

Update from the new National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)—the former CSREES:

The recent Farm Bill required that the former Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension service be renamed the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, or NIFA, as of October 1. All legal authorities for research, extension, and teaching transfer over to the new agency. It also specified that a White House appointee that does not require Senate confirmation become the new Director, rather than the previous career civil service leadership. That new leader has been appointed: Dr. Roger Beachy from the Danforth Foundation, a plant biotech scientist. A formal National Press Club Oct. 8 press release is at [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov) and a one hour video broadcast of the event is available at [www.visualwebcaster.com/NIFA-Rollout](http://www.visualwebcaster.com/NIFA-Rollout). Collaborating with other federal agencies such as DOE, NIH, NSF, and the White House office of science were emphasized.

The new undersecretary over the USDA mission area of research, education and economics including the new NIFA as well as Ag Research Service, Economic Research Service, and the National Ag Statistics Service is Dr. Rajiv Shah, who came from the Gates Foundation. He is a medical MD with a focus on international agricultural aid. He also brought in Dean Molly Jahn from the University of Wisconsin, another plant biotech expert, on a one year detail to help coordinate research across the mission area.

NIFA is being reorganized into 4 institutes:

- Food Production and Sustainability
- Bioenergy, Climate and Environment
- Food Safety and Nutrition
- Youth and Community Development

Scientists specializing in these areas are anticipated to come in on temporary details to provide leadership for each institute.

Several new farm bill authorizations and budget increases include Specialty Crops, Beginning Farmers and Ranchers, Organic production, and increases to the AFRI (Ag and Food Research Initiative—the former NRI or national research initiative). Competitive grants for Integrated Pest Management remain at flat funding. We are still waiting for final budgets for fiscal year 2010 from congress.