

Good morning! I'm Sarah Ohlhorst, Senior Director of Advocacy and Science Policy for the American Society for Nutrition. ASN appreciates the opportunity to comment on USDA's Research, Education, and Economics mission area. ASN is a not-for-profit scientific society with over 6,500 members working in academia, clinical practice, government and industry in more than 75 countries around the world. ASN currently reaches over 36 million people annually with the highest quality nutrition information. Our members are supported by AFRI grants, and are employees within the entire REE spectrum, including NIFA, ARS, ERS, the Office of the Chief Scientist and the Human Nutrition Research Centers. ASN is extremely appreciative of REE's support for human nutrition research and for your responsiveness to stakeholder input.

In 2012, ASN identified six [Nutrition Research Priorities](#) which offer the most promising scientific opportunities for nutritional research whose advancement will have the greatest projected impact on the future health and well-being of global populations, as well as on food and agricultural sciences. In addition, ASN identified five tools essential for advancing nutrition research.

Understanding linkages between behavior, the environment, and dietary and lifestyle choices can help tackle obesity and other nutrition-related issues of extreme public health importance. Yet society's current challenges in nutrition research go well beyond childhood obesity, highlighted as Goal 4 in the current REE Action Plan. The U.S. must maintain and enhance the potential for future scientific breakthroughs to be achieved in many areas of nutrition, in addition to focusing on our most immediate public health concerns. To this end, ASN supports maintaining an emphasis on integrated programs and multidisciplinary teams, while also providing significant funding for investigator-initiated applied and basic nutrition research. Such research informs our understanding and implementation of health promoting-lifestyles and dietary practices to lead to future health advances, improve nutrition across the lifespan and optimize quality of life, and therefore should remain an REE priority.

ASN believes that the top priority in food and agricultural research that REE should address is the nexus of agriculture and its impact on health and human nutrition. As the world population reaches 8.5 billion by 2030, feeding the growing population is a known challenge. However, we not only need more food, we need to improve the nutritional quality of the food supply through agriculture. An increased supply of high-quality nutritious foods will maintain the health of the growing population, decrease the incidence of nutrition-related conditions and diseases, and most importantly decrease healthcare-related costs. Nutrition research support is necessary to better understand the linkages between agriculture, diet, health and disease prevention and focus efforts on improving the nutritional quality of our food supply. It's also imperative that we consider how to sustainably increase and improve food production efficiency and outputs to feed the growing world population, while reducing food loss and waste at the agricultural and production levels.

ASN applauds USDA's support for the next generation of nutrition scientists by ensuring that training and careers are sustained for years to come. Such career training is essential and REE should consider providing additional training opportunities, such as for first-time AFRI applicants. ASN also applauds the important work of REE to promote consumer nutrition education through extension, which is essential for achieving public health by helping consumers make informed, healthy choices.

ASN would also to highlight our concerns with the proposed relocations of NIFA and ERS outside of the DC area, as well as the reorganization of ERS. The stakeholder community would like to better understand the justifications and ramifications of these proposed actions on the USDA REE mission area before USDA moves forward with the reorganization or relocations.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. ASN looks forward to future opportunities to work with the Agency to further enhance USDA's human nutrition research contributions.