



Strategic Investments for a Thriving Economy

Citizens of the U.S. have entrusted our government with the responsibility of promoting and ensuring safe and secure food, fiber, and natural resources. Indeed, agriculture in the U.S. is highly productive. This was achieved because past investments into agricultural research 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, novel solutions to new challenges faced in today's agriculture must be explored and developed. **Investment in agricultural research is needed to achieve these solutions.***

- ▶ **Background:** The agriculture and food industries are key components in the overall health and security of the U.S. economy. In 2010, U.S. farms and ranches spent \$288 billion to produce goods valued at \$369 billion; the value of U.S. food and agriculture exports exceeded \$140 billion in 2011, creating a record trade surplus of \$42.5 billion. Furthermore, the jobs of 21 million Americans depend on the vitality of the U.S. agriculture and food sector.

Innovations from publicly funded agricultural research are critical to maintain a successful agriculture and food sector. For every \$1 invested in publicly funded agricultural research, at least \$20 in economic activity is generated. However, with the stagnant budgets of the past decade, U.S. government investments in agricultural innovation have been, at best, flat. 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. *Thus, 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.*

- ▶ **Solution:** *Investment in science for food and agriculture is essential for maintaining the nation's food, economic, and national security, and critical investments in research funding for food and agriculture must be increased steadily and significantly to support a thriving U.S. economy and to meet the future challenges of increased needs of a growing world population.* At a minimum, maintain overall funding for agricultural research, education, and extension programs and avoid further cuts in individual programs.
 - To help “jumpstart” our economy, increase funding for agricultural research, education, and extension as these strategic investments will have long-term implications for our nation's overall economic viability as well as food, feed, and fuel security.
 - Increase funding for fundamental and applied research on human pathogens on/in plants.
 - Increase funding to enhance our understanding of plant associated microbial communities.
 - Restore funding to the FY 2010 level for the National Plant Diagnostic Network to ensure that devastating plant diseases are discovered and addressed before they cause major economic and environmental damage.
 - Expand opportunities to educate and train the next generation of broadly trained scientists to fill the increasing needs of agricultural and food industries.
 - Protect agricultural science, extension, and education programs at all agencies from further reductions in funding and most particularly from indiscriminate across-the-board cuts.
- ▶ **Contacts:** APS PPB member **Jan Leach** (jan.leach@colostate.edu) and APS's Washington DC liaison **Kellye Eversole** (eversole@eversoleassociates.com) are available to answer any additional questions.