ASA, CSSA, SSSA
Science Policy Office

2020
ANNUAL REPORT
Research Funding

The Science Policy Office advocates for federal funding for food, agriculture, and natural resources research programs, specifically the U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Science Foundation, and Department of Energy-Office of Science. In 2020, ASA, CSSA, and SSSA submitted individual and coalition funding requests to the House and Senate in support of these programs.

- **Agriculture Research Service**: $1,789 million
- **Agriculture and Food Research Initiative**: $480 million
- **Hatch Act Formula Funds**: $280 million
- **Smith-Lever Extension Funds**: $341 million
- **Competitive Research Grants**: $5 million
- **Agriculture Advanced Research and Development Authority**: $50 million
- **National Science Foundation**: $8,550 million
- **Department of Energy-Office of Science**: $7,400 million
- **Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy**: $450 million

Congressional Visits Day

Congressional Visits Day is an annual event held in Washington, D.C. which brings ASA, CSSA, and SSSA members to Capitol Hill to advocate for food, agriculture, and natural resources research funding. For 2020, ASA, CSSA, and SSSA members made three funding requests to Congressional offices:

- ✔️ Fund Agriculture and Food Research Initiative at $480 million
- ✔️ Fund Agriculture Advanced Research and Development Authority at $50 million
- ✔️ Fund the competitive equiptments grants program at $5 million

Congressional Visits Day by the numbers:

- **77** Participants
- **123** Congressional Meetings
- **143** Signatures on the AFRI Dear Colleague Letter
- **105** Funding Requests
Congressional Soils Caucus

The Congressional Soils Caucus is a bipartisan caucus for members of the U.S. House of Representatives interested in the issue of soil science. The Science Policy Office works with the Soils Caucus to organize an annual, three-part briefing series.

SOILS & CARBON STORAGE
Putting carbon into soil - improving soil health and capturing CO₂ from the atmosphere to mitigate climate change.

SOILS & FRESH WATER
Forever chemicals - how plastics and PFAs get to, and move through, our soils.

SOILS & FOREVER CHEMICALS
Soils filter fresh water - but what changes after natural disasters?

Congressional Science Fellowship

The ASA, CSSA, SSSA Congressional Science Fellowship is a one-year, paid Fellowship for a Society member to work for a Member of Congress in Washington, D.C.

The 2019-2020 Congressional Science Fellow, Taylor Dunavin, served on the Senate Agriculture Committee.

SEED Ambassador Program

The Scientists Engaging and Educating Decisionmakers (SEED) Ambassador program is a year-long advocacy leadership designed to help Society members develop meaningful relationships with policymakers.

The 2019 inaugural SEED Ambassador class had 18 members from across the U.S., at different career stages, from academia, industry, and government.
Partnerships

ASA, CSSA, and SSSA participate in multiple coalitions focusing on different scientific topics.

- National Science Funding Coalition
- Energy Science Coalition
- AFRI Coalition
- Supporters of Agriculture Research Coalition
- National Coalition for Agricultural Research Funding
- Climate Science Working Group
- Geoscience Working Group
- Farm Bill Conservation Coalition

ASA, CSSA, and SSSA also sign-on to coalition letters to show broad consensus on an issue and to demonstrate the influence scientists have when they speak out with a unified voice. In 2020, ASA, CSSA, and SSSA signed on to coalition letters focusing on:

- Federal response to COVID-19
- Use of scientific studies in EPA policy
- International student visas
- Plant gene editing
- Racism in academia

Nominations

Many federal agencies rely on scientific experts to provide guidance on specific scientific topics. ASA, CSSA, and SSSA regularly submit nominations for Society members to serve on federal advisory committees and topical working groups.

- National Academy of Sciences Study of Earth Science at NSF
- EPA Agricultural Science Committee
- National Genetic Resources Advisory Council
- National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board
- Task Force on Agricultural Air Quality Research
Requests for Information

ASA, CSSA, and SSSA regularly send letters to Congress, the administration, and federal agencies on a variety of science and research issues. In 2020, ASA, CSSA, and SSSA submitted input on topics such as:

- The federal research environment
- Hemp farming regulations
- Future of NIFA
- Federal data collection
- Open access
- Urban and indoor agriculture
- National Climate Assessment
- Biotechnology education

USDA Agriculture Innovation Agenda

The Agriculture Innovation Agenda, a USDA-wide effort to align research goals with innovative ideas for transformative products, USDA solicited stakeholders for their input on how to increase the productivity and reduce the environmental footprint of agriculture. ASA, CSSA, and SSSA, established an intersociety Task Force with four other scientific societies to develop a response. The final comments recommended that USDA should embrace agriculture education, diversity and inclusion, economic policies that help farmers be flexible, and products that increase resilience and sustainability, like sensor systems and breeding toolkits.

AIA Joint Task Force

American Society of Agronomy  
Crop Science Society of America  
 Soil Science Society of America  
Certified Crop Advisors  
American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers  
American Society of Plant Biologists  
Entomological Society of America  
National Association of Plant Breeders

The final comments recommended that USDA should embrace agriculture education, diversity and inclusion, economic policies that help farmers be flexible, and products that increase resilience and sustainability, like sensor systems and breeding toolkits.

Science Policy Committees

The Science Policy Committees provide scientific expertise to recent or emerging policy issues. Committee members provide invaluable insight and guidance on such issues as GMO labeling, student and workforce development, and federal funding priorities. Society members at any career stage can volunteer to serve on the one of the Science Policy Committees during the annual call for volunteers.