



National Association of State Departments of Agriculture

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March 11, 2020

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Chairwoman, Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Request: USDA and FDA; from Dr. Barbara P. Glenn, CEO, NASDA

Dear Chairman Shelby, Chairwoman Lowey, Ranking Member Leahy and Ranking Member Granger:

As Congress advances fiscal year 2021 (FY21) appropriations legislation, the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) encourages you to support programs that enhance farmers, ranchers and their rural communities and ensure a safe, affordable, and abundant food supply. NASDA represents the Commissioners, Secretaries, and Directors of agriculture in all fifty states and four territories. NASDA members are co-regulators with the federal government and strong advocates for American agriculture. For FY21, we ask you to prioritize the below programs. An addendum is attached providing a more detailed breakout of the requests.

1. **Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA): Produce, Animal Food, Produce Safety Alliance, Food Safety Outreach Program**
 - a. \$34 million – Produce Safety Rule Implementation, State Cooperative Agreement Program
 - b. \$6 million – Animal Food Preventive Controls Rule Implementation, State Cooperative Agreement Program
 - c. \$10 million – Food Safety Outreach Program (FSOP)
 - d. \$2 million – Produce Safety Alliance (PSA) Funding

NASDA members are at the forefront of implementing FSMA and funding these programs will allow NASDA to continue building state regulatory programs required by FSMA and educate and train the farm and food sectors on compliance. The education, outreach, and training provided by state programs, FSOP and PSA are all critical pieces of meeting FSMA's mandate and ensuring a safe food supply.

2. **Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN) - \$10 million, full funding**

Funding will continue efforts enabled by FY19 and FY20 funding to scale assistance programs and create trainings and partnerships to serve rural Americans—60% of whom live in areas with mental health professional shortages.

3. **National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) - \$30 million, full funding**

NAHLN funding is critical for large-scale animal-disease outbreak response. NASDA members, who regulate and oversee animal health in the states, are the first line of defense against animal disease outbreaks and rely on NALHN labs for tracking disease progress and performing tests on thousands of diagnostic samples. Federal funding for the NAHLN will expand surveillance and surge capacity to diagnose diseases and ramp up during emergency situations.

4. **State and Tribal Assistance Grants (STAG) – Categorical Grant**

STAG provides states with funding to implement the co-regulatory framework of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). Increased funds will allow states to meet their increasing workload regarding drift complains and implementation of new federal regulations.

Conclusion

NASDA asks that you give our requests careful consideration as you work to fund the nation's agricultural policy priorities in fiscal year 2021. We appreciate the committee's continued investments

Sincerely,



Barbara P. Glenn, Ph.D.

Chief Executive Officer

Enclosure: NASDA Fiscal Year 2020 Appropriations Priorities Table

Cc: Representative Robert Aderholt (R-AL), Chair, Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee
Representative Sanford Bishop (D-GA), Ranking Member, Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee
Representative Ken Calvert (R-CA), Chair, Interior Appropriations Subcommittee
Representative Betty McCollum (D-MN), Ranking Member, Interior Appropriations Subcommittee
Senator John Hoeven (R-ND), Chair, Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee
Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Ranking Member, Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee
Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Chair, Interior Appropriations Subcommittee
Senator Tom Udall (D-NM), Ranking Member, Interior Appropriations Subcommittee



Fiscal Year 2021 Appropriations Priorities Addendum

1. FSMA: Produce, Animal Food, Produce Safety Alliance, Food Safety Outreach Program

a. \$34 million – Produce Safety Rule, State Cooperative Agreement Program

In FY20, there was no specific line item for this program, only a \$16 million “FSMA enhancement” item. It is currently unclear if any of those increased dollars will benefit state programs.

FDA and NASDA members have partnered through a series of cooperative agreements to implement the FSMA Produce Safety Rule. States rely on the funds provided by FDA to conduct education, training and outreach to the farming communities and industries covered by FSMA. Additionally, all 50 states and territories are establishing food safety programs and hiring the inspectors needed to comply with all FSMA requirements. Once trained in the classroom, farmers are eligible to participate in a practical exercise called On-Farm Readiness Review’s (OFRR) conducted by NASDA and their certified trainers. OFRR’s ensure farmers and their employees understand how the classroom training translates to their operations with the goal of foodborne illness prevention. Over 1000 OFRRs have been conducted since 2018 and over 500 people have been trained to perform OFRRs. FDA began inspecting large farms in May 2019 and is scheduled to start inspecting mid-sized farms in 2020. Without this funding, states will discontinue training resulting in inspection failures, loss of revenue and additional outbreaks that impact school children and the elderly, and those with compromised immune systems such as transplant patients, pregnant women, and those with long term illnesses.

b. \$6 million – Animal Food Preventive Controls Rule Implementation, State Cooperative Agreement Program

According to the American Veterinary Medical Association, there were 29 major animal food recalls in 2019. The FSMA Animal Food Preventive Controls rule is designed to help prevent these outbreaks. NASDA members currently operate state feed programs that guarantee the safety and efficacy of animal food; however, these programs require resources to fully implement the rule. This \$6 million request for FY2021 would provide \$300,000 per state for the 15 states working to meet FSMA animal food mandates and help agribusinesses meet these mandates. Without this funding, states will not have the resources or capacity to update their current feed programs to begin inspections.

