

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 11, 2020

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
H-307 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Sanford Bishop
Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture
House Committee on Appropriations
2632-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jeff Fortenberry
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture
House Committee on Appropriations
1514 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Lowey, Chairman Bishop, Ranking Member Granger and Ranking Member Fortenberry:

Thank you for your continued support for competitive agricultural research at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). As you meet to consider funding for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021, we urge you to provide funding and include report language to support the Agriculture Advanced Research and Development Authority (AGARDA), authorized in Section 7132 of the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018 (2018 Farm Bill).

The domestic agriculture industry faces challenges on several fronts, from changing climates to infectious disease outbreaks to labor shortages. Many of these challenges can be addressed through the targeted acceleration of novel, early stage innovative agricultural research. In several cases, however, this type of research cannot be undertaken by the private sector alone; the federal government must step in to alleviate the technological and financial uncertainties that come with seeking solutions to high-risk, high-reward research questions.

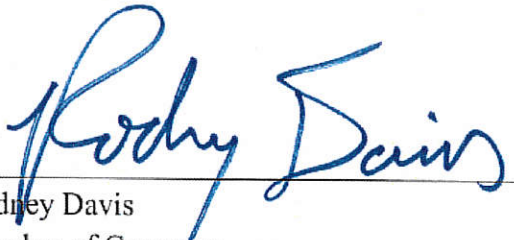
The AGARDA pilot program has the capacity to support a diverse set of research projects, from projects that help automate the harvesting of specialty crops to projects that develop countermeasures to animal and plant diseases. Additionally, the program is allowed special authorities through which USDA can explore creative public-private partnerships and funding avenues to support innovative concepts and potential commercialization.

As Congress strives to support our nation's farmers and ranchers succeed in the twenty-first century, we request robust funding to support the establishment of the AGARDA pilot program. Additionally, we urge you to include report language that requires USDA to quickly establish and fill the position of Director of AGARDA within the Office of the Chief Scientist. We also request report language that strongly encourages USDA to complete the strategic plan for AGARDA, as directed by Section 7132 of the 2018 Farm Bill.

Sincerely,



Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



Rodney Davis
Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Donald M. Payne Jr.
Member of Congress

Ro Khanna
Member of Congress

David Scott
Member of Congress

Andy Levin
Member of Congress

Filemon Vela
Member of Congress

Roger Marshall, M.D.
Member of Congress

Neal P. Dunn, D.M.
Member of Congress

Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress

Chris Pappas
Member of Congress

Tom O'Halleran
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Anthony Brindisi
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Cindy Axne
Member of Congress

Mark Takano
Member of Congress

Clay Higgins
Member of Congress

Don Bacon
Member of Congress

Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress

Kim Schrier, M.D.
Member of Congress

Joseph D. Morelle
Member of Congress

Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress

Mike Bost
Member of Congress

Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress

Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress

Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress

Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress

Peter Welch
Member of Congress

Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress

Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress

Trent Kelly
Member of Congress

James Corner
Member of Congress

Dave Loebsack
Member of Congress

Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress

Steven Horsford
Member of Congress

Salud O. Carbajal
Member of Congress

Angie Craig
Member of Congress

Susan Wild
Member of Congress

Jim Costa
Member of Congress

André Carson
Member of Congress

Mike D. Rogers
Member of Congress

David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

Suzan DelBene
Member of Congress

John Garamendi
Member of Congress

Antonio Delgado
Member of Congress

Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

Susan A. Davis
Member of Congress

Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress

Dean Phillips
Member of Congress

Joe Neguse
Member of Congress

Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

Elissa Slotkin
Member of Congress

Mike Levin
Member of Congress

Ted S. Yoho, D.V.M.
Member of Congress

Abby Finkenauer
Member of Congress

Elise M. Stefanik
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

Terri A. Sewell
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