February 26, 2026

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chair
House Committee on Appropriations
2207 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair
Senate Committee on Appropriations
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
2413 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Andy Harris
Chair
Subcommittee on Agriculture
House Committee on Appropriations
1536 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Hoeven
Chair
Subcommittee on Agriculture
Senate Committee on Appropriations
338 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Sanford Bishop
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture
House Committee on Appropriations
2407 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture
Senate Committee on Appropriations
506 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: FY 2027 302(b) Allocation—Support a Robust Allocation for the Agriculture Appropriations Bill

Dear Chairs and Ranking Members:

On behalf of the undersigned stakeholders representing food and agriculture organizations, we write to urge you to provide a robust FY 2027 allocation for the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.
USDA-funded research is a core driver of American agricultural strength. It helps producers reduce input costs, raise yields, manage pests and disease, improve soil and water efficiency, and bring innovations to market faster. These outcomes translate into **greater farm profitability, stronger rural communities, and lower food prices for American families.** In short: USDA research advances the practical, applied science that keeps U.S. agriculture competitive and our food supply abundant.

However, the Agriculture Appropriations bill has too often received an allocation that does not keep pace with real-world costs or national needs. When the topline is constrained, USDA's research mission is forced into a zero-sum exercise: unavoidable increases—personnel, facilities, inflation, and other fixed costs—inevitably squeeze funding available for on-the-ground research, extension, and innovation. This erosion is rarely sudden, but it is persistent, and it undermines the very programs that deliver measurable value to producers and consumers.

A stronger FY 2027 allocation is essential to protect and grow the USDA research enterprise, including:

- **Agricultural Research Service (ARS):** conducts intramural research that develops solutions producers can use immediately—new crop varieties, pest and disease control strategies, and production practices that lower costs and improve resilience.
- **National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA):** administers competitive and capacity programs that fuel innovation through land-grant universities and partners in every state.
    - **Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI):** USDA's premier competitive grants program, supporting cutting-edge research and technology development.
    - **Capacity funds (Hatch, Evans-Allen, McIntire-Stennis) and Extension support (Smith-Lever):** the backbone of the land-grant system that translates research into practical tools for producers and rural businesses.
- **Economic Research Service (ERS) and National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS):** develop reliable, objective data and analysis that help farmers, agribusinesses, lenders, and policymakers make informed decisions—reducing uncertainty and supporting efficient markets.

These programs are not abstract - this bill contains critical accounts that have been squeezed in recent years. We need your leadership to drive the nation's status as the global leader in agricultural, food, and nutrition innovation. Doing so promotes real-world outcomes and budgetary impacts that provide benefits to all American citizens: supporting new uses and new markets, keeping food costs down, and stronger private-sector preparedness, underpinning our national security. Research that expands markets, improves animal health, strengthens biosecurity, and reduces crop losses is far less expensive than responding to widespread outbreaks, severe shortages, or emergency market disruptions.

A robust FY 2027 allocation for the Agriculture bill will also help address the challenges producers are currently facing: volatile input costs, global competition, supply chain disruptions, and the increasing threat of pests, pathogens, and invasive species. Continued underinvestment diminishes the effectiveness of USDA programs, slowing the development and deployment of technologies and practices that can reduce costs at the farm gate and keep food affordable.

Our request is straightforward: as you develop FY 2027 302(b) allocations and advance the Agriculture appropriations bill, we urge you to consider we are operating largely at FY 2023

levels, not even adjusted for inflation. We urge you to provide a strong topline that prevents continued erosion of USDA research and ensures these high-value programs can meet the needs of producers and consumers, putting us back on track to best compete in the global food and agriculture system.

We appreciate your leadership and your commitment to rural America. We stand ready to work with you and your staff to provide additional information and to highlight how USDA research investments deliver practical results for farmers, ranchers, foresters, and the American public.

Sincerely,
2Blades
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
agInnovation North Central
agInnovation Northeast
agInnovation South
agInnovation West
Alliance to End Hunger
American Association of Mycobacterial Diseases
American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges
American Dairy Science Association
American Institute of Biological Sciences
American Meat Science Association
American Seed Trade Association
American Society for Horticultural Science
American Society for Nutrition
American Society of Agronomy
American Society of Plant Biologists
American Soybean Association
Animal Health Institute
Carbon180
Council for Agricultural Science and Technology (CAST)
Crop Science Society of America
Entomological Society of America
Farm Journal Foundation
Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB)
Friends of the USDFRC
Illinois Agricultural Experiment Station
Michigan State University AgBioResearch
Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals - Multistate Initiative
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research
National Corn Growers Association

