



LSU AgCenter Budget Call to Action

Dear LSU AgCenter Supporter,

Your LSU AgCenter is facing drastic budget cuts due to a deficit in the state's budget if sensible solutions are not realized. **We are asking you to contact your State Senator and Representative to:**

1. **Educate them on the value of our programs to them and their community.**
2. **Explain that further budget reductions will cause the elimination of parish based extension services, termination of valuable research initiatives, closure of research stations and reduction in teaching programs.**
3. **Stress the importance of quickly finding solutions to resolve the budget issue.**

Your legislator's contact information can be located at this link

<https://www.legis.la.gov/legis/FindMyLegislators.aspx>



Friday afternoon, the state operating budget was moved to the floor of the Senate for approval. Members of the Senate finance committee amended the budget bill to show the devastating impact the fiscal cliff will have on state government if additional revenue is not generated. The chairman of the finance committee testified this is a "pretend budget," meaning it is only intended to show this serious potential impact. However, the implications are very real.

The budget, as it stands now, includes more than \$96 million in state general fund cuts to higher education along with a 30 percent reduction in TOPS funding. Under this scenario, AgCenter budget could be cut by more than \$10 million. The AgCenter has already experienced more than \$20 million in reductions, or 18 percent, since July of 2008. A reduction of this magnitude would have widespread negative impact on the research and extension programs across the state

Commissioner of Administration Jay Dardenne testified in committee that if reductions of this magnitude are passed and the Legislature does not renew sales taxes or increase other revenue-generating measures, the reductions would devastate statewide AgCenter programs.

It is anticipated that a second special session will be convened immediately after the current session ends to address the renewal of a sales tax to fill the shortfall. There is, and has been, much controversy among legislators on taxes. We do not know what will actually be palatable when a final vote comes.

We encourage you to contact your legislators to discuss sensible solutions to address the nearly \$650 million shortfall they are trying to fill.

