SNE

November 8, 2002

CSREES Listening Sessions
University Outreach and Extension – Jackson County
1507 South Nolan Road
Independence, MO 64055-1307
Attn: Cindy Zluticky

Dear CSREES Staff:

As CSREES gathers input about the effectiveness of its existing programs, the Society for Nutrition Education (SNE) urges you to recognize the critical and timely need for effective educational models and to continue funding research and programs that allow for the translation of research into effective models for community-based interventions. The National Research Initiative (NRI), Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems (IFAFS) and other grant programs can make a significant impact on our nation's health by funding new research to increase educators' ability to improve health-related behaviors. We need innovative, research-based approaches combat obesity and improve health, especially for individuals that have been "hard-to-reach" with traditional interventions. In addition, we need more rigorous measurement tools to assess dietary behaviors and to evaluate the impact of our programs. Behavior-oriented research, curricula and evaluation tools will enable food/nutrition educators to achieve and document outcomes in the form of meaningful changes in behaviors and lifestyle choices.

CSREES administers the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program as well as locally based extension programs that focus on nutrition education. The unique value of community-based programs which are linked to state and federal resources and oversight has been well documented. We urge you to continue to invest in these high quality programs.

SNE is the professional organization for over 1300 professionals in nutrition education research and practice. SNE is dedicated to advancing the professional achievements of our members by promoting healthy, sustainable food choices, with an overarching vision of healthy people in healthy communities. As such, we are familiar with the complex array of issues and opportunities related to promoting healthy, active lifestyles for Americans.

SNE is not alone in recognizing the importance of behavior-oriented nutrition research and practice at this important time. The objectives for the nation in *Healthy People 2010* (created by leading scientists and health experts in and out of government) stress the need for "culturally appropriate and linguistically competent community health promotion programs" (objective 7-11) and "research and evaluation of communication programs" (objective 11-3).

Similarly, The Institute of Medicine's 2001 report on *Health and Behavior: The Interplay of Biological, Behavioral and Societal Influences* states as its #1 recommendation that "Funding agencies should direct resources toward interdisciplinary efforts for research and intervention studies that integrate biological, psychological, behavioral, and social variables" and #2 that "Research efforts to elucidate the mechanisms by which social and psychological factors influence health should be encouraged. Intervention studies are needed to evaluate the effectiveness of

modifying these factors to improve health and prevent disease...Research should include all levels of intervention, from individual to family, community, and society."

In summary, there has never been a more important time to support nutrition education and behavior research and to deliver highly effective nutrition education programs. SNE urges you to devote CSREES resources to research that can build and strengthen models for effective educational interventions and to support educational programs that can document impact. Such investments will increase our ability to modify health behaviors and achieve success in reducing the rates of diet-related chronic disease.

Sincerely,

Kathleen McMahon, PhD, RD	Jane Voichick, PhD	Elizabeth Crockett, PhD
SNE President	SNE President-Elect	SNE Vice President