

Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) Coalition

November 20, 2020

The Honorable John Hoeven
Chairman
Senate Agriculture Appropriations
Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Sanford Bishop
Chairman
House Agriculture Appropriations
Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
Ranking Member
Senate Agriculture Appropriations
Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeff Fortenberry
Ranking Member
House Agriculture Appropriations
Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Hoeven, Ranking Member Merkley, Chairman Bishop, and Ranking Member Fortenberry:

The AFRI Coalition commends you for your support of USDA's Agriculture & Food Research Initiative (AFRI) and urges \$435 million for AFRI in the final FY21 appropriations bill. The AFRI Coalition is comprised of organizations representing research institutions, scientific societies, and other food and agricultural stakeholders. Together, we advocate for robust research investments in AFRI, USDA's flagship competitive grants program for fundamental and applied research, extension, and education in support of our nation's food and agricultural systems.

We are grateful for the inclusion of \$435 million for AFRI in both the House and Senate FY21 spending proposals, and we urge you to maintain this commitment to competitive agricultural research in conference negotiations. This increased level of investment will further AFRI's ability to support cutting-edge research on bioenergy, nutrition, climate adaptation and resiliency, agricultural technology, economic prosperity in rural communities, and food safety and quality. Moreover, it will help address the COVID-19 challenges facing farmers, ranchers, and our nation's food supply chains. Already, AFRI has awarded \$13 million for COVID-19 rapid response grants aimed at addressing urgent needs and finding timely solutions to the pandemic's impact on the agricultural community and food supply chain.¹

Thank you for your continuing support of AFRI and efforts to strengthen the program in recent years. We believe now it is more important than ever to invest in agricultural research and education to help ensure a prosperous and healthy future for all Americans.

Sincerely,

The AFRI Coalition

¹ <https://nifa.usda.gov/press-release/usda-nifa-grants-nearly-14-million-rapid-response-help-us-universities-find-scientific#:~:text=By%20expanding%20NIFA's%20AFRI%20program,being%20of%20Farm%2C%20Food%20Service>