October 17, 2022

The Honorable Sanford Bishop
Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture
House Committee on Appropriations
2407 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Andy Harris
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture
House Committee on Appropriations
2334 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Agriculture
Senate Committee on Appropriations
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Hoeven
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture
Senate Committee on Appropriations
338 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Bishop, Chairwoman Baldwin, Ranking Member Harris and Ranking Member Hoeven:

The undersigned organizations and institutions would first thank you for your collective efforts to complete the fiscal year (FY) 2023 appropriations. As Congress looks beyond the midterm election, we urge you to work together to come to an agreement on FY 2023 spending as soon as possible. The uncertainty created by short and long-term continuing resolutions has significant negative impacts on the research enterprise. As Congress moves forward to develop a final FY 2023 spending package, we encourage you to support increased investments to advance food and agricultural research at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The food and agriculture enterprise faces unprecedented challenges from extreme weather exacerbated by climate change, to supply chain disruptions and rising food costs resulting from natural and geopolitical events, to adverse health outcomes related to nutrition inequality. Fortunately, the key to addressing many of these challenges lies in strong federal investments in the broad suite of research, education, and extension programs within USDA. We urge you to make the following investments in the final FY 2023 spending agreement.

Provide $1.768 billion for the National Institute of Food and Agriculture Research (NIFA) as recommended in the House Agriculture Appropriations bill.
As USDA's extramural funding arm, NIFA programs integrate research, education, and extension to ensure that groundbreaking scientific discoveries are brought out of the laboratory and into the hands of those who can put them to work. NIFA's capacity programs, including Hatch Act, Smith-Lever, McIntire-Stennis, Evans Allen, 1890 institutions, and 1994 institutions, provide an innovation network supporting our nation's experiment stations and extension activities that help keep the United States as the global leader of agricultural research. The broad array of NIFA competitive grant programs support work on food safety, plant and animal diseases and pests, and sustainable agriculture, and provide opportunities for underserved communities and minority institutions.

Within NIFA:

Provide $500 million in funding for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) as recommended in the House Agriculture Appropriations bill.

AFRI is USDA's premier competitive research program, supporting fundamental and applied research to address key problems of local, regional, national, and global importance in conventional, organic, and urban agricultural systems. Year after year, the AFRI program receives broad, bipartisan support, but continues to receive only minimal funding increases. At its current funding level, AFRI can support fewer than a third of the projects recommended for funding. AFRI research programs support the development of new technologies and a workforce that will advance our national security, agricultural productivity, and the health of Americans.

Provide $2 million in funding for the Research Facilities Act (RFA) as recommended in the House Appropriations Minibus bill.
Agricultural and food research solves global issues including preventing the next pandemic, addressing energy sustainability, limiting forest fires, and feeding global populations. Yet, the U.S. is at a hazardous crossroads and is rapidly losing ground as the global leader in agricultural science. 70 percent of the research facilities at U.S. public colleges of agriculture are at the end of their useful life. RFA funding will allow land-grant universities and non-land-grant colleges of agriculture to construct and modernize their research infrastructure to meet the needs of 21st century agricultural challenges.

Provide $1.922 billion for the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) as recommended in the Senate Agriculture Appropriations bill.
As USDA's principal in-house research agency, ARS advances scientific knowledge through its four national program areas: nutrition, food safety and quality; animal production and protection; natural resources and sustainable agricultural systems; and crop production and protection. As one of the only funding sources available for long-term agricultural research, the ARS labs and research sites foster synergistic research collaborations across scientific disciplines and geographic locations. This funding would also help to address ARS infrastructure improvements critical to carrying out its research responsibilities.

Provide at least $2 million in funding for the Agriculture Advanced Research and Development Authority (AgARDA) as recommended in the House Agriculture Appropriations bill.
The success of ARPA-style research programs has been proven across federal agencies. From defense to energy and now even to health and transportation, advanced research programs are an innovative funding mechanism that supports transformative breakthroughs that cannot readily be accomplished through traditional research or commercial activity. Agriculture has no shortage of "wicked problems" that will require transdisciplinary coordination to generate innovative solutions. As USDA moves forward to develop the AgARDA strategic plan, we urge you to continue to invest in AgARDA, specifically for the purposes of hiring the inaugural AgARDA Director.

The investments in USDA research, education, and extension programs made today will be responsible for developing the scientific outcomes and workforce urgently needed to meet identified and as-yet unknown challenges in the future. We urge you to do all you can to support a robust, diverse research, education, and extension portfolio within USDA.

We thank you for your continued support and look forward to working with you on this important effort.

Sincerely,
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

Agricultural & Applied Economics Association
American Association of Mycobacterial Diseases
American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges
American Dairy Science Association
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Feed Industry Association
American Institute of Biological Sciences
American Malting Barley Association
American Phytopathological Society
American Pulse Association
American Samoa Community College Division of Agriculture, Community & Natural Resources
American Seed Trade 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 Soybean Association
American Veterinary Medical Association
Aquatic Plant Management Society
Association of 1890 Research Directors (ARD)
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, Board on Agriculture Assembly
Bread for the World
Carbon180
Colorado State University
Council for Agricultural Science and Technology (CAST)
Crop Science Society of America
Ecological Society of America
Entomological Society of America
Environmental Defense Fund
Eversole Associates
Farm Journal Foundation
FASS
Foundation for Meat & Poultry Research & Education
Friends of Hemp
Global Hemp Association
Hawaii Agriculture Research Center
Hawaii Macadamia Nut Association
Institute of Food Technologists
International Alliance for Phytobiomes Research
International Wheat Genome Sequencing Consortium
Iowa State University
Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals – Multistate Initiative
National Association of Plant Breeders
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 Corn Growers Association
National Cotton Council
National Grange
National Sunflower Association
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
National Turfgrass Federation
National Wheat Improvement Committee
North American Craft Maltsters Guild
North American Meat Institute
North American Millers' Association
North Carolina State University
North Central Regional Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors
North Central Weed Science Society
Northeastern Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors (NERA)
Northeastern Weed Science Society
Oregon Dairy Farmers Association
Oregon State University College of Agricultural Sciences
Oregon Women for Agriculture
Rural & Agriculture Council of America
Society for Range Management
Soil Science Society of America
Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors
Southern Weed Science Society
Supporters of Agricultural Research (SoAR) Foundation
Synergistic Hawaii Agriculture Council
The Breakthrough Institute
Tulane University
U.S. Canola Association
UF/IFAS
Union of Concerned Scientists
University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture
US Dairy Forage Research Center Stakeholder Committee
USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council
USA Rice
Weed Science Society of America
Western Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors
Western Society of Weed Science