

Testimony of the American Phytopathological Society
Regarding the FY 2013 funding levels for
USDA Research, Extension, and Education Appropriations

Submitted to the Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
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The American Phytopathological Society (APS), the premier educational, professional, and scientific society dedicated to the promotion of plant health and plant disease management for the global good, appreciates the opportunity to provide our views on research, extension, and education provisions of the FY 2013 agricultural appropriations bill. The APS believes that now is the time to make strategic, additional investments in agricultural science to help jumpstart the US economy. Thus, we request the Subcommittee to include in the FY 2013 agricultural appropriations bill, funding for agricultural science and technology **at no less** than the FY 2012 level for the USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). We further request the Subcommittee to support strategic investments, above the FY 2012 funding levels, of \$72.9 million for the ARS and NIFA as described below:

- A net increase of \$7.9 million for salaries and expenses for the USDA Agricultural Research Service, (i.e., funding at not less than the President's Budget request of \$1,102,565,000);

- A net increase of \$4 million for the Food and Agriculture Defense Initiative (homeland security) under the Integrated Activities account of the National Institute for Food and Agriculture, returning the funding to the FY 2010 level of \$9.83 million with the increase divided equally between the National Plant Diagnostic Network and the National Animal Health Laboratory Network; and
- A net increase of \$61 million (total budget of \$325 million) for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) competitive grants program of the National Institute for Food and Agriculture.

Agriculture in the United States is highly productive. This productivity was achieved because past investments in agricultural science led to advances that placed our producers, processors, and manufacturers at the cutting edge of agricultural technology. To ensure continued safety and security of our food, feed, fiber, and natural resources, we believe that science based solutions to the new challenges faced in today's agriculture must be explored and developed. Further, our agricultural economy must be protected from devastating invasive plant diseases and pests by a robust diagnostic network and the development of science based tools and resources. The only way we can achieve these solutions is by providing strategic investments in agricultural science, extension, and education and to make these investments with additional funds and not by reducing funding for other essential programs at ARS and NIFA.

The jobs of 21 million Americans depend on the vitality of the U.S. agriculture and food sector. In Ohio, for example, 1 in 7 jobs is directly tied to agriculture. For every \$1 invested in publicly funded agricultural research, a minimum of \$20 in economic activity is generated.

Unfortunately, U.S. government investments in **agricultural innovation** have been flat in recent years. As a consequence, the competitive edge that made the U.S. agricultural research sector the envy of the world has declined, and industry is turning to other parts of the world for innovation. The decisions made by the Subcommittee this year will have far-reaching impacts, the downstream implications of decisions made now have far reaching impacts, as the scientific research funded today will be responsible for enhancing the Nation's agricultural productivity and overall economic prosperity in the future.

While an increase of \$100 million would have little impact on the NIH or NSF research budgets, a \$73 million increase in funding for the USDA's ARS and NIFA would be significant in the impact on the nation's economy, generating almost \$1.5 billion in economic activity.

The added funds we are requesting for the Food and Agricultural Defense Initiative (Homeland Security) would ensure that we have a coordinated network of diagnostic laboratories and experts at land grant universities, state departments of agriculture to protect our crops from diseases such soybean rust, citrus greening, plum pox virus, sudden oak death, Ug99. The slight increase in funding for the ARS would support funding for food safety, crop health, and strengthen long-term agro-ecosystem research that will be essential for ensuring an abundant supply of safe, high quality, food, feed, and fiber during periods of changing weather patterns.

The 23 percent increase in the AFRI competitive grants program would provide a much needed boost of funding for fundamental, applied, and integrated research and education that will be used to address critical gaps in food safety science, particularly those related to human pathogens on/in plants and plant associated microbial communities. The AFRI funding increase could also

expand opportunities for scientists broadly trained to meet the needs of the various agricultural industries.

We recognize the difficult challenge facing the Subcommittee. However, we believe that investment in science for food and agriculture is essential for maintaining the nation's food, economic, and national security. Thank you for this opportunity to present our views.

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