



Healthy Plants • Healthy World

Summary of Priority Areas for USDA-CSREES - March 2006

The American Phytopathological Society (APS), founded in 1908, is the premiere educational, professional and scientific society dedicated to the promotion of plant health and plant disease management for the common good. The Society represents the interest of five thousand scientists whose pivotal research advances the understanding of the science of plant pathology and its application to plant health. The APS seeks to help identify priority areas for funding to support research and education objectives.

The APS has identified areas where additional funding by the USDA-CSREES would be of substantial benefit:

Genomics of Agriculturally-Related Plants and Microbes: Ensuring safe and secure food, fiber and natural resources. A genomics-empowered foundation must be in place to ensure the sustainable production of healthy and safe crops and to spur continued improvement of crop productivity. *Expanding our investments in plant and microbial genomics to include sequencing and functional genomics of agriculturally-important plants and microbes and the training of future scientists to use this information will allow us to create this foundation.*

Protect and Enhance the Nation's Natural Resource Base and Environment: While USDA-CSREES recently has increased funding for systems level agriculture, biologically based pest management (BBPM), an environmentally benign and integrated activity, has not received sufficient priority. Biologically based pest-management will contribute to environmental stewardship, enterprise profitability, and rural development that is paramount for the wide utilization and adaptability of sustainable environmental practices in the myriad of agricultural production operations in the United States. However, development and implementation of BBPM requires significant research and education of producers for adoption. *Thus, we recommend that programs in the NRI soliciting integrated projects be expanded with emphasis on the development of BBPM.*

Enhance Protection and Safety of the Nation's Agriculture and Food Supply: The U.S. agricultural enterprise is vulnerable to intentional pathogen or pest introductions by those intending harm. *The APS and several partner professional societies have proposed the creation of a National Center for Plant Biosecurity (NCPB) to facilitate strategic planning and ensure the coordination of National activities to maintain the security of our crops, forests, rangelands and other plant resources* (www.apsnet.org/members/ppb/PDFs/CenterProposal.pdf).

The National Plant Diagnostics Network: *Continued support for the National Plant Diagnostic Network (NPDN) is critical to maintain the Nation's ability to recognize and manage new plant pests.*

The National Research Initiative (NRI), housed within the USDA, has sponsored research projects that have dramatically benefited agricultural science and technology, and the agency is highly respected within the research community because of the very competitive process used to identify projects for funding. *Additional funding is needed to support research in areas of plant health management.*

A National Need for Broadly-Trained Plant Pathologists: This is a new effort to develop a national pilot program that will seek to develop novel (regional) approaches to curriculum delivery and support for graduate students in obtaining a broad education in the plant health areas. *Funding in support of training the next generation of plant pathologists is needed.*

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