

August 21, 2018

The Honorable Michael Conaway
Chairman
House Committee on Agriculture
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Pat Roberts
Chairman
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Collin Peterson
Ranking Member
House Committee on Agriculture
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Roberts, Chairman Conaway, Ranking Member Stabenow, and Ranking Member Peterson:

As you work toward a conference agreement for the 2018 Farm Bill, the below 37 undersigned organizations write to encourage your robust support for the agricultural research, extension and education enterprise. We are appreciative that both the House and Senate have recognized the importance of research throughout the Farm Bill process. While there are a number of important research provisions in both the House and Senate versions of the Farm Bill, we specifically applaud the efforts in the Senate's Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 to recognize the valuable role of research in the US food and agricultural sector, as both a way to foster innovation and mitigate risk.

The Senate's Farm Bill Research Title (Title VII) would make significant and needed federal investments in agricultural research through both mandatory and discretionary USDA programs. These funding increases are critical to advancing scientific discovery and spurring technology that will propel U.S. agriculture and ensure our nation's food security and global competitiveness.

Mandatory dollars are provided for specialty crop, organics, and biomass research, as well as providing the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research (FFAR) additional funding to ensure the continued development of public-private partnerships that address agricultural grand challenges. Some of the new investments proposed include programs focused on urban agriculture and agricultural education and workforce. The Senate's bill would also create a new advanced research and development authority within USDA with flexibility to work with other federal agencies and private entities to advance food defense and specialty crop research.

These are just a few of the many vital programs the Senate's Research Title would support. To ensure our country remains at the forefront of agricultural innovation, increased investment, as represented through the Senate's Title VII, is imperative. Please support these critical programs through the Farm Bill conference process.

Signed:

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Feed Industry Association
American Phytopathological Society
American Samoa Community College
American Society for Nutrition
American Society of Agronomy
American Society of Plant Biologists
Aquatic Plant Management Society

Association of 1890 Research Directors, Inc.
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges
College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Michigan State University
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Iowa State University
Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
Crop Science Society of America
Ecological Society of America
Entomological Society of America
Farm Journal Foundation
Institute of Food Technologists
National Association of Plant Breeders
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
National Turfgrass Federation
Northeastern Weed Science Society
Organic Farming Research Foundation
Pollinator Partnership
Purdue University
SoAR Foundation
Soil Science Society of America
Southern Weed Science Society
Union of Concerned Scientists
University of Georgia
University of Nevada, Reno
University of New Hampshire
Weed Science Society of America
Western Society of Weed Science