

# USDA Research Relocation and Reorganization

Perspectives from Former USDA Chief Scientists and Administrators

*Featuring*

**The Honorable Stephen Censky**

Deputy Secretary, USDA

**Catherine Woteki**

Former USDA Under Secretary

**Gale Buchanan**

Former USDA Under Secretary

**Susan Offutt**

Former ERS Administrator

**Scott Swinton (Moderator)**

Past President, AAEA; Michigan State



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# Housekeeping

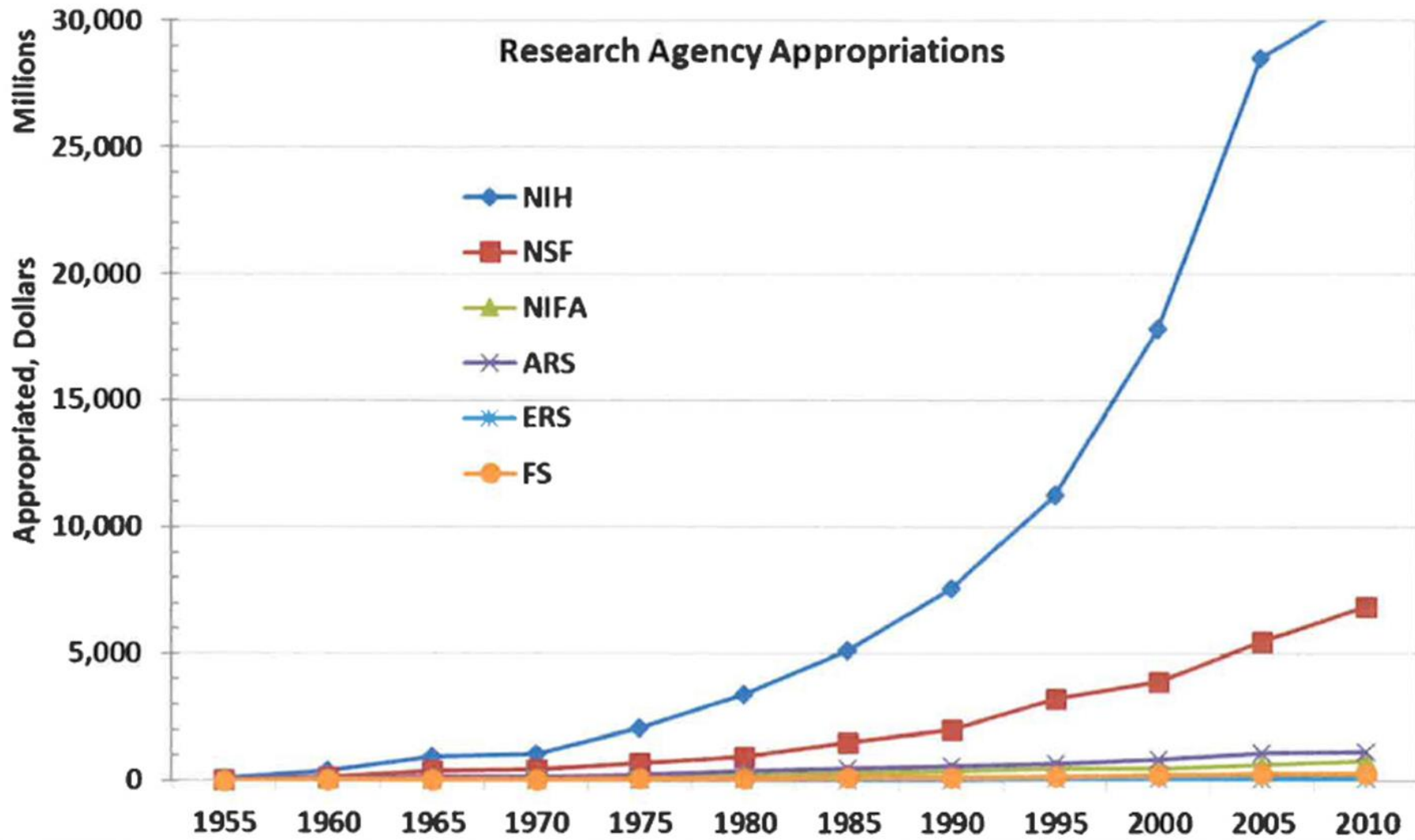
- Today's webinar is being recorded and will be available at APDU website, [apdu.org](http://apdu.org), in next few days.
- All webinar participants are in listen-only mode. You can hear us, we can't hear you.
- If you have any questions for our speaker, please type them into the **Questions** box which you'll see in the Gotowebinar interface.
- You can submit questions at any point during the webinar, but we will hold them until the end of the presentation.
- Join the conversation online: [#NIFA\\_Strong](#) [#ERS\\_Strong](#)

***Make “no little” plans for they have  
no magic to stir men’s blood.***

— Daniel Burnham

Relocating NIFA and ERS is a “no little” plan.  
Unfortunately, it is a poor “no little” plan.

Instead, let’s invest to ensure agriculture’s future  
success.



# Recommendations for USDA

- Delay any further actions on relocation until questions raised by Congress and stakeholders can be addressed
- Convene formal public comment period to solicit feedback from research community, engage stakeholders and address concerns
- Provide data and analysis used to inform decision to relocate:
  - Employee hiring, recruiting and retention data
  - Data on anticipated staff losses and plans to recruit, hire and train
  - Cost-benefit analysis, including estimated costs associated with relocation
  - Detailed timeline for relocation, and transition plan to maintain core functions of each agency

# Congressional Actions Needed

## **Appropriations**

- Hold oversight hearings to obtain answers to questions raised
- Request an independent study—including a cost-benefit analysis—of the problems USDA is trying to address and the ramifications of their proposed fix
- Delay any proposed relocation and reorganization until questions and concerns from stakeholders and Congress can be addressed
  - i.e. withhold any further appropriations for relocation expenses
  - i.e. deny any reprogramming requests to cover relocation expenses

## **Agriculture Committees (aka “Farm Bill”)**

- Hold oversight hearings to obtain answers to questions raised
- Based on responses, consider whether the new farm bill should prohibit reorganization or relocation

# What Can You Do??

## **Raise public visibility**

- Increase media coverage (op-eds, letters to the editors, in-depth reporting)
- Share online: blogs, social media (blogs, LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook ...)

## **Continue to build the coalition**

- Reach out to key stakeholders (land-grants, state departments of agriculture, commodity groups, professional associations)
- Mobilize other concerned constituents (action alerts, researcher petitions)



# What Can You Do??

**To become more involved with keeping NIFA and ERS strong and independent, contact:**

- For ERS, Steve Pierson, Director of Science Policy, American Statistical Association, [pierson@amstat.org](mailto:pierson@amstat.org)
- For NIFA, Juli Obudzinski, Deputy Policy Director, National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, [jobudzinski@sustainableagriculture.net](mailto:jobudzinski@sustainableagriculture.net)

**Has your organization signed the community letters to Congress or sent its own?**

- [www.tinyurl.com/ERS-Strong](http://www.tinyurl.com/ERS-Strong)

**Do you know of former senior officials willing to sign onto letters?**

- [www.tinyurl.com/StrongERS4USDA](http://www.tinyurl.com/StrongERS4USDA)

# Questions?

- Please submit them through the GoToMeeting questions feature