

FUNDING AND NETWORKING STRATEGIES FOR EXTENSION WEED SCIENTISTS. James J. Kells, Professor, Department of Crop and Soil Sciences, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824.

The discipline of weed science has experienced and will likely continue to experience a dramatic reduction in funding from the private sector. In addition, faculty positions in weed science at public universities are likely to decrease over the next several years with faculty retirements and reallocation of funds to other university initiatives. With diminishing resources, universities will very likely establish regional alliances to share faculty expertise across state lines. These trends will require extension weed scientists to seek creative ways to remain effective and relevant. Extension weed scientists should work to strategically develop complimentary expertise on a regional basis. With diminishing private sector support, extension weed scientists need to explore other funding sources. Potential funding sources include commodity groups, foundations, and regional and national competitive grant programs. USDA Competitive Grant Programs such as Crops at Risk (CAR), Risk Avoidance and Mitigation Program (RAMP), Organic Transition (OT), and Pest Management Alternatives Program (PMAP) are viable funding sources which have not been fully utilized. Although the emphasis of these programs is usually research, they all require that projects include an outreach (extension) component. Regional programs such as North Central Integrated Pest Management (NC-IPM) and North Central Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (NC-SARE) are important potential sources for research and extension funding. In order to be competitive for these funds, collaboration will be needed among weed scientists regionally and with other crop and pest management disciplines.