

June 8, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Room H-305, The Capitol Room
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Room S-221, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Room S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McCarthy, Majority Leader Schumer, and Minority Leader McConnell:

America's agricultural enterprise, the lifeblood of Rural America, is facing multiple challenges: climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, and research and development (R&D) competition from China, Brazil, and India to feed, clothe, and house the growing world population while still meeting our own country's needs. Our farmers, ranchers, producers, and foresters need a significant investment in agricultural research, infrastructure, and innovation in order to provide affordable solutions to these crises, while striving to achieve net zero emissions. We write to express our strong support for intramural and extramural agriculture research and capacity across the country. **As Congress continues to negotiate a federal infrastructure package, we ask that you prioritize significant investments, at least \$40 billion, for agricultural climate research, agricultural innovation, and agricultural research infrastructure.**

Food and agriculture have significant economic impact. A 2021 study shows that the food and agriculture sectors account for roughly one-fifth of the country's economic activity, directly supporting nearly 20 million jobs. That's more than 13% of U.S. employment. Total jobs indirectly supported by food and agriculture reach almost 41 million jobs. The total output of these sectors is \$7 trillion.¹

By providing solutions to short- and long-term challenges, research makes our food and agriculture sectors a powerhouse of the U.S. economy. **A recent study found that U.S. public food and agriculture R&D spending from 1910 to 2007 returned, on average, \$17 in benefits for every \$1 invested.**² Increased funding of USDA's research and development (R&D) programs

¹ <https://feedingtheeconomy.com/>

² Baldos, Uris Lantz, Frederi G. Viens, Thomas W. Hertel, and Keith O. Fuglie. R&D Spending, Knowledge Capital, and Agricultural Productivity Growth: A Bayesian Approach. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*. July 2018. 101(1): 291–310; <https://doi.org/10.1093/ajae/aay039>.

will invest in our rural communities and give our farmers, ranchers, producers, and foresters the tools needed to improve resiliency and scale climate-smart agriculture. Without significant investments in climate-smart agriculture research and outreach, U.S. farmers and ranchers could face serious production challenges. **A recent study in the journal *Climate* found that average U.S. corn, soybean, and rice yields could fall by up to 23%, 15%, and 4%, respectively, by 2100.**³

Modern agricultural research and education facilities serve as the backbone of our nation's cutting-edge agricultural and food research enterprise. **The situation is dire, 69% of the buildings at U.S. colleges and schools of agriculture are at the end of their useful life.**⁴ Strategic federal investment in agricultural research infrastructure would create hundreds of thousands of new jobs nationwide.

The federal share of overall R&D spending as a percentage of GDP is now at its lowest point since the 1950s, and food and agriculture lags even further behind most other Federal R&D areas. **Food and agricultural research funding at USDA has remained fairly flat over the last 50 years.**⁵ In contrast, funding for other Federal research agencies has increased 10- to 20-fold during the same period. Additionally, other countries, including China, Brazil, and India, are investing heavily in agricultural R&D, while the U.S. has fallen behind.⁶ We need to make these significant investments to win the R&D race and keep our family farms, and all the people they employ in rural America, in business.

This once in a generation opportunity to significantly fund food and agriculture research, innovation, and infrastructure is crucial for the United States to reclaim our global lead in food and agricultural science and rise to meet today's crises and those in the future. We look forward to working with you to make these investments a reality.

Sincerely,

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Agricultural & Applied Economics Association
Agricultural Retailers Association
American Association of Meat Processors
American Association of Mycobacterial Diseases
American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges
American Dairy Science Association
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Feed Industry Association
American Institute of Biological Sciences
American Malting Barley Association, Inc.
American Mushroom Institute

³ Peterson, Lillian K., 2019. "Impact of Climate Change on Twenty-First Century Crop Yields in the U.S." *Climate* 7(3).

⁴ <https://www.aplu.org/library/a-national-study-of-capital-infrastructure-at-colleges-and-schools-of-agriculture-an-update/file>

⁵ <https://www.nsf.gov/statistics>

⁶ Jahn, Molly. New solutions for a changing climate: The policy imperative for public investment in agriculture R&D. August 2020. https://www.thechicagocouncil.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/report_new-solutions-for-changing-climate_0.pdf. Pages 1, 13.

