



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

5585 Guilford Road, Madison WI 53711-5801 • Tel. 608-273-8080 • Fax 608-273-2021  
www.agronomy.org • www.crops.org • www.soils.org

March 6, 2015

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: FY16 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 scientists 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 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 2016 budget:

**\$1.192 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. ARS intramural research is uniquely suited to conduct research that requires a long term investment leading to high-impact payoff, while maintaining the capacity and readiness to respond to emerging and pressing problems.

**\$1.508 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:

**\$450 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. The 2014 Farm Bill reauthorizes the program and continues the authorization for appropriations of up to \$700 million for each of Fiscal Years 2014 through 2018 in order to meet the challenges facing agriculture.

**\$256 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.

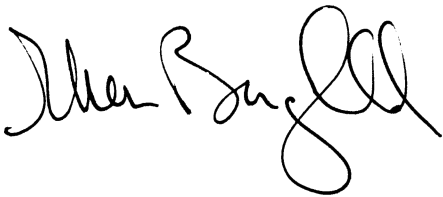
**\$304 million for Smith-Lever 3(b) and (c) funding** that supports the extension program. The ability to translate and disseminate research findings as widely and quickly as possible is critical to our ability to address emerging agricultural issues.

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 21<sup>st</sup> 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](mailto: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.

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