

# Science Policy Office

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[www.agronomy.org](http://www.agronomy.org) | [www.crops.org](http://www.crops.org) | [www.soils.org](http://www.soils.org)

Congress is beginning the important process of determining funding for fiscal year 2016 U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) research, education and extension programs. In addition to supporting the Agricultural Research Service, capacity and extension programs, the President's budget request included **\$450 million for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI)** – an unprecedented thirty-eight percent increase.

This is great news for our community! Even better news – two respected members of Congress have stepped forward to champion AFRI. Representatives Rodney Davis (IL-R) and Suzan DelBene (WA-D) are circulating a letter amongst their colleagues asking the House Appropriations Committee to support AFRI funding.

**But they need your help.** Please contact your Representative today and ask them to support AFRI by signing the Davis-DelBene "Dear Colleague" letter.

We must act now. The deadline for signing on is March 20<sup>th</sup>.

**You have a unique opportunity to impact the future of research by contacting your Representative and asking them to support AFRI by signing the Davis-DelBene Dear Colleague letter.**

To email your members of Congress and ask for their support [click here](#).

You can make a difference. Be a voice for research and contact your U.S. Representative today!

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Dear XXX:

In the coming decades, our agricultural system must sustainably produce food for a rapidly growing global population. The Nation's economic prosperity and security depend on our dedication to developing innovative, science-based solutions to meet our growing agricultural needs.

To meet these challenges, Congress has charged the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) with administering competitive basic and applied research funding through the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI). AFRI is the premier competitive grants program for fundamental and applied research, extension and education to support of our Nation's food and agricultural systems.

**Over half of the AFRI research grant proposals rated as highly innovative go unfunded due to lack of funding.**

Numerous challenges face our country and the world related to food, agriculture and natural resources -- these issues impact not only plant and animal research but also food safety,



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healthy soils and the environment. We can meet these challenges through research and application advances that improve production efficiency and ensure continued sustainability. Doing so will propel the U.S. economy and spur innovation.

I urge you will join Representatives Rodney Davis and Suzan DelBene in signing the letter below to House Appropriations Committee Chairman Harold Rogers and Ranking Member Nita Lowey, and Agriculture Appropriations Chairman Robert Aderholt and Ranking Member Sam Farr requesting that they continue this worthwhile effort.

Please show your support for agricultural research and ensure that the Department of Agriculture has the resources it needs to discover solutions to the challenges facing agriculture.

To sign onto the attached letter, please notify Bobby Frederick with Rep. Davis at [Bobby.Frederick@mail.house.gov](mailto:Bobby.Frederick@mail.house.gov) / 5-2371 or Ben Barasky with Rep. Del Bene at [Ben.Barasky@mail.house.gov](mailto:Ben.Barasky@mail.house.gov) / 5-6311 by COB March 20.

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Mar. X, 2015

Dear Chairman Rogers, Chairman Aderholt, Ranking Member Lowey and Ranking Member Farr:

Thank you for your past support for food and agriculture research at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA). As you consider fiscal year 2016 appropriations we urge you to sustain this important effort. Your leadership will help ensure that U.S. agriculture remains competitive and continues to lead the world in food and agriculture innovation.

Throughout our history, the United States has depended on agriculture not only to feed its citizens, but also as a major driver of its economy. Exports of agricultural products resulted in a \$37 billion trade surplus in 2011. The agricultural sector is currently responsible for 1 in 12 American jobs. The U.S. farmer is among the most efficient in the world and the United States is the global leader in meeting the world's demand for food because of the investments in food and agriculture research made throughout the 20th century.

However, investments in agriculture research have stalled or even decreased over the past three decades. More than half of the USDA-NIFA Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) research grant proposals rated as highly innovative go unfunded due to budget constraints. In order to continue the important work made possible by the Committee's prior support, we request robust funding in fiscal year 2016.



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We must close this gap in unfunded highly innovative research if the United States is to remain the world's leader in food and agriculture. The United States faces stronger competition as the leaders of China, Brazil, and India increase their agricultural research investment. China has outspent the United States in agricultural research since 2009. Investing in research and innovation through the USDA is necessary to meet the critical challenges facing U.S. agriculture in the 21st century.

The Nation's economic prosperity and security depend on our dedication to developing innovative, science-based solutions to meet our growing agricultural needs and managing efficient food systems.

Thank you for your consideration. We are grateful for your leadership in ensuring that the strong funding necessary to protect animal and human health will continue to be available.

Sincerely,

Rodney Davis  
Suzan DelBene

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Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

