

March 16, 2018

Honorable Thad Cochran
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 Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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

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

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

Dear Chairmen Cochran, Hoeven, Frelinghuysen and Aderholt, and
Ranking Members Leahy, Merkley, Lowey and Bishop:

The undersigned members of the Friends of the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Coalition write to express our vehement support for ARS research and ask that Congress provide \$1.35 billion in discretionary funding for ARS in fiscal year (FY) 2019 and reject the administration's proposed funding cuts that would result in the elimination of 20 ARS facilities across the country.

The ARS is the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) 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.

Our funding recommendation for FY 2019 reflects a critical turning point for federal investments and commitments in agriculture research. Over the last decade, ARS's budget has been stagnant: the nation's premier agricultural research programs are struggling to keep pace with innovation, emerging challenges, and global competition, while our national research facilities continue to defer necessary maintenance. **Therefore, for FY 2019, the Friends of ARS request \$1.35 billion in discretionary spending, which reflects ARS's FY 2010 discretionary funding level adjusted for inflation.**

One of the unique features of ARS is the collaborative nature of ARS-funded projects. ARS facilities are integral to the country's federal agriculture research infrastructure, currently supporting 690 research projects and 5,522 permanent employees across the country, with ongoing collaborations with state colleges, universities, local state governments, and the private sector. These facilities are critically important resources for the country and local economies, advancing cutting-edge research that benefits the national population, while supporting thousands of jobs. Further, studies have shown that public investment in agricultural research has resulted in large economic benefits with annual rates of return between 20 and 60 percent.

Further, ARS scientists are actively engaged in recruiting the nation's next generation of researchers. More than 600 scientists serve as advisors or mentors to students of all ages, sparking and supporting their interest in critical Ag STEM fields.

Yet, President Trump's FY 2019 budget proposed a dramatic 20 percent cut across ARS, which will cause job loss across the country, undermine the health of our children and elderly, and threaten our nation's competitiveness as a leader in agricultural research and innovation.

We believe that it is vital that the ARS is funded for FY 2019 at \$1.35 billion to extend the nation's scientific knowledge in nutrition, food safety, and quality and continue to support research that focuses on solving problems affecting everyday Americans.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
American Association of Mycobacterial Diseases
American Crystal Sugar Company
American Dairy Science Association
American Malting Barley Association
American Phytopathological Society
American Pulse Association
American Seed Trade Association
American Society for Horticultural Science
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
Consumer Federation of America
Crop Science Society of America
Ecological Society of America
Farm Journal Foundation
FASS
Hop Growers of America
Hop Growers of Washington

Hop Research Council
Idaho Hop Growers Association
Michigan Bean Commission
Michigan Dry Bean Research Board
Minnesota Area II Potato Research Council
Minnesota Barley Growers Association
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 Barley Improvement Committee
National Cattlemen's Beef Association
National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research
National Sunflower Association
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
National Wheat Improvement Committee
North American Meat Institute
Northern Plains Potato Growers Association
Oregon Hop Growers Association
Pollinator Partnership
Red River Valley Sugarbeet Growers Association
Rural & Agriculture Council of America
Society for Range Management
Soil Science Society of America
Southern Minnesota Beet Sugar Cooperative
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