

Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) Coalition

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July 15, 2015

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Chairman, Agriculture Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
Ranking Member, Agriculture Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Moran and Ranking Member Merkley:

As you prepare to mark up your FY 2016 agriculture appropriations bill, we write on behalf of the AFRI Coalition's broad and diverse collection of organizations, scientific societies and interest groups, to urge your support for increased funding for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) in the final Senate agriculture funding bill.

AFRI is by far the largest competitive grants program for fundamental and applied agriculture research, extension and education, and funds high priority research grants in areas of critical concern to our country. Research underpins the success of any sector, and the future of our food and farming system relies on increased investment in innovations today. Strengthening AFRI along with the suite of other competitive research programs administered by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture will be key to solving challenges facing future generations.

We were pleased to see a request of \$450 million included in the President's Budget for Fiscal Year 2016, but were disappointed that both the House and Senate bills fall far short in providing this level of funding in their respective agriculture funding bills. While the House bill does provide for a small increase in funding of \$335 million for AFRI, the Senate bill holds the program to current funding levels, despite the emphasis on the importance of agricultural research during the subcommittee markup of the Senate agriculture funding bill.

As you continue negotiations over final program funding levels for Fiscal Year 2016 with your colleagues on the Senate Appropriations Committee, we strongly urge you to secure additional funding for AFRI to bring total funding up to at least \$335 million, as provided in the House bill.

We look forward to supporting you in this important effort and thank you for your continued support of AFRI and strengthening agricultural research.

Sincerely,

The AFRI Coalition¹

cc: Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee

¹ Members of the AFRI Coalition include:

American Dairy Science Association
American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering
American Phytopathological Society
American Society for Horticultural Science
American Society for Microbiology
American Society for Nutrition
American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers
American Society of Agronomy
American Society of Animal Science
American Society of Plant Biologists
American Soybean Association
American Veterinary Medical Association
Aquatic Plant Management Society
Association of American Universities
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Biotechnology Industry Organization
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Council on Food, Agricultural, and Resource Economics
Crop Science Society of America
Entomological Society of America
Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology
Federation of Animal Science Societies
Genetics Society of America
Institute of Food Technologists
Iowa State University
Michael Fields Agricultural Institute
National Association of Plant Breeders
National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
National Turfgrass Federation
North Central Weed Science Society
Northeastern Weed Science Society
Poultry Science Association
Society of Nematologists
Soil Science Society of America
Southern Weed Science Society
The American Physiological Society
The Rodale Institute
Union of Concerned Scientists
University of California - Riverside
Weed Science Society of America
Western Society of Weed Science