

COMMISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Friday, December 11, 2009

DISCUSSION ITEM C-1: Budget Line Items: Purdue University, Agricultural Research and Extension

Staff Recommendation

For discussion only.

Background

As part of the biennial budget process, the Commission makes recommendations on the so called higher education line items. The Commission is taking time during this off-budget year to take a closer look at the several line items in the budget than is typically possible during the busy budget session. This second group of line items to be reviewed by the Commission consists of two line items assigned to Purdue University: Agricultural Research and County Agriculture Extension Educators; and one line item assigned to Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana: Workforce Certification Centers.

As part of Purdue University's traditional Land Grant status, the University engages the state agricultural economy through various means. One of those is through agricultural research and extension services. Through a funding partnership between the state of Indiana and the federal government through the United States Department of Agriculture Purdue University works to meet critical needs of Indiana agriculture. The state's contribution to agricultural research and extension programs at Purdue University provides the critical infrastructure (people and programs) necessary to address high-priority issues for Indiana citizens and farmers.

Supporting Document

Agricultural Research and Extension, 2009-11 Biennial Budget Request from Purdue University, December 2, 2009.

Agricultural Research and Extension

The funding partnership between the state of Indiana and the federal government through the United States Department of Agriculture is critical to meet the needs of Indiana agriculture. The state's contribution to agricultural research and extension programs at Purdue University provides the critical infrastructure (people and programs) necessary to address high-priority issues for Indiana citizens and farmers. These include agricultural productivity, renewable fuels from agricultural products, water quality, livestock waste and odor management, food products, specialty crops such as fruit and vegetables, forest products, natural resource management, youth programs, nutrition education, and community and economic development programs. State funds provide the base upon which additional funds may be leveraged from the federal government and industry. Despite a three percent increase in state appropriations for the current biennium, our capacity to deliver key programs in support of Indiana's agricultural economy has been eroded at a time when agricultural economic development is a cornerstone of our state's future plans. As Indiana strives to grow its bio- and life-science industries, it is critical to not only maintain but strengthen Purdue University's research capacity in the agricultural sciences.

Addressing critical issues including the development of a bioenergy and life sciences industry, growing livestock production, emerging threats to agricultural productivity (diseases and pests), expanding food processing, improving the nutrition and health of Indiana's youth, and developing community leadership for rural economic growth are all dependent on these key investments in agricultural research and extension. For example, this funding in the past has allowed us to:

- Establish water quality field stations to study the impact of agronomic practices on water quality. This has led to recommendations to Indiana producers on fertility and pesticide application practices that improve water quality for Hoosiers.
- Establish the Crop Diagnostic and Training Center, providing critical training to over 1,000 industry leaders each year on emerging diseases and pests
- Create and staff the Plant Pest Diagnostic Laboratory to be a one-stop service for diagnosis of plant problems including diseases, weeds, and insects. The lab plays a critical regional role in monitoring the emergence of new pathogens that could be intentionally released as a bioterrorist threat to homeland security.
- Establish and staff the New Ventures Team, bringing together state and county extension specialists and educators to assist Hoosiers in the assessment of business opportunities, the development of business plans, and the identification of markets for new, value-added agricultural products
- Establish and staff the Swine Environmental Research facility to develop new and innovative technologies to manage and mitigate the environmental issues associated with livestock waste
- Establish the Hardwood Tree Improvement and Regeneration Center to develop new and improved varieties of fine Indiana hardwood species

- Create rapid response teams to address issues related to confined animal feeding, co-products of the corn ethanol industry such as distiller's dried grains with solubles, invasive species, floods, public and animal health threats, etc.