In FY20, there was no specific line item for this program, only an increase to the FDA Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM). NASDA works in concert with CVM on rule implementation.

c. \$10 million – Food Safety Outreach Program (FSOP)

Administered by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA NIFA), FSOP provides competitive grants for food safety training and education for beginning farmers, socially

disadvantaged farmers, small processors, or small fresh fruit and vegetable merchant wholesalers and processors affected by FSMA. FSOP is a critical piece of reaching smaller producers and specialized audiences whose needs have not been previously addressed. In 2019, 28 FSOP grantees provided trainings that helped close the gap on food safety outreach and education and strengthened the foundation for food safety trainings across the country. As the produce rule nears full implementation, these trainings are crucial.

d. Produce Safety Alliance (PSA) Funding - \$2 million

PSA is an entity that collaborates between Cornell University, FDA and USDA to provide training and technical assistance to fresh produce growers. PSA has developed and deployed two courses; a Grower Training Course and a Train-the-Trainer Course. The PSA Grower Training Curriculum was created through a four-year nationwide development process. The cooperative agreement between FDA and PSA expires in 2021 with no commitment for additional funding.

PSA funding is essential because they help meet the FSMA requirements at CRF 112.22(c) but also, because growers need their basic level training before they can attend an event like an OFRR. PSA focuses on reaching new audiences, developing new curricula, and holding trainings. Not only does PSA train producers, but they train educators, trainers, government officials and more. Given that the FSMA implementation is still underway and water rule is not finalized, PSA is more critical now than ever as more regulatory requirements for farmers and ranchers will be rolled out in 2020 and 2021.

2. Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN)¹ - \$10 million, full funding²

FRSAN awardees received their first distributed funding dollars in winter 2019. Each of the four regions received \$480,000 for over a dozen partners. This funding will be supplemented by a \$10 million FY20 RFA (\$2.5million/region) which opens in May 2020. With continued funding for FY21, the networks and regional centers that were created in FY19 will be able to continue operations, hire staff, develop and deploy trainings, and reach more people who need help. While 48% of rural residents reported experiencing more mental health challenges compared with one year ago, only 31% had sought assistance.³ Both farmers and farmworkers and rural residents in general ranked cost, embarrassment and stigma as their main barriers to seeking help. Fully funding the FRSAN will support programs that can help offset barriers like cost and stigma.

3. National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) - \$30 million, full funding⁴

Congress recently reiterated its intent for a fully-funded NAHLN in the 2018 Farm Bill conference and with this intent, NASDA requests full funding for NAHLN. An outbreak of a foreign animal disease could cripple the entire agricultural sector with long-lasting ramifications for the economic viability of U.S. livestock production. Federal investments in the

¹ 7 USC 5936: Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network

² FY19: \$2m; FY20: \$10m; Funded through USDA-NIFA

³ <https://www.fb.org/newsroom/new-national-poll-shows-impacts-of-rural-economy-on-farmer-mental-health>

⁴ FY 19: \$16.3m; FY20: \$16.3m

NAHLN today could save billions worth of losses in the future because NAHLN laboratories test for economically devastating diseases, such as mad cow disease, Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), avian and swine influenza, and classical swine fever. For example, during the 2015 outbreak of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, many disease confirmation tests were conducted by laboratories operating under the NAHLN, and this rapid confirmation allowed for depopulation of infected flocks and establishment of safety protocols around infected farms. These timely actions were made possible by NAHLN laboratories providing early diagnosis of the disease and were critical in curtailing the outbreak. Additionally, an outbreak of FMD could cost U.S. agriculture an estimated \$128 billion. This includes decreased revenues for corn and soybean of \$44B and \$24.9B, respectively. This loss translates into roughly 154,000 jobs over the course of the outbreak.

4. State and Tribal Assistance Grants (STAG) ⁵ – Categorical Grants – \$24 million for enforcement⁶, \$13 million for implementation⁷

The Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) State and Tribal Assistance Grant (STAG) Program seeks to assist states and territories in developing and maintaining comprehensive pesticide programs that address all aspects of pesticide enforcement, surveillance, monitoring and overall pesticide regulatory activities in the states. The FIFRA STAG compliance monitoring program awards dollars annually through negotiated cooperative agreements between EPA and states. This is a co-regulatory framework that states maintain with EPA that relies on appropriated dollars to be fully functional. Over years, the workload for states has drastically increased with more investigations over pesticide drifts and implementation of Worker Protection Standards (WPS), yet funding did not increase as expected. Increased funding will allow states to have enough personnel to appropriately carry out these programs while assuring workers' safety.

⁵ Section 23(a) of FIFRA (7 USC sec. 136u); Funded through EPA Office of Pesticide Programs (OPP)

⁶ FY20: \$24m; FY19: \$18.05m

⁷ FY20: \$12.3m; \$11.89m