Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

As organizations concerned about the future of food and agricultural science, the undersigned are writing to express our support for the America Grows Act (S.2458), a bill Senator Durbin has recently introduced that would significantly increase our nation’s investment in agricultural research and development.

Food and agriculture remain a pillar of the U.S. economy, accounting for nearly $1 trillion of our GDP, 1 in 10 jobs, and a significant contribution to our nation’s trade balance. Our nation has long understood the critical role agriculture and our food system play in our economic and national security. Thanks to the U.S. government’s extraordinary leadership and commitment to agricultural research and development since 1862, our agriculture sector is the most productive in the world, providing Americans with safe, affordable, and abundant food.

The public return on investment for agricultural research is significant, estimated at $20 to $1. Yet U.S. funding in this area has declined in real dollars since 2003 while other forms of domestic research have risen dramatically.

The America Grows Act would help reverse this dangerous trend by reinvesting in our nation’s scientists and producers and helping reassert U.S. research leadership on the global stage. Modeled after the successful 21st Century Cures Act passed in 2016, which spurred additional funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the America Grows Act authorizes a five percent inflation-adjusted annual increase for the next five years for agricultural research in the following USDA agencies:

- National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA)
- Agricultural Research Service (ARS)
- Economic Research Service (ERS)
- National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)
The timing for the *America Grows Act* could not be better. Investments in research are critical in addressing production, nutrition, food security, and other major challenges across the U.S. food and agricultural sector. USDA projected 2019 net-farm income to be half that of 2013. An unusually wet spring has led to flooding and one of the latest planting seasons on record for much of the Midwest. Our nation’s producers are facing pest, disease, and severe weather challenges that research can solve.

Thank you for your consideration and your hard work on behalf of agriculture and agricultural research. We look forward to working with you to advance the *America Grows Act*. This legislation represents a crucial step in meeting the vital needs of our nation’s producers and consumers while retaining our status as the world leader in agricultural innovation.

Sincerely,

AFRI Coalition
Agricultural and Applied Economics Association
Agricultural Retailers Association
American Association of Mycobacterial Diseases
American Dairy Science Association
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Malting Barley Association
American Phytopathological Society
American Phytopathological Society (APS)
American Pulse Association
American Society for Horticultural Science
American Society for Microbiology
American Society for Nutrition
American Society of Agronomy
American Society of Animal Science
American Society of Plant Biologists
American Veterinary Medical Association
Aquatic Plant Management Society
Association of 1890 Research Directors
Association of American Universities
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges
Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities
Brooks Tropicals, LLC
Charles V. Riley Memorial Foundation
College of Agricultural Sciences, Penn State University
Consumer Federation of America
Council for Agricultural Science and Technology (CAST)
Crop Science Society of America
Entomological Society of America
Eversole Associates
Experiment Station on Organization & Policy (ESCOP)
Farm Journal Foundation
FASS
Friends of ARS Coalition
Fort Valley State University
Hop Growers of America
CC: The Honorable Richard Durbin
   Senate Minority Whip