

June 26, 2001

The Honorable Herb Kohl, Chairman
ATTENTION: Mr. Galen Fountain
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development
& Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
136 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-6025

Dear Mr. Chairman:

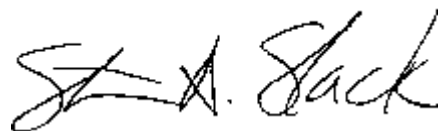
We are writing to express our strong support for competitively awarded agricultural research programs. As the Senate begins work on the FY 2002 agricultural appropriations bill, we urge you to ensure that the bill increases funding for the National Research Initiative (NRI) and provides, at least, \$267.6 million for research programs that award grants on a competitive basis. We are extremely concerned about potential reductions in the overall level of funding for competitively awarded research programs at the USDA.

Recently, the House Appropriations Committee reported its version of the FY 2002 agricultural appropriations bill. The bill, as reported by the Committee, reduced funding for competitively awarded research programs by \$118.5 million. This represents a reduction of almost 45 percent from the FY 2001 level of \$267.6 million that was available for competitively awarded research grants through the NRI, the Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems (IFAFS), and the integrated research, education, and extension competitive grants program.

Competitively awarded research programs at the USDA, (for example, the NRI) have been critical to advancements in research on plant diseases and their management. We are deeply concerned that our discipline, critical to ensuring a safe and secure food supply, will suffer tremendously if funding is reduced for competitively awarded research programs at the USDA.

We, strongly, urge you to ensure that the FY 2002 agricultural appropriations bill includes an increase in funding for the NRI and, that the bill provides not less than \$267.6 million in funding for competitively awarded research programs at the USDA. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Slack". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Steve Slack, President
American Phytopathological Society

June 26, 2001

The Honorable Thad Cochran, Ranking Member
Attention: Ms. Rebecca Davies
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development
& Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
123 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-6025

Dear Senator Cochran:

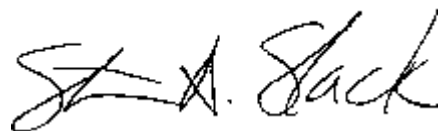
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Steve Slack, President
American Phytopathological Society