



Congressional Meetings Guidelines

- At scheduled meeting time, enter the office, hand the staff assistant your business card (if you have one) and tell them you have a meeting. Include the time of your meeting and staffer's name with whom you are meeting.
- Once you meet the member and/or staffer, thank them for their time. The lead constituent then introduces themselves including name, title, affiliation (institution). All attendees then introduce themselves.

Talking Points:

- Tell member and/or staffer that you are here to talk about research funding at USDA specifically,
 1. the internal research program - Agricultural Research Service (ARS)
 2. the external research program - Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI)
- The combination of internal and external research programs allows USDA to support long term research projects **AND** new and emerging issues in food and agriculture science. That's why we are asking for support for both programs.
- ARS funding decreased for several years (see graph on the *USDA Ask*), but received an increase last year. Our goal is to maintain ARS funding at a level that keeps up with inflation.
- AFRI is authorized to be funded up to \$700 million, but is currently funded at \$316 million. Our goal is to grow AFRI funding toward the \$700 million each year.
- AFRI consistently receives more proposals of scientific merit than it can fund. For example, in FY2011, 1,308 proposals were recommended for funding, but AFRI could only award funding for 331 proposals. That means we're funding less than **1/3** of the exceptional research proposals!
- **Use a short anecdote or tell a story** that illustrates the value of ARS and/or AFRI.
 - This is a good place for you to give a brief description about your research and the potential impacts/outcomes of it.
 - You can also describe the economic impacts: jobs created, money coming back to the district/state. Use the state facts sheets here, they have lots of good data that shows the impacts of agriculture research in a specific state.
- Make the **"Ask"**. We urge Congress to provide strong support for research programs in fiscal year 2015. For USDA, we are asking for \$1.14 billion for ARS (Senate) and \$325 million for AFRI (both House and Senate).
- Even if you are not scheduled to meet with the member of Congress in person, ask if they are in the office and available for a quick photo. (Sometimes this can get you a minute or two of face-to-face time!) Make sure to get a photo if you are meeting with the member of Congress.
- Thank member/staffer for their time.