

FRIENDS OF THE AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE

February 26, 2016

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chairman, Subcommittee on Agriculture,
Rural Development, Food and Drug
Administration and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sam Farr
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Agriculture
Rural Development, Food and Drug
Administration and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Rogers and Aderholt, and Ranking Members Lowey and Farr:

The Friends of the Agricultural Research Service Coalition (FARS) writes in support of increased funding for the USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS). We urge the Committee to provide no less than \$1,161,340,000. Investments in sound science will lead to healthy animals and plants, healthy soil, and safe and nutritious food.

ARS has a strong track record of providing science-based solutions to critical agricultural challenges faced by the Nation, thereby improving the competitiveness and sustainability of U.S. agriculture. ARS intramural research is uniquely suited for projects that require a long-term investment leading to high-impact payoffs, while maintaining the capacity and readiness to respond to emerging and pressing problems.

ARS also plays a critical role in partnering with the university community and industry to advance science and address emerging issues. These partnerships are strengthened through ARS extramural support of research at these institutions.

FARS is encouraged by the agency's increased focus on livestock production and protection research programs in critical areas such as avian influenza, foreign animal diseases and antimicrobial resistance. ARS research has been critical to anticipating and addressing challenges faced by producers of both commodity and specialty crops with recent focus on using big data to improve crop genetics and management. ARS has the potential to make significant progress towards solving problems facing America's crop, livestock, and poultry producers.

We are also pleased to see the ARS investment in research to improve water management and increase water use efficiency. Unprecedented drought in places like California underscores the importance of this work.

FARS thanks the committee for investing in ARS infrastructure in fiscal 2016. To that end we support the President's request of \$94.5 million to address the next highest priority facilities identified in the Capital Investment Strategy to support ARS facilities.

As you work on agriculture appropriations for fiscal year 2017, we urge you to provide no less than \$1,161,340,000 to carry out the important mission of ARS. This level of funding will ensure that ARS can respond to new pests and diseases, drought, food safety issues and environmental concerns. Thank you for your consideration of our request. FARS stands ready to work with you as the process moves forward and answer any questions that you may have.

Sincerely,

American Association of Mycobacterial Diseases
American Dairy Science Association
American Malting Barley Association
American Seed Trade Association
American Society for Horticultural Science
American Society for Microbiology
American Society for Nutrition
American *Society* of Agronomy
American Society of Plant Biologists
American Veterinary Medical Association
Animal Health Institute
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Crop Science Society of America
Entomological Society of America
FASS
Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals Multistate Initiative
National Association for the Advancement of Animal Science
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Barley Growers Association
National Barley Improvement Committee
National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research
National Sunflower Association
Rural and Agriculture Council of America
Society for Range Management
Soil Science Society of America
U.S. Canola Association
U.S. Dry Bean Council
U.S. Dairy Forage Research Center Research and Industry Committee
USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council

cc: members of the House Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies