

Food & Agriculture Research

From: The Honorable X

Sent By: X

Date: X

Dear Colleague:

Recognizing the interest in reducing federal spending, we believe careful decision making can yield savings while providing proper funding levels for specific accounts that are vitally needed to advance innovation in food and agricultural research that keeps America competitive and at the forefront of meeting the many challenges posed by population growth and ~~a climate~~ changing climate.

Congress has charged the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) with administering competitive research funding through the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI). **Over half of the AFRI research grant proposals rated as “highly innovative” go unfunded due to budget constraints.**

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A myriad of issues face our country and the world related to food and agriculture -- these issues impact not only plant and animal research but also food safety, healthy soils, and the environment. We can meet ~~the~~ these challenges through research advances that improve production efficiency and ensure continued sustainability. Doing so will propel the U.S. economy and spur innovation.

Congress has responded in recent years by providing ~~adequate~~ supplementary resources to address the serious budget shortfalls. We hope you will join us in signing the attached letter to House Appropriations Committee Chairman Harold Rogers and Ranking Member Nita Lowey, and Agriculture Appropriations Chairman Robert Aderholt and Ranking Member Sam Farr requesting that they continue this worthwhile effort. We should ensure that the Department of Agriculture has the resources it needs to discover the solutions to ~~tomorrow's problems~~ the challenges facing agriculture.

Comment [KEA1]: Is there a better word to describe this?

We urge you to sign onto this letter to the appropriators or include this among your individual requests.

To sign onto the attached letter, please notify Bobby Frederick with Rep. Davis at email / 5-2371 or Donald Grady with Rep. Costa at email / 5-3341 by COB March X.

Sincerely,

Rodney Davis
Member of Congress
Jim Costa
Member of Congress

Feb. X, 2015

Chairman Harold Rogers
Committee on Appropriations
H-305 Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Nita Lowey
Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth Building
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Robert Aderholt
Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture,
Rural Development, FDA, & Related Agencies
2362-A Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Sam Farr
Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture,
Rural Development, FDA, & Related Agencies
1016 Longworth Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers, Chairman Aderholt, Ranking Member Lowey and Ranking Member Farr:

~~As you meet to consider fiscal 2016 appropriations, we are writing to t~~ Thank you for your ~~outstanding~~ past support for food and agriculture research at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). ~~and As you consider fiscal year 2016 appropriations we~~ urge you to sustain this effort in fiscal ~~year~~ 2016. ~~Your leadership will make a difference in helping to ensure that our country~~ U.S. agriculture remains competitive ~~in the world and that we~~ and continues to lead the ~~way world~~ in food and agriculture innovation.

Throughout our history, the United States has depended on agriculture not only to feed its citizens, but also as a major driver of its economy. ~~Exports of agricultural products resulted in a \$37 billion trade surplus in 2011. The agricultural sector is currently responsible for 1 in 12 American jobs. The U.S. farmer is among the most efficient in the world and the United States is the global leader in meeting the world's demand for food because of the investments in food and agriculture research made throughout the 20th century.~~

However, investments in agriculture research have stalled or even decreased over the past three decades. **Over half of the USDA-NIFA Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) research grant proposals rated as “highly innovative” go unfunded due to budget constraints.** In order to continue the important work made possible by the Committee's prior support, ~~we request robust funding in fiscal year 2016.~~

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Comment [KEA2]: I think we should at the very least mention the president's request. I don't think we should back off putting a number in until we talk with Bobby and Donald.

We must close ~~the this innovation deficit~~ gap in unfunded ~~“highly innovative”~~ research if the United States is to remain the world's ~~innovation~~ leader in food and agriculture. ~~The United States faces stronger competition as the leaders of China, Brazil, and India increase their agricultural research investment. China has already outspent the United States in agricultural research since 2009.~~ Investing in research and innovation through the USDA is necessary to meet the critical challenges facing U.S. agriculture in the 21st century.

The Nation's economic prosperity and security depend on our dedication to developing innovative, science-based solutions to meet our growing agricultural needs and managing efficient food systems.

Thank you for your consideration ~~of these requests.~~ We ~~will be~~ are grateful for your leadership in ensuring that funds necessary to protect both animals and people will continue to be available.

Sincerely,