

119TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 4155

To amend the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 to require the Secretary of Agriculture to recognize centers of excellence, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 26, 2025

Mr. BACON introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture

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## A BILL

To amend the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 to require the Secretary of Agriculture to recognize centers of excellence, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “American Agricultural  
5 Security Research Act of 2025”.

6 **SEC. 2. CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE.**

7 Section 1673 of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation,  
8 and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 5926) is amended—

1           (1) by striking subsections (a) through (c) and  
2     inserting the following:

3     “(a) CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE.—

4           “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Agri-  
5     culture shall recognize at least one center of excel-  
6     lence for each of the areas of focus described in  
7     paragraph (2) for the purpose of carrying out re-  
8     search, extension, and education programs.

9           “(2) AREAS OF FOCUS.—A center of excellence  
10    recognized under this subsection may engage in re-  
11    search, extension, and education programs focused  
12    on the following:

13           “(A) AQUACULTURE.—Developing and ap-  
14    plying aquaculture methods, including through  
15    the propagation and rearing of economically  
16    and ecologically valuable aquatic and marine  
17    species.

18           “(B) BEGINNING FARMERS AND RANCH-  
19    ERS.—Training beginning farmers and ranch-  
20    ers, including training on farm and agribusiness  
21    management, mentoring and technical assist-  
22    ance, and access to capital.

23           “(C) BIOSECURITY AND CYBERSECU-  
24    RITY.—Agricultural biosecurity and cybersecu-

1 rity efforts to defend the food supply of the  
2 United States from—

3 “(i) a biosecurity or cybersecurity at-  
4 tack; or

5 “(ii) other global catastrophic and ex-  
6 istential threats, as defined in section 7302  
7 of the Global Catastrophic Risk Manage-  
8 ment Act of 2022 (6 U.S.C. 821).

9 “(D) BIOSYSTEMS AND AGRICULTURAL  
10 ENGINEERING.—Biosystems and agricultural  
11 engineering, including precision agriculture  
12 technologies and mechanization and automation  
13 technologies for specialty crops.

14 “(E) BIOTECHNOLOGY.—Development of  
15 animal and plant biotechnologies that will in-  
16 crease agricultural productivity.

17 “(F) CROP PRODUCTION, PROTECTION,  
18 AND RESILIENCE.—Crop production and protec-  
19 tion, including the development, manufacture,  
20 and use of fertilizer, crop protection tools, and  
21 adjuvants in increasing productivity and pro-  
22 tecting crops from damaging pests and diseases.

23 “(G) DIGITAL AGRICULTURE.—Developing,  
24 evaluating, and deploying digital agriculture, in-

1 cluding artificial intelligence and remote sensing  
2 systems.

3 “(H) FARM BUSINESS AND FINANCIAL  
4 MANAGEMENT.—Farm business and financial  
5 management activities, including marketing  
6 plans, production diversification, and cash for-  
7 ward contracting.

8 “(I) FOOD QUALITY.—Improving food  
9 quality, including research on the uptake of  
10 perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances in  
11 food, the presence of microplastics in biosolids,  
12 and the efficacy and feasibility of reducing lev-  
13 els of inorganic arsenic, lead, cadmium, or mer-  
14 cury in food.

15 “(J) FOREIGN ANIMAL DISEASE.—Foreign  
16 animal diseases, including the ecology and eti-  
17 ology of emerging diseases, control methods,  
18 and implementation strategies to enhance pre-  
19 paredness and response efforts to protect the  
20 livestock and poultry industry.

21 “(K) FORESTRY.—Forest productivity and  
22 forest health, including invasive species control,  
23 biochar and pyrolysis development and commer-  
24 cialization, reforestation and restoration of

1 damaged landscapes, and new wood-based ma-  
2 terials.

3 “(3) HOST INSTITUTIONS.—

4 “(A) IN GENERAL.—An institution eligible  
5 to host or co-host a center of excellence recog-  
6 nized under this subsection means—

7 “(i) a 1862 Institution, as defined in  
8 section 2 of the Agricultural Research, Ex-  
9 tension, and Education Reform Act of  
10 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7601);

11 “(ii) a 1890 Institution, as defined in  
12 section 2 of the Agricultural Research, Ex-  
13 tension, and Education Reform Act of  
14 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7601);

15 “(iii) a 1994 Institution, as defined in  
16 section 532 of the Equity in Educational  
17 Land-Grant Status Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C.  
18 301 note);

19 “(iv) a non-land-grant college of agri-  
20 culture, as defined in section 1404 of the  
21 National Agricultural Research, Extension,  
22 and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C.  
23 3103);

24 “(v) a Hispanic-serving agricultural  
25 college or university, as defined in section

1           1404 of the National Agricultural Re-  
2           search, Extension, and Teaching Policy  
3           Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3103); and

4           “(vi) a college or school of veterinary  
5           medicine accredited by the American Vet-  
6           erinary Medical Association.

