

Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) Coalition

900 2nd St. NE Suite 205

Washington, D.C. 20002

sciencepolicy@agronomy.org

September 23, 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

Dear Chairman Kohl and Ranking Member Brownback:

We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to the Subcommittee for supporting our Nation's agricultural research, extension, and education activities in the FY 2011 appropriations bills. During this period of tight budgets, we recognize that Congress faces tough choices about how to best allocate its resources. Yet, despite these challenges, your unwavering support of agricultural science research and innovation recognizes the role that such science plays in advancing our nation's economic goals.

The AFRI Coalition is a group of scientific societies and science advocacy organizations with diverse research interests who support a full appropriation of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI). The Coalition believes that robust funding of AFRI shows strong commitment to America's farmers, consumers, researchers, and food and rural entrepreneurs, bringing them the tools necessary to maintain the country's competitiveness. At the same time, work performed under AFRI helps to protect the natural resource base and environment, enhance human nutrition, promote health, improve our fundamental understanding of plants and animals, and foster vibrant rural communities.

The \$310.1 million appropriated for AFRI, a significant increase from last year's funding, correctly reflects the growing need for agricultural research as we face new challenges related to climate change, energy production, and population growth, among other areas. The increased funding for AFRI is a positive and necessary step toward the authorized \$700 million level. Your past investment in science that supports our nation's food, fiber and fuel has demonstrated many successes--increasing crop productivity, enhancing U.S. trade relationships with other countries, and revitalizing our rural communities. We anticipate even greater advances for our nation through the new AFRI paradigm that encourages transdisciplinary approaches that address broad science questions. This type of approach can encourage our individual disciplines and sciences to work together on

solving problems ranging from climate concerns to food safety and nutrition. Continued investments in basic, integrated, and multidisciplinary research will help to ensure that our nation will maintain a world-class food supply for many years to come.

Again, we applaud the Subcommittee for your strong support of agricultural research. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or request additional information.

Sincerely,

American Dairy Science Association
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 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