

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 6, 2022

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture and
Rural Development
Senate Appropriations Committee
190 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Hoeven
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture and
Rural Development
Senate Appropriations Committee
129 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Baldwin and Senator Hoeven:

As you prepare the Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) Agriculture Appropriations bill, we request that an increase of at least a five percent plus inflation above Fiscal Year 2022 funding levels be provided across the board for all USDA research activities underway within the Agriculture Research Service, National Institutes for Food and Agriculture, the Economic Research Service and the National Agricultural Statistics Service.

For five decades, public and private sector contributions to domestic food and agriculture research has remained relatively steady, each contributing roughly half of total expenditures. In recent years, however, public investments in agriculture and food research have dropped by 20 percent, while the contributions by large private-sector corporations has increased by 64 percent.

Private research certainly has achieved noteworthy and widespread breakthroughs, but typically entails proprietary protections and provides a more immediate return for the sponsoring enterprise. It is not a substitute for public research. The public sector can pursue research into subjects and specialties that the private sector cannot or will not, while allowing for unrestricted and greater dissemination of shared research and the exploration of multiple applications of that knowledge. Such open-access research helps to increase the pace of discoveries whereby the cost-benefits of the initial investment can have a dramatically expanded payback to society, by some estimates ranging between a 20 to 60 percent rate of return.

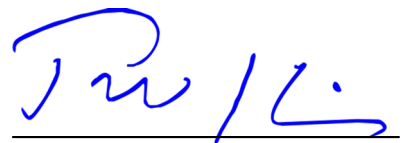
While U.S. public agricultural research spending has declined during the past 30 years, China's public agricultural research spending, by comparison, has increased by eight times, surpassing U.S. public investments more than ten years ago. This is concerning, given global population growth, increasing consumer demand for sustainability, changing weather patterns, and greater risks for plant and animal disease transmissions. Trends in life sciences, communications, data management, robotics and engineering strongly suggest that American agriculture is on the cusp of yet another sweeping transformation similar to that which emerged after the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl.

As we enter into the decade of the 2020s, USDA must return to the forefront of the innovation frontier. We ask your support to signal this new beginning of agriculture and food research by providing an increase of at least a five percent plus inflation above FY22 levels for USDA research activities for FY23. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



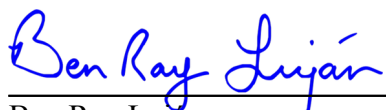
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United States Senator



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United States Senator



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United States Senator



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Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator




Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator

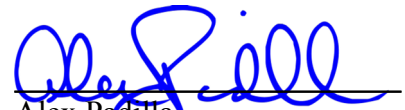


Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

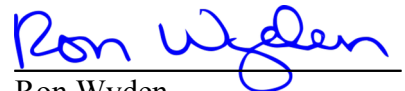



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United States Senator



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