

March 10, 2020

The Honorable Pat Roberts
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture,
Nutrition and Forestry
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture,
Nutrition and Forestry
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Roberts and Ranking Member Stabenow:

The farmers, ranchers, cooperatives, technology developers, scientists, co-regulators and seed companies represented by the organizations signed below strongly support the ongoing development of new breeding methods which have the potential to bring incredible advances to agriculture, the environment, and our global food system. In order for U.S. agriculture to succeed in the future, we must have access to every tool available to address future challenges such as catastrophic weather events and rapidly evolving pests and diseases. We must do this while meeting consumer expectations for reductions in the use of crop inputs and new varieties of healthy and affordable food options.

Providing legal certainty through interagency coordination among the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is necessary to encourage the continued domestic and global adoption of evolving plant breeding methods, provide certainty in domestic and international markets, promote consistency of global policies and facilitate predictability in the development of new gene edited plant varieties.

Our associations strongly support a system which fosters innovation and recognizes the long and safe track record of plant breeding and genetic engineering in plants. We applaud USDA for engaging with stakeholders while developing a rule to update their Part 340 biotechnology regulations. We urge EPA and FDA to similarly engage with stakeholders and other agencies in the development of their respective policies as instructed in the *2019 Executive Order on Modernizing the Regulatory Framework for Agricultural Biotechnology Products* which directs agencies to adopt science- and risk-based regulatory approaches that avoid undue burdens for the products of agricultural biotechnology.

Congress should continue to encourage Federal agencies to broadly communicate how their policy decisions related to new plant varieties protect human and environmental health to increase consumer confidence in the products of agricultural biotechnology.

Countries around the world are adopting policies for precision breeding so that farmers and scientists will have access to these important tools. Our organizations urge swift action by USDA, EPA and FDA to advance the position of the United States as a global leader in the area of plant breeding and further encourage the U.S. government to continue to engage with other countries to support open and fair trade for products of innovative breeding tools. It is our hope that through timely completion of an updated U.S. regulatory framework at USDA, EPA and FDA, our trading partners will be encouraged to adopt similar science- and risk-based regulatory approaches.

Thank you for your support for innovation. We look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure U.S. agriculture remains a world leader in innovation.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Retailers Association
American Farm Bureau Federation
AmericanHort
American Seed Trade Association
American Soybean Association
American Sugarbeet Growers Association
Biotechnology Innovation Organization
California Specialty Crops Council
Corn Refiners Association
CropLife America
Crop Science Society of America
Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Cotton Council
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Corn Growers Association
National Sorghum Producers
Produce Marketing Association
Society of American Florists
United Fresh Produce Association
USA Rice
U.S. Beet Sugar Association
U.S. Canola Association