
Appendixes

Options That Relate Primarily to Action by the Executive Branch but in Which Congress May Wish To Be Involved Through Oversight

Science and Education
Administration-Agricultural
Research (SEA-AR) (see p. 185)

OPTION 1

Within AR, transfer line authority including responsibility and accountability for planning and coordination of research, and resource allocation for regional and national research, from regional administrators to the national program staff (NPS).

The reorganization of 1972 removed scientific leadership from the former national technical leaders (now NPS) and placed it in the hands of regional deputy administrators and area officers. NPS is divided into five units, headed by a chief, as follows: livestock and veterinary science; soil, water, and air; crop science (production and protection); post-harvest technology; and human nutrition. Since most U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) laboratories or field locations are organized around mission-oriented research, only two or three of the chiefs are usually involved at any location.

This move has resulted in a lack of national leadership for national programs and, in effect, substituted a series of programs more oriented to local, State, or several State areas. NPS has no authority in research allocation. Instead, it offers strictly staff recommendations which may or may not be accepted.

Pros

This option would reduce wasted manpower and eliminate many of the unnecessary and unproductive debates in developing regional and national programs. It would greatly facilitate the development of national research leaders,

strengthen the scientific aspects of the programs, help to focus the programs on the important regional and national issues, and improve cooperation with State agricultural experiment station (SAES) scientists and other scientists. This provides an opportunity for close contact between research scientists and their immediate NPS specialists and the assurance of coordination of various disciplines at the chief level. Scientists and administrators can choose the appropriate NPS specialists, chief, deputy administrator, or administrator to contact according to their needs.

Cons

Resource allocation decisions would be made by scientists interested in broad regional and national concerns. This would make it more difficult for local interested groups to divert the efforts of the local AR scientists and budgets to local and State problems.

OPTION 2

Same as above, but consider a change in the number and/or location of regions to provide more efficient management and eliminate the offices of area directors.

The geographical area covered by each regional deputy administrator was chosen to coincide with the SAES regional areas and has little significance with truly regional research problems. Such problems do not follow State lines, nor does any group of regional problems fall within the same cluster of States. Consideration should be given to whether there is a need for four such regional administrators and their best geographic locations, including the D.C. area. It is beyond the scope of this assessment to study the specific number needed and their most effective location. However, the findings of this assessment raise ques-

tions concerning the need for and efficiency of the present number and their location.

Pros

This option or option 1 would eliminate the need for the area director positions. All technical planning would be carried out by NPS and technical staff, and with the reduced workload, the regional administrators could easily handle the administrative functions without the need for area directors. This would aid in eliminating in-house opposition to the closing of unneeded AR field locations. The area directors could find employment in the local and regional research stations or laboratories, where they could use their talents to the advantage of both. Locating the regional administrators in the D.C. area would facilitate focusing on broad regional and national issues.

Cons

Locating the regional administrators in the field and having their duties correspond to SAES regions assists in frequent contacts between the regional administrators and the SAES directors of his regions and probably helps in coordination at the management level.

HN Intra-Agency Options (see p. 187)

OPTION 1

Maintain present management structure within USDA with clarifications in budget and staffing.

Human Nutrition (HN) would remain within SEA but with its own budget. The administrator of HN would be given budgetary authority similar to the AR administrator. The administrative relationship of the HN administrator to the center directors who are not employed by USDA would be delineated.

Pros

This option would clarify HN's status within USDA. At present, administrative and budgetary authority are split, in contrast to good management principles. It would obviate possible conflicts of interest between AR research interests and HN research interests. This option would remove one layer of bureaucracy between the administrator of HN and the Secretary. It also would carry out the mandate of Congress.

Cons

The HN budget is not large enough to warrant a separate system,

OPTION 2

Remove HN from SEA and place it under the Assistant Secretary for Food and Consumer Services.

Pros

This option would place all nutrition activity of USDA within the purview of a single assistant secretary concerned with nutrition, and would give the administrator of HN direct access to the assistant secretary.

Cons

This option would separate nutrition research from all other research in USDA. Use could not be made of the peer review mechanisms within SEA.

Placement of HN within an action arm of USDA would cause research results to be less respected than if they were produced by an independent research arm. It would cause research to be directed toward the needs of that arm and thus hamper long-term research projects. It would politicize nutrition research so that research directions might change with each change in administration.

Placing HN in a nonresearch division will place it under administrators unfamiliar with research administration and inexperienced in solving the unique problems associated with human nutrition research.

Situated as it is in SEA, HN is not tied to any one constituency within USDA. By placing it in the same division as the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), HN would be under tremendous pressure to focus primarily on FNS's research needs. While FNS represents a large fraction of USDA's budget, the clientele served represent only a small fraction of the U.S. public. The human nutrition research needs of producers, processors, and a large segment of the consuming public might be neglected.