American Phytopathological Society
American Pulse Association
American Seed Trade Association
American Society for Horticultural Science
American Society for Microbiology
American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers
American Society of Agronomy
American Society of Animal Science
American Society of Plant Biologists
American Vanguard Corporation
AmericanHort
Animal Health Institute
ASCC-ACNR (Land Grant Program)
Associated Oregon Hazelnut Industry
Association of 1890 Research Directors (ARD)
Association of Northeast Extension Directors
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Biotechnology Innovation Organization
California Polytechnic State University
California State University, Chico
Charles Valentine Riley Memorial Foundation
Clif Bar & Company
CoBank
College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Cornell University
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, University of Arizona
College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Maryland, College Park
College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources, University of Connecticut
Colorado State University
Consumer Federation of America
Corteva Agriscience
Council for Agricultural Science and Technology
Crop Science Society of America
CropLife America
Deans Council Agriculture, Food & Veterinary Medicine (Canada)
Donald Danforth Plant Science Center
Entomological Society of America
Eversole Associates
Extension Committee on Organization and Policy
Farm Journal Foundation
FASS
Florida Nursery, Growers and Landscape Association
FMI - The Food Industry Association
Idaho Nursery & Landscape Association
Illinois Green Industry Association
Indiana Nursery & Landscape Association
Indiana Outdoor Management Association

Indigo Ag
Institute of Food Technologists
International Alliance for Phytobiomes Research
International Wheat Genome Sequencing Consortium
Kansas State University
Maine Landscape & Nursery Association
Michigan Nursery & Landscape Association
Michigan State University, AgBioResearch
Michigan State University, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources
Montana State University
Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals – Multistate Initiative
National Agriculture in the Classroom Organization
National Association for the Advancement of Animal Science
National Association of Federal Veterinarians
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
National Barley Growers Association
National Barley Improvement Committee
National Bison Association
National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research
National Farmers Union
National Grange
National Milk Producers Federation
National Pork Producers Council
National Sunflower Association
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
National Turkey Federation
NC State University
New Jersey Landscape Contractors Association
Noble Research Institute, LLC
North American Millers' Association
North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University
North Central Cooperative Extension Association (NCCEA)
North Central Regional Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors
Northeastern Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors
Ohio Landscape Association
Oklahoma Farm Bureau
Oklahoma State University
Oregon Association of Nurseries
Oregon Cattlemen's Association
Oregon Dairy Farmers Association
Oregon Farm Bureau Federation
Oregon State University College of Agricultural Sciences
Oregon Women for Agriculture
Oregonians for Food & Shelter
Organic Farming Research Foundation
Penn State University
Pennsylvania Landscape & Nursery Association

Poultry Science Association
Produce Marketing Association
Rochester Institute of Technology
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
Society for Range Management
Soil Science Society of America
South Dakota State University
Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors
Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center
Supporters of Agricultural Research (SoAR) Foundation
Syngenta
Tennessee State University
Texas A&M AgriLife
The BARN & Colorado Ag News Network
The Breakthrough Institute
The Fertilizer Institute
The Ohio State University, College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences
The University of Memphis
The University of North Carolina System
The University of Tennessee
U.S. Apple Association
U.S. Canola Association
UC Berkeley
United Fresh Produce Association
University of Arizona Division of Agriculture, Life and Veterinary Sciences, and Cooperative Extension
University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources
University of California System
University of California, Davis
University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment
University of Maryland Eastern Shore
University of Minnesota, College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences
University of Missouri Extension
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
University of New Hampshire
University of Puerto Rico
US Dairy Forage Research Center Stakeholder Committee
USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council
Utah State University
Veterinary Regional Referral Hospital
Virginia Tech
Washington State Nursery & Landscape Association
Washington State University
West Virginia University
Western Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors
Western Growers Association
Wisconsin Cranberry Research and Education Foundation