



American Society of Agronomy • Crop Science Society of America • Soil Science Society of America

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April 4, 2013

The Honorable Mark Pryor
Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, FDA, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, FDA, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

**RE: FY14 Appropriations—Support for USDA Research, Education, and Economics
Mission Areas**

Dear Chairman Pryor and Ranking Member Blunt:

The American Society of Agronomy (ASA), Crop Science Society of America (CSSA), and Soil Science Society of America (SSSA) represent over 18,000 members in academia, industry, and government, and 12,500 Certified Crop Advisers, as the largest coalition of professionals dedicated to the agronomic, crop and soil science disciplines in the United States. ASA, CSSA, and SSSA are dedicated to developing innovative, science-based solutions to meet our growing food, fuel, feed, and fiber needs. With an ever expanding global population and increasing food demands, investment in food and agriculture research is essential to maintaining our nation's food, economic and national security.

ASA, CSSA, and SSSA support the President's fiscal year 2013 budget request for the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Research, Education, and Economics (REE) mission areas. Our support includes both USDA's suite of extramural programs in the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), such as the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) and capacity funds, and USDA's intramural programs including the Agricultural Research Service (ARS). Specifically, we support **\$1.244 billion for NIFA** to maintain funding for agricultural research, extension, and higher education activities.

Within NIFA, ASA, CSSA, and SSSA support **\$236 million for Hatch Act formula funding**, which supports agricultural research conducted at state agricultural experiment stations located within our Nation's great land-grant colleges and universities. We also strongly support **at least \$325 million in funding for AFRI**. AFRI is the premier competitive grants program for fundamental and applied research, extension and education in support of our nation's food and agricultural systems. A December 2012 report authored by the President's Council of Advisers on Science and Technology (PCAST) urged a commitment of \$700 million for new agricultural research. The PCAST report concludes that now is the time to move agricultural research

ahead by increasing funding for competitive grants in order to address some of the Nation's most pressing challenges: severe weather management, depleted water resources, animal disease and emerging plant pest risks.

Additionally, we support **at least \$1.103 billion for ARS**. ARS research programs and technologies ensure high-quality, safe food and other agricultural products, assesses the nutritional needs of Americans, help to sustain a competitive agricultural economy, enhance the natural resource base and the environment, and provide economic opportunities for rural citizens and communities.

While we understand the budgetary challenges facing the Subcommittee, investments in publicly funded research are critical for maintaining a successful agriculture and food sector. For every \$1 invested in publicly funded agricultural and food research, \$20 in economic activity is generated. In addition, from 2002-2009 federal funding for agricultural research and development has declined by 13%. The budgetary decisions made this year have far reaching impacts: scientific research funded today will be responsible for enhancing the Nation's agricultural productivity and economic prosperity in the future.

Given the current uncertainty about the President's FY 2014 budget request, we hope this correspondence will be the first step in an ongoing dialogue between the Subcommittee and stakeholders about the FY 2014 budget needs of ARS and NIFA.

Thank you for your consideration. For additional information or to learn more about the ASA, CSSA, and SSSA, please contact Karl Anderson, Director of Government Relations, at kanderson@sciencesocieties.org or 202-408-4781.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ellen Bergfeld". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ellen" and last name "Bergfeld" clearly distinguishable.

Ellen Bergfeld
CEO

Cc:

Members of the Senate Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies