Science Societies

MAHA strategy report released to address children's health

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The Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) Commission released its strategy report earlier this week with an emphasis on continued and additional research to ensure the health of American children. Overall, the report focuses on contributions to chronic disease beyond the food system, including physical activity, environmental contaminants, and prescription drug use. This article outlines the areas that impact agriculture and research.

The Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) Commission released its strategy report earlier this week with an emphasis on continued and additional research to ensure the health of American children. Four strategies were outlined to address childhood chronic diseases: advance research, realign incentives, foster private-sector collaboration, and increase public awareness.

Overall, the report focuses on contributions to chronic disease beyond the food system, including physical activity, environmental contaminants, and prescription drug use. Below are some of the recommendations that impact agriculture and research.

Pesticides

The report recommends the USEPA, National Institutes of Health (NIH), and USDA develop a research and evaluation framework for cumulative exposure across chemical classes. In addition, the USEPA will use the increased scientific capacity from new hires

in the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention and the Office of Water to ensure more timely reviews of pest management tools. The USEPA will work to reform the approval process for the full range of chemical and biologic products to protect against weeds, pests, and disease to increase the availability of more innovative growing solutions for farmers. Notably, the report does not recommend restrictions on specific pesticides.

Soil health

A focus on soil health is also featured prominently in the report, which directs USDA and USEPA to promote and incentivize farming solutions that focus on soil health and stewardship of the land. The report specifically calls out the value of USDA's voluntary conservation programs, conservation technical assistance, and ensuring growers have access to new and better tools to enable soil health practices.

Agricultural innovation

Precision agriculture practices and technologies are highlighted in the report with the USDA and USEPA launching partnerships with the private sector to support increased crop productivity and reduce the total amount of pesticides needed.

Research

The report also highlights the need for more and better federal research that is more transparent in support of children's health. As part of USDA’s research security initiative, the USDA will mandate annual disclosures for researchers of the amount, type, and source of research funding received. The report also reenforces actions related to research security and transparency in Executive Orders on Restoring Gold Standard Science (EO 14303) and Improving Oversight of Federal Grantmaking (EO 14332).

Join the Societies' MAHA working group

Given the growing interest in MAHA, ASA, CSSA, and SSSA are seeking members to join a working group to discuss policy recommendations and potential engagement on these issues. Please email Luther Smith if you'd like to serve on the working group.

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