

Media Release

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## **Ag Producer Leader Calls Increased Funding Key to Farm Bill Research Title Implementation**

**Washington, DC** – September 30, 2009 – Joseph H. Layton, Jr., a soybean, corn and grape producer on Maryland's Eastern Shore, emphasized the priority need for increased federal funding for food and agricultural research, extension and education at an oversight hearing convened today by the House Agriculture Subcommittee on Conservation, Credit and Research regarding implementation of the 2008 Farm Bill Research Title. Layton testified as a producer and on behalf of the American Soybean Association (ASA) and the National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research (National C-FAR), and the USDA National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education and Economics (NAREEE) Advisory Board.

"We are all customers—farmers, consumers and, yes, even Congress—who are dependent upon our food and ag research programs for sound answers," Layton said. "We must seize this historic opportunity to come together in support of increased federal funding for both fundamental and applied research if we are to expect our researchers to provide the science-based outcomes needed to meet multiple challenges we are facing, both known and unknown."

Layton expressed excitement about the vision and leadership that U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Under Secretary Rajiv Shah and newly appointed National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) Director Roger Beachy are bringing to USDA's research mission, pledging that ASA and National C-FAR would work with USDA on the new roadmap to implement Research Title reforms and to work with the Administration and Congress in support of critical increases in funding.

Layton pointed out that the Research Title of the 2008 Farm Bill represents the nation's signature federal investment in the future of the food and agricultural sector, with the success of every other Title in the Farm Bill and those who are charged with carrying out their respective missions dependent in significant part on scientific outcomes and tools generated by research programs.

"Research reforms we all support will not work if the USDA research mission remains seriously underfunded," warned Layton. He said the NAREEE Advisory Board had taken a detailed look at several research areas and had been concerned about the insufficient level of funding in all instances. The ag leader called for increasing funding for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) to the fully authorized level of \$700 million annually as soon as possible, as part of increased funding overall for both extramural and intramural research.

National C-FAR (<http://www.ncfar.org>) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, consensus-based, and *customer-led* coalition that brings food, agriculture, nutrition, conservation, and natural resource stakeholders together with the food and agriculture research and extension community, serving as a forum and a unified voice in support of sustaining and increasing public investment at the national level in food and agricultural research, extension, and education. Layton is National C-FAR President.

ASA (<http://www.soygrowers.com>) represents 22,000 producer members on national issues of importance to all U.S. soybean farmers. Layton serves on the ASA Board and represents ASA on the National C-FAR Board.

The NAREEE Advisory Board, established by Congress, provides advice to the Secretary of Agriculture, land-grant colleges and universities, and to the Congress on top priorities and policies for food and agricultural research, education, extension and economics. The Board is made up of 25 members, each of which represents a specific category of U.S. agricultural stakeholders.