

March 10, 2021

Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Chairwoman, Agriculture Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Hoeven
Ranking Member, Agriculture Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
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

The Honorable Sanford Bishop
Chairman, Agriculture Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jeff Fortenberry
Ranking Member, Agriculture Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Leahy, Baldwin, Lowey and Bishop, and Ranking Members Shelby, Hoeven, Granger and Fortenberry:

The undersigned members of the Friends of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Coalition thank you for your support in (FY) 2021. As you consider the future needs for programs and facilities within the subcommittee's jurisdiction, we ask that you increase support for the ARS. **The Coalition recommends \$1.720 billion in top-line funding for ARS in FY 2022, which represents a 5% increase or \$76.35 million over the FY 2021 enacted level for the four national program areas, flat funding for the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility of \$102.6 million, and \$15 million directed to the new Big Data Initiative.**

The ARS is USDA's chief scientific in-house research agency with a mission to conduct research, develop solutions to agricultural problems of the highest national priority, and provide information to the public across four national program areas: nutrition, food safety and quality; animal production and protection; crop production and protection; and natural resources and sustainable agricultural systems.

ARS laboratories serve as regional engines for research innovation and contribute to a vibrant network of national facilities that advance knowledge and expand capability for the country. The newest addition, NBAF, is the nation's only bio-safety level (BSL) 4 laboratory focused on livestock health and zoonotic disease, a critical component of the United States' agro-security infrastructure. **As ARS assumes ownership and operational authority of NBAF, it is vitally important that the agency's account is increased to reflect the expanded responsibility of this \$1.25 billion facility without cannibalizing ARS's four existing national programs.** We are grateful for the subcommittee's support of NBAF to-date and the \$102.6 million requested for FY 2022 will continue to support the standup activities underway, including hiring scientific personnel and workforce training. Long-term funding for NBAF's operational costs and science program is critical to ensuring that the US remains capable of identifying and responding to emerging threats to livestock and discovering new paths to mitigate or eliminate animal diseases.

In addition to countless research contributions, ARS research projects provide more than 8,000 jobs and are directly contributing to local economies. Additionally, ARS workforce enables groundbreaking discoveries that contribute to the stability and security of the American economy and agricultural industry. ARS labs and research facilities support collaboration opportunities that incorporate the broader research community at many of our nation's universities, allowing ARS to directly and indirectly impact every part of the United States agricultural system.

It is vital that the ARS is funded at \$1.720 billion for FY 2022 to extend the nation's scientific knowledge in the four national program of nutrition, animal production/protection, crop production/protection, and natural resources, while ensuring additional funding is directed to new activities, such as NBAF and the Big Data Initiative, to ensure that it has adequate resources for operations, maintenance, research and workforce.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

American Association of Mycobacterial Diseases
American Dairy Science Association
American Malting Barley Association
American Society for Nutrition
American Society of Agronomy
American Veterinary Medical Organization
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges
Crop Science Society of America
Entomological Society of America
FASS
Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals – Multistate Initiative
National Association of Federal Veterinarians
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture

National Barley Improvement Committee
North American Millers' Association
Soil Science Society of America
The Breakthrough Institute
Tufts University
US Dairy Forage Research Center Stakeholder Committee
Weed Science Society of America