Showcasing Exemplary R&D Collaborations: Agriculture, Food, Nutrition, and Natural Resources.

Roundtable Q&A

1. What does the roundtable aim to achieve?
The objectives of the roundtable are to (1) raise the profile of agriculture, food, and natural resources related research throughout the federal government and beyond and (2) highlight the characteristics of highly productive collaborations in order to enhance future collaborations.

2. Has this roundtable been held before?
No, this is the first roundtable to showcase federally funded collaborations in agriculture, food, nutrition and natural resources research and development.

3. What will be presented at the roundtable?
Senior investigator presentations of exemplary case studies of collaboration will be integrated into presentations by leading science policy officials.

4. Is travel assistance available for investigators selected to present case studies at the roundtable?
Yes. Resources are available to pay for travel costs related to investigators selected to present case studies at the event.

5. How many people typically/are you expecting to attend?
Approximately 80 people are expected to attend the roundtable.

6. Who (what types of companies, institutions and what job functions) typically/are you expecting to attend?
High level government officials from federal agencies involved in research on issues related to agriculture, food, nutrition and natural resources are expected to attend in addition to the senior scientists that present case studies. These include representatives from: Office of Science and Technology Policy, United States Department of Agriculture, National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation, Department of Energy, Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Interior, and the Food and Drug Administration. Representatives from key scientific societies, universities and agriculture industry are also expected to attend.

7. Why has it been launched now/why is it needed now?
In recent years, the federal investment in agriculture related research and development has lagged behind other areas of science supported by the federal government. Roundtable organizers believe that consideration should be given to reversing this trend. Last year USDA transformed its primary extramural research agency, the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES), into the new National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). The time is right to take advantage of the
momentum associated with this transformation to help inform more people about the importance of agriculture, food, nutrition, and natural resources research.

Another indicator that this is the right time to highlight agricultural research is the growing concern over global food security. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has estimated that the world will need to double food production by the year 2050 in order to feed a population of 9.2 billion. They further estimate that seventy percent of this increased production will need to come from the creation and adoption of new technologies, highlighting the importance of science to feeding the world.

This roundtable is a way to highlight the value of federal investment in the agriculture related sciences and the positive impacts such an investment has had on society. The roundtable also provides a forum to demonstrate how collaborations across federal agencies and academia can leverage resources and expertise to effectively deliver science based solutions to challenges facing our nation.

8. Why should industry organizations support it?
There is generally a broad recognition by organizations related to agriculture, food, nutrition and natural resources that science is critical to the future success of industries in these areas. As a result, we believe that there will be interest from industry in helping demonstrate how past investments in research have been effective in addressing societal challenges and how new collaborations will be key to moving forward in the future.