

May 14, 2019

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue:

We are delighted that Kansas City (KC) is a finalist site for the future home to two U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) agencies: Economic Research Service (ERS) and National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). As members of the leadership team from the adjacent land-grant, research institutions, we enthusiastically endorse the proposal submitted by the Kansas City Area Development Council (KCADC) and the Kansas City Animal Health Corridor for relocation to Kansas City.

The Kansas City region is widely recognized as a center for Midwest agriculture. Within 300 miles of Kansas City, there are six of the nation's premiere 1862 land-grant institutions – two of which are members of the prestigious Association of American Universities. Additionally, there are three 1890 land-grant institutions, and three 1994 institutions. All of these universities and colleges offer future talent in agricultural sciences, in addition to the many regional colleges of agriculture throughout the midwest. Since 2017, these institutions graduated more than 150 PhDs in agriculture. No other location in the United States offers a similar cluster of land-grant access and diversity.

Across the midwest, agriculture is the unrivaled economic driver, contributing more than \$300 billion annually to the region. Furthermore, each institution has acclaimed research, teaching and Extension programs actively contributing to agricultural innovation and technology translation across the region, the nation and the world. The USDA will find more than 400,000 farming operations here in the midwest with an average farm size of nearly 600 acres.

We are confident that an enhanced USDA presence in Kansas City will convey a strong commitment to U.S. agriculture, supported by ready access to world-class researchers and land-grant and other agricultural institutions that will lend leadership to critical agricultural issues facing policy makers.

Iowa State University (ISU) is 225 miles from KC. ISU conducts cutting-edge research in agriculture and natural resources. Iowa ranks first nationally in corn, hog, egg and ethanol production, and second nationally in soybean and red meat production and in agricultural cash receipts and exports. Iowa was first state to adopt the Morrill Act, and originated Cooperative Extension. ISU and the surrounding community host: 1) USDA APHIS Veterinary Services Laboratory; 2) USDA ARS National Animal Disease Center; National Laboratory for Agriculture and Environment and Regional Plant Introduction Station; Corn Insects and Crop Genetics Research Unit; and Crop Genome Informatics Laboratory; 3) USDOE Ames National Laboratory; and 4) other state/regional/national centers with missions aligned with the USDA.

The University of Nebraska–Lincoln (UNL), is 195 miles from KC. This exceptional Big Ten land-grant institution was the first university west of the Mississippi River to offer graduate education. Nebraska is the third largest agricultural economy in the U.S., ranks first in beef exports, commercial red meat production and the number of irrigated acres, and is known for the scale and diversity of its crop and livestock commodities. UNL is home to globally leading plant and animal science research programs, a U.S. Census Regional Data Center, the Daugherty Water for Food Global Institute, the National Drought Mitigation Center, Nebraska Innovation Campus – including a Food Innovation Center and Greenhouse Innovation Center – and the innovative Engler Agribusiness Entrepreneurship Program.

Kansas State University (K-State), anchored in Manhattan, KS and 123 miles from Kansas City, is the nation’s first operational land-grant university. K-State offers 323 undergraduate and master degree programs, 43 graduate certificates, 39 doctoral degree programs, and has exceptional research facilities, including the Biosecurity Research Institute. The new National Bio-and Agro-defense Facility sits adjacent to the campus’ College of Veterinary Medicine and College of Agriculture, both ranked among the top schools in the nation. With these resources and a campus in suburban KC, K-State is well poised to support USDA NIFA and ERS agencies in meeting U.S. and global food system challenges.

The University of Missouri’s College of Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources (MU-CAFNR) is situated 125 miles from Kansas City, with 17 research farms and centers positioned across the Show-Me state. MU-CAFNR offers degree programs to nearly 3,000 students preparing for careers in the agriculture and natural resource industries. This land-grant college is home to world-class animal and plant scientists who develop systems to produce the food, fiber, feed and fuel for a healthy world. Identified as an MU-CAFNR *Program of Distinction*, the Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute contributes critical information to USDA and Capitol Hill on policy issues.

The land-grant mission is alive and well in the midwest, the heart of U.S. agriculture. The faculty, staff and students across our campuses are ready to help our USDA colleagues adapt to the Kansas City region as we work together to strengthen U.S. agriculture around the world.

Sincerely,



Wendy Wintersteen, Ph.D.
President, Iowa State University



Richard B. Myers
President, Kansas State University



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