

June 8, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
United States House of Representatives  
Room H-305, The Capitol Room  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
H-204, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Room S-221, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Room S-230, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McCarthy, Majority Leader Schumer, and Minority Leader McConnell:

America's agricultural enterprise, the lifeblood of Rural America, is facing multiple challenges: climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, and research and development (R&D) competition from China, Brazil, and India to feed, clothe, and house the growing world population while still meeting our own country's needs. Our farmers, ranchers, producers, and foresters need a significant investment in agricultural research, infrastructure, and innovation in order to provide affordable solutions to these crises, while striving to achieve net zero emissions. We write to express our strong support for intramural and extramural agriculture research and capacity across the country. **As Congress continues to negotiate a federal infrastructure package, we ask that you prioritize significant investments, at least \$40 billion, for agricultural climate research, agricultural innovation, and agricultural research infrastructure.**

**Food and agriculture have significant economic impact.** A 2021 study shows that the food and agriculture sectors account for roughly one-fifth of the country's economic activity, directly supporting nearly 20 million jobs. That's more than 13% of U.S. employment. Total jobs indirectly supported by food and agriculture reach almost 41 million jobs. The total output of these sectors is \$7 trillion.<sup>1</sup>

By providing solutions to short- and long-term challenges, research makes our food and agriculture sectors a powerhouse of the U.S. economy. **A recent study found that U.S. public food and agriculture R&D spending from 1910 to 2007 returned, on average, \$17 in benefits for every \$1 invested.**<sup>2</sup> Increased funding of USDA's research and development (R&D) programs

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<sup>1</sup> <https://feedingtheeconomy.com/>

<sup>2</sup> Baldos, Uris Lantz, Frederi G. Viens, Thomas W. Hertel, and Keith O. Fuglie. R&D Spending, Knowledge Capital, and Agricultural Productivity Growth: A Bayesian Approach. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*. July 2018. 101(1): 291–310; <https://doi.org/10.1093/ajae/aay039>.

will invest in our rural communities and give our farmers, ranchers, producers, and foresters the tools needed to improve resiliency and scale climate-smart agriculture. Without significant investments in climate-smart agriculture research and outreach, U.S. farmers and ranchers could face serious production challenges. **A recent study in the journal *Climate* found that average U.S. corn, soybean, and rice yields could fall by up to 23%, 15%, and 4%, respectively, by 2100.**<sup>3</sup>

Modern agricultural research and education facilities serve as the backbone of our nation's cutting-edge agricultural and food research enterprise. **The situation is dire, 69% of the buildings at U.S. colleges and schools of agriculture are at the end of their useful life.**<sup>4</sup> Strategic federal investment in agricultural research infrastructure would create hundreds of thousands of new jobs nationwide.

The federal share of overall R&D spending as a percentage of GDP is now at its lowest point since the 1950s, and food and agriculture lags even further behind most other Federal R&D areas. **Food and agricultural research funding at USDA has remained fairly flat over the last 50 years.**<sup>5</sup> In contrast, funding for other Federal research agencies has increased 10- to 20-fold during the same period. Additionally, other countries, including China, Brazil, and India, are investing heavily in agricultural R&D, while the U.S. has fallen behind.<sup>6</sup> We need to make these significant investments to win the R&D race and keep our family farms, and all the people they employ in rural America, in business.

This once in a generation opportunity to significantly fund food and agriculture research, innovation, and infrastructure is crucial for the United States to reclaim our global lead in food and agricultural science and rise to meet today's crises and those in the future. We look forward to working with you to make these investments a reality.

Sincerely,

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
Agricultural & Applied Economics Association  
Agricultural Retailers Association  
American Association of Meat Processors  
American Association of Mycobacterial Diseases  
American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges  
American Dairy Science Association  
American Farm Bureau Federation  
American Feed Industry Association  
American Institute of Biological Sciences  
American Malting Barley Association, Inc.  
American Mushroom Institute

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<sup>3</sup> Peterson, Lillian K., 2019. "Impact of Climate Change on Twenty-First Century Crop Yields in the U.S." *Climate* 7(3).

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.aplu.org/library/a-national-study-of-capital-infrastructure-at-colleges-and-schools-of-agriculture-an-update/file>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.nsf.gov/statistics>

<sup>6</sup> Jahn, Molly. New solutions for a changing climate: The policy imperative for public investment in agriculture R&D. August 2020. [https://www.thechicagocouncil.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/report\\_new-solutions-for-changing-climate\\_0.pdf](https://www.thechicagocouncil.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/report_new-solutions-for-changing-climate_0.pdf). Pages 1, 13.

