

Research: Opportunities and Benefits...

Research is not a short-term expense; rather, it is an investment for the future. Increased investment in agricultural and biological sciences research and education is required to fully capture the benefits of new tools and technologies. Research has offered great potential to increase food safety and quality, develop sustainable resource utilization and management strategies, conserve and preserve biological diversity, and forecast and remediate the impacts of pollution and global climate change.

Competition

The United States has long been a global leader in agricultural and biological research. Such leadership has contributed to economic growth as investments in the agricultural and biological technology sectors have led to increased productivity, spurred new industries, and improved the lives of millions. Complementary research in the social sciences has allowed us to understand and better manage our environment, resulting in fewer costs by reducing the potential for overexploitation of natural resources.

If the U.S. is to retain its global leadership, a balanced federal investment in all fields of R&D is required.

Environment

Federally funded long-term research has shown that ecosystems, including agricultural systems, provide important non-traditional "services." A few examples include clean air and water, wildlife habitat, waste detoxification, and refuges for agriculturally important pollinators. Further investments in freshwater and marine ecosystems allow us to better understand threats to economically important fisheries.

Agricultural and biological research informs conservation and management practices that will allow us to sustain these vital natural services, saving taxpayers money in coming decades.

Security

Many of the R&D advancements resulting from federally funded research programs help to maintain our nation's economic position in an increasingly competitive world where our agricultural and biological systems can be disrupted. Our research enterprise can provide the nation with the ability to prevent, detect, diagnose, and recover from an agro or bio terror attack.

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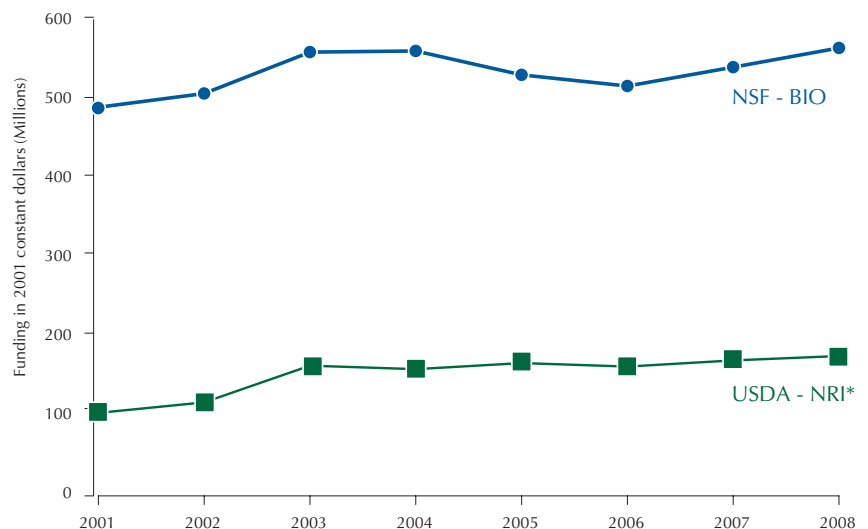
The ISSUE: Stagnant Funding

Findings and developments from basic agricultural and biological research affect everyone everyday. Yet, funding for the federal grant programs that support this research has remained stagnant.

NSF's Biological Sciences Directorate (BIO) supports transformative, fundamental research in the non-medical biological sciences. BIO provides:

- 68 % of federal support for basic biological science research;
- Research support to university-based scientists;
- Training grants to undergraduate, graduate and post-doctoral students; and,
- Funding for vital research infrastructure.

Funding for NSF BIO and USDA's NRI grant programs has experienced flat growth from 2001-2008



*NRI figure does not include the Administration's proposed transfer of integrated programs in FY 2008

When adjusted for inflation the proposed FY 08 funding level for NSF's BIO directorate would be nearly equal to the FY 03 level. Additionally, the percentage of funded research grants from the BIO directorate (14 percent) continues to decline, and is now well below the agency average of 21 percent.

USDA's National Research Initiative (NRI) supports research on key problems of national and regional importance in biological, environmental, nutritional, physical, and social sciences. In particular, the NRI provides funds for:

- Peer-reviewed, competitive research;
- Programs which help increase the competitiveness of U.S. agriculture;
- Research to sustain the quality and productivity of the natural resources and the environment upon which agriculture depends.

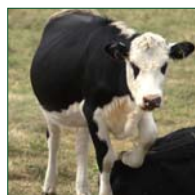
In constant 2001 dollars, funding for the NRI has experienced flat growth from 2001-2008.

Congress can help!

Congress can help capture the benefits offered by agricultural and biological sciences research by providing increased funding for key federal programs that support investigator-initiated, peer-reviewed, competitive grants through important extramural research grant programs, such as those at NSF and USDA. Other important extramural research programs not highlighted above include EPA Office of Research and Development, US Forest Service Office of Research and Development, USDA's Economic Research Service, and the Department of Energy's Office of Biological and Environmental Research.

Congress has demonstrated broad, bipartisan support for basic research and sought to restore potentially devastating cuts to some research programs. This support is greatly appreciated and will help our nation invest in a competitive future!

Thank You For Your Continued Support!



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