

February 4, 2025

The Honorable Jodey Arrington, Chair  
Committee on the Budget  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Brendan Boyle, Ranking Member  
Committee on the Budget  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole, Chair  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Lindsey Graham, Chair  
Committee on the Budget  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jeff Merkley, Ranking Member  
Committee on the Budget  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins, Chair  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray, Vice Chair  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Arrington, Ranking Member Boyle, Chair Cole, Ranking Member DeLauro, Chair Graham, Ranking Member Merkley, Chair Collins, and Vice Chair Murray:

As you develop the Fiscal Year 2026 budget and appropriations bills, we strongly urge you to provide more resources for the respective Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittees to significantly increase discretionary funding for crucial U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs to support America's farmers, improve the security of our food supply, and restore our nation's agricultural communities.

America's farmers and ranchers are under pressure from increased production costs, supply chain disruptions, devastating natural disasters, and growing global competition. They rely on USDA conservation technical assistance, trade promotion, and commodity, crop insurance and disaster programs to navigate the multiple challenges facing agriculture. These programs are the cornerstone of our resilient food system.

America's nearly two million farms and ranches are the backbone of our country. Millions of producers, scientists, engineers, production workers, and truck drivers are critical to our economic prosperity. Food and agriculture industries directly support nearly **24 million jobs** – over **15% of U.S. employment**<sup>1</sup>, accounting for nearly **\$1 trillion in wages**<sup>2</sup>. They are responsible for **\$9.6 trillion of economic activity** – 20% of total U.S. output<sup>3</sup>.

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

<sup>2</sup> <https://feedingtheeconomy.com/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://feedingtheeconomy.com/>

USDA programs impact every American. Consumers rely on a safe, affordable, and nutritious food supply. USDA nutrition programs work to end hunger across the United States and improve the health of all Americans. Science-based food safety programs protect public health by ensuring the U.S. food supply is among the safest in the world. As consumers are faced with rising food costs these programs are more important than ever.

Strengthening investments in USDA will help rebuild our rural communities and provide critical economic development opportunities. Rural development programs support essential rural infrastructure including broadband and electric services. These investments are essential to the success of rural communities that have been hit hard by inflation.

The food and agriculture sector relies on USDA research and extension programs to deliver science and innovation to our farmers and ranchers, giving them the tools needed to improve economic and environmental sustainability. Science and innovation are responsible for the great success of modern agriculture. Without continued innovation, America is at risk of falling behind countries like China in biotechnology, AI and agri-tech innovations.

Considering how crucial rural America, agriculture, and food security is to our national security, USDA's programs should reflect higher levels of investment. Compared to other appropriations subcommittees, the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittees have not received the same levels of increase. From Fiscal Year 2015 to Fiscal Year 2023, Agriculture Appropriations spending has increased by 24 percent – not even keeping up with inflation. Over the same time, the total discretionary funding for the Federal government increased nearly 42 percent.

By strengthening investments in critical food and agriculture programs we can protect farmers and ranchers, ensure the resiliency of our food system, safeguard our national security, deliver new agricultural innovations and maintain our global leadership in the face of competition from countries like China.

We join in this urgent call to substantially increase investment in USDA's programs and strongly urge your respective committees to increase 302(b) allocations for the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittees.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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agInnovation North Central  
Agricultural & Applied Economics Association  
American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges  
American Institute of Biological Sciences  
American Phytopathological Society  
American Seed Trade Association

American Society for Horticultural Science  
American Society for Nutrition  
American Society of Agronomy  
American Society of Plant Biologists  
American Soybean Association  
Association of 1890 Research Directors  
Carbon Removal Alliance  
Carbon180  
CEA Alliance  
Ceres  
Crop Science Society of America  
CropLife America  
Entomological Society of America  
Farm Journal Foundation  
Federation of American Scientists  
Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB)  
Kansas State University  
Lithos Carbon  
National Association of Wheat Growers  
National Barley Improvement Committee  
National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research  
National Grange  
Soil Science Society of America  
Spark Climate Solutions  
Synergistic Hawaii Agriculture Council  
The Breakthrough Institute  
The Fertilizer Institute  
The Good Food Institute  
The Nature Conservancy  
UNDO  
Union of Concerned Scientists  
USA Rice  
Washington State University  
Woodwell Climate Research Center  
World Coffee Research  
Yale University  
Yard Stick PBC