



December 30, 2005

Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns
Farm Bill, Suite 205
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Johanns:

As USDA prepares for the 2007 Farm Bill, the Coalition on Funding Agricultural Research Missions (CoFARM), representing 23 professional scientific organizations with 130,000 members dedicated to advancing and sustaining a balanced investment in our nation's food and agricultural research portfolio, would like to urge you to increase the opportunities and funding of food and agricultural research.

Agriculture's role in society has expanded and understanding of all steps in the processes of plant, animal and food production, soil and water management, economic and social viability, and nutrition remains crucial for the future sustainability of our food and fiber system. USDA must aggressively seek enhanced funding and identify opportunities and needs to facilitate these issues.

Below are CoFARM's recommendations for the 2007 Farm Bill, which can help USDA meet the five CSREES Strategic Goals: Enhance Economic Opportunities for Agricultural Producers; Support Increased Economic Opportunities and Improved Quality of Life in Rural America; Enhance Protection and Safety of the Nation's Agriculture and Food Supply; Improve the Nation's Nutrition and Health; and Protect and Enhance the Nation's Natural Resource Base and Environment.

- Reauthorize the National Research Initiative (NRI) at \$500 million a year;
- Eliminate USDA's NRI indirect cost ceiling;
- Maintain a maximum 5-year duration for competitive grants;
- Provide authority to ensure 3-year average duration for competitive grants;
- Reauthorize the Initiative for Future Agriculture & Food Systems at \$200 million;
- Provide the Secretary with the ability to apply up to 30 percent of funding to conduct integrated research, education and extension within the NRI; and
- A provision authorizing USDA to evaluate competitive research programs every 4 years.

Increased funding for agricultural research is needed to rebuild the human resource base in order to answer the continuing and emerging challenges in agricultural and food systems. This research is an essential component to sustaining and improving production, food safety, and environmental quality. In order to address these challenges and maintain our position in an increasingly competitive world, we must maintain and continue to support research programs within USDA.

CoFARM Contact
Ted Cartwright, Chair
Institute of Food Technologists
202-466-5980, ttcartwright@ift.org

Please consider CoFARM as a supportive resource in efforts to improve food and agricultural research capacity. We hope you will call on our membership and scientific expertise.

Member Societies

- o American Dairy Science Association o American Phytopathological Society
- o American Society for Horticultural Science o American Society for Microbiology
- o American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers o American Society of Agronomy o American Society of Animal Science
- o American Society of Plant Biologists o Botanical Society of America o Crop Science Society of America o Council on Food, Agricultural, and Resource Economics o Council of Entomology Department Administrators o Federation of Animal Science Societies o Genetics Society of America
- o Institute of Food Technologists o Poultry Science Association o Society for Range Management o Society of Nematologists
- o Soil Science Society of America o Weed Science Society of America