June 11, 2014

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chairman
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Agriculture, FDA, and Related Agencies - Chairman
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sam Farr
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Agriculture, FDA, and Related Agencies – Ranking Member
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Rogers and Aderholt and Ranking Members Lowey and Farr:

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.

Within the Agricultural Research Service (ARS)
AAC was heartened 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. We urge you to ensure that the final agriculture appropriations bill maintains this important funding.

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 replaced. ARS’s top three priorities are the Southeast Poultry Research Laboratory, the Fort Detrick foreign disease research facility and the Beltsville human nutrition, bee research, and animal science facility. In short, the work the ARS performs at these key facilities is critical for the modern food and agriculture industry, and promotes a healthy and safe food supply chain for American and world consumers.

Several of the current ARS facilities are near the end of their useful lives. We applaud the Committee’s actions to support investment at ARS to upgrade buildings and facilities. The provision of funding demonstrates a commitment to the importance of strong research support for America’s agriculture sector.
Within the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)
We are encouraged that the Committee continued its support of programs within NIFA that are of great importance to the AAC. Specifically, AAC appreciates the support for the Food Animal Residue Avoidance Databank, the Food and Agriculture Defense Initiative, the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program, the Animal Health Disease Research program, and the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative. Stable funding for these essential programs helps safeguard animal agriculture, strengthens animal health and facilitates advances necessary to keep U.S. animal agriculture the envy of the world.

Within the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)
Your bill provides much of what is needed for APHIS to cover the facilities fees now being charged in the budget to individual agencies. We all know too well the devastating impacts foreign animal diseases have on the economy. It is imperative that APHIS be bolstered with the appropriate funding as it works to prevent 160 animal diseases from entering our country and continues to eradicate harmful and economically devastating diseases. When a disease is detected, APHIS implements emergency protocols and partners with affected states and the National Animal Health Laboratory Network to quickly manage or eradicate the outbreak. This aggressive approach has enabled APHIS to successfully prevent and respond to potential disease threats. Your bill goes a long way toward helping APHIS continue to respond quickly and effectively in the event of a disease outbreak. APHIS' core functions are critical to animal agriculture as it guards our borders from foreign animal diseases and protects the health and value of U.S. agriculture.

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,

[Signature]
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 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