February 27, 2012

Dear Chairs and Ranking Members:

The AFRI Coalition and undersigned agricultural stakeholders are writing to support the President’s FY 2013 budget proposal of $325 million for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI).

Authorized at $700 million annually and housed within the USDA’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), AFRI is the premier competitive grants program for fundamental and applied research, extension and education in support of our nation’s food and agricultural systems. AFRI supports research in critical issue areas including: food safety and security; agricultural economics and rural communities; plant and animal health, production and products; nutrition; agricultural systems and technology; and energy, natural resources and the environment.

The AFRI Coalition recognizes that in the current fiscal environment, difficult decisions must be made. We urge you to consider the return on investment that scientific research generates. Specifically, for every federal dollar spent on publicly funded agricultural research, $20 or more is generated in the U.S. economy. [i]

As you consider the fiscal year 2013 agriculture appropriations priorities, we strongly urge you to fund AFRI at $325 million. Thank you for your support of agricultural research.

Sincerely,

American Association of Avian Pathologists
American Dairy Science Association
American Feed Industry Association
American Horse Council
American Meat Institute
American Phytopathological Society
American Society for Horticultural Science
American Society for Microbiology
American Society for Nutrition
American Society of Agronomy
American Society of Animal Science
American Veterinary Medical Association
Association of American Universities
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Biotechnology Industry Organization
California Climate and Agriculture Network
CASA del LLano, INC
Crop Science Society of America
CropLife America
Dakota Rural Action
Ecological Farming Association
Entomological Society of America
Experiment Committee on Organization and Policy
Federation of Animal Science Societies
Food System Economic Partnership
Future Harvest CASA
Illinois Stewardship Alliance
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Institute of Food Technologists
Iowa State University
Izaak Walton League of America
Johnne's Disease Integrated Program
Kansas Rural Center
Michael Fields Agricultural Institute
Michigan Food and Farming Systems
Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service
National Association of Plant Breeders
National Center for Appropriate Technology
National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
Northwest Center for Alternatives to Pesticides
PCC Farmland Trust
Poultry Science Association
Practical Farmers of Iowa
Rural Advancement Foundation International-USA
Soil Science Society of America
Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group
Union of Concerned Scientists
Weed Science Society of America
West Virginia University
Western Sustainable Agriculture Working Group

cc:
Members of the House Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies

Members of the Senate Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies