

## **Budget Cuts Slash LSU AgCenter Programs**

The governor's executive budget presented to the Legislature includes a reduction of approximately \$219 million for higher education. This is in addition to this year's midyear budget reduction to higher education of \$55 million. For the LSU AgCenter this means an additional \$13.3 million cut (15.1 percent) for FY 2010 over the FY 2009 \$3.8 million midyear budget cut (4.4 percent). These reductions will require the AgCenter to eliminate long-standing research and extension programs in Louisiana and will severely affect the food and fiber industry of Louisiana.

### ***Over the past decade:***

- A personnel decrease of 300 positions, which is about a 20 percent reduction in our workforce.
- Unfunded mandates and required costs (retirement, health insurance, civil service merits) increased by \$18.9 million, but only \$14.7 million was funded by the state. This effectively represents a 4.5 percent cut in state general funds.
- In only three of the past 10 years were state funds appropriated for faculty raises. As a result, the AgCenter salaries of all faculty ranks average 7.2 percent below those for southern peers.

## **Fiscal Year '09 Budget Cut Impact**

### ***Beef Research & Extension Programs***

The beef cattle industry contributed approximately \$400 million to the nearly \$11 billion in total value generated by Louisiana agriculture in 2007. Beef production ranked sixth among all agricultural commodities in economic importance to the state.

- By spring 2009, the AgCenter will have lost 62.5 percent (5 of 8 positions) of beef research and extension capacity needed to solve problems that limit profitability for our producers.

### ***Row Crop (Rice, Cotton, Soybean, Corn, Wheat, Milo) Research & Extension Programs***

Row crops contributed more than \$1.42 billion of the nearly \$11 billion in total farm gate value generated by Louisiana agriculture in 2007. Row crop production ranked 2nd among all agricultural commodities in economic importance to the state.

- Lost 56.3 percent (4.5 of 8 positions) of agronomy research capacity at research stations.
- The cotton production extension specialist position will remain unfilled.
- Lost 7 parish row crop county agent positions.

### ***Sugarcane Research & Extension Programs***

The sugarcane industry contributed approximately \$667 million of the nearly \$11 billion in total value generated by Louisiana agriculture in 2007. Sugarcane production ranked third among plant commodities and fourth among all agricultural commodities in economic importance to the state.

- Lost half (1 of 2 positions) the sugarcane breeding capacity that provides new varieties critical to this industry for profitability.
- The sugarcane production extension specialist position will remain unfilled.

### ***Forestry Research & Extension Programs***

The timber industry contributed more than \$4.2 billion of the nearly \$11 billion in total value

generated by Louisiana agriculture in 2007. Timber production ranked No. 1 among all agricultural commodities in economic importance to the state.

- Lost one area extension forestry position.

#### ***Wildlife and Fisheries Research & Extension Programs***

Economic evaluations indicate fishing contributes \$1.63 billion, hunting \$1.02 billion, and nonconsumptive activities (e.g., bird watching) contribute \$317 million to the state's economy.

- Lost nearly 30 percent critical capacity in wildlife management and fisheries ecology.
- Drastic reduction in the 4-H youth and adult wetland and outdoor skills education programs.

#### ***Commercial and Consumer Horticulture Research & Extension Programs***

Economic impact of Louisiana's "green industries" is more than \$2.2 billion annually.

Commercial fruit and vegetable production, including sweet potato, contributes nearly \$370 million to our state's economy.

- Lost 4 parish horticulture county agent positions.
- Lost engineering position responsible for horticultural equipment for the commercial vegetable and nursery industries.

#### ***4-H Youth Development Programs***

In 2008, the Louisiana 4-H program reached 243,522 youth, represented in all 64 parishes. Of these youth, 49,471 participated in school 4-H clubs, with 1,374 participating in 4-H community clubs. In addition, 194,628 youth across the state were reached by 4-H school enrichment programs.

- 17 vacant 4-H positions are frozen because of budget cuts. At the current level of reach per agent, this means the potential of 36,884, or 15 percent, fewer youth reached this year.
- Eliminated funding for individual project book curriculum (150,000 project books). 4-H students will have to purchase their own books.

#### ***Family and Consumer Sciences Research & Extension Programs***

Family and Consumer Science programs have a long history of serving the educational needs of families in three main focus areas: food, family and finances, which are particularly critical during this economic turndown.

- Three agent positions are vacant and will not be filled.

The LSU AgCenter provides the agricultural research and outreach that supports Louisiana's food and fiber system. The value of products and services generated by the industries in the food and fiber system totaled more than \$28 billion in 2007, with more than \$18 billion from product industries and almost \$10 billion from service industries.

With the recognized decrease in revenue for the state in the current fiscal year, the AgCenter has reduced the current operating budget by \$3.8 million. This was achieved through the elimination and reductions of funded positions, travel expenditures and equipment purchases. The AgCenter's budget includes 60.12% from the State General Fund, with the remaining revenue coming from self-generated funds, statutory dedications, grants and contracts, and federal funds. This high dependence on state funding magnifies the impact of these cuts to the AgCenter.

Unlike most institutions in higher education, the AgCenter has no students from which tuition is received. Without additional revenue to offset the lack of tuition (other campuses often use increased tuition and fees) and budget cuts, a reduction in the AgCenter's state operating budget will have devastating effects on the programs and initiatives provided for Louisiana.