National Cotton Council of America
NC State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS)
North Dakota State University
Organic Farming Research Foundation
Soil and Water Conservation Society
Soil Science Society of America
Synergistic Hawaii Agriculture Council
The Breakthrough Institute
The Good Food Institute
World Coffee Research

March 9, 2026

The Honorable Andy Harris
Chair
Subcommittee on Agriculture
House Committee on Appropriations
1536 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Hoeven
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Senate Committee on Appropriations
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The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
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Subcommittee on Agriculture
Senate Committee on Appropriations
506 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: FY 2027 request for USDA Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI)

Dear Chairman Harris, Chairman Hoeven, Ranking Member Bishop, and Ranking Member Shaheen:

The undersigned research institutions, scientific societies, and agricultural stakeholders respectfully request **$500 million for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) in FY 2027**. AFRI is USDA's premier competitive grants program that supports merit-based, fundamental and applied research, extension, and education that strengthens U.S. agriculture across crops, livestock, food systems, and rural economies. Increased investment in AFRI is one of the most effective ways Congress can help American producers remain competitive, protect animal health, and grow demand for U.S. products.

In recent years, AFRI funding has experienced reductions even as producers face tighter margins, evolving animal disease threats, and intensified global competition. We therefore urge you to **at least restore funding to the program's highest appropriated level of $455 million for FY27.** Restoring these cuts is essential to maintain the pipeline of innovation needed to keep U.S. agriculture globally competitive.

AFRI-funded research directly supports farmers, ranchers, processors, rural communities, consumers, and the broader U.S. economy. The program addresses challenges such as crop and livestock productivity, supply chain resilience, food safety, nutrition security, soil and water management, invasive weeds, pests and diseases, and workforce development across the food and agriculture system. Importantly, AFRI is also a primary mechanism for advancing research aligned with the new USDA Research and Development Priorities for 2026. **Strong AFRI funding is therefore essential to ensure that USDA can execute these newly articulated national research priorities in partnership with universities, industry, and research institutions.**

AFRI delivers practical results that matter to producers and rural communities, including:

- **Improving farmer profitability through technology and decision tools.** AFRI has supported efforts such as the AI Institute for Future Agricultural Resilience,

Management, and Sustainability (AIFARMS), which aims to develop technologies that help producers improve resilience and long-term profitability while adapting to labor constraints. AFRI also supports research that helps advance regenerative agriculture.

- **Protecting livestock and poultry health from costly disease outbreaks.** AFRI-supported projects include work to improve detection of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI)—including development of more scalable diagnostic approaches for H5/H7 subtypes—and research advancing African swine fever (ASF) detection platforms to strengthen preparedness and response capabilities.
- **Expanding markets by creating new uses and value-added products.** AFRI research helps develop new processes and products that can broaden demand for U.S. grown commodities—such as technologies for producing biobased products and fuels from grains and efforts to develop new food uses, creating additional market pathways for producers.
- **Advancing nutrition to improve public health.** AFRI supports research that improves the nutritional quality, safety, and functionality of foods while helping consumers make healthier choices. This work aligns with growing national interest in improving health outcomes through better diets and prevention-focused strategies, while also expanding market opportunities for U.S. farmers by increasing demand for nutritious, domestically produced foods.

We appreciate your past support for AFRI and for the broader USDA research mission. As Congress works through the FY 2027 appropriations process, we urge you to invest in the future of U.S. agriculture by **striving to provide $500 million for AFRI, but no less than $455 million** to reverse the program's recent funding cuts. These investments are critical for ensuring U.S. leadership in agricultural innovation, economic resilience, and national security.

Thank you for your consideration.
Sincerely,

2Blades
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
agInnovation North Central
agInnovation Northeast
agInnovation South
agInnovation West
Agricultural & Applied Economics Association
American Association of Mycobacterial Diseases
American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges
American Dairy Science Association
American Feed Industry Association
American Institute of Biological Sciences
American Malting Barley Association
American Meat Science 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 Animal Science
American Society of Plant Biologists
American Soybean Association
American Veterinary Medical Association
Aquatic Plant Management Society
Association of 1890 Research Directors
Association of American Universities
Association of Public & Land-grant Universities
Carbon180
Council for Agricultural Science and Technology (CAST)
Crop Science Society of America
Ecological Society of America
Entomological Society of America
Extension Committee on Organization and Policy
Farm Journal Foundation
Friends of the Mississippi River
Friends of the US Dairy Forage Research Center
International Fresh Produce Association
Land Core
Maize Genetics Cooperation
Michigan Food & Farming Systems (MIFFS)
Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals - MI
National Association for Plant Breeding (NAPB)
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research
National Corn Growers Association
National Cotton Council of America
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
North American Plant Phenotyping Network (NAPPN)
North Central Weed Science Society
Northeastern Weed Science Society
Organic Farming Research Foundation
Pet Food Institute
Resource Renewal Institute
Soil and Water Conservation Society
Soil Science Society of America
Southern Society of Weed Science
Spark Climate Solutions
Synergistic Hawaii Agriculture Council
The Breakthrough Institute
The Good Food Institute
Union of Concerned Scientists
University of Minnesota College of Food, Agricultural, and Natural Resource Sciences

