

March 12, 2019

Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Hoeven
Chairman, Agriculture Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
Ranking Member, Agriculture Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sanford Bishop
Chairman, Agriculture Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jeff Fortenberry
Ranking Member, Agriculture Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Shelby, Hoeven, Lowey and Bishop, and Ranking Members Leahy, Merkley, Granger and Fortenberry:

The undersigned members of the Friends of the (US Department of Agriculture) Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Coalition thank you for your support in (FY) 2019. We are very encouraged that Congress rejected the Administration's 2019 proposal to cut ARS research programs and eliminate 20 ARS laboratories and facilities, instead providing a topline increase for the Agency. As you consider the future needs for programs and facilities within the subcommittee's jurisdiction, we emphasize that the funding increase provided in FY 2019 brings the agency's budget slightly above the FY 2010 funding level when adjusted for inflation. **Therefore, as you begin work on FY 2020 appropriations, we ask that you continue to increase support for the ARS. The Coalition recommends \$1.821 billion in top-line funding for ARS in FY 2020, which represents a \$137 million increase over FY 2019.** This total would provide an increase of \$84 million or 5 percent to support all four national program areas and includes \$53 million in new funding dedicated to the standup activities of the new National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF).

The ARS is USDA's chief scientific in-house research agency with a mission to conduct research, develop solutions to agricultural problems of the highest national priority, and provide information to the public. As part of USDA's Research, Education, and Economics (REE) mission area, ARS supports research across four national program areas: nutrition, food safety and quality; animal production and protection; crop production and protection; and natural resources and sustainable agricultural systems.

ARS laboratories serve not only as regional engines for research innovation but make up a vibrant network of national facilities that advance knowledge and expand capability. The increased investment of other nations such as China and India in agricultural research productivity could supplant American producers and companies, doing great harm to the American economy. It is of the utmost importance to ensure robust funding for ARS to guarantee that American agricultural innovation continues to remain at the helm of the global research community.

In addition to countless research contributions, across the country ARS research projects provide more than 8,000 jobs, directly contributing to local economies. As agricultural research continues to innovate, ARS represents a critical component of the research infrastructure that enables groundbreaking discoveries that contribute to the stability and security of the American economy and agricultural industry. ARS labs and research facilities support collaboration opportunities that incorporate the broader research community, allowing ARS to directly and indirectly impact every part of the United States agricultural system.

As ARS assumes ownership and operational authority of NBAF, it is vitally important that the agency's account is increased to reflect the expanded responsibility of this \$1.25 billion facility without cannibalizing ARS's four existing national programs. We are grateful for the subcommittee's support of NBAF to-date and the \$53 million requested for FY 2020 will continue to support the standup activities underway, including hiring scientific personnel and workforce training. Long-term funding for NBAF's operational costs and science program is critical to ensuring that the US remains capable of identifying and responding to emerging threats to livestock and discovering new paths to mitigate or eliminate animal diseases.

It is vital that the ARS is funded at \$1.821 billion for FY 2020 to extend the nation's scientific knowledge in the four national program of nutrition, animal production/protection, crop production/protection, and natural resources, while ensuring a path to success for NBAF.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
American Association of Mycobacterial Diseases

American Dairy Science Association
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Phytopathological Society
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 Veterinary Medical Association
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Consumer Federation of America
Council on Food, Agriculture, and Resource Economics
Crop Science Society of America
Ecological Society of America
Farm Journal Foundation
FASS
Meat Institute
Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals Multi-state Initiative
National Association for the Advancement of Animal Science
National Association of Federal Veterinarians
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Barley Growers Association
National Cattlemen's Beef Association
National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research
National Corn Growers Association
National Sunflower Association
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
National Wheat Improvement Committee
Organic Farming Research Foundation
Society for Range Management
Soil Science Society of America
Tufts University
US Canola Association
US Dairy Forage Research Center Stakeholder Committee
US Dry Bean Council
USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council
Weed Science Society of America