

Legislative Action Network

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ASA, CSSA, SSSA Legislative Action Network Update: Senate Ag Committee holds Farm Bill hearing on research

The Senate Agriculture Committee held its first D.C.-based hearing for the 2018 farm bill on June 15 entitled, Agricultural Research: Perspectives on Past and Future Successes for the 2018 Farm Bill. The Committee invited USDA Acting Undersecretary for Research, Education, and Economics (REE), Dr. Ann Bartuska, ARS Administrator, Dr. Chavonda Jacobs-Young, NIFA Director, Dr. Sonny Ramaswamy, and the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research (FFAR) Executive Director, Dr. Sally Rocky to give testimony and answer questions. [Their testimony and webcast of the hearing can be found here](#). As a part of the National Coalition for Food and Agriculture Research (NCFAR), ASA, CSSA and SSSA submitted [outside witness testimony](#) for the hearing.

Many of the senators' questions related to the purpose of the intramural and extramural research supported by ARS, NIFA, and FFAR and how funds can be leveraged. The panelists' answers described a set of national programs and partnerships that address broad goals like emerging diseases, nutrient management and the rural opioid epidemic with specific, locally-based programs. Several members also brought up the important role of extension in bringing new research and best practices to local communities.

Near the close of the hearing, Sen. John Hoeven, the Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee for Agriculture, had this to say about agriculture research: "Our farmers and ranchers provide the highest quality, lowest cost food supply in the history of the world and ag research is a big, big part of that. We need to support ag research funding in the budget and I chair Ag Appropriations and we have every intention of doing that. I know our Ag Committee Chair and Ranking Member share that sentiment."

As work on the 2018 Farm Bill begins to move forward, this early emphasis on research is an exciting and encouraging development. ASA, CSSA and SSSA will continue to engage with the House and Senate Agriculture Committees to represent our sciences and our Societies in these important policy discussions.