Dear colleagues:

Welcome to the second e-newsletter of the Board on Agriculture and Natural Resources (BANR). In the first quarter of 2013, we kicked off two new studies, and continued planning activities that we hope will reinvigorate the science and engineering communities and the way they address major societal needs in agriculture, food, and natural resources (AFNR). In the course of this effort, we have been interacting with several other organizations that are pursuing related goals. The President's Council of Advisers on Science and Technology (PCAST), AGree, and the Chicago Council on Global Affairs are among the growing number of groups exploring questions about changes needed in AFNR research, education and extension. I sense these discussions are leading to a confluence of thinking about how to broaden and diversify the science and engineering communities that work on AFNR and what will be required to increase their impacts and contributions to science and society. This is an exciting prospect!

At its May 22 and 23 meeting, BANR discussed ways to catalyze even broader discussions across the many disciplines and sectors of the AFNR community. Stay tuned for more details. In the meantime, check out the newsletter for items of interest, such as the announcement of newest members of the BANR Board. In addition, in the coming days, you’ll be getting a separate request for information from the committee reviewing the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI).

NAS President appoints eight new BANR members

Dr. Ralph Cicerone, who serves as Chairman of the National Research Council and President of the National Academy of Science, extended invitations to eight individuals to serve a three-year term on the BANR. The new members include:

Susan Capalbo, Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, Oregon State University

Gail Czarnecki-Maulden, Nestlé Research Center, Nestlé Purina Pet Care

Bob Goldberg, Department of Molecular, Cell, and Developmental Biology, UCLA

Fred Gould, Department of Entomology, North Carolina State University

Gebisa Ejeta, Department of Agronomy, Purdue University

James Jones, Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering, University of Florida
Steven S. Kelley, Department of Forest Biomaterials, North Carolina State University

Jim E. Riviere, College of Veterinary Medicine, Kansas State University

Dr. Goldberg and Dr. Gould are members of the NAS. Dr. Jones is a member of the National Academy of Engineering. Dr. Riviere is a member of the Institute of Medicine. Click here to read short biosketches of the new and continuing BANR members.

NAS convenes Forum on Science with Chicago Council on Global Affairs

On May 20, the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) co-hosted an evening reception and dinner with the Chicago Council on Global Affairs for a group of thought leaders in science and agriculture. Opening remarks were provided by Dan Glickman, former Secretary of Agriculture, Catherine Bertini, former Executive Director of the UN World Food Program, and Barbara Schaal, NAS Vice President. The dinner guests used the evening to discuss ways to strengthen the impact of agricultural research and development internationally. Many of the participants at the forum were in town to attend the Chicago Council's annual symposium on global food security, which took place on May 21. More information can be found here.

Solutions From The Land releases Pathways report

BANR member AG Kawamura, a co-chair of the Solutions From The Land Dialogue, participated in the March 6 release event at the National Press Club for the group's report, A New Vision for United States Agriculture, Forestry and Conservation. The report calls for finding landscape-scale solutions, valuing ecosystem services, harmonizing conflicting public policies, and strengthening research and information-sharing on sustainable practices. More information on the report can be found at the Farm Foundation website.

NRC Review of the Draft 2013 National Climate Assessment

BANR member Kathy Segerson was a member of the NRC committee that reviewed the Draft 2013 National Climate Assessment. The review was requested by the U.S. Global Change Research Program, which prepared the assessment. The committee made suggestions for improving the draft and also raised broader considerations about the scope of research that underlies the findings of the assessment. The committee's report can be found here.

NEW STUDY COMMITTEES

Nutrient Requirements of Beef Cattle, 7th Edition

The long-awaited update of the NRC report on the nutrient requirements of beef cattle got underway in earnest on February 25, when the committee held its first meeting in Washington, DC to hear from study sponsors and other stakeholders about priorities to include in the update.

Review of the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI)

An NRC committee to review the AFRI program has held meetings in February, April, and June to gather information on the grants program administered by USDA's National Institute for Food and Agriculture. In July, the committee will issue a call for input from the scientific community.

Read more about the new committees here.
NEW REPORT

On June 5, the National Research Council released a report evaluating key scientific issues related to the management of horses and burros occupying public lands in the western United States. The study was commissioned by the Department of Interior's Bureau of Land Management, which is tasked with maintaining the horses in a "thriving ecological balance" with other uses of the public lands. The full report, a 4-page brief, and other information are available here.

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