

Charles Valentine Riley Memorial Foundation



Pursuing a Unifying Message: Overview

The Charles Valentine Riley Memorial Foundation (RMF) has been leading a collaborative effort to pursue a unifying message in support of elevating food, agricultural and natural resources research as a national priority. This effort has been a launching pad — not to craft the message, but to inspire diverse stakeholders to come together, understand how important this goal is for society and realize the benefits of a shared approach and a compelling, common message to make this research the priority it must be for our common future. However, the ultimate goal is to craft a unifying message that will have broad support.

2013

In June, discussion at the RMF and American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Riley Lecture Leadership Breakfast focused on concerns about the nation's future position internationally due to declining research investment and a decline in productivity. A key point: Federal priority for agricultural research wouldn't change unless the agricultural community could unite with a common message and goal.

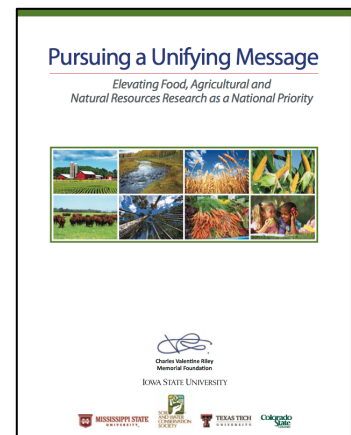
In July, RMF released a briefing paper on international investments in agricultural research and productivity data from USDA-ERS. In August, a *Science* editorial written by Alan Leshner, then the CEO of AAAS, stated: "Agriculture R&D provides a dramatic example of how neglect can undermine a scientific domain."

In November, RMF organized a focus group of 17 participants hosted by AAAS to discuss advancing food, agricultural and natural resources research through development of a common message. A partnership was formed to explore pursuing a unifying message, led by RMF and Iowa State University and including Mississippi State University, Soil and Water Conservation Society, Texas Tech University and Colorado State University.

2014

Planning began in January for an RMF report making the case for pursuing a unifying message. In June, a unifying message was part of the panel discussion at the 2014 Riley Memorial Lecture at AAAS, and central to the keynote address by Dr. Duane Nellis, president of Texas Tech University, at the 2014 RMF/AAAS Riley Leadership Breakfast.

In December, the RMF report, *Pursuing a Unifying Message: Elevating Food, Agricultural and Natural Resources Research as a National Priority* was released at the National Press Club. **The report is available online: rileymemorial.org/.** The report concluded that the nation's leadership and competitiveness on a global scale are at stake. China and India are dramatically increasing investments in agricultural research compared to waning support in the US. Also, agricultural productivity rates in China and Brazil are increasing rapidly while the same rates are slowing in the U.S. Awareness is growing that U.S. agriculture is unprepared to meet looming challenges facing the nation and world and increased federal funding will be required to meet those challenges. Resulting research should impact the lives of everyone, resulting in safe and nutritious food, healthy families, quality environment, renewable energy and a growing economy.



2015

In April, RMF held a stakeholder event, hosted by AAAS, with 23 leaders of universities and university associations to discuss the unifying message.

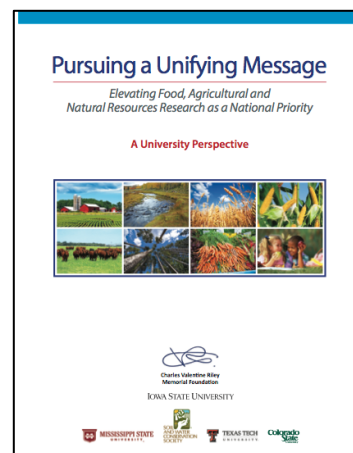
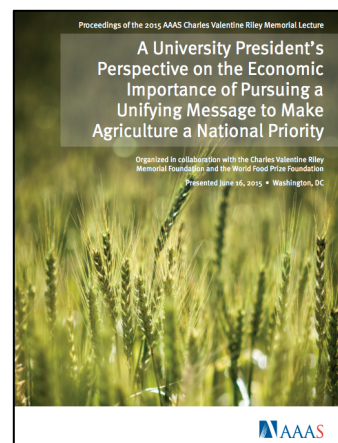
In June, the 2015 AAAS Charles Valentine Riley Memorial Lecture was presented by Dr. Steven Leath, president of Iowa State University — *A University President's Perspective on the Economic Importance of Pursuing a Unifying Message to Make Agriculture a National Priority*. **The lecture proceedings and video are available online: aaas.org/riley-lecture.**

Complementing the Riley Lecture's unifying message theme was the keynote address by Dr. Randy Woodson, president of North Carolina State University, at the 2015 RMF/AAAS Riley Leadership Breakfast.

At the same time, RMF released its second report summarizing the university stakeholder discussion, *Pursuing a Unifying Message: Elevating Food, Agricultural and Natural Resources Research as a National Priority. A University Perspective*. **The report is available online: rileymemorial.org/.**

On December 9, 2015, RMF conducted another stakeholder event, hosted by AAAS, with leaders from 23 scientific societies and associations. A report on the event will be released in early 2016 as the third unifying message report.

By the end of 2015, endorsements in support of pursuing a unifying message were received from 6 university presidents, chairs of 2 key committees within the Board on Agriculture Assembly within the Association for Public and Land-grant Universities, the Non-land grant Agricultural and Natural Resources Universities, the Southwest Council for Agribusiness and a commodity organization.



2016

RMF plans under development for 2016 include:

- Securing additional endorsements from key leaders and stakeholder organizations. (In early 2016, endorsements were received from the Delta Council and 4 farm or commodity organizations.)
- Organizing a third stakeholder event for leaders in the food and nutrition research area. Other key stakeholder events also are under consideration.
- Looking forward to the 2016 AAAS Riley Memorial Lecture in June, which is expected to again address or highlight the pursuit of a unifying message.
- Working to develop plans for a final, integrated report on the unifying message, tentatively aimed at release in January 2017.

About the Charles Valentine Riley Memorial Foundation (rileymemorial.org/)

The theme of many RMF activities is "to promote a broader and more complete understanding of agriculture as the most basic human endeavor and to enhance agriculture through increased scientific knowledge." RMF builds upon Charles Valentine Riley's legacy as a "whole picture" person, recognizing that a vibrant and robust food, agricultural, forestry and environmental-resource system is essential for human progress and world peace.

January 14, 2016