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## Senate Appropriations Committee boosts USDA budget 14%

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Both responding to the recession and investing in new products like biofuels, the Senate Appropriations Committee voted 30-0 this week for a \$124.544 billion fiscal 2010 Agriculture Appropriations Bill. The \$124.5 billion total includes \$100.8 billion for mandatory nutrition and farm commodity programs, up 14.8% from FY '09 and \$23.7 billion for discretionary programs such as ag research, bioenergy, rural and food safety programs, up 10.8% from FY '09.

The bill goes next to the full Senate where changes may be made before a House/Senate conference committee agrees on a final bill to present to President Obama. The Senate version provides \$102 million more than the \$124.442 billion the President requested. On the discretionary side, the Senate bill allocates \$219 million more for agricultural research than in the President's \$2.569 billion request.

Overall, the bill's discretionary funding includes, in billion \$:

	FY09 Enacted	FY10 Request	FY10 Subcommittee
Nutrition	7.234	8.166	7.946
Drug & Food Safety	3.024	3.369	3.369
Internat'l Food Assistance/Trade	1.502	2.080	2.086
Research	2.648	2.569	2.788
Rural Development	2.737	3.020	3.046
Farm Support Agencies	1.722	1.780	1.781
Conservation	0.970	0.908	1.016
Other Regulatory Agencies	1.014	1.012	1.057
Administrative Offices	0.504	0.692	0.607
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$21.355</b>	<b>\$23.596</b>	<b>\$23.696</b>

Sen. Herb Kohl (D-WI), Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies, commented that "Our agricultural productivity is directly tied to several things. First, we're blessed with hard working farm families and great natural resources. And second, we continue to invest in and renew and refresh American agriculture through research and education. That process becomes more complex with each passing year. This bill

supports robust research to improve efficiency and profitability, fight diseases and emerging pests, and set us on a course for energy independence.”

International food aid programs receive major increases over FY09 levels. Food for Peace Title II is funded at \$1.69 billion, which is equal to the President’s request and \$464.1 million above fiscal year 2009 enacted level, not including emergency supplemental funding. The McGovern-Dole Food for Education Program is funded at \$199.5 million, equal to the President’s request and \$99.5 million above fiscal year 2009 enacted level.

Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA), a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee and Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, praised the bill and said that “Investing in agricultural research now means new advancements and technologies in renewable energy, food safety and other areas long into the future. This funding enhances our ability to lead the world with the best technology that will keep America’s farmers, food and agriculture sector and rural communities the most productive in the world.”

Senators noted that with its focus on research and new product development, the bill funds a broad array of important projects including:

- \$128 million for the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) to help farmers, ranchers and rural small businesses build their own clean energy projects, including biomass, manure digesters, wind and solar power, and energy efficiency.
- \$50.73 million for the Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Program.
- \$21.87 million for the Value-Added Market Development Program Grants Program which provides grants to producers and producer organizations for the purpose of finding new opportunities and higher values for agricultural products.
- \$10.72 million for Rural Cooperative Development Grants.
- \$2.8 million for Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA), a national sustainable agriculture information service provided through a public/private partnership between USDA Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS) and the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT).
- \$1.25 million for the North Central Agricultural Research Laboratory - Biomass Crop Production to develop value-added uses for byproducts (DDG and DDGS) resulting from corn-based ethanol production.
- \$1.213 million for the Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute (FAPRI) at Iowa State University and the University of Missouri which uses comprehensive data and computer modeling systems to develop projections for the U.S. agricultural sector and international commodity markets.
- \$1 million for the Food Safety Consortium to conduct research to improve the safety of meat and poultry in the United States.
- \$889,000 for the Rural Policy Research Institute (RUPRI), a multi-state, interdisciplinary research consortium jointly sponsored by Iowa State University, the University of Missouri-Columbia and the University of Nebraska, to continue research and analysis on a range of rural issues important.
- \$839,000 for Mississippi State University to develop a plant-based gasification process to produce liquid fuel and \$797,000 to continue the study of crop genomics to improve agriculture production.