Dear Chairs and Ranking Members:

As organizations concerned about the future of food and agricultural science, the undersigned are writing to express our support for the America Grows Act of 2021 (S.____), a bipartisan bill Senators Durbin and Moran have recently introduced that would significantly increase our nation’s investment in agricultural research and development.

Food and agriculture remain a pillar of the U.S. economy, accounting for nearly $3 trillion of our GDP, 1 in 6 jobs, and a significant contribution to our nation’s trade balance at more than $155 trillion in export value. As the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed vulnerabilities of our agriculture and food system, and the increasing occurrence of natural disasters that harm harvests and production, agricultural research is a critical solution for our nation’s economic and national security. Thanks to the U.S. government’s extraordinary leadership and commitment to agricultural research and development since 1862, our agriculture sector is the most productive in the world, providing Americans with safe, affordable, and abundant food.

The public return on investment for agricultural research is significant, estimated at $17 to $1. Yet U.S. funding in this area has declined in real dollars since 2003 while other forms of domestic research have risen dramatically. The America Grows Act would help reverse this dangerous trend by reinvesting in our nation’s scientists and producers and helping reassert U.S. research leadership on the global stage. Modeled after the successful 21st Century Cures Act passed in 2016, which spurred additional funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the America Grows Act appropriates a 5% inflation-adjusted annual increase for the next 10 years for agricultural research in the following USDA agencies:

- Agricultural Research Service (ARS)
- Economic Research Service (ERS)
- National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)
• National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)

The timing for the America Grows Act could not be better. Investments in research are critical in addressing production, nutrition, food security, and other major challenges across the U.S. food and agricultural sector. Farm cash receipts from crop and livestock sales are at their lowest point since 2016, and USDA projects that farm income will decline 8% in 2021. Our nation’s producers are facing pest, disease, and severe weather challenges that research can solve.

Thank you for your consideration and your hard work on behalf of agriculture and agricultural research. We look forward to working with you to advance the America Grows Act. This legislation represents a crucial step in meeting the vital needs of our nation’s producers and consumers while retaining our status as the world leader in agricultural innovation.

Sincerely,

[List of organizations]

American Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
AFRI Coalition
Agricultural and Applied Economics Association
Agricultural Retailers Association
American Association for the Advancement of Science
American Association of Mycobacterial Diseases
American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges
American Dairy Science Association
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Malting Barley Association
American Phytopathological Society
American Pulse Association
American Seed Trade Association
American Society for Horticultural Science
American Society for Microbiology
American Society for Nutrition
American Society of Agronomy
American Society of Animal Science
American Society of Plant Biologists
American Statistical Association
American Veterinary Medical Association
Aquatic Plant Management Society
Arizona Farm Bureau

Association of 1890 Research Directors
Association of American Universities
Association of Northeast Extension Directors (NEED)
Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities
Association of Southern Region Extension Directors
The Breakthrough Institute
Brooks Tropicals, LLC
Charles V. Riley Memorial Foundation
College of Agricultural Sciences, Penn State University
Colorado State University
Consumer Federation of America
Corn Refiners Association
Experiment Station Directors (NCRA)
North Central Weed Science Society
Northeastern Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors (NERA)
Northeastern Weed Science Society
Oklahoma State University
Oregon State University
Plant Based Products Council
Pollinator Partnership
Poultry Science Association
Robinson Oak Lea Farm
Rochester Institute of Technology
Rural & Agriculture Council of America
Society for Range Management
Soil and Water Conservation Society
Soil Science Society of America
South Dakota State University
Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors
Southern Weed Science Society
Supporters of Agricultural Research (SoAR) Foundation
Texas A&M AgriLife
Union of Concerned Scientists
United States Cattlemen's Association
The University of California System
University of California, Davis
University of Delaware
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
University of Maryland
University of Nebraska
University of Wisconsin-Madison
University of Wyoming
US Canola Association
US Dairy Forage Research Center Stakeholder Committee
US Dry Bean Council
USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council
USA Rice
Virginia Farm Bureau Federation
Weed Science Society of America
Western Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors
Western Society of Weed Science

CC: The Honorable Richard Durbin
Democratic Whip

The Honorable Jerry Moran