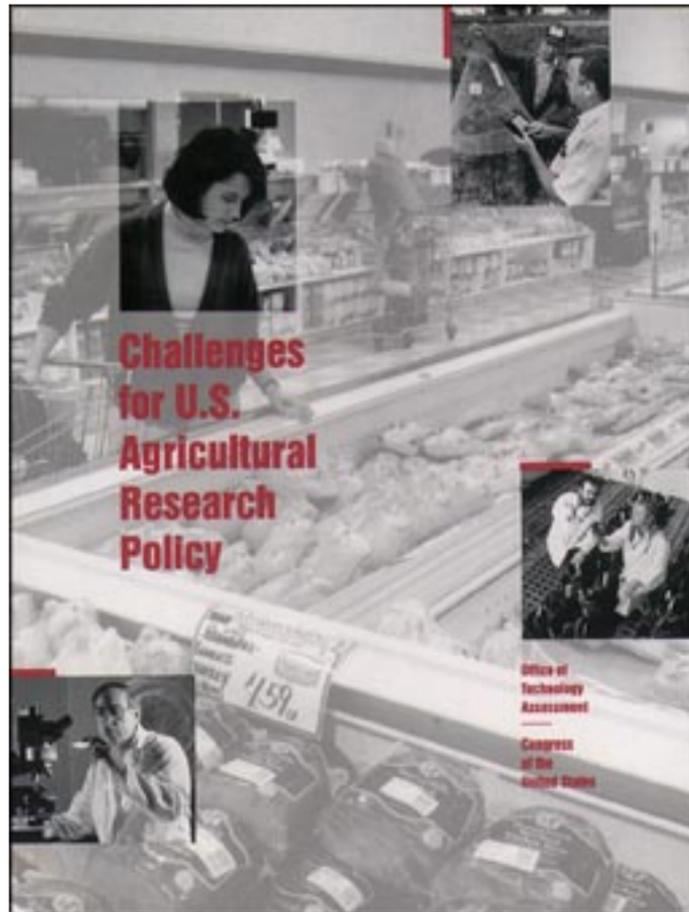


*Challenges for U.S. Agricultural Research  
Policy*

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# Foreword

**A**gricultural productivity has increased markedly in recent years—more rapidly, in fact, than productivity in the overall U.S. economy. Many attribute a large part of this growth to public sector agricultural research, which is carried out primarily by land grant universities and the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s research agencies. Despite this success, however, new budget constraints, scientific advances, and public demands for environmental safety are presenting the agricultural research system with the greatest challenges it has faced since its inception, more than a century ago. Questions have been raised about whether the old research institutions are still useful, and about how they should adapt to accommodate the new realities of the 1990s.

In discussions leading up to the 1995 farm bill, agricultural research policy has been put squarely on the negotiating table. Policymakers have been particularly interested in how well the agricultural system has responded to legislative directives in the past farm bill that called for a clarification of the purposes of agricultural research and extension, a national competitive research initiative, a sustainable agricultural research program, and research efforts to create new agricultural crops and new uses for agricultural commodities.

This report responds to a bipartisan request from the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry to determine the progress the research system has made in meeting the objectives set forth in these new areas, and to provide guidance on the management of agricultural research. In doing so, the report focuses on new ways to finance, organize, and manage agricultural research to prepare the system for the challenges of the next century.



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