August 1, 2013

Dear Agriculture Committee Chairs and Ranking Members:

We, the undersigned organizations are writing to urge your support for inclusion of the Farm Animal Agriculture Integrated Research Initiative (FAAIR) as a part of the conference report as you reconcile the House and Senate versions of the Farm Bill. FAAIR is included as a part of Section 7208 of Senate passed S. 954 and represents an important opportunity to advance critical priorities in the area of animal science.

As the world’s population grows and natural resources become limited, investments in animal agriculture research are needed to improve efficiency in order to continue providing safe and abundant food supplies for the growing global community. Demand for food is expected to increase from 70 to 100 percent by 2050. Meat consumption is estimated to increase by 73 percent, dairy consumption is estimated to increase 57 percent, and per capita egg consumption in developing countries is expected to rise by almost 40 percent.

Advancements in animal science will play an important role in meeting these needs and enabling the future success of animal agriculture and the rural economy. Livestock and poultry sales account for forty percent of all farm income. When feed crops consumed by livestock are included, the contribution to farm income is 60 percent. The United States must step up its investments in agriculture research to maintain its status as a leading producer of safe, affordable and abundant food and meet increasing demands.

Unfortunately, current funding by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to support the animal sciences is not proportionate with the economic contributions of animal agriculture. In fact, investment in the animal sciences has been declining for many years, even for programs that have received increased appropriations.

The FAAIR initiative helps address the shortfall in federal investments for the animal sciences by supporting high priority research in three key focal areas: Food Security, One Health and Stewardship. The research priorities in the FAAIR Initiative build on the Farm Animal Integrated Research 2012 (FAIR 2012) priority setting process completed in 2012, which brought together leaders from industry, academia and government to identify critical priorities for the animal sciences.

We urge inclusion of the FAAIR initiative in the final version of the Farm Bill. Please let us know if you have any questions or if we can be of any assistance regarding this initiative.

Sincerely,
Alabama Cattleman’s Association
American Association of Avian Pathologists
American Association of Bovine Practitioners
American Association of Mycobacterial Diseases
American Association of Swine Veterinarians
American Dairy Goat Association
American Dairy Science Association
American Farmers and Ranchers
American Feed Industry Association
American Goat Federation
American Meat Institute
American Meat Science Association
American Sheep Industry Association
American Society of Animal Science
American Veterinary Medical Association
Animal Health Institute
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges
Colorado Livestock Association
Council for Agricultural Science and Technology
Federation of Animal Science Societies
Georgia Cattleman’s Association
Georgia Poultry Federation
Iowa Cattleman’s Association
Iowa Pork Producers Association
Iowa Poultry Association
Iowa State Dairy Association
Michigan Agri-Business Association
Michigan Meat Association
Michigan Milk Producers Association
Michigan Sheep Breeders
Multistate Initiative on Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals
Mississippi Cattleman’s Association
National Association for the Advancement of Animal Science
National Association of Federal Veterinarians
National Farmers Union
National Grain and Feed Association
National Milk Producers Federation
National Pork Producers Council
National Turkey Federation
North American Meat Association
Oklahoma Cattleman’s Association
Oklahoma Pork Council
Oklahoma Farmers Union
United Egg Producers
United States Animal Health Association
U.S. Poultry and Egg Association
Vermont Dairy Industry Association