



Charles Valentine Riley
Memorial Foundation

JOINT POSITION STATEMENT

The Board on Agriculture Assembly (BAA) of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) represent a national system of more than 107 land-grant and nearly 60 non-land-grant universities found in every state.

The Charles Valentine Riley Memorial Foundation (RMF) works to promote a broader, comprehensive understanding of agriculture, enhancing agriculture through increased scientific knowledge. Since 2014, RMF has engaged with more than 120 organizations to pursue a common message of support for increased federal investment in food, agricultural and natural resources research. More recently, RMF has added related education, extension and public outreach to its scope of interest because of the role of these functions in a robust system to ensure the health of the land and its people.

The BAA and RMF have mutual interests and goals of increasing federal investments in all segments of an agricultural, food and natural resources research, education, extension and outreach system, with the shared mission of producing the best possible food and agricultural science to meet some of the greatest challenges of the 21st century.

The challenges facing the productivity and sustainability of our agriculture, natural resources and communities are well-documented, evidenced in the hard work and success of our nation's producers and communities, who are a firm foundation of science and innovation. Agriculture is a pillar of the U.S. economy, accounting for nearly \$1 trillion of our GDP, with one in 10 jobs offering a significant contribution to our nation's trade balance. Agricultural R&D is an area where return on investment is estimated at 20 to one. Though public funding for other forms of domestic research has risen dramatically in recent years, the U.S. agricultural research budget has declined in real dollars since 2003, and its buying power is less than it was in 1980. Agriculture is reliant on new technology for increases in agricultural productivity and this foundation is in jeopardy. Not only has public funding of agricultural research declined, we also face increasing international competition. The U.S. has been second to China in total public agricultural research funding since 2008. By 2013, China's spending on public agricultural R&D nearly doubled that of the United States. The likely long-term impacts of the downward trajectory of public investment in food and agriculture research include falling agricultural productivity in the U.S., impaired ability to respond to emerging threats to crops and livestock, diminished entrepreneurship and launching of new products and businesses from scientific discoveries and the loss of a trained workforce necessary to maintain a vibrant and creative agricultural sector.

One of the most vital assets for addressing these challenges resides in our public agricultural research infrastructure — the scientific expertise, facilities and linked Cooperative Extension, education and outreach programs. Current levels of public support these critical areas are inadequate to address the mounting challenges.

We join our voices with others, calling for strengthened federal research, education, extension, and outreach efforts directed toward food, agriculture and natural resources — essential work that

touches every American and contributes to the public good, including economic growth, jobs and quality of life improvements in support of growing each of the key components of the related funding portfolio:

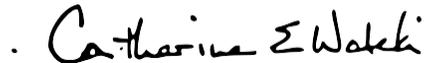
Capacity funds for state (universities) and federal (such as USDA Agricultural Research Service, Economic Research Service and Forest Service) institutions to continue to provide a stable scientific workforce and research sites that conduct research requiring long-term commitment and potential high-risk/high-payoff solutions, while maintaining the capacity to rapidly deal with crisis situations.

Competitive grants to take advantage of innovation at public and private universities, federal laboratories and other organizations with scientific and technical expertise – and the commitment to multi-partner, multidisciplinary collaboration – that contribute to beneficial results to society.

Public-private partnerships to support growing the number of efforts like the Foundation of Food and Agricultural Research, a nonprofit corporation that matches public funds with private funds to conduct research on problems of national and international significance.



Orlando F. McMeans
Chair
Board on Agriculture Assembly
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities



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