September 23, 2021

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Chair
Senate Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
190 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Sanford Bishop Jr.
Chair
House Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
2362-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Hoeven
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
S-128 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeff Fortenberry
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
2362-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Baldwin, Ranking Member Hoeven, Chairman Bishop, and Ranking Member Fortenberry,

On behalf of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), thank you for your commitment and support of America’s Land-grant Universities in the drafting and consideration of the FY 2022 Agriculture Appropriations bill. As you consider reconciling differences between House and Senate measures, APLU urges you to provide robust funding for agricultural and food research, education, and Cooperative Extension System programs at public colleges of agriculture. Specifically, APLU requests support for priority programs administered through the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) at the following levels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smith Lever (Cooperative Extension)</td>
<td>$330 million (Senate)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hatch (State Ag. Experiment Stations)</td>
<td>$275 million (Senate)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evans-Allen (1890s Research)</td>
<td>$92.8 million (House)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1890 Extension</td>
<td>$67 million (House)</td>
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<tr>
<td>McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry</td>
<td>$40 million (Senate)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extension Services at 1994 Institutions</td>
<td>$10 million (Senate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payments to 1994 Institutions</td>
<td>$6 million (Senate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Grants for 1994 Institutions</td>
<td>$5 million (Senate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Food and Research Initiative</td>
<td>$450 million (House)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural Scholars Program</td>
<td>$10 million (Senate)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1890s Institution Education Grants</td>
<td>$28.5 million (House)</td>
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</table>
The founders of our Land-grant University System (LGU) recognized the importance of funding agricultural and food research and Extension programs at the national level, while maintaining state and multi-state contexts. Capacity funds do just this; they are instruments of support for faculty, staff, Extension educators and agents, and undergraduate and graduate students. The decentralized structure, of capacity at federal and local levels, is paramount to U.S. domestic food security, food safety, pest and zoonotic disease containment, as well as for agricultural markets research and Extension efforts. Investments continue to prove a significant return to the American taxpayer.

Research demonstrates that for every $1 invested publicly, U.S. food and agriculture R&D has returned $17, on average, to the American economy.\(^1\) Despite this incredible return on investment, the United States’ share of global agricultural R&D has decreased significantly in the last half-century, going from 20 percent to 8.9 percent.\(^2\) To provide additional context, according to NIFA, public investment (purchasing power adjusted) in agricultural research and the Cooperative Extension System is below 1990 levels.\(^3\)

Both agricultural appropriations bills make strides to reverse this trend with important increases in funding for priority programs at USDA NIFA. Research funding for Hatch Act, Evans-Allen Programs, and Research Grants for 1994 Institutions is central to the function of agricultural, food, and forest science programs at our nation’s public institutions. The list of successful outcomes of investment in agricultural research is extensive and includes disease-resistant bananas, soybean cultivars, and post-harvest technology to eliminate peanut allergens. Research capacity programs support includes field-tested innovations on crop, forest, and animal health and disease prevention, as well as technologies, systems and interventions that enable access to safe and nutritious foods. Increased funding for these programs is instrumental to developing modern, science-based and relevant best practices about agriculture climate adaptation and mitigation and use/preservation of natural resources, bolstering the American agricultural economy while keeping our food system safe.

Smith-Lever, 1890s Extension, and Extension Services at 1994 Institutions funds support the Cooperative Extension System (CES), a unique network of researchers, specialists, agents, and educators who deliver vital, practical information to agricultural producers, small business owners, communities, youth, and families. These programs support over 32,000 university- and county-based employees and 2.8 million volunteers support this partnership and multiply its impact across nearly all the 3,143 counties, parishes, and boroughs in the United States. Extension programs are fundamental in averting the spread of agricultural pest and diseases, connecting people with high-quality information during national emergencies, and keeping American farmers on the farm by providing information about new sources of on-farm income.\(^4,5\) As part of CES, the 4-H network provides the nation’s youth with community mentors and learning opportunities related to food, agriculture, environment, and personal growth. Increases to these programs allow for locally relevant and scholarly programs to be administered in a timely fashion.

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2  The Drivers of U.S. Agricultural Productivity Growth By Philip G. Pardey and Julian M. Alston
3  The Biomedical Research and Development Price Index (BRDPI) indicates how much the NIH budget must change to maintain purchasing power. See link: https://officeofbudget.od.nih.gov/gbpriceindexes.html
4  https://nifa.usda.gov/announcement/nifa-supports-disaster-education-through-eden
APLU also supports increases to the McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry funding. McIntire-Stennis increases will allow support for more students and local and regional solutions for forest management, climate change mitigation, and biobased products development. Extension Services, Research Grants, and Payments for the 1994 Institutions enhance tribal college capabilities to meet unique challenges faced by their students and stakeholders.

Finally, APLU wishes to reinforce our support for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI), USDA’s flagship competitive grants program. As examples, awards from AFRI are making tremendous strides in rapid detection of cattle disease, cutting greenhouse gases from ruminants, and understanding heat impacts on bees. The House funding for AFRI will allow NIFA to address a broader array of highly ranked applications.

APLU appreciates your consideration of our priorities and continued support for America’s colleges of agriculture.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Peter McPherson