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Research, Education, and Economics (REE) -- Office of the Chief Scientist (OCS)  
National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics (NAREEE) Advisory Board

June 7, 2023

Secretary Thomas J. Vilsack  
US Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave, SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Undersecretary and Chief Scientist Chavonda Jacobs-Young  
US Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave, SW  
Washington, DC 20250

RE: The NAREEE Board's Recommendations on Agriculture Climate Adaptation Programs and Activities

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

The NAREEE Advisory Board is statutorily required to perform an annual review of the relevancy of all agricultural research, extension, or education activities with respect to the Research, Education, and Economics (REE) mission area priorities, and the adequacy of the funding for those activities (7 USC 7613 (b)):

*(b) Advisory Board review*

*On an annual basis, the Advisory Board shall review-*

- (1) the relevance to the priorities established under section 7612(a) of this title of the funding of all agricultural research, extension, or education activities conducted or funded by the Department; and*
- (2) the adequacy of the funding.*

The Executive Committee of the Board met on December 6, 2022, via videoconference, to discuss the formulation of an Ad Hoc Committee to address the draft of the Board's *Report and Recommendations on the Relevance and Adequacy of the Ag Climate Adaption Programs and Activities at USDA (July 2020)*. According to records, the draft of the report was not fully executed due to transitions in leadership that took place between August 2020 and December 2020. The 2023 NAREEE Advisory Board approved providing an addendum to the 2020 Report with consideration of the time lapse from July 2020 to present date.

The Ad Hoc Committee was charged with: (1) reviewing previously submitted documents – (a) the *Executive Summary for the 2020 Annual Relevance and Adequacy Review – Climate Adaptation (January 2020)* -- (b) the Board's *Report and Recommendations on the Relevance and Adequacy of the Ag Climate Adaption Programs and Activities at USDA (July 2020)*; and (2) reviewing an updated *Executive Summary for the 2022 Annual Relevance and Adequacy Review – Climate Adaptation (Dec 2022)*.

Upon review of the said documents, committee members provided a comprehensive assessment of REE agencies, including, the Office of the Chief Scientist (OCS), the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), the Economic Research Service (ERS), the National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA), and the National Agricultural Statistical Service (NASS), and their ability to address Ag Climate Adaptation



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programs and activities. Specifically, a review of the following areas was conducted – (a) education and outreach, (b) soil, ag resilience, and cropping systems, (c) livestock and grazing land adaptation, and (d) forest resiliency.

This addendum conveys the Board’s response with consideration of current activities related to the annual research priorities with respect to the REE mission area at the time of the 2020 Relevancy and Adequacy (R&A) Report. The intent of this addendum is to preserve the overall recommendations of the 2020 Board and provide an up-to-date context for the basis of the previously stated recommendations.

Upon review, the 2023 Board appreciated the excellent update the REE mission area agencies provided and commends the USDA REE mission areas for their robust work and ongoing commitment to the long-term research and dedication of resources as the science of climate adaptation evolves. It is a complex but critical topic that requires collaboration to implement a voluntary, science-based approach in the research and adoption of practices on the agricultural landscape to feed and fuel the world.

In the Board’s review of their previous R&A Report -- *Report and Recommendations on the Relevance and Adequacy of the Ag Climate Adaptation Programs and Activities at USDA (July 2020)* -- and the recent in-depth updates provided by the REE mission area agencies, we maintain that the recommendations provided in the report are still relevant and encourage the USDA to consider the recommendations as it continues its vigorous efforts on climate.

In addition, we recommend further consideration be given to the interconnection of agriculture, food processing, nutrition, horticulture, and the allied fields of bioeconomy in USDA’s activities focused on climate adaptation and mitigation.

Sincerely,

Dr. Kenrett Jefferson-Moore  
Chair, NAREEE Advisory Board

**Addendum Developed by the Ad Hoc Committee on Ag Climate Adaptation Relevance and Adequacy, a subcommittee of the NAREEE Advisory Board**

Dr. Kenrett Jefferson-Moore (Chair), Professor and Chair, North Carolina A&T State University  
Dr. V.M. Balasubramaniam, Professor and Director, the Ohio State University  
Dr. Mario Ferruzzi, Professor and Director, Arkansas Children’s Nutrition Center, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences  
Ms. Lisabeth Hobart, Government Relations Manager, GROWMARK, Inc.  
Dr. Ariel Ortiz-Bobea, Associate Professor, Cornell University