

September 10, 2019-transmitted via email

The Honorable Dick Durbin  
U.S. Senate  
711 Hart Senate Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Durbin:

As organizations concerned about the future of food and agricultural science, the undersigned are writing to our support for the “*America Grows Act*,” a bill you are introducing that would significantly increase our nation’s investment in agricultural research and development.

Food and agriculture remain a pillar of the U.S. economy, accounting for nearly \$1 trillion of our GDP, 1 in 10 jobs, and a significant contribution to our nation’s trade balance. Our nation has long understood the critical role agriculture and our food system play in our economic and national security. Thanks to the U.S. government’s extraordinary leadership and commitment to agricultural research and development since 1862, our agriculture sector is the most productive in the world, providing Americans with safe, affordable, and abundant food.

The public return on investment for agricultural research is significant, estimated at \$20 to \$1. Yet U.S. funding in this area has declined in real dollars since 2003 while other forms of domestic research have risen dramatically.

The *America Grows Act* would help reverse this dangerous trend by reinvesting in our nation’s scientists and producers and helping reassert U.S. research leadership on the global stage. Modeled after the successful [21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures Act](#) passed in 2016, which spurred additional funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the *America Grows Act* authorizes a 5 percent inflation-adjusted annual increase for the next five years for agricultural research in the following USDA agencies:

- National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA)
- Agricultural Research Service (ARS)
- Economic Research Service (ERS)
- National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)

The timing for the *America Grows Act* could not be better. Investments in research are critical in addressing production, nutrition, food security, and other major challenges across the U.S. food and agricultural sector. USDA projected 2019 net-farm income to be half that of 2013. An unusually wet spring has led to flooding and one of the latest planting seasons on record for much of the Midwest. Our nation’s producers are facing pest, disease, and severe weather challenges that research can solve.

Thank you for your consideration and your hard work on behalf of agriculture and agricultural research. We look forward to working with you to advance the *America Grows Act*. This legislation represents a crucial step in meeting the vital needs of our nation's producers and consumers while retaining our status as the world leader in agricultural innovation.

Sincerely,

AFRI Coalition  
Agricultural and Applied Economics Association  
Agricultural Retailers Association  
American Association of Mycobacterial Diseases  
American Dairy Science Association  
American Farm Bureau Federation  
American Malting Barley Association  
American Phytopathological Society  
American Phytopathological Society (APS)  
American Pulse 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  
Aquatic Plant Management Society  
Association of 1890 Research Directors  
Association of American Universities  
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges  
Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities  
Brooks Tropicals, LLC  
Charles V. Riley Memorial Foundation  
College of Agricultural Sciences, Penn State University  
Consumer Federation of America

Council for Agricultural Science and Technology (CAST)  
Crop Science Society of America  
Entomological Society of America  
Eversole Associates  
Experiment Station on Organization & Policy (ESOP)  
Farm Journal Foundation  
FASS  
Fort Valley State University  
Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research  
Institute of Food Technologists  
IR-4 Project  
Kauffman's Animal Health  
Michigan State University AgBioResearch  
Midwest Poultry Consortium  
Minnesota Canola Council  
Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals Multistate Initiative  
National Alfalfa & Forage Alliance  
National Association for the Advancement of Animal Science  
National Association of Plant Breeders  
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture  
National Barley Growers Association  
National Barley Improvement Committee  
National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research  
National Corn Growers Association  
National Cotton Council  
National Farmers Union  
National Grange  
National Pork Producers Council  
National Sunflower Association  
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition  
National Turfgrass Federation (NTF)  
North Central Regional Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors (NCRA)  
North Central Weed Science Society

Northeastern Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors (NERA)  
Northeastern Weed Science Society  
Pollinator Partnership  
Poultry Science Association  
Robinson Oak Lea Farm  
Rural & Agriculture Council of America  
Society for Range Management  
Soil and Water Conservation Society  
Soil Science Society of America  
Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors  
Southern Weed Science Society  
Supporters of Agricultural Research (SoAR) Foundation  
Union of Concerned Scientists  
United States Cattlemen's Association  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
US Canola Association  
US Dairy Forage Research Center Stakeholder Committee  
US Dry Bean Council  
USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council  
Weed Science Society of America  
Western Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors  
Western Society of Weed Science