

# NATIONAL RESEARCH AGENDA

American Association *for* Agricultural Education  
2011- 2015 Research Priority Areas

The American Association for Agricultural Education (AAAEE) developed their 2011-2015 national research agenda and six research priorities as a signpost for our colleagues across the food and agricultural systems indicating both our focus and commitment towards addressing the issues and problems facing individuals, organizations, and communities both locally and globally. This agenda also serves as our profession's internal compass focusing our collaborative efforts and resources in the light of recent change and a future laced with opportunities and challenges. It is our hope that the outcomes of our profession's research agenda facilitates, supports, and inspires the human dimension of our global food and agricultural systems for years to come.

## **PRIORITY 1: Public and Policy Maker Understanding of Agriculture and Natural Resources**

*Key Outcome: Consumers and policy makers will have an accurate understanding of and informed opinions about agriculture and natural resources. Further, policy decisions at all levels will reflect win-win solutions that ensure the long-term sustainability of agriculture, natural resources, and quality of life in communities across the nation.*

As our global population grows to a projected nine billion people by 2050, the non-agriculture population has little to no understanding of the complexities involved with sustaining a viable agriculture system. The potential negative impact of an uninformed population on the United States and global agriculture and food systems is great. An informed citizenry, including policy decisions at all levels, will create win-win solutions that ensure the long-term sustainability of agriculture, natural resources, and quality of life in communities across the world.

## **PRIORITY 2: New Technologies, Practices and Products Adoption Decisions**

*Key Outcome: Agriculturists, rural landowners, homeowners, and consumers will embrace new technologies, practices, and products derived through agricultural and natural resources research.*

To achieve positive outcomes in current and future agriculture-related diffusion efforts, related research, education, and outreach activities must continually change to address the new challenges and opportunities brought about by rapidly advancing technologies; evolving consumer demands, needs, and behaviors; and the need to make positive contributions to environmental, human, and animal health. Our social science research must also remain cognizant that the chains of production, distribution, and marketing of agricultural products are complex. We must create transdisciplinary, systems research approaches that holistically examine technological adaptation and policy design while accounting for all of the components of agricultural systems, from farm to the market and the consumer and back again.

## **PRIORITY 3: Sufficient Scientific and Professional Workforce That Addresses the Challenges of the 21st Century**

*Key Outcome: A sufficient supply of well-prepared agricultural scientists and professionals drive sustainable growth, scientific discovery, and innovation in public, private, and academic settings.*

An examination of the last one hundred years of U.S. agriculture often highlights the increase in productivity, the technological developments, changes brought about through consumer influences, and policy changes that have both advanced and provided course corrections to the industry. New trends in today's global economy require greater capacity of the agricultural workforce. In order to further improve agricultural productivity efficiency and effectiveness in meeting our global food, fiber, and energy needs, a sufficient supply of well-prepared agricultural scientists and professionals is needed to drive sustainable growth, scientific discovery, and innovation in public, private, and academic settings.

#### **PRIORITY 4: Meaningful, Engaged Learning in All Environments**

*Key Outcome:* Learners in all agricultural education learning environments will be actively and emotionally engaged in learning, leading to high levels of achievement, life and career readiness, and professional success.

The design, development, and assessment of meaningful learning environments which produce positive learner outcomes are essential to properly educating the citizens of the 21st century. Yet, this task is complex. Research is needed to achieve the goal of having all learners in all agricultural education learning environments actively and emotionally engaged in learning, resulting in high levels of achievement, life and career readiness, and professional success.

#### **PRIORITY 5: Efficient and Effective Agricultural Education Programs**

*Key Outcome:* Highly effective educational programs will meet the academic, career, and developmental needs of diverse learners in all settings and at all levels.

*Key Outcome:* Accurate and reliable data that describe the quality and impact of educational programs and outreach efforts at all levels will be distributed to respective decision groups (e.g. students, parents, administration, industry, policy makers).

Learning is the single most significant element molding our being. It is the driving force that combines with our experiences, our needs, and our desires to make us what we are while influencing the social structures to which we belong. Highly effective educational programs will meet the academic, career, and developmental needs of diverse learners in all settings and at all levels. Further, accurate and reliable data that describes the quality and impact of educational programs and outreach efforts at all levels must be distributed to respective decision groups.

#### **PRIORITY 6: Vibrant, Resilient Communities**

*Key Outcome:* Local communities will have effective leaders and engaged citizens who ensure high quality educational and career development opportunities for youth and adults and proactively sustain an environment conducive to positive community change.

Strong local communities have effective leaders and engaged citizens who ensure high quality educational and career development opportunities for youth and adults and proactively sustain an environment conducive to positive community change and growth. Communities that lack vigor and capacity have great difficulty in responding to the increasingly complex challenges present in many communities today. Additional research is needed to ensure the environment where positive community change transforms unhealthy communities into high-capacity communities.

As a discipline, *Agricultural Education* includes agricultural education in schools, universities, and other postsecondary institutions; education and other nonformal, community education, and outreach programs; leadership development in individuals, communities, organizations and agencies; and communication within and throughout the agricultural and natural resources industries. Also included are university programs designed to develop educators, leaders, and professional communicators for all aspects of the vast agriculture industry. Agricultural Education is a broad, applied field that draws foundational knowledge from psychology and sociology, while focusing on the human dimensions of science and practice in agriculture and natural resources management.