

May 13, 2011

The Honorable Jack Kingston, Chair
The Honorable Sam Farr, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Support for Restoring Funds to Top-Line Budgets of ARS and NIFA

Dear Chairman Kingston and Ranking Member Farr:

The undersigned organizations are writing to you with respect to agricultural and food research funding for FY 2012 and the need to restore funds cut from the top-line budgets of both the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) during the FY 2011 appropriations process.

We represent a broad cross-section of American agriculture and food stakeholders. Although we serve diverse interests, we share an unwavering commitment to maintaining the federal agricultural and food research, development and education (R&D) efforts that produce scientific outcomes needed to help the agricultural and food system achieve multiple national objectives.

The ARS appropriation in FY 2011 totaled \$1.113 billion, which is \$117 million less than the FY 2010 appropriated level of \$1.251 billion. Similarly, NIFA funding in FY 2011 totaled \$1.230 billion, which is \$128 million less than the FY 2010 appropriated level of \$1.359 billion. These reductions will have a direct impact on the USDA science research program, hurting both the intramural R&D programs conducted by ARS and the extramural R&D programs funded through NIFA, and these programs' ability to provide the scientific outcomes needed by the agricultural and food sector and to serve the national interest.

We understand that the federal budget deficit must be reduced and that the agriculture and food sector will not be immune to program reductions. However, we are very concerned about both the magnitude of the cuts made in FY 2011 and the many meritorious research projects that were shut down under the moratorium on congressionally directed spending. Many of the undersigned organizations could point to a number of NIFA and ARS projects that had proven outcomes and measurable benefits, even though they were not competitively awarded.

We appreciate the fact that your Subcommittee attempted, as best you could under the circumstances, to address this situation by making small increases to three NIFA programs (Hatch Act, McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry, and Evans-Allen) in the final FY 2011 bill. We urge you to revisit this matter when you put together the FY 2012 Agriculture Appropriations bill. There are programs at both ARS and NIFA that deserve modest increases in light of the decision to forgo congressionally directed projects in both the FY 2011 and FY 2012 appropriations cycles.

Societal demands and expectations placed upon the agricultural and food system are ever-changing and growing. Our nation has a serious and unsustainable agricultural and food R&D deficit, just as the nation has a budget deficit. Failure to address this research deficit will have real negative consequences, not just to the agricultural and food system but to the entire nation and U.S. economy.

Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

American Association of Avian Pathologists
American Dairy Science Association (ADSA)
American Dietetic Association (ADA)
American Feed Industry Association (AFIA)
American Sheep Industry Association
American Society for Nutrition (ASN)
American Society of Agronomy (ASA)
American Society of Animal Science (ASAS)
American Soybean Association (ASA)
American Sugar Alliance
American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA)
Aquatic Plant Management Society
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC)
Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO)
Council for Agricultural Science and Technology (CAST)
CropLife America
Crop Science Society of America (CSSA)
Ecological Society of America (ESA)
Federation of Animal Science Societies (FASS)
Institute of Food Technologists (IFT)
Johne's Disease Integrated Program (JDIP)
Kansas State University
National Agricultural Biotechnology Council (NABC)
National Association of Plant Breeders
National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG)
National Chicken Council (NCC)
National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives (NCFC)
National Farmers Union
National Sorghum Producers
North American Millers' Association (NAMA)
North Central Weed Management Society
Northeastern Weed Management Society
Poultry Science Association (PSA)
Soil Science Society of America (SSSA)
Southern Weed Science Society
USA Rice Federation
U.S. Rice Producers Association
Weed Science Society of America (WSSA)
Western Society of Weed Science