OPTION 3

Dispense with HN as an administrative and planning entity and disperse HN within AR, with each of the centers under the authority of the director for the region in which it is situated.

Pros

Any positive aspects of such a move would be political rather than managerial. It would reassert that USDA holds producers' interests to have greater priority than consumers' interests.

Cons

Segmentation of human-nutrition research would destroy the ability of USDA to develop a coordinated research effort in human nutrition. Human nutrition is one aspect of USDA's research effort whose parameters are not "site specific." Dispersal of HN component parts to the regional directors would make coordination of the human nutrition research effort nearly impossible.

Dispersal of HN would also place the centers in the position of competing for funds with other research in its particular region. Since most regional directors are agricultural-production oriented, the HN centers' budgets would not be expected to fare well.

The regional directors have little experience in administering human nutrition.

Research at the HN centers would lose its national character and could become focused on the agricultural products of a region, rather than on basic human conditions and their nutritional needs, e.g., infancy, parturition, lactation, aging.

The coordination of all Federal HN research as called for in the 1977 farm bill and the development of the nutritional surveillance network would become difficult, if not impossible, when the lead agency (USDA) for human nutrition research has no in-house administrative, budgetary, or coordinating mechanism for the direction and/or use of human-nutrition research. For example, the mechanism for the coordination of the nutrient data bank and food consumption survey in the Consumer Nutrition Center and Beltsville's nutrient composition laboratory with the Department of Health and Human Services' Health and Nutrition Examination Survey would be nonexistent.

The development of information and educational material relating to human nutrition—a nationwide concern—would be under regional authority.

OPTION 4

Dispense with HN as an administrative and planning entity, disperse the clinical and laboratory components within AR un-

der the authority of the regional directors, and place the survey and statistical research and information services under the Assistant Secretary for Food and Consumer Services. *

Pros

FNS would have closer coordination with the developers of nutrition information and educational material and with researchers who survey and analyze food consumption patterns in the United States.

Cons

All the cons of options 2 and 3 apply. In addition, there is the problem of separating the development of educational and informative materials from the research on which they are based. Not only would the possibility of misinterpretation arise, but it would be necessary to hire additional staff to do the interpretive work, because the scientists who developed it would be in a different division of USDA.

The clinical and laboratory research segments of HN would presumably still use USDA's information bureau for the dispersal of information. With coordinating mechanisms absent, the information released could contradict that being released by FNS.

The informative and educational materials released by FNS would be seen by many to be politically tainted, since they are released by an action arm of USDA, rather than by a research group.

Separation of either the nutrient-composition labs or the nutrient data bank from the food-consumption survey would be cumbersome and inefficient. The development and transfer of usable information would be severely hampered, making use of the data bank extremely expensive and time consuming.

OPTION 5

For all options above, determine if all regional HN research centers are needed, and if not, which ones best serve the public interest. Available funds for HN would be allocated to the needed centers.

Pros

This will assure that funds allocated to HN are used for high-priority needs. It would assist in

*USDA has put this option into effect.

funding centers at a level commensurate with U.S. national interests.

Cons

National laboratories for the six centers have been built for or assigned to the objectives of the centers. At the time it was authorized by Congress, there was a need for this research. Even though the centers are inadequately funded, there is continuing interest in these activities. Also, because of the deluge of nutrition misinformation and its increasing impact, as evidenced by the growing health food and health care industry, it would be in the best interest of U.S. producers and consumers to maintain regional HN research centers that address areas of public concern in nutrition and can distribute to the public scientifically based information on food and nutrition as it relates to health.

Economics and Statistics Service (ESS)
(see p. 187)

OPTION 1

Reinstate each ESS component to separate agency status reporting to the Assistant Secretary or Director for Economics. *

The two components of ESS, the Economics Research Service (ERS) and the Statistical Reporting Service (SRS), would become distinct operating agencies, each headed by an administrator. This option would eliminate positions in the present administrator's office.

Pros

This option would help eliminate confusion between the statistical unit's information and the projections and forecasts of the economics research unit.

It would also reduce the administrative layering that exists by eliminating the present questionable bureaucratic procedures and paperwork.

Cons

It would create two entities where the appearance of one existed before.

OPTION 2

Reinstate each ESS component to separate agency status with SRS reporting to

the Assistant Secretary or Director for Economics and the ERS reporting to SEA.

ERS would join the other research agencies --i. e., AR and HN in SEA. For the economic policy analysis that needs to be conducted, an analytical and policy staff would be assigned directly to the Assistant Secretary or Director for Economics.

Pros

Having the main research agencies reporting to SEA at either the director or assistant secretary level has the following advantages: 1) coordination among research agencies is much easier, 2) it facilitates the integration of economics research with biological and physical science research, 3) much biological and physical science research would become more relevant and productive with leadership and participation by production and marketing research economists, and 4) by working more closely with the biological and physical scientists, it may be easier for economics research to obtain increased funding.

