In 1843, the Rothamsted Experiment Station was opened in England as the first agricultural experiment station in the world. On 2 Mar. 1887, President Grover Cleveland signed into law the Hatch Act, thus beginning the basis of agricultural research in the United States. Since that time, the foundation of agricultural research has been based on funding provided by this act and by state legislatures. In 2008, the U.S. Congress established the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and, with it, the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI), thereby changing the structure of how research dollars would be obtained and how research would be conducted.

Over the decades, these acts and establishments would provide millions of dollars to agronomy, crop, and soil science research, supplying scientists with the resources necessary to solve grand challenges of their day. As new and more complicated challenges arise while others remain unsolved, how will organizations like NIFA evaluate the distribution of funding? Furthermore, how will researchers, from graduate students to tenured professors, address the changing culture of agricultural research to meet the demands of the current exponential growth of the world population? These questions and more are what your ACS Graduate Student Committee seek to address at this year’s International Annual Meeting in Phoenix.

At this year’s meeting, we have organized a luncheon, titled “Think Tank on the Future of Agricultural and Environmental Research: Addressing the Need to Do More with Less,” to engage scientists of all levels in a candid discussion of these very issues. Due to the social, economic, and political changes that have occurred or are occurring on a global scale, researchers must adapt to the changing times and address the concerns of a growing population with increased concern and scrutiny. This session is designed to serve as a platform for addressing the new reality in research and research funding, bringing together currently established and future professionals, both in the private and public nexus, from the fields of agronomy, crops, and soils.

For this session, the committee has invited a distinguished panel of established experts with an in-depth understanding of the funding arena and future of ACS research. These experts represent all sectors of research, including non-governmental organizations, governmental funding agencies, industry professionals, and academic scholars. These individuals will discuss the “sleeping giant” topics of research including the perceived disconnect between relevant research and available funding as well as the perpetual “battle” of basic vs. applied fields. In order to engage the new generation of scientists, the session will be live-tweeted, moderating burning questions from the in-person audience and abroad to our panel of experts.

Look for more details on the session time and location online (http://bit.ly/2byh5k9) and follow @ASA_CSSA_SSSA on Twitter for updates. We hope you will join us for an engaging, cross-generational discussion on the future of research in agronomy, crop science, and soil science.

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