American Phytopathological Society  
American Pulse Association  
American Seed Trade Association  
American Society for Horticultural Science  
American Society for Microbiology  
American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers  
American Society of Agronomy  
American Society of Animal Science  
American Society of Plant Biologists  
American Vanguard Corporation  
AmericanHort  
Animal Health Institute  
ASCC-ACNR (Land Grant Program)  
Associated Oregon Hazelnut Industry  
Association of 1890 Research Directors (ARD)  
Association of Northeast Extension Directors  
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities  
Biotechnology Innovation Organization  
California Polytechnic State University  
California State University, Chico  
Charles Valentine Riley Memorial Foundation  
Clif Bar & Company  
CoBank  
College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign  
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Cornell University  
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, University of Arizona  
College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Maryland, College Park  
College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources, University of Connecticut  
Colorado State University  
Consumer Federation of America  
Corteva Agriscience  
Council for Agricultural Science and Technology  
Crop Science Society of America  
CropLife America  
Deans Council Agriculture, Food & Veterinary Medicine (Canada)  
Donald Danforth Plant Science Center  
Entomological Society of America  
Eversole Associates  
Extension Committee on Organization and Policy  
Farm Journal Foundation  
FASS  
Florida Nursery, Growers and Landscape Association  
FMI - The Food Industry Association  
Idaho Nursery & Landscape Association  
Illinois Green Industry Association  
Indiana Nursery & Landscape Association  
Indiana Outdoor Management Association

Indigo Ag  
Institute of Food Technologists  
International Alliance for Phytobiomes Research  
International Wheat Genome Sequencing Consortium  
Kansas State University  
Maine Landscape & Nursery Association  
Michigan Nursery & Landscape Association  
Michigan State University, AgBioResearch  
Michigan State University, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources  
Montana State University  
Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals – Multistate Initiative  
National Agriculture in the Classroom Organization  
National Association for the Advancement of Animal Science  
National Association of Federal Veterinarians  
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture  
National Barley Growers Association  
National Barley Improvement Committee  
National Bison Association  
National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research  
National Farmers Union  
National Grange  
National Milk Producers Federation  
National Pork Producers Council  
National Sunflower Association  
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition  
National Turkey Federation  
NC State University  
New Jersey Landscape Contractors Association  
Noble Research Institute, LLC  
North American Millers' Association  
North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University  
North Central Cooperative Extension Association (NCCEA)  
North Central Regional Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors  
Northeastern Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors  
Ohio Landscape Association  
Oklahoma Farm Bureau  
Oklahoma State University  
Oregon Association of Nurseries  
Oregon Cattlemen's Association  
Oregon Dairy Farmers Association  
Oregon Farm Bureau Federation  
Oregon State University College of Agricultural Sciences  
Oregon Women for Agriculture  
Oregonians for Food & Shelter  
Organic Farming Research Foundation  
Penn State University  
Pennsylvania Landscape & Nursery Association

Poultry Science Association  
Produce Marketing Association  
Rochester Institute of Technology  
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey  
Society for Range Management  
Soil Science Society of America  
South Dakota State University  
Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors  
Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center  
Supporters of Agricultural Research (SoAR) Foundation  
Syngenta  
Tennessee State University  
Texas A&M AgriLife  
The BARN & Colorado Ag News Network  
The Breakthrough Institute  
The Fertilizer Institute  
The Ohio State University, College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences  
The University of Memphis  
The University of North Carolina System  
The University of Tennessee  
U.S. Apple Association  
U.S. Canola Association  
UC Berkeley  
United Fresh Produce Association  
University of Arizona Division of Agriculture, Life and Veterinary Sciences, and Cooperative Extension  
University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources  
University of California System  
University of California, Davis  
University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment  
University of Maryland Eastern Shore  
University of Minnesota, College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences  
University of Missouri Extension  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
University of New Hampshire  
University of Puerto Rico  
US Dairy Forage Research Center Stakeholder Committee  
USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council  
Utah State University  
Veterinary Regional Referral Hospital  
Virginia Tech  
Washington State Nursery & Landscape Association  
Washington State University  
West Virginia University  
Western Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors  
Western Growers Association  
Wisconsin Cranberry Research and Education Foundation