May 31, 2018

The Honorable Pat Roberts
Chairman
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Roberts and Stabenow,

We appreciate your efforts to draft a comprehensive Farm Bill that will effectively and efficiently serve all segments of agriculture and the public. An important component that is needed to address both current and future needs is publically funded agricultural research. We, in collaboration with other science-based organizations, have contacted you in recent months to emphasize the critical need for research funding that addresses all aspects of agriculture.

The current Agricultural Genome Initiative was first authorized in the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990. It has been included in subsequent Farm Bills and wisely authorized research on both plants and animals in the initial version and each subsequent reauthorization. As you work to finalize your draft version of the Research Title of the 2018 Farm Bill we encourage you to include reauthorization of the important work being done through the Agricultural Genome Initiative.

A large amount of plant crops grown in the U. S. are used for animal agriculture as well as to support companion animal (pet) health. To only support plant genomics does not recognize the massive role that animal agriculture plays not only in the profitability of crop farmers but in human health. We need, in fact, integrated plant and animal work...Which plant and animal genomes together in a system provides the most efficient, environmentally sustainable, profitable and support of human health. We write to you as animal and agricultural scientists, representing all species of livestock, to stress the important of including animal genomics as a part of the program that you include in the Farm Bill and urge you to support equality in funding between plants and animals.

Thank you for your consideration and positive action on this matter.

The FASS Science Policy Committee,

Dr. John McNamara - Chair
Dr. H. Russell Cross
Dr. Shawn Archibeque
Dr. Anne Ballou
Dr. Mike Brouk
Dr. Jim Quigley
Dr. Alison L. Van Eenennaam
Dr. Ken Olson – FASS Science Policy Director