March 9, 2026

The Honorable Andy Harris
Chair
Subcommittee on Agriculture
House Committee on Appropriations
1536 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Hoeven
Chair
Subcommittee on Agriculture
Senate Committee on Appropriations
338 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Sanford Bishop
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture
House Committee on Appropriations
2407 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture
Senate Committee on Appropriations
506 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: FY 2027 request for USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS)

Dear Chairman Harris, Chairman Hoeven, Ranking Member Bishop, and Ranking Member Shaheen:

The undersigned organizations representing agriculture, academia, industry, and the food and nutrition community write to thank you for your continued bipartisan support of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service (ARS). As your Committees consider appropriations for the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies bill for Fiscal Year 2027, we respectfully request **$1.877 billion for ARS salaries and expenses**, representing a **5 percent increase over the FY2026 enacted level**.

As USDA's chief intramural research agency, ARS conducts food and agricultural research at more than 90 research locations nationwide and delivers science-based solutions that support American farmers, ranchers, consumers, and rural communities. ARS research is organized into 15 National Programs spanning crops, animals, natural resources, nutrition, and food safety—allowing multidisciplinary teams to address complex challenges across the entire food and agricultural system. More than one-third of ARS locations are co-located with public universities, strengthening partnerships that accelerate innovation and maximize the return on federal investment.

The long-term, mission-driven research supported by ARS has produced tangible outcomes that improve agricultural productivity, natural resource management, and public health:

- **Plant Systems:** ARS scientists have developed disease-resistant crop varieties and advanced breeding tools that help producers combat devastating plant diseases such as Fusarium head blight in wheat, citrus greening, and emerging pest pressures. ARS research has led the way on open-source, AI-training databases for plants that have paved the way for precision weed and pest management technologies. These innovations reduce yield losses, lower input costs, and strengthen the reliability of domestic crop production.

- **Animal Agriculture:** ARS research has led to improved animal health management strategies, including enhanced disease surveillance, nutrition optimization, and genetics research that increases livestock productivity while reducing losses from endemic and foreign animal diseases. ARS research is developing novel treatments, preventatives and response strategies to combat emerging challenges like New World screwworm. This work strengthens U.S. biosecurity and protects producers from significant economic risk.
- **Human Nutrition and Food Safety:** ARS researchers have conducted landmark research on infant and child nutrient metabolism, including how protein quality, carbohydrates, and micronutrients are utilized during early growth and development. This work has led to improvements in the formulation of infant formula and pediatric medical nutrition products, helping ensure that vulnerable populations—such as premature infants and children with metabolic disorders—receive safe, effective, and nutritionally appropriate foods. In addition, ARS is making meaningful headway on mycotoxin mitigation, specifically with aflatoxin and vomitoxin, and this progress helps reinforce a strong and safe food supply chain.
- **Soil Health and Natural Resources:** ARS research has advanced soil health management practices such as cover crops that improve water retention, reduce erosion, and increase carbon storage while sustaining yields. Through long-term research networks such as the Long-Term Agroecosystem Research (LTAR) sites, ARS generates critical datasets that help producers adapt to weather variability and resource constraints while protecting soil and water resources.

In addition, ARS maintains essential national research infrastructure, including the **National Agricultural Library**, the world's largest agricultural information repository, and the **Germplasm Resources Information Network (GRIN)**, which safeguards plant, animal, and microbial genetic resources vital to future breeding and food security. Together, these data collections enable research that consistently returns multiples of the original federal investment through higher yields, reduced input costs, and improved resilience across U.S. agriculture.

The benefits of agricultural research accrue over decades, not budget cycles. Sustained and predictable funding for ARS is essential to maintain scientific capacity, retain skilled researchers, and ensure continuity of long-term experiments and datasets that cannot be restarted once lost. A 5 percent increase for FY2027 will help ARS address rising operational costs, maintain research momentum, and respond to emerging threats to plant health, animal health, nutrition security, and natural resource management.

As you work on the FY2027 agriculture appropriations, we urge you to provide **no less than $1.877 billion for ARS salaries and expenses**. This investment will ensure that ARS continues to deliver science-based solutions that enhance U.S. agricultural competitiveness, strengthen food and nutrition security, and steward the natural resources upon which agriculture depends.

Thank you for your leadership and continued support of agricultural research. We stand ready to work with you and your staff and are happy to serve as a resource as the appropriations process moves forward.

Sincerely,

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
agInnovation North Central
agInnovation South
Agricultural & Applied Economics Association
American Association of Mycobacterial Diseases
American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges
American Dairy Science Association
American Feed Industry Association
American Malting Barley Association
American Meat Science Association
American Phytopathological Society
American Society for Horticultural Science
American Society for Microbiology
American Society for Nutrition
American Society of Agronomy
American Society of Animal Science
American Society of Plant Biologists
American Soybean Association
American Veterinary Medical Association
Aquatic Plant Management Society
Association of 1890 Research Directors
Carbon180
Colorado State University
Council for Agricultural Science and Technology (CAST)
Crop Science Society of America
Ecological Society of America
Entomological Society of America
Farm Journal Foundation
Friends of the US Dairy Forage Research Center
International Fresh Produce Association
Maize Genetics Cooperation
Meat Institute
Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals - MI
National Association for Plant Breeding (NAPB)
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Barley Improvement Committee
National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research
National Corn Growers Association
National Cotton Council of America
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
North American Plant Phenotyping Network (NAPPN)
North Central Weed Science Society
Northeastern Weed Science Society

Organic Farming Research Foundation
Pet Food Institute
Soil and Water Conservation Society
Soil Science Society of America
Southern Weed Science Society
Spark Climate Solutions
The Breakthrough Institute
The Good Food Institute
University of Minnesota College of Food, Agricultural, and Natural Resource Sciences
USA Pulses
Weed Science Society of America
Western Society of Weed Science
World Coffee Research