

March 17, 2023

The Honorable Andy Harris
Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture
House Committee on Appropriations
2334 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

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

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture
Senate Committee on Appropriations
303 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

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

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

The undersigned members of the Friends of the Agricultural Research Service (FARS) Coalition write to thank you for your continued support of the USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) in Fiscal Year 2023. As your committees consider Appropriations for the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies for FY2024, we respectfully request \$1.95 billion in total funding for ARS. A strong federal investment in food, agricultural, and natural resources research at ARS provides the foundation for a vibrant domestic agricultural supply chain.

As USDA's chief intramural research agency, ARS supports research across the full spectrum of food and agriculture at more than 90 research locations across the country. ARS has a strong track record of providing science-based solutions to critical agricultural challenges facing our Nation and improving the competitiveness, sustainability, and resilience of U.S. agriculture. ARS also plays an invaluable role in partnering with universities and industry to advance science and address emerging issues. These partnerships are strengthened through ARS extramural support of research at these institutions.

ARS is uniquely positioned to support critical long-term agricultural research across a variety of ecosystems and agricultural settings, including the USDA Climate Hubs and the Long Term Agro-Ecosystem Research (LTAR) sites. The Climate Hubs are an innovative collaboration across USDA agencies, that develop and deliver science-based, region-specific information and technologies to enable climate-informed decision-making for farmers, ranchers, foresters, and landowners. The Long-Term Agroecosystem Research (LTAR) network comprises 18 long-term research sites focused on sustainable intensification - increasing our agricultural productivity while also protecting the environment. However, not all research sites have been fully funded and the necessary funding to establish a dedicated data access and management team has not been provided. These research sites must be adequately funded to most effectively provide the critical research, data collection, and information sharing capabilities that enable the U.S to meet its production and sustainability goals.

ARS also develops and maintains numerous, agriculturally significant, long-term datasets and is home to the National Agricultural Library, the world's largest collection devoted to agriculture. Modern agricultural research is data-intensive—and publishing that data fosters trust and drives innovation in

agricultural research. The NAL is a leader in scientific data management and supports USDA's strategic goals for fact-based, data-driven decision-making, benefiting researchers everywhere.

In addition to its flagship network of labs focusing on regional issues, ARS also utilizes the "Grand Challenge" research model that facilitates collaboration between scientists across locations, National Programs, and research systems. Grand Challenge projects have focused on such issues as citrus greening, pollinator health, and sustainable feed. These synergistic projects channel the energy of diverse scientific teams to address complex problems of high national importance that may not be solved within the boundaries of a single discipline.

The FARS Coalition also thanks the Committee for investing in ARS infrastructure in FY 2023. For FY 2024, we request that ARS receive adequate funding to support research operations and management of the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF) in Manhattan, Kansas. As ARS assumes ownership and operational authority of NBAF, it is vitally important that the agency's account is increased so that the expanded responsibility of this new facility does not come at the expense of ARS's four existing National Programs.

As you work on agriculture appropriations for Fiscal Year 2024, we urge you to provide no less than \$1.95 billion for ARS. This level of funding will ensure that ARS can respond to new plant and animal pests and diseases, weather and environmental stresses, and food safety and nutrition security concerns. Thank you for your consideration of our request. The FARS Coalition stands ready to work with you as the process moves forward and answer any questions that you may have.

Sincerely,

American Association of Mycobacterial Diseases
American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges
American Dairy Science Association
American Institute of Biological Sciences
American Malting Barley Association
American Phytopathological Society
American Seed Trade Association
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
Carbon180
Crop Science Society of America
Ecological Society of America
Entomological Society of America
Environmental Defense Fund
Eversole Associates
Farm Journal Foundation
FASS

International Wheat Genome Sequencing Consortium
Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals – Multistate Initiative
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
National Barley Improvement Committee
National Cattlemen's Beef Association
National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research
National Grange
National Wheat Improvement Committee
North American Craft Maltsters Guild
North American Meat Institute
North American Millers' Association
Phytobiomes Alliance
Rural & Agriculture Association of America
Society for Range Management
Soil Science Society of America
Spark Climate Solutions
Supporters of Agricultural Research (SoAR) Foundation
Synergistic Hawaii Agriculture Council
The Breakthrough Institute
US Dairy Forage Research Center Stakeholder Committee
Weed Science Society of America

cc:

The Honorable Patty Murray
The Honorable Susan Collins
The Honorable Kay Granger
The Honorable Rosa DeLauro