

IFAS Matters

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IFAS Matters - August 2013

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Innovation Matters

"Hedge your bets" is advice we receive about many aspects of life. However, in my opinion, hedging our bets by cutting government spending for research and innovation is not a good strategy.

In horse racing parlance, it's hard to see the logic in where the hedge bet is being placed. On one hand, we are betting less on our long-time favorite horse, "Innovation Preeminence," but somehow, expect him to win. Unfortunately, "Innovation Preeminence" isn't getting the level of care and feeding that he needs to win, or even place. In fact, over the past decade he's been undernourished and over-trained. The rest of our money seems to be going on a pampered newcomer called "Deficit

Multimedia

Tropical Aquaculture Lab



Interview with Craig Watson about Florida's tropical fish industry and the work done at the tropical aquaculture lab. [Watch Video>>](#)

Tropical Pests



UF/IFAS' Dr. Lance Osborne talking tropical pests on "Ask This Old House," scene 4. [View Video>>](#)

Responding to the Rainbow



Kevin Folta and his graduate students are teaching kids how light "affects" plant growth.

[Recent studies by UF professor highlighted by scientific journal](#)

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[Phil Stansly honored with a proclamation from the Collier County Board of Commissioners](#)

[UF/IFAS' Phil Kaufman to be lauded as Illinois 4-H alumnus](#)

Reducer,” although *we don't really expect him to win any races. We're just hedging our bets.*

On July 31st more than 160 university presidents and chancellors sent a letter to President Obama and Congress urging them to increase investments in research and higher education in order to close what they called an “innovation deficit.” Their letter appears as an advertisement in Politico, a newspaper in Washington, D.C. The letter states that the United States is “rapidly losing ground” to countries that have increased spending on research and education, and adds that “further cuts including sequestration will only exacerbate the problem.”

It starts out like this:

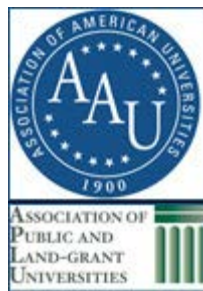
Dear President Obama & Members of the 113th Congress: Our nation's role as the world's innovation leader is in serious jeopardy. The combination of eroding federal investments in research and higher education, additional cuts due to sequestration, and the enormous resources other nations are pouring into these areas is creating a new kind of deficit for the United States: an innovation deficit.

The authors urged Mr. Obama and Congress to “reject unsound budget cuts” and to “recommit to strong and sustained investments in research and education.”

For my money, any time you have two bets going that work against each other, one of them almost has to be a bad percentage bet. It's not only a pity, but short-term thinking to starve “Innovation Preeminence,” and overfeed “Deficit Reducer,” for the same reason that there will never be another thoroughbred named “Secretariat,” there will also never be another USA “Innovation Preeminence.”

By the way, I'm still betting on “Innovation Preeminence.”

-Jack



Innovation Deficit

University presidents urge the President and Congress to close the innovation deficit.

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Economic Impact

UF study: Florida's agricultural and natural resources industries remain strong since recession.

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Articles

NPR Feature



New bugs in Florida stymie researchers, threaten crops.

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Bee College



UF/IFAS expands Bee College to South Florida, including courses in Spanish.

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Gardening Solutions



UF/IFAS debuts new gardening videos.

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African Dust



UF/IFAS to research the approximately 50 million metric tons of African dust that's deposited over Florida each year.

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Goliath Grouper

UF/IFAS study finds feelings run deep in goliath grouper debate.

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UF/IFAS Solutions



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