



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

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March 19, 2014

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

RE: FY15 Appropriations—Support for USDA Research, Education, and Economics Mission Areas

Dear Chairman Aderholt and Ranking Member Farr:

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, 12,500 Certified Crop Advisers (CCA), and 781 Certified Professional Soil Scientist (CPSS), as the largest coalition of professionals dedicated to the agronomic, crop and soil science disciplines in the United States.

In the coming decades, our agricultural system must sustainably produce food, fuel, feed, and fiber for a rapidly growing global population. The Nation's economic prosperity and security depend on our dedication to developing innovative, science-based solutions to meet our growing agricultural needs.

We support the following areas of the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Research, Education, and Economics (REE) mission areas for fiscal year 2015 budget:

\$1.149 billion for the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), USDA's intramural programs which conduct research and provide access to scientific information to solve national agriculture problems of high priority. This level represents a small increase over the FY14 enacted level of \$1.122 billion and would restore the \$23 million cut to ARS research programs called for in the President's budget request.

\$1.341 billion for the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), USDA's suite of extramural programs whose primary role is to provide a link between federal and state research initiatives through partnerships with educational institutions and competitive grant programs.

Within NIFA, we specifically support:

\$360 million for Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI). AFRI is the premier competitive grants program for fundamental and applied research, extension, and education to support of our nation's food and agricultural systems. In December 2012, the President's Council of Advisers on Science and Technology (PCAST) urged a commitment of \$500 million for AFRI.

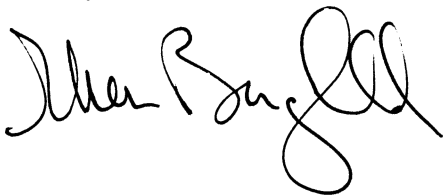
\$244 million for Hatch Act formula funding, which supports agricultural research conducted at state agricultural experiment stations located within our nation's great land-grant colleges and universities.

We must close the innovation deficit if the United States is to remain the world's innovation leader. China continues to exhibit the world's most dramatic R&D growth at 20.7 percent annually, compared to the United States at 4.4 percent growth over the same time period. By 2009, agriculture R&D fell to a historically low 0.035 percent share of the United States economy, a level far below the total U.S. R&D spending and that which is necessary to meet the critical challenges facing U.S. agriculture in the 21st century.

Science is essential. A strong commitment to federally funded scientific research will boost the Nation's capacity for innovation, agricultural productivity, and economic prosperity.

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 202-408-5382.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ellen Bergfled". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

Dr. Ellen Bergfled, CEO
American Society of Agronomy
Crop Science Society of America
Soil Science Society of America

Cc:

Members of the House Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA, and Related Agencies