The Animal Agriculture Coalition (AAC) writes to express our sincere gratitude for the Committee’s actions during consideration of the Fiscal Year 2015 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. The AAC is comprised of most major animal and animal-related commodity organizations as well as allied organizations representing veterinary medicine, animal science and various livestock or animal agricultural interests in the U.S. We would like to strongly reiterate our support for the Southeast Poultry Research Laboratory (SEPRL) that will ensure the continued synergy intended in poultry research and development when this facility was designated years ago.

Within the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) AAC was encouraged to see the Committee support funding for buildings and facilities upgrades at the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), USDA’s premier intramural science agency. This critical funding will allow ARS to replace and modernize degrading facilities.

At the instruction of the Committee, ARS conducted a thorough assessment of its needs and, in a capital investment strategy that was delivered to the Subcommittee in April 2012, the agency identified 21 priority facilities that need to be modernized due to aging infrastructure. ARS’s highest priority is the SEPRL, a national poultry laboratory. Until that project is completed ARS will be unable to move to other important infrastructure improvements. The $155 million will fund the construction of a modern research facility located in Athens, Georgia, consistent with program missions, goals, and requirements. We urge you to ensure that the final agriculture appropriations bill maintains this important funding.

SEPRL was established in 1960 and became the center for detecting and treating major poultry diseases. As a result, research at this lab was expanded to support collaboration on poultry health and infectious animal diseases that may impact human
health with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Institutes of Health and more than 10 universities around the country. This laboratory serves the nation and is a vital link to a healthy and sustaining US poultry industry.

In short, the work performed at this key ARS facility is critical for the modern food and agriculture industry, and promotes a healthy and safe food supply chain for American and world consumers. We applaud the Committee’s actions to support investment at ARS to upgrade buildings and facilities. The provision of funding for SEPRL demonstrates a commitment to the importance of strong research support for America’s agriculture sector.

Once again, the AAC thanks you for prioritizing funding for agencies and individual programs that are of great importance to animal-related commodity organizations, veterinary medicine, animal science and other animal agriculture stakeholders, as well as to U.S. and world consumers. Thank you for your consideration of our views. Should you have questions, I can be reached at Dwells@TurkeyFed.org and 202.730.9636.

Sincerely,

Damon Wells
Chairman
Animal Agriculture Coalition

On behalf of:

American Association of Avian Pathologists
American Association of Bovine Practitioners
American Association of Mycobacterial Diseases
American Association of Small Ruminant Practitioners
American Association Swine Veterinarians
American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians
American Dairy Goat Association
American Dairy Science Association
American Feed Industry Association
American Goat Federation
American Horse Council
American Society of Animal Science
American Sheep Industry Association
American Veterinary Medical Association
Animal Agriculture Alliance
Animal Health Institute
Animal Science Societies
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges
Association of Veterinary Biologics Companies
Fats and Proteins Research Foundation
Federation of Animal Science Societies
Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals (MDA) Multistate Initiative
National Association for the Advancement of Animal Science
National Association of Federal Veterinarians
National Chicken Council
National Grain and Feed Association
National Milk Producers Federation
National Pork Producers Council
National Renderers Association
National Turkey Federation
Poultry Science Association
U.S. Poultry & Egg Association
United Egg Producers