

April 25, 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 members of the Friends of the Agricultural Research Service (FARS) Coalition write to thank you for your continued support of the USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) in FY 2022. As your committees consider Appropriations for the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies for Fiscal Year 2023, we respectfully request \$1.90 billion for ARS salaries and expenses. Included in this amount is \$112 million for National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF) and \$15 million directed to the new Big Data Initiative.

ARS is USDA's chief scientific in-house research agency supporting research across the full spectrum of food and agriculture at more than 90 research locations across the country. ARS is uniquely positioned to support critical long-term agricultural research across a variety of climates and agricultural settings, including the Long Term Agro-Ecosystem Research (LTAR) sites, the Resilient Economic Agricultural Practices (REAP) sites, and the USDA Climate Hubs. ARS also develops and maintains numerous, agriculturally significant, long-term datasets and is home to the National Agricultural Library, the world's largest collection devoted to agriculture.

ARS research is organized into four National Programs: Animal Production and Protection, Crop Production and Protection, Natural Resources and Sustainable Agricultural Systems, and Nutrition, Food Safety, and Quality. The coordination of research through the National Programs allows teams across multiple ARS locations to develop comprehensive solutions to address agricultural challenges. ARS researchers also collaborate extensively with state colleges and universities, where more than one-third of ARS locations are co-located.

Research of the ARS Animal Production and Protection National Programs improves the health, well-being, and efficiency of livestock, poultry, and aquatic food animals to ensure a productive and safe food supply. Infectious disease modeling is a critical part of preparedness and protection of U.S. livestock. Work by ARS scientists at the Plum Island Animal Disease Center showed that pigs can transmit foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) well before showing signs of sickness. Research such as this provides critical information to help build better models to protect livestock industries from FMD.

The ARS Crop Production and Protection National Programs deliver science-based information, genetic resources, and technologies for increased crop productivity, economically and environmentally sustainable methods of crop production, and crop protection from diseases and pests. USDA's National Plant Germplasm System (NPGS) is the guardian of over 600,000 diverse strains of crop plants and their wild relatives. In an era of increasing pest and disease threats and environmental stresses due to climate change, support for NPGS collections to identify beneficial genetic variation takes on even greater urgency.

The ARS Natural Resources and Sustainable Agricultural Systems National Programs develop technologies and strategies that help farmers, ranchers, and other managers effectively steward the diverse agricultural systems across the nation. Precision agriculture combines cutting-edge technology with traditional farming methods to improve the productivity, efficiency, and viability of agriculture. ARS researchers in Auburn, Alabama have developed a unique mobile system that assesses and maps out soil carbon in real time. The data obtained from this new tool helps producers better understand how their land management practices can keep carbon sequestered in the soil rather than releasing it into the atmosphere.

The ARS Nutrition, Food Safety, and Quality National Programs maintain a healthy and safe food supply while improving the economic viability and competitiveness of American agriculture. Strawberries are a valuable crop in the United States, so loss of a small percentage of the crop to damage during postharvest storage is costly to growers and consumers. ARS researchers in Beltsville, Maryland, released and patented 'Keepsake', a new strawberry variety with improved shelf life. The fruits have outstanding flavor, but are also firm and tough enough for commercial handling

Also within the ARS budget we request \$112 million for research operations and management of NBAF in Manhattan, Kansas. This new, state-of-the-art facility, will be a key national asset for the protection of our nation's agriculture and its citizens against the threat and potential impact of serious animal diseases. Once fully operational, NBAF will be the only maximum biocontainment (BSL-4) facility in the U.S. with the capacity to study diseases affecting large livestock. As ARS assumes ownership and operational authority of NBAF, it is vitally important that the agency's account is increased so that the expanded responsibility of this new facility does not come at the expense of ARS's four existing National Programs.

As you work on agriculture appropriations for fiscal year 2023, we urge you to provide no less than \$1.9 billion for ARS salaries and expenses. This level of funding will ensure that ARS can respond to new plant and animal pests and diseases, weather and environmental stresses, and food safety and nutrition security concerns. Thank you for your consideration of our request. The FARS Coalition stands ready to work with you as the process moves forward and answer any questions that you may have.

Sincerely,

American Association of Mycobacterial Diseases  
American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges  
American Dairy Science Association  
American Feed Industry Association  
American Institute of Biological Sciences  
American Malting Barley Association  
American Phytopathological Society

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  
Cereals & Grains Association  
Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences  
Council for Agricultural Science and Technology (CAST)  
Crop Science Society of America  
Ecological Society of America  
Entomological Society of America  
Eversole Associates  
Farm Journal Foundation  
FASS.  
International Alliance for Phytobiomes Research  
International Wheat Genome Sequencing Consortium  
Montana Grain Growers Association  
Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals – Multistate Initiative  
National Association of Federal Veterinarians  
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture  
National Association of Wheat Growers  
National Barley Improvement Committee  
National Cattlemen's Beef Association  
National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research  
National Corn Growers Association  
National Grange  
National Wheat Improvement Committee  
North American Craft Maltsters Guild  
North American Meat Institute  
North American Millers' Association  
North Carolina State University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences  
Plant Based Products Council  
Rural & Agriculture Council of America  
Society for Range Management  
Soil Science Society of America  
Synergistic Hawaii Agriculture Council  
Tufts University  
US Dairy Forage Research Center Stakeholder Committee  
Weed Science Society of America