being appealed.

The Committee also heard a representative of the Center for Rural Affairs which is a family farm research and advocacy organization which studies trends in agriculture and how they relate to public policy. The Center is concerned about the increasing expenditures for the production of pesticides which have an impact on farm size, increased cancer rates among farmers and consumers, and destruction of natural resources. The Center is

also critical of herbicide resistant crops and urges that research dollars be directed to agronomy which looks at improving farming practices by studying the interaction of organisms.

The Committee also received testimony from staff members of the National Conference of State Legislatures regarding sustainable agriculture which is promoted by research centers such as the Leopold Center created by legislative initiative of the General Assembly. There is no national policy regarding sustainable agriculture, but a number of states are funding research and in 1988, there were fifty-three projects relating to sustainable agriculture funded by federal grants to one hundred twenty-six institutions in thirty-seven states.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The Coordination of Agricultural Research and Funding Study Committee makes the following recommendations:

1. That agricultural research should receive \$1 million for legislative designated projects, a total of \$30 million appropriated incrementally over a period of five years (commencing with \$2 million the first year and adding \$2 million each year) to support the Iowa State University Experiment Station, \$3 million standing appropriation to support a comprehensive agricultural research program to be administered by the State Board of Regents, and \$3 million in continuing support for capital improvements for research facilities at Iowa State University.
2. That Iowa State University be responsible for administering a research program to keep Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) land from returning to row crop production. The program would be funded by at least one-half of the funds available for legislative designated projects.
3. That legislative designated funds be used to provide specific technical assistance to farmers interested in alternative crop production. The assistance could be provided by contract with the Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship.
4. That legislative designated funds be used to support a center for environmental and social ethics within the state universities to provide multidisciplinary studies of the environmental and social impacts of agricultural research on the small or family farm.
5. That Iowa State University study the feasibility of creating a chair for cooperatives to coordinate research that is interdisciplinary, to study impact on small farmers, rural assistance, and issues relating to promoting self-help arrangements.

6. That more collaborative research and development be undertaken with other land grant colleges, that Iowa State University actively explore collaborative research and development efforts with other land grant colleges and with other institutions in Iowa, and that Iowa State University shall make the fullest possible use of existing research from other land grant colleges.

7. That Iowa State University examine population trends and consider the impact on Iowa agriculture.

8. That a legislative review committee on agricultural research be created consisting of the chairpersons of the Committees on Agriculture, the chairpersons of the Appropriation Subcommittees on Education and Agriculture and Natural Resources, or their designees, and two designees of the minority leaders of the House and Senate.

9. That the sustained annual funding for the Leopold Center be \$1.2 million and that funds be appropriated to reach the sustained annual funding of \$1.2 million if established funding mechanisms are not adequate to ensure the sustained funding level.

10. That the following Comprehensive Agriculture Research Program be adopted:

#### COMPREHENSIVE AGRICULTURE RESEARCH PROGRAM

##### FUNDING CATEGORIES

- 1) Long-term/Basic Research
- 2) Emergency Response Research
- 3) State Funds to Draw Federal/Private Dollars
- 4) Research for Existing Crops and Livestock
- 5) Alternative Crop Research
- 6) Research Dissemination
- 7) Agricultural Occupational Health and Safety

##### CRITERIA FOR DISTRIBUTING FUNDS

###### Overarching Criteria

All funds from the comprehensive agricultural research program shall be available to all public and private entities in Iowa on a competitive grant basis. All research shall meet all of the following criteria:

- a) Research shall help Iowa to maintain productive soil, viable communities, and farms with income sufficient to support a family;
- b) Research shall enhance the profitability of farmers;
- c) Research shall lead to farming which enhances and preserves Iowa's environment;

Funding Categories

- 1) Long-term/Basic Research -- Preference to projects that:
  - a) Have no ready funding source from traditional funds
  - b) Require a long time to produce positive or negative results
- 2) Emergency Response Research -- Preference to projects that:
  - a) Deal with issues expected to be problems in the next five years
  - b) Deal with problems that could cause substantial social and economic cost to Iowa
  - c) Offer opportunities that may be missed if there is delay
- 3) State Funds to Draw Federal/Private Funds -- Projects that:
  - a) Are a necessary component of another grant
  - b) Will produce the largest ratio of outside funds to state funds
- 4) Research on Existing Crops and Livestock -- Research to:
  - a) Grow, process, market present agricultural output
  - b) Enhance the quality of present crops or by-products and find new uses
  - c) Lower the cost of production
  - d) Avoid the contamination of food, water, soil
- 5) Alternative Crop Research -- Research to:
  - a) Enhance the opportunity for self-employment
  - b) Promote site-appropriate crops
  - c) Help the state to be more self-sufficient in food and energy needs

- d) Grow, process, market new crops
- e) Develop the infrastructure to support new crops
- 6) Research Dissemination -- Research that will:
  - a) Expand the knowledge of potential producers
  - b) Collect, create, and disseminate existing agricultural knowledge
  - c) Encourage the exchange of ag-related information among researchers
  - d) Provide farmers access to all information resources related to agriculture
- 7) Agriculture Health and Safety
  - a) Identify, investigate, and increase awareness of agriculture safety problems
  - b) Develop practical solutions to agriculture safety problems
  - c) Develop ways to increase awareness and use of safety practices and devices
  - d) Improve medical professionals' ability to diagnose farm-related health problems
  - e) Reduce the accident and mortality rate in the agricultural industry