



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary  
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 16, 2021

Mr. Josh Stull  
Vice President for Policy and Analysis  
Supporters of Agricultural Research Foundation  
4601 North Fairfax Drive  
Suite 1120  
Arlington, Virginia 22203  
jstull@supportagresearch.org

Dear Mr. Stull:

Thank you for your letter of March 1, 2021, on behalf of the listed organizations affiliated with the Supporters of Agriculture Research Foundation (SoAR) regarding support of agricultural research, education, extension, and innovation. I apologize for the delayed response.

I appreciate your efforts to support and increase awareness of the importance of agricultural research and support for increased public investment in food and agricultural research and scientific innovation.

I agree that agricultural research is key to our success in combating climate change and helping farmers and ranchers meet their needs. Ninety-seven percent of the land in the United States is in rural areas and most is either privately owned, with adjacencies to Federal programming, or federally owned and managed. This is an opportunity to use the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) expertise in conservation, science, and research, and the passion and commitment of our farmers, ranchers, and private forest owners to put the United States in a leadership position on climate change mitigation. We must put food, agriculture, and forestry at the center of climate smart practices by building new markets, including renewable energy and biobased manufacturing, and creating new streams of income for producers and landowners.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris Administration, we are committed to transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department. I see a role for science supporting all this critical work.

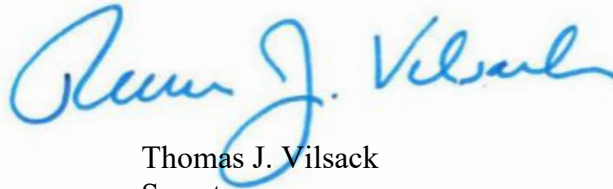
As noted in your letter, history demonstrates that investments in research and development delivers significant returns. I appreciate your efforts to support and increase awareness of the importance of agricultural research and USDA's role through the National Institute of Food and Agriculture's Agriculture and Food Research Initiative competitive grant program.

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Again, thank you for writing. I look forward to continuing our conversation and working together to achieve remarkable things. We value the work of partners like you.

Please share this letter with your colleagues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Thomas J. Vilsack". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Thomas" and the last name "Vilsack" clearly legible.

Thomas J. Vilsack  
Secretary