August 17, 2018

The Hon. Pat Roberts  
Chairman, U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry  
Washington, DC 20510

The Hon. Mike Conaway  
Chairman, U.S. House Committee on Agriculture  
Washington, DC 20515

The Hon. Debbie Stabenow  
Ranking Member, U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry  
Washington, DC 20510

The Hon. Collin Peterson  
Ranking Member, U.S. House Committee on Agriculture  
Washington, DC 20515

RE: NCFAR Support for Food and Ag Research Provisions in 2018 Farm Bill Conference

Senators Roberts and Stabenow and Congressmen Conaway and Peterson,

The National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research (NCFAR) urges conferees to include strong support for the food and agricultural research, extension and education enterprise, and in particular provisions in the Senate-passed legislation that provide mandatory funding for specialty crop, organics, and biomass research, as well as additional funds for FFAR.

NCFAR appreciates that both the House and Senate have recognized the importance of food and agricultural research, extension and education throughout the Farm Bill reauthorization process.

While there are a number of important research provisions in both the House and Senate versions of the Farm Bill, NCFAR strongly supports provisions in the Senate-passed legislation as briefly highlighted below and urges that they be included by conferees in the final conference report.

The Senate’s Farm Bill Research Title (Title VII) would make significant additional federal investments in food and agricultural research, extension and education through both mandatory and discretionary USDA programs. These funding increases are critical to advancing scientific discovery and spurring technology that will propel the U.S. food and agricultural system, ensure our nation’s food security and global competitiveness, and mitigate risk.

Mandatory funding is provided in the Senate-passed bill for specialty crop, organics, and biomass research, as well as providing the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research (FFAR) additional funding to ensure the continued development of public-private partnerships that complement the USDA food and agricultural research, extension and education mission and help address agricultural grand challenges. The Senate-passed bill would also create a new advanced research and development authority within USDA with flexibility to work with other federal agencies and private entities to advance food defense and specialty crop research.

NCFAR is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, consensus-based and customer-led coalition that brings food, agriculture, nutrition, conservation and natural resource organizations together with the food and agricultural research and extension community, serving as a forum and unified voice in support of sustaining and increasing public investment at the national level in food and agricultural research, extension and education.

NCFAR thanks the conferees for working to achieve a final conference report that increases investment in the nation’s food and agricultural research, extension and education enterprise to ensure our nation remains at the forefront of food and agricultural innovation.
Respectfully Submitted on behalf of NCFAR,

R. Thomas Van Arsdall

Executive Director

CC: Conferees