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Question1:

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Question6: The California Strawberry Commission is currently engaged with similar berry grower organizations throughout the United States to develop a National Berry Crop Initiative (NBCI). The NBCI is a partnership of industry, academia, and government formed to develop a strategic research and Extension plan for the continued growth and sustainability of berry crop production in the United States. The mission of the NBCI is to be the world leader in identifying and responding to trends that affect the sustainability of berry crop industries.

Goals of the NBCI provide a framework for research and extension programs. Among stated NBCI goals are:

To obtain a FDA health claim for berry crops; To characterize and improve the contribution of berry crops to the quality of life in rural communities; To optimize the interaction of the genotype, cultural practices and the environment to optimize yield and nutritional and nutraceutical content of the berry crops and products; To manage the water cycle, nutrient/mineral cycle, and energy flow through production fields and processing facilities in a sustainable manner; and To insure that berry crop producers have necessary risk management tools.

These goals parallel Strategic Goal 2 (Support increased economic opportunities and improved quality of life in rural America), Strategic Goal 4 (Improve the nation's nutrition and health) and Strategic Goal 5 (Protect and enhance the nation's natural resource base and environment) as described within the USDA's Strategic Plan Framework as major programmatic policies and objectives.

Farm Bill funding, in a partnership between government, academic, and non-profit business sectors, is critical to the success of the NBCI.

Joint public-private sector funding will allow for collaborative and creative research activities and technology transfer through extension services to accomplish the aggressive goals of the NBCI.