

# Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) Coalition

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March 17, 2010

The Honorable Herb Kohl, Chairman  
United States Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,  
Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Sam Brownback, Ranking Member  
United States Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,  
Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies

Re: Support for FY11 Funding of AFRI

Dear Chairman Kohl and Ranking Member Brownback,

The AFRI Coalition (Coalition), which represents a diverse array of scientific societies and agricultural science stakeholder organizations united in support of the USDA's Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI), respectfully requests that you make AFRI, the nation's premiere competitive research program in applied and fundamental agricultural science, a priority in the FY 2011 appropriations bill. The Coalition believes that robust funding of AFRI shows strong commitment to America's farmers, consumers, and food and rural entrepreneurs, bringing them the tools necessary to maintain the country's competitiveness. At the same time, work performed through AFRI helps to protect the natural resource base and environment, enhance human nutrition, and foster vibrant rural communities.

The AFRI Coalition supports funding the program at the fully authorized level of \$700 million as soon as practicable. With the nation and world seeking solutions for climate change sustainable food and fuel production, ecosystem health, food security and nutrition challenges, now is the time to renew public investment in our nation's agricultural research enterprise.

A substantial step towards the authorized level of \$700 million is necessary in FY 2011 to ensure the achievement of the scientific underpinnings necessary to increase productivity, improve nutrition and food safety, and fulfill the promise of the next generation of biofuels. The President's FY 2011 budget recognized the value of competitive agricultural research by proposing a significant funding increase to AFRI. The recent establishment of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture at USDA with a visionary scientist at the helm has sparked a renewed energy at the Department and throughout the stakeholder community. Furthermore, USDA Secretary Vilsack has testified before Congress that "underlying the achievement of all of the Department's goals is a strong research program."

## **Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) Coalition**

The diverse research interests of the AFRI Coalition are represented in the attached flyer, which highlights some of the many achievements and exciting, ongoing initiatives funded by AFRI. Thank you for your continued support of competitive, peer-reviewed agricultural research. We look forward to working with you toward the important goal of funding AFRI at the fully authorized level as soon as practicable.

Thank you for your consideration and please do not hesitate to contact us if we may provide additional information.

Sincerely,

American Phytopathological Society  
American Society for Horticultural Science  
American Society for Microbiology  
American Society for Nutrition  
American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers  
American Society of Agronomy  
American Society of Animal Science  
American Society of Plant Biologists  
Aquatic Plant Management Society  
Biotechnology Industry Organization  
Council on Food, Agricultural, and Resource Economics  
Crop Science Society of America  
Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology  
Federation of Animal Science Societies  
Institute of Food Technologists  
Iowa State University  
Michael Fields Agricultural Institute  
National Association of Plant Breeders  
National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research  
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition  
North Central Weed Science Society  
Northeastern Weed Science Society  
Poultry Science Association  
Society of Nematologists  
Soil Science Society of America  
Southern Weed Science Society  
The Rodale Institute  
Union of Concerned Scientists  
Weed Science Society of America  
Western Society of Weed Science

CC: Ag Approps Subcommittee Members