Cons

The disadvantages include: 1) not all economics research lends itself to integration with biological and physical science research, 2) the Assistant Secretary for Economics would have only one reporting agency which does not warrant position at the level of assistant secretary or director, and 3) the economics unit maybe regarded as a service unit to biological and physical research,

International Food and Agricultural Research (see p. 192)

OPTION 1

Centralize technical staff in one bureau in the Agency for International Development (AID). USDA would maintain its present level of activity. *

The technical staff from the regional bureaus and missions would be combined with the present central staff of the Development Support Bureau (DSB) to form an overall operating technical bureau. The technical bureaus would have responsibility for country and central programs of technical assistance, research, training, and institution building and would be headed by out-

*USDA has put this option into effect,

*AID has moved in the direction of this option, but still retains the regional bureau structure.

standing professionals in their relevant fields. The functions of the regional bureaus would be reduced essentially to those necessary for liaison with State and collation of normal desk functions. Presidential appointees would not be required for these positions. More study would be needed on the details of structuring the agency within such a reorganization.

Pros

This would permit but not assure much better and more coherent patterns of relationships between AID and sources of needed U.S. technical expertise such as universities, other Federal agencies, voluntary agencies, and private firms. It should permit improvement in developing strategies for various functional programs such as agricultural development, population, etc. It might result in more emphasis on research as an instrument in development.

Cons

In the absence of major organizational and policy changes, centralization of technical staff would result in confused line of authority, particularly to field staff.

Country program decisions are made “in-line”—i.e., missions to regional bureaus to Program and Policy Coordination (PPC) to administrator, DSB’s central staff is involved only by regional bureau sufferance and on a very limited basis. In cases of differences, the regional bureau view prevails except on rare occasions where an administrator may override. DSB influence is largely via professional relationships with regional bureau specialists, who have some influence, albeit usually marginal, in mission/regional bureau decisions. The influence is usually on technical details—not program strategy, program composition, or intercountry allocations. Unless buttressed by actions sharply reallocating decision-making responsibility, centralization of technical staff would probably reduce even further technical staff participation in major decisions regarding country programs and “regional strategies.”

This option could well sever the line of communication between technical personnel in field missions and their counterparts in Washington. This communication, in the formal sense of collaboration on program and project design and implementation, is currently nebulous and varies greatly. Centralization of technical staff might reduce it still further.

It would cause further program imbalance toward capital transfer (in some suitable disguise) as this would reduce the need for intrusion of central staffs in regional bureau decision making.

OPTION 2

Within AID establish technical operating bureaus around the major thrusts of AID programs as defined in legislation—i.e., food and nutrition, population and health, and natural resources and energy (technical bureaus would be headed by technical career professionals). USDA would maintain its present level of activity.

The technical bureaus would have responsibility for country as well as central programs of technical assistance, research, training, and institution building and would be headed by outstanding professionals in their relevant fields. The regional bureaus would be eliminated and regional office positions set up in the PPC or under an assistant administrator with limited role and power necessary for liaison with State and collation of normal desk functions. Presidential appointees would not be required for these positions. This would reduce the cost and amount of manpower to perform these functions. More study would be needed on the details of structuring the agency within such a reorganization.

Pros

This option would make desired organizational changes and enlarge the role of technical to non-technical personnel. With the technical operating bureaus organized around the major thrusts as defined in legislation, the program would focus more clearly on U.S. interests. With it organized around technical issues, it would strengthen tremendously the ability of AID efforts to identify the important technical issues constraining development of the various countries, to recruit and manage technical resources, and to work with the departments or instruments of government of the developing countries in solving their own problems. This would reduce both the cost and amount of manpower to perform these functions.

Cons

This option would require a major change in the types of personnel hired by AID. The number of technical people would increase considerably with a greater decrease in nontechnical people. It

would require either a reduction in force or a long time in attrition. It would require special care in choosing the administrators for the technical bureaus. They would have to be competent in their professional areas, international experience, and administration.

OPTION 3

Increase USDA involvement in the international agricultural research network, with major emphasis on maximizing U.S. benefits. This applies to both options 1 and 2 above.

The United States has much to gain, as well as give, in international agricultural research. USDA would be given specific responsibility for taking the lead in programs to maximize U.S. benefits from agricultural research conducted in other countries and the international centers. This would be closely coordinated with AID agricultural activities.

Pros

One Federal agency would have the responsibility to assure maximum U.S. benefit from agricultural research conducted abroad. It would increase cooperation with other nations and research institutions. It would increase our ability to obtain knowledge quickly of breakthroughs and current research. It would also expand opportunities for U.S. scientists.

Cons

A program to promote benefits to the United States from research of the international centers and developing countries could cause other donors to accuse the United States of trying to be a beneficiary as well as a donor to the international effort to assist Third World countries through research in agriculture.