7           “(B) DISTRIBUTION.—To the maximum  
8           extent practicable, the Secretary shall ensure  
9           the geographic diversity of institutions selected  
10          to host or co-host a center of excellence recog-  
11          nized under this subsection.

12          “(C) LIMITATION.—An institution may  
13          host or co-host only one center of excellence rec-  
14          ognized under this subsection during any given  
15          period.

16          “(D) DUTIES.—A institution selected to  
17          host or co-host a center of excellence recognized  
18          under this subsection shall partner with the Ag-  
19          ricultural Research Service, other Federal agen-  
20          cies, State governments, other institutions of  
21          higher education (as defined in section 101 of  
22          the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.  
23          1001)), agricultural industry groups, or other  
24          relevant entities to—

1 “(i) reduce duplicative efforts and  
2 focus on filling gaps across research, ex-  
3 tension, and education programs by en-  
4 hancing coordination and improving cost-  
5 effectiveness;

6 “(ii) leverage available resources by  
7 using public-private partnerships;

8 “(iii) implement training and edu-  
9 cational initiatives to increase awareness  
10 and effectively disseminate solutions to tar-  
11 get audiences through extension activities;

12 “(iv) increase economic returns to  
13 rural communities by identifying, attract-  
14 ing, and directing funds to high-priority  
15 agricultural issues;

16 “(v) rapidly respond to emerging  
17 issues that threaten any sector of the agri-  
18 cultural industry of the United States;

19 “(vi) focus on workforce development  
20 for employers to recruit and retain high-  
21 quality employees in rural areas; and

22 “(vii) engage in assistance for admin-  
23 istrative management and education re-  
24 garding potentially valuable intellectual  
25 property derived from federally supported

1                   research, extension, and education pro-  
2                   grams.

3                   “(4) DURATION.—The term of an award under  
4                   this subsection shall be for a five-year period and  
5                   may be renewed for not more than one additional  
6                   five-year period.

7                   “(5) CONSTRUCTION PROHIBITED.—Funds  
8                   made available under this subsection shall not be  
9                   used for—

10                   “(A) the construction of a new building or  
11                   facility; or

12                   “(B) the acquisition, expansion, remod-  
13                   eling, or alteration of an existing building or fa-  
14                   cility (including site grading and improvement  
15                   and architect fees).

16                   “(6) REPORT.—Not later than one year after  
17                   the date of enactment of the American Agricultural  
18                   Security Research Act of 2025, and every year  
19                   thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the Com-  
20                   mittee on Agriculture of the House of Representa-  
21                   tives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition,  
22                   and Forestry of the Senate a report describing—

23                   “(A) the projects initiated in the preceding  
24                   year by each center of excellence recognized  
25                   under this subsection;



1 “(B) the amount of funding for each such  
2 project and the funding source;

3 “(C) the institutions participating in each  
4 such project and their shares of the overall  
5 funding for each project;

6 “(D) the level of cost-sharing for each such  
7 project;

8 “(E) any technology transfer and intellec-  
9 tual property management actions taken by  
10 each such center of excellence, including the  
11 number of relevant invention disclosures, any  
12 provisional patents filed, any non-provisional  
13 patents filed and issued, the number of licenses  
14 executed, and any start-up companies reg-  
15 istered; and

16 “(F) any additional information deemed  
17 necessary by the Secretary.

18 “(7) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—  
19 There is authorized to be appropriated to the Sec-  
20 retary \$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2026  
21 through 2030 to carry out this subsection.”;

22 (2) by redesignating subsection (d) as sub-  
23 section (b); and

24 (3) in subsection (b), as so redesignated—

25 (A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking “The Secretary” and inserting “In addition to the centers of excellence recognized under subsection (a), the Secretary”; and

(ii) by striking “3” and inserting “8”;  
(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) in subparagraph (A)—

(I) in the subparagraph heading, by striking “AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT” and inserting “, WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, AND RURAL STUDIES”; and

(II) by inserting “economics, psychology, rural sociology, data sciences,” after “mathematics,”;

(ii) in subparagraph (E), by inserting “and developing nature-based solutions to improve the composition of soil organic compounds, including carbon, that are beneficial to soil quality and the environment” before the period at the end; and

(iii) by adding at the end the following:

“(G) FOREST HEALTH AND CