



April 3, 2024

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Chair, Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Chair, Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins  
Vice Chair, Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairs Granger and Murray, Vice Chair Collins, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As your Committees consider fiscal year 2025 (FY25) appropriations for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Food and Agriculture Climate Alliance (FACA) urges you to provide robust funding for programs that support our industries' efforts to reduce GHG emissions and build climate-resilience landscapes.

FACA's 80+ members represent farmers, ranchers, forest owners, agribusinesses, manufacturers, the food and innovation sector, state governments, higher education associations, sportsmen and sportswomen, and environmental advocates. Our organizations have come together to advance climate solutions across the food, agriculture, and forestry supply chains.

For FY25, FACA respectfully requests additional resources for key programs within USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Research, Education, and Economics (REE) mission area, and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). These requests are aligned with and support the policies laid out in our coalition's [Farm Bill policy platform](#).

**NRCS:**

- **Conservation Operations and Conservation Technical Assistance**  
FACA strongly supports USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) voluntary, incentive-based conservation programs because they are essential for supporting farmers who want to adopt climate-smart practices on their operations. Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) is essential for NRCS conservation program implementation, and FACA's recommendations support enhancing CTA. On-the-ground capacity at NRCS continues to be a limitation for farmers seeking to implement climate-smart practices. Strong funding for NRCS Conservation Operations, most of which funds Conservation

Technical Assistance (CTA), is needed to support the conservation workforce, conservation planning, and the extension of specialized technical assistance to producers. Due to historic and increasing demand from farmers, ranchers, and forest owners to adopt climate-smart practices, providing strong funding for CTA is more important than ever. The Conservation Operations account also funds the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative, which is a FACA priority.

*FACA requests funding of \$1.2 billion for NRCS Conservation Operations.*

➤ **Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI)**

The GLCI supports voluntary efforts to improve the management, productivity, and health of the Nation’s privately owned grazing lands. Additional funding is necessary to meet a growing unmet need for technical advisory services to grazing lands managers and landowners in response to changing climatic conditions and supply chain pressures.

*FACA requests \$30,000,000 for the GLCI within the Conservation Operations account and submits the following report language:*

*Conservation of Private Grazing Lands. The Committee supports the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI) and recognizes the importance of collaborative technical assistance to help farmers and ranchers effectively manage grazing lands to protect water quality, improve soil health and biodiversity, sequester carbon in the soil, and increase resilience and producer profitability. The Committee directs NRCS to allocate GLCI funds through competitive grants and cooperative agreements to support partnerships that address unique grazing lands needs at the local, state, and regional levels. GLCI partnership agreements may provide grazing lands conservation technical services for grazing planning and implementation, workshops and demonstrations, peer-to-peer education and support for producer networks, conferences, and producer outreach. The Committee further directs USDA to report annually to the House and Senate Committee on Appropriations and the House and Senate Agriculture Committees on outcomes of GLCI-funded projects and programs.*

**REE Mission Area:**

Robust investments in research, Extension, and innovation are a priority for FACA, as we recognize that these investments are vital to unlock the agriculture and forestry sectors’ climate mitigation potential. FY25 appropriations offers a key opportunity to prioritize the innovation, partnerships, and research needed to create sustainable solutions and strengthen the science behind their mitigation potential. To achieve these goals, FACA requests investments in agriculture research and innovation to adapt to and address climate change impacts:

➤ **Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI)**

AFRI is the largest competitive research program at USDA and supports fundamental and applied research, extension, and education. AFRI-supported research plays a vital role in adapting to and mitigating the impacts of climate change.

*FACA requests funding of \$500,000,000 for AFRI.*

➤ **Agricultural Research Service (ARS)**

ARS is the chief intramural research agency at USDA and supports food and agricultural research across the country. It serves to deliver cutting-edge, scientific tools, and innovative solutions for American farmers, producers, industry, and communities, and plays a vital role in sustaining our nation's agricultural systems and natural resources. ARS has a vast network of laboratories and scientists that can be leveraged to provide critical answers to research questions around regional and crop- and livestock-specific measures to adapt, mitigate and become more resilient to climate change. 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. As part of this effort, addressing methane emissions is one area that ARS research can play a key role, with support for both facility and operational related expenses for research and development of solutions to address agriculture methane sources.

*FACA requests funding the ARS at no less than \$1,950,000,000, including providing \$10,000,000 to expand research into finding solutions to reduce agricultural methane.*

➤ **Economic Research Service (ERS) and National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)**

ERS conducts research on a range of climate change issues related to agriculture, including but not limited to: impacts of climate change on agricultural production, implications of climate change on agricultural markets, and the potential for agriculture to adapt to and mitigate climate change. NASS provides comprehensive statistical analysis and data on agricultural production, which is critical in meeting climate data needs. Consistent and comprehensive evaluation mechanisms for climate-smart agriculture practices and processes, including measurement, verification, and data collection, are critical for the success of federal policies focused on climate. The economic and policy research and evaluation conducted through the ERS, and the statistical analysis conducted through the NASS are essential to supporting scientifically rigorous tools and information to build climate resilience.

*FACA requests funding the ERS at no less than \$95,000,000 and the NASS at no less than \$241,000,000.*

➤ **The Agriculture Advanced Research and Development Authority (AGARDA)**

AGARDA is an advanced research and development pilot program at USDA, modeled after the "advanced research projects agency (ARPA) model utilized by the Departments

of Defense, Energy, and Health to accelerate development of breakthrough technologies necessary to address climate resiliency.

*FACA requests funding AGARDA at the authorized level of \$50,000,000.*

➤ **Research Facilities Act (RFA)**

A 2021 report determined 70% of research facilities at U.S. public colleges of agriculture are at the end of their useful life with \$11.5 billion in deferred maintenance and \$38 billion in replacement cost. The report also acknowledged that \$550 million annually is needed just to keep up with facilities challenges. Increased funding for the RFA will allow for construction of modern facilities at colleges of agriculture that support agricultural research. In order to provide the critical research needed to support solutions to address climate impacts, agricultural sustainability, and weather resiliency, research facilities and infrastructure at U.S. public colleges must be maintained and modernized. These new facilities will dramatically increase the quality of pest and disease preparedness in the face of climate change and new solutions for pivoting to address pressures from extreme weather events across the nation.

*FACA requests funding of \$500,000,000 for the RFA.*

**Forest Service:**

➤ **Forest Inventory and Analysis Program (FIA)**

The FIA program within the USDA's Forest Service represents the only source of forest data and analysis that is national in scope and consistent in measurements. Accurate measurements and easily accessible data and analysis are critical for the U.S. to measure its progress on reducing CO2 emissions and support existing and expanding market opportunities for forests and forest products.

*FACA requests no less than \$32,197,000 for the FIA program. Additionally, of the amount allocated for Salaries and Expenses in Forest and Rangeland Research, FACA requests \$54,900,000 for the FIA program.*

We thank you for your consideration of these requests and look forward to working with your Committees to ensure robust funding for these critical programs.

Sincerely,

The Food and Agriculture Climate Alliance

CC:

The Honorable Andy Harris, Chair, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration

The Honorable Sanford Bishop, Ranking Member, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration

The Honorable Martin Heinrich, Chair, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies

The Honorable John Hoeven, Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Mike Simpson, Chair, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Chellie Pingree, Ranking Member, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Jeff Merkley, Chair, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski, Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies