

September 10, 2019-transmitted via email

The Honorable Dick Durbin
U.S. Senate
711 Hart Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Durbin:

As organizations concerned about the future of food and agricultural science, the undersigned are writing to our support for the “*America Grows Act*,” a bill you are introducing that would significantly increase our nation’s investment in agricultural research and development.

Food and agriculture remain a pillar of the U.S. economy, accounting for nearly \$1 trillion of our GDP, 1 in 10 jobs, and a significant contribution to our nation’s trade balance. Our nation has long understood the critical role agriculture and our food system play in our economic and national security. Thanks to the U.S. government’s extraordinary leadership and commitment to agricultural research and development since 1862, our agriculture sector is the most productive in the world, providing Americans with safe, affordable, and abundant food.

The public return on investment for agricultural research is significant, estimated at \$20 to \$1. Yet U.S. funding in this area has declined in real dollars since 2003 while other forms of domestic research have risen dramatically.

The *America Grows Act* would help reverse this dangerous trend by reinvesting in our nation’s scientists and producers and helping reassert U.S. research leadership on the global stage. Modeled after the successful [21st Century Cures Act](#) passed in 2016, which spurred additional funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the *America Grows Act* authorizes a 5 percent inflation-adjusted annual increase for the next five years for agricultural research in the following USDA agencies:

- National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA)
- Agricultural Research Service (ARS)
- Economic Research Service (ERS)
- National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)

The timing for the *America Grows Act* could not be better. Investments in research are critical in addressing production, nutrition, food security, and other major challenges across the U.S. food and agricultural sector. USDA projected 2019 net-farm income to be half that of 2013. An unusually wet spring has led to flooding and one of the latest planting seasons on record for much of the Midwest. Our nation’s producers are facing pest, disease, and severe weather challenges that research can solve.

Thank you for your consideration and your hard work on behalf of agriculture and agricultural research. We look forward to working with you to advance the *America Grows Act*. This legislation represents a crucial step in meeting the vital needs of our nation's producers and consumers while retaining our status as the world leader in agricultural innovation.

Sincerely,

AFRI Coalition
Agricultural and Applied Economics Association
Agricultural Retailers Association
American Association of Mycobacterial Diseases
American Dairy Science Association
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Malting Barley Association
American Phytopathological Society
American Phytopathological Society (APS)
American Pulse 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 Veterinary Medical Association
Aquatic Plant Management Society
Association of 1890 Research Directors
Association of American Universities
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges
Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities
Brooks Tropicals, LLC
Charles V. Riley Memorial Foundation
College of Agricultural Sciences, Penn State University
Consumer Federation of America

Council for Agricultural Science and Technology (CAST)
Crop Science Society of America
Entomological Society of America
Eversole Associates
Experiment Station on Organization & Policy (ESCOP)
Farm Journal Foundation
FASS
Fort Valley State University
Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research
Institute of Food Technologists
IR-4 Project
Kauffman's Animal Health
Michigan State University AgBioResearch
Midwest Poultry Consortium
Minnesota Canola Council
Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals Multistate Initiative
National Alfalfa & Forage Alliance
National Association for the Advancement of Animal Science
National Association of Plant Breeders
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
National Barley Growers Association
National Barley Improvement Committee
National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research
National Corn Growers Association
National Cotton Council
National Farmers Union
National Grange
National Pork Producers Council
National Sunflower Association
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
National Turfgrass Federation (NTF)
North Central Regional Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors (NCRA)
North Central Weed Science Society

Northeastern Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors (NERA)
Northeastern Weed Science Society
Pollinator Partnership
Poultry Science Association
Robinson Oak Lea Farm
Rural & Agriculture Council of America
Society for Range Management
Soil and Water Conservation Society
Soil Science Society of America
Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors
Southern Weed Science Society
Supporters of Agricultural Research (SoAR) Foundation
Union of Concerned Scientists
United States Cattlemen's Association
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
US Canola Association
US Dairy Forage Research Center Stakeholder Committee
US Dry Bean Council
USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council
Weed Science Society of America
Western Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors
Western Society of Weed Science