July 14, 2010—via E-mail

The Honorable Herb Kohl, Chair
The Honorable Sam Brownback, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC  20510

RE:  FY11 Appropriations—Support for Increasing Funding for Food and Agricultural Research, Extension and Education

Dear Chairman Kohl and Ranking Member Brownback:

The undersigned organizations urge the Senate Appropriations Committee to increase federal investment in food and agricultural research, extension and education (RE&E) as a critical component of federal appropriations for FY11.

This includes action to fund the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) at the fully authorized level as soon as practicable. A substantial step towards the authorized level of $700 million is necessary in FY 2011 to ensure the achievement of the scientific underpinnings necessary to increase productivity, improve nutrition and food safety, fulfill the promise of the next generation of biofuels, and meet other pressing needs. The President’s FY 2011 budget request for a significant funding increase for AFRI represents a meaningful step in the right direction.

We also urge the Committee to support the Administration’s FY11 requests for other parts of USDA’s RE&E mission, both extramural and intramural, including: the remainder of NIFA beyond AFRI, the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), Economic Research Service (ERS) and Forest Service (FS).

The Research Title of the Farm Bill represents the nation’s signature federal investment in the future of the food and agricultural sector. Other Farm Bill titles depend heavily upon the Research Title for tools to help achieve their stated objectives. Public investment in food and agricultural fundamental and applied research, extension and education today and in the future must simultaneously satisfy multiple needs including food quantity, quality and safety; resource conservation; and producer profitability.

Thank you for your leadership action in investing in America’s food and agriculture system.

Respectfully Submitted,

Agricultural Retailers Association
American Association of Swine Veterinarians
American Dairy Science Association (ADSA)
American Dietetic Association
American Feed Industry Association
American Horse Council
American Meat Science Association
American Society for Nutrition
American Society of Agronomy
American Society of Animal Science (ASAS)
American Society of Plant Biologists (ASPB)
American Soybean Association
Animal Health Institute
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges
CropLife America
Crop Science Society of America
Council for Agricultural Science and Technology
Donald Danforth Plant Science Center
Federation of Animal Science Societies (FASS)
Institute of Food Technologists
Michigan State University College of Agriculture & Natural Resources
National Agricultural Biotechnology Council
National Association of Federal Veterinarians
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research
National Corn Growers Association
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Farmers Union
National Renderers Association
North American Millers’ Association
Novus International, Inc.
Poultry Science Association (PSA)
Soil Science Society of America
United States Animal Health Association
Weed Science Society of America

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