April 10, 2013

Dear Chairman Pryor, Chairman Aderholt, Ranking Member Blunt, and Ranking Member Farr:

The Animal Agriculture Coalition (AAC) writes to urge your consideration of its views and recommendations for the fiscal year 2014 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies funding. The AAC is comprised of major animal and animal-related commodity organizations as well as allied organizations representing veterinary medicine, animal science and various livestock sectors or animal agriculture interests in the U.S.

Animal agriculture is a major driver of the U.S. agriculture economy and livestock sales account for 39 percent of all farm income. In addition, animal protein needs are projected to increase worldwide by 67 percent over the next 40 years. The future success of animal agriculture is closely tied to advancements in science and technology in addition to the detection and eradication of disease that could devastate this sector. Adequate funding will be critical for programs that ensure our ability to feed a growing population.

**Agricultural Research Service (ARS)**

The AAC strongly supports research conducted by the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), which has the potential to make significant progress towards solving problems facing America’s livestock and poultry producers but is consistently receiving funding disproportionate to its contributions to the farm economy. We believe there must be increased emphasis on livestock production and protection. AAC supports the President’s request for ARS of $1,124,003,000 which includes funding for a new consolidated poultry research facility to address highly virulent poultry diseases that require increased biocontainment capabilities and state-of-the-art facilities.

AAC has been particularly concerned this past year by an abrupt change in treatment of the National Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring System (NARMS) by the Food and Drug Administration Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM). NARMS has been a cooperative program between CVM, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and ARS. While funded with FDA discretionary funding, equality of the agencies has been emphasized through previous appropriations report language. Over the past year CVM has moved NARMS focus away from ARS and toward regulatory agencies (CVM and the Food Safety and Inspection Service). This diminishes participation by farmers and veterinarians and results in limiting valuable information inputs for NARMS. AAC urges Congress to equally distribute $7,600,000 between ARS, CVM, and CDC; require CVM to utilize ARS labs.
for isolation and characterization of all animal samples and results analysis; and require ARS, CVM, and CDC to jointly report NARMS findings and annually report on budget and collaboration between the agencies to Congress.

**National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA)**
Investments in animal science through the National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and ARS will be critical to meeting requirements to feed a growing population. AAC supports the President’s request of $801,140,000 for NIFA Research and Education Activities, including for programs such as the Hatch Act and the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI). AAC supports overall funding for NIFA Extension Activities $476,000,000; the President has requested just $459,037,000. AAC supports the President’s request of $28,129,000 for Integrated Activities.

With specific regard to AFRI, AAC continues to support increased funding for competitive agricultural research. However, despite the major contributions of animal agriculture to farm income and the agriculture economy, only 9 percent of AFRI funding goes towards animal health, animal production, and animal products. The amount granted in these areas in fiscal year 2011 was 50 percent of the amount granted in fiscal year 2009 even though the total amount of funding awarded by AFRI increased over this time period. AAC supports the President’s requested increase in AFRI funding to $383,376,000. AAC urges that research accurately reflect the priorities set out in the 2008 Farm Bill for research and providing funds for animal science commensurate with animal agriculture’s contributions to the farm economy. AFRI grants are paramount to addressing a number of challenges including weather risk, depleted water resources, animal disease and emerging animal pest risks.

In 2012, the AAC supported an effort entitled Farm Animal Integrated Research 2012 (FAIR 2012) which brought together leaders from industry, academia and government to determine priority research needs for the future of animal agriculture. FAIR 2012 identified food security, one health and stewardship as three primary focal areas for additional investment in the animal science. A summary of the FAIR 2012 results can be found at: [http://www.fass.org/docs/FAIR2012_Summary.pdf?v3](http://www.fass.org/docs/FAIR2012_Summary.pdf?v3). AAC strongly encourages Congress and the Administration to provide greater emphasis on these priority areas in fiscal year 2014.

Within the NIFA accounts, AAC urges funding for the following programs with specific emphasis and impacts for animal agriculture:
- $4,790,000 for the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program. AAC supports the President’s request.
- $4,000,000 for the Animal Health and Disease Research Program. AAC supports the President’s request.
- $1,250,000 for the Food Animal Residue Avoidance Database Program. This important food safety program always relies upon Congress to restore funding as it is traditionally omitted from the President’s annual budget requests. No funding was requested by the President in fiscal year 2014.
- $9,980,000 for the Food and Agriculture Defense Initiative. The President requested $6,000,000.

The Food and Agriculture Defense Initiative provides baseline funding for the National Animal Health Laboratory Network – our nation's most vital early warning system guarding against emerging and foreign animal diseases and has the capability to test for economically devastating diseases such as mad cow disease, foot-and-mouth disease, avian and swine influenza, and classical swine fever; it serves to protect our nation’s food supply and public health. Also, AAC has become alarmed by a lack of federal funding to advance drug approvals to treat minor species. The National Research Support Project 7/Minor Use Animal Drug Program has been treated as an earmark since fiscal year 2010. Congress is urged to elevate the importance of AFRI and ARS funding for research and development of drugs for minor species and for minor uses in major species.

**Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)**
AAC urges Congress to restore funding to the traditional animal health activities and provide Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) with at least $825,000,000. The President’s fiscal year 2014 request is $797,601,000. APHIS has suffered a 16.4 percent cut ($148,738,000) since fiscal year 2010. AAC fears that further cuts to APHIS will bring irrevocable damage, cause a deterioration of essential services, and impair the agency from carrying out its fundamental mission of guarding our borders from foreign animal diseases and protecting the health and value of U.S. agriculture and our country’s natural resources. APHIS is currently working to prevent 160 animal diseases from entering our country and to eradicate harmful and economically devastating diseases.
Funding must be restored for APHIS' core functions that are so critical to animal agriculture. APHIS' shift on its priorities for foreign animal diseases from "stamping out" under the OIE guidelines to vaccination means increased funds are needed for emergency preparedness. APHIS' International Services are critical to the continued success of U.S. trade and our country's ability to gain broader market access. AAC supports the zoonotic disease program but this function must not come at the expense of traditional animal health activities. If the President and Congress continue to limit resources for APHIS then funding must not be diverted from traditional animal health activities.

**Conclusion**

Animal agriculture is a large part of the agriculture enterprise, and AAC asks that you give our requests careful consideration as you set out to fund the nation's agricultural policy priorities in fiscal year 2014. We would encourage that this correspondence be the first step in an ongoing dialogue between the Subcommittee and AAC about the fiscal year 2014 budget needs for outlined programs. We realize the difficulty of your task but know that increased investment in the outlined programs will prove to be a wise decision now and for the future. AAC stands ready to work with you and your staff to expeditiously pass the fiscal year 2014 agriculture appropriations bill. Thank you for your consideration; if you would like to discuss the AAC’s recommendations further, please contact Damon Wells, AAC chairman at DWells@TurkeyFed.org or 202-730-9636, or Gina Luke, AAC vice chairman at GLuke@AVMA.org or 202-289-3204.

On behalf of:

American Association of Avian Pathologists  
American Association of Bovine Practitioners  
American Association of Small Ruminant Practitioners  
American Association of Swine Veterinarians  
American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians  
American Dairy Goat Association  
American Dairy Science Association  
American Goat Federation  
American Horse Council  
American Meat Institute  
American Sheep Industry Association  
American Feed Industry Association  
American Society of Animal Science  
American Veterinary Medical Association  
Animal Health Institute  
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges  
Association of Veterinary Biologics Companies  
Biotechnology Industry Organization  
Federation of Animal Science Societies  
Multistate Initiative on Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals  
National Aquaculture Association  
National Chicken Council  
National Pork Producers Council  
National Turkey Federation National Association for the Advancement of Animal Science  
National Association of Federal Veterinarians  
National Grain and Feed Association  
National Renderers Association  
North American Meat Association  
Poultry Science Association  
U.S. Animal Health Association  
USPOULTRY U.S. Poultry & Egg Association

CC:

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
The Honorable Susan Collins  
The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
The Honorable Tom Harkin  
The Honorable John Hoeven  
The Honorable Tim Johnson  
The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
The Honorable Jerry Moran  
The Honorable Jon Tester  
The Honorable Tom Udall  
The Honorable Sanford Bishop  
The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
The Honorable Jeff Fortenberry  
The Honorable Tom Latham  
The Honorable Alan Nunnelee  
The Honorable Chellie Pingree  
The Honorable Tom Rooney  
The Honorable David Valadao  
The Honorable Kevin Yoder