Invitation: Northeast Ag Innovation Agenda listening session

WHEN:
Jul 14, 2020 10:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

WHERE:
https://extension.zoom.us/j/91904546170?pwd=MzBkZ1hnVmc4N1REZndGcjVOTWkrdz09
Meeting ID: 919 0454 6170; Password: 095480
Alternate phone line: (646) 876-9923; Meeting ID: 919 0454 6170

The Need: The USDA is seeking input from stakeholders through August 1, 2020 on *Agricultural Innovation*, part of the USDA's Agriculture Innovation Agenda.

The Opportunity: NEED and NERA, with technical support from eXtension, are hosting a virtual listening session on July 14th 2020 from 10:00am-12:00pm. Invited to attend are college deans, Cooperative Extension and AES directors, or associate directors, and institutional scientists.

NEED and NERA will develop a regional response and submit that response to the USDA through the Federal eRulemaking Portal. We will also make the response available to all member institutions to adapt and submit to amplify the messages as appropriate.

Background: The Agriculture Innovation Agenda is comprised of four main components. The first component is to develop a U.S. agriculture innovation strategy that aligns and synchronizes public and private sector research. The second component is to align the work of our customer-facing agencies and integrate innovative technologies and practices into USDA programs. The third component is to conduct a review of USDA productivity and conservation data. USDA already closely tracks data on yield, but on the environmental side, there's some catching up to do. Finally, USDA has set benchmarks to hold us accountable. These targets will help measure progress toward meeting the food, fiber, fuel, feed, and climate demands of the future. Some of the benchmarks include:

- **Agricultural Productivity:** Increase agricultural production by 40 percent by 2050 to do our part to meet estimated future demand.
- **Forest Management:** Build landscape resiliency by investing in active forest management and forest restoration through increased Shared Stewardship Agreements with States.
- **Food loss and waste:** Advance our work toward the United States' goal to reduce food loss and waste by 50 percent in the United States by the year 2030.
- **Carbon Sequestration and Greenhouse Gas:** Enhance carbon sequestration through soil health and forestry, leverage the agricultural sector's renewable energy benefits for the economy, and capitalize on innovative technologies and practices to achieve net

reduction of the agricultural sector's current carbon footprint by 2050 without regulatory overreach.
- **Water Quality:** Reduce nutrient loss by 30 percent nationally by 2050.
- **Renewable Energy:** We can increase the production of renewable energy feedstocks and set a goal to increase biofuel production efficiency and competitiveness to achieve market-driven blend rates of 15% of transportation fuels in 2030 and 30% of transportation fuels by 2050.

What Is the USDA Seeking? Respondents are asked to identify transformational innovation opportunities for the next era of agriculture productivity and environmental conservation and propose approaches to these opportunities with an eye to the public and private sector research needed to support them. Input from the agricultural and scientific community will help inform research goals with the intent of aligning applications and technologies to best address the goals of the Agriculture Innovation Agenda for the next 10 to 30 years. Based on stakeholder input from the RFI, USDA will develop a comprehensive U.S. agriculture innovation strategy that it intends to release by the end of this year.

Framing the Discussion: The USDA, using the 2019 National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine report *Science Breakthroughs to Advance Food and Agricultural Research by 2030*, identified four innovation clusters that present broad potential for transformative innovation. Innovation clusters represent a grouping of innovations to focus agricultural research and inform product development. These clusters are:
- Genome Design—Utilization of genomics and precision breeding to explore, control, and improve traits of agriculturally important organisms.
- Digital/Automation—Deployment of precise, accurate and field-based sensors to collect information in real time in order to visualize changing conditions and respond automatically with interventions that reduce risk of losses and maximize productivity.
- Prescriptive Intervention— Application and integration of data sciences, software tools, and systems models to enable advanced analytics for managing the food and agricultural system.
- Systems Based Farm Management—Leverage a systems approach in order to understand the nature of interactions among different elements of the food and agricultural system to increase overall efficiency, resilience, and sustainability of farm enterprises.

Stakeholders will be asked to respond to the following questions:
1. What agricultural commodity, group of commodities, or customer base does your response pertain to or would benefit?
2. What are the biggest challenges and opportunities to increase productivity and/or decrease environmental footprint that should be addressed in the next 10- to 30-year timeframe?
3. For each opportunity identified, answer the following supplemental questions: a. What might be the outcome for the innovation solution (e.g., the physical or tangible

product(s) or novel approach) from each of the four innovation clusters? b. What are the specific research gaps, regulatory barriers, or other hurdles that need to be addressed to enable eventual application, or further application, of the innovation solution proposed from each of the four innovation clusters?

Stakeholder input will inform the USDA as it works to develop a comprehensive strategy to guide public sector research objectives and inform private-sector product development in order to maximize the U.S. Agriculture sector's continued ability to meet future demands.

How to attend:

- Mark your calendars with the connection information below and join us over Zoom on the 14th. Registration is not required but we ask that you please email Rick Rhodes rcrhodes@uri.edu and Ali Mitchell amitchell@northeastextension.org to help us plan.

- Watch these short pre-session videos https://app.vidgrid.com/content/TUKRg3ctGkw0 to understand more about what USDA thinks about their "innovation clusters".

- Share this invitation across the region. Your voices are important. We are excited to help them be heard.

Connection Information:

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Join Zoom Meeting
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