

December 13, 2023

The Honorable Shalanda Young
Office of Management and Budget
Eisenhower Executive Office Building
1650 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20504

The Honorable Arati Prabhakar
Office of Science and Technology Policy
Eisenhower Executive Office Building
1650 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20504

Dear Directors Young and Prabhakar,

As you prepare the fiscal year 2025 (FY25) budget submission, the undersigned organizations, companies, and institutions appreciate the opportunity to submit our funding request for research at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). We urge the President to put forward a budget that reflects the significant challenges facing the food and agricultural system and **providing at least at five percent increase to the USDA Research, Education, and Economics (REE) mission area**. This increase is consistent with the level of funding outlined in the bipartisan, bicameral *America Grows Act* (S. 1628, H.R. 5268) and will expand American competitiveness in foreign markets, improve sustainable production for a growing global population, increase nutrition access, address threats from extreme weather, pests, and diseases, and expand adoption of new technologies, advanced computing, and robotics.

Food, agriculture, and related industries remain a pillar of the U.S. economy, accounting for more than \$1 trillion of our GDP, 1 in 10 jobs,¹ and a significant contribution to our nation's trade balance at more than \$196 billion in export value.² Thanks to the U.S. government's extraordinary leadership and commitment to agricultural research and development, our agriculture sector is the most productive in the world, providing Americans with safe, affordable, and abundant food. Agricultural research is key to ensuring food security, economic stability, sustainable development, and a robust middle class. However, public funding for U.S. agricultural research has declined by nearly one-third in the past two decades. At the same time, China has stepped up its spending in this area to more than \$10 billion a year - more than double what the U.S. spends - giving their farmers a significant advantage in their competition with U.S. producers.

The REE mission area at USDA supports research, analysis, and education to advance scientific knowledge across the food and agricultural enterprise. USDA REE plays a critical role in accomplishing many of the FY25 research and development priorities articulated by the Biden-Harris Administration³, including advancing biotechnology, addressing biosecurity, mitigating the impacts of and adapting to climate change, achieving better health outcomes through enhanced nutrition, and developing technologies and tools that support rural communities and create good-paying jobs.

¹ <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/ag-and-food-statistics-charting-the-essentials/ag-and-food-sectors-and-the-economy/>

² https://www.fas.usda.gov/sites/default/files/2023-05/2022-Yearbook_0.pdf

³ [FY2025-OMB-OSTP-RD-Budget-Priorities-Memo.pdf \(whitehouse.gov\)](https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/FY2025-OMB-OSTP-RD-Budget-Priorities-Memo.pdf)

Increasing the REE budget by five percent would allow for increased investments across the wide range of programs within REE that advance foundational knowledge, support innovation, develop a strong scientific workforce, and modernize infrastructure at USDA labs and universities.

- Agriculture Research Service (ARS) – USDA’s chief in-house scientific research agency with 90+ locations nationwide, that investigate local and regional issues to provide solutions to producers, landowners, consumers, and communities.
- National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) – which funds external research through a nationwide network of land-grant colleges and universities, agricultural experiment stations, schools of forestry, schools of veterinary medicine, and cooperative extension.
- National Agriculture Statistics Service (NASS) – which collects and reports statistics on U.S. agriculture, such as the farm census, crop forecasts, and price estimates.
- Economic Research Service (ERS) – which provides economic and policy analysis on farming, ranching, food, conservation practices, farm management, commodity markets and rural economic development.

We understand the budget constraints the Administration faces in FY25, compounded by significant delays in the FY24 appropriations process. As USDA research funding for FY24 remains unresolved in Congress, we implore you to show your commitment to agricultural innovation by submitting a robust request for USDA REE for FY25. If the United States continues its trend of underinvestment in agricultural and food research, we leave our producers, consumers, and communities vulnerable to rising prices, limited access, poor health outcomes, and threats to national security.

The United States can no longer wait to invest the USDA’s critical research, education, economics, and infrastructure programs that are the foundation of our nation’s competitiveness and security. We look forward to working with you to support the USDA REE mission area with a robust funding request in FY25.

Sincerely,

American Association of Mycobacterial Diseases
American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges
American Dairy Science Association
American Institute of Biological Sciences
American Malting Barley Association
American Phytopathological Society
American Seed Trade Association
American Society for Horticultural Science
American Society for Microbiology
American Society for Nutrition
American Society of Agronomy
American Society of Plant Biologists
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU)
Biochar Policy Project, National Center for Appropriate Technology
Clean Air Task Force

Crop Science Society of America
Earthjustice
Ecological Society of America
Entomological Society of America
Farm Journal Foundation
FASS
Meat Institute
Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals – Multistate Initiative
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
National Barley Improvement Committee
National Center for Appropriate Technology
National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research
National Grange
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
National Turfgrass Federation
National Wheat Improvement Committee
New Entry Sustainable Farming Project
Organic Farming Research Foundation
Rural & Agriculture Council of America
Society for Range Management
Soil and Water Conservation Society
Soil Science Society of America
Supporters of Agricultural Research (SoAR) Foundation
Synergistic Hawaii Agriculture Council
The Breakthrough Institute
The Good Food Institute
The National Grange
Union of Concerned Scientists
US Dairy Forage Research Center Stakeholder Committee
World Coffee Research