

# The American Phytopathological Society

## In Focus: Federal Funding for Research Programs



### About APS

The American Phytopathological Society (APS) is a distinctive community of more than 3,600 scientists, whose knowledge, energy, and commitment ensure the global advancement of phytopathology. Plant pathology is an interdisciplinary science that includes botany, microbiology, crop science, soil science, ecology, genetics, biochemistry, molecular biology, and physiology. APS members represent a broad range of specialties, pushing frontiers in the accuracy and speed of crop and forest disease diagnosis and pursuing fundamental research to increase understanding of plant health and plant-microbe interactions to create novel approaches for sustaining healthy ecosystems. Members span academia, government, industry, and private practice.

APS members work closely with various Federal agencies (e.g., the U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Science Foundation, and Environmental Protection Agency) and White House offices (e.g., the Office of Science Technology and Policy), on cutting edge plant and microbial biology. Through these efforts, the society is working to solve global plant disease challenges with plant resistance engineering, spectral imaging to manage plant health, rapid plant and microbial phenotyping and genomics, and improved pathogen surveillance. Strong funding programs will address increasing needs and ensure certainty as APS determines which projects to partner with the federal government on. In addition, adequate funding is critical to support U.S. agriculture for continued economic development, especially in rural communities.



### Need for Robust Research Funding:

On behalf of The American Phytopathological Society (APS), we ask that you support the following programs that support plant and microbiome health with robust funding levels in the Fiscal Year 2026 appropriations legislation.

- **USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS):** APS members rely on a strong APHIS program to build out plant health initiatives. We ask that APHIS programs be fully funded for both plant health and the total APHIS budget.
- **USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS):** APS is proud of our partnerships with USDA ARS officials and are appreciative of the increased funding in the president's budget for this important program, specifically the increase in ARS Research Programs. Within ARS, we ask that you support funding for the Fungal Database. A supported Fungal Database, will provide researchers across the country with improved data to better monitor plant health and predict future yields impacts.
- **USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA):** Increased investment in NIFA supports robust scientific discovery, fosters sustainable agricultural practices, and equips farmers and researchers with tools to combat emerging threats such as plant diseases, pests, and climate change impacts. Adequate funding ensures the U.S. remains a global leader in agricultural science, securing food systems and promoting economic growth in agriculture-related sectors.



## Need for Robust Research Funding Continued:

- **USDA National Plant Diagnostic Network (NPDN):** NPDN provides critical infrastructure and programs that are not available elsewhere. Federal funding is required to support its mission. NPDN laboratories help protect our nation's crops, forests, rangelands, as well as ornamentals and their associated industries. Through careful analysis of hundreds of thousands of samples every year, these laboratories detect threats that would have significant negative economic impact on agriculture to threaten the safety of our food supply, harm public health, and jeopardize trade. NPDN is guided by a strong strategic plan and will need increased funding to properly implement this strategy. Additionally, NPDN partners with programs like APHIS to provide expertise and additional capacity. Increased top-line funding would ensure that these partnerships continue, and could even allow cross-program partnerships to grow in scope and impact.
- **USDA Foundation for Food & Agriculture Research (FFAR):** APS urges higher funding for the FFAR to advance research on crop resilience and disease resistance, both critical in safeguarding U.S. food security. Increased support for FFAR will encourage partnerships that drive innovation in plant health, benefiting farmers, consumers, and the environment through sustainable agricultural practices, as well as supporting comprehensive workforce development practices that will drive our sector forward.
- **National Science Foundation (NSF):** Increased funding for the NSF will support groundbreaking research to strengthen agricultural resilience against plant diseases and pests. Enhanced NSF funding will foster scientific advancements that ultimately provide an abundant and low-cost food supply.
- **EPA Office of Pesticide Programs:** APS works closely with this office to help achieve their mission to screen new pesticides before they are introduced to the public, continually evaluate existing registered pesticides, and provide data on ways these pesticides will impact human health and protect the environment. Together with the USDA, Office of Pest Management and Policy, APS also provides data, comments, and other inputs during the registration review process to ensure that all pesticide labels meet the registration standards. Given the recent regulatory priorities originating from OPP and OSTP, we urge you to support funding for a fully-staffed office and programs that encourage public-private partnerships.