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Deans on the Hill is a Big Success!

What a great three days we had with our recent Executive Committee meeting and "Deans on the Hill" program. Special thanks to the Deans, Directors, and Department Heads from 19 states who participated. We made over 80 personal visits to Congressional offices with a unified message asking for FY '08 funding for McIntire-Stennis at \$30 million, RREA at \$8 million, and NRI at \$256 million. We explained our needs, answered questions, and thanked our various Congressional representatives for their support.

The reception celebrating the 25th Anniversary of our organization was held in the House Agriculture Committee hearing room on the evening of March 6th and was attended by 130 people including three Members of Congress, numerous Congressional staff, the new Chief of the USFS, Agenda 2020 Board Members, USFS research leadership team, and leaders from AF&PA and SAF. Special thanks to Terri Bates and Randy Nuckolls for their efforts to make these meetings last week effective and successful.

During our Executive Committee meeting, we visited with Colleen Heffernan, the head of CSREES, Anne Bartuska, the head of Forest Service Research, and had very worthwhile discussions with other partners at CSREES, USFS, AF&PA, and SAF. The McIntire-Stennis Strategic Plan is near completion and will be sent to our membership for review this spring before its final approval. You will be notified later this spring about an early summer conference call to provide NAUFRP members with an update on FY '08 funding, the status of the 2007 Farm bill, CREATE 21, and other matters of interest.

If you have questions regarding NAUFRP, do not hesitate to give us a call. You can also check our website www.naufnp.org for the latest updated position papers that were distributed to Congressional offices during our Deans on the Hill visits. I hope you have a pleasant and productive spring.

George Hopper