STRATEGY FOR CARRYING OUT THE RESEARCH INITIATIVE

Industry-Academic-Government Partnership

Since the goals of this Initiative are broad and national in scope, a cooperative effort between industry, universities and government is needed. We propose that the Agricultural Research Service be the coordinating agency for the conduct of this research. Programs could be conducted by ARS, researchers at leading universities, other federal agencies, industry, or through any combination that would maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of the research itself. The intent of this Initiative is to conduct research in the most appropriate locations and with the most qualified people; not to add unnecessary or duplicate infrastructure.

Research Teams

The Initiative will be largely implemented by **research teams.** These teams will frequently involve multiple research locations spread across several states to ensure the right mix of scientific skills are available for a systematic research strategy. The research dollars will be coordinated by and through the Agricultural Research Service budget. In turn, ARS will work with university and private industry researchers to establish research teams. The value of the team approach is to maximize cooperation among all of the various research communities.

Interdisciplinary Approach

The need for interdisciplinary research strategies and teams is paramount. In addressing each of the research areas suggested by this Initiative, researchers must consider not only the specific goals of a project, but also how the results might impact or interact with other real-world production aspects. For example, "solving" a problem through biotechnology or genetic manipulation would only be useful if it does not create or exacerbate other problems encountered in producing or maintaining turfgrass in the field. None of the specific research programs in this Initiative is intended to be developed in isolation.

Interaction with Other Agricultural Research

This Initiative also envisions that research should seek to adapt results from other agriculture (or other biological) research areas, rather than starting anew for each crop or project. For example, if research is being conducted on corn or wheat that might benefit turfgrasses, then a valid research proposal would build on, rather than duplicate that research. In addition, all aspects of grassland agriculture (turf, forage, biofuels and ecosystem restoration) will benefit from a coordinated, national effort to collect, evaluate and preserve grass germplasm. Therefore, this strategy will achieve a greater return on every dollar invested in research.

Accountability and Communication

Accountability is an important consideration in all research efforts, and nowhere more so than when Federal funds are involved. Since this Initiative has been formulated with the joint input of industry, academic and government researchers, its success relies on that continued, joint input. This Initiative envisions that ARS will work with the industry to establish an on-going system of communication among the tripartite members of the coalition to ensure that research programs remain relevant to the needs of the industry.