USA Pulses
Weed Science Society of America
Western Society of Weed Science
World Coffee Research

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Washington, DC 20515

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Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harris, Chairman Hoeven, Ranking Member Bishop, and Ranking Member Shaheen:

As your Committees prepare the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill and Report for FY2027, the undersigned research institutions, scientific societies, and agricultural stakeholders urge you to provide no less than $1 million for the Agriculture Advanced Research and Development Authority (AGARDA).

Advanced research agencies have been effectively deployed in defense, energy, and health to tackle the biggest challenges facing these industries in novel and groundbreaking ways. Established in the 2018 Farm Bill and modeled after successful advanced research agencies like the Department of Defense's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), AGARDA will foster research, development, and technology transfer resulting in significant benefits across the U.S. food and agriculture value chain.

The challenges facing agriculture today require bold, forward-thinking solutions. High farm input costs and emerging pest and disease pressures, like New World Screwworm, continue to impact producers across the country. Agricultural research can address these challenges, improve producer profitability, and ensure everyday consumers have access to affordable food. Secretary Rollins recently announced new USDA research and development priorities, explicitly calling for innovations that increase producer profitability, create new uses for U.S. agricultural products, and protect the integrity of American agriculture from invasive pests and diseases—all goals that align with the mission outlined in AGARDA's authorizing statute.[1]

Congress has appropriated less than $4 million to AGARDA to date. While we appreciate this funding, other advanced research programs, such as DARPA, ARPA-E, and ARPA-H, received

[1]https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/news/press-releases/2025/12/30/secretary-rollins-announces-new-priorities-research-and-development-2026

substantial initial investments and had dedicated leadership to ensure success. Individual projects under ARPA-E's ROOTS and TERRA programs ranged from $3-10 million. A typical DARPA project can be tens of millions of dollars. AGARDA will require at least $10 million to support an initial high-impact research effort that can produce transformative results.

Providing $10 million in funding AGARDA will give the program the greatest chance at success. **We urge the Subcommittee to strive to provide $10 million for AGARDA, but no less than $1 million in FY2027.** It is critical that AGARDA has the necessary funds to appoint leadership, hire staff, and successfully leverage AGARDA to support agricultural research projects, demonstrating that this model can produce impactful results for agriculture. This funding is also needed to enable USDA to leverage AGARDA to lead coordination efforts with DARPA and other research agencies—a key priority outlined in USDA's National Farm Security Action Plan to promote innovation at the agriculture and national security nexus.[2]

By supporting AGARDA, Congress can unlock the potential of groundbreaking innovations that emerge from collaboration across disciplines. Continued investment in AGARDA will not only benefit domestic producers and consumers, but also ensure the resilience of our agricultural systems and keep U.S. agriculture globally competitive.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

2Blades
agInnovation North Central
AgLaunch Initiative
Agricultural & Applied Economics Association (AAEA)
American Association of Mycobacterial Diseases
American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges
American Conservation Coalition Action
American Dairy Science Association
American Feed Industry Association
American Institute of Biological Sciences
American Meat Science Association
American Phytopathological Society
American Seed Trade Association
American Society for Horticultural Science
American Society for Microbiology

[2]https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/news/press-releases/2025/12/30/usda-advances-farm-security-action-plan-protect-us-farmland-and-federal-programs-foreign-adversaries

American Society for Nutrition
American Society of Agronomy
American Society of Animal Science
American Society of Plant Biologists
American Soybean Association
American Veterinary Medical Association
Animal Health Institute
BPC Action
Breakthrough Institute
C3 Action
Central State University
ClearPath Action
Council for Agricultural Science and Technology (CAST)
Crop Science Society of America
Ecological Society of America
Edge Dairy Farmer Cooperative
Entomological Society of America
Environmental Defense Fund
Environmental Policy Innovation Center
Farm Journal Foundation
Farmers Innovation Fund
Federation of American Scientists
Friends of the US Dairy Forage Research Center
Illinois Agricultural Experiment Station
Kansas State University College of Agriculture
Maize Genetics Cooperation
Michigan State University AgBioResearch
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National Cotton Council of America

North American Plant Phenotyping Network (NAPPN)

Organic Farming Research Foundation

Pet Food Institute

Soil Science Society of America

Spark Climate Solutions

Synergistic Hawaii Agriculture Council

The Good Food Institute

University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

University of Minnesota College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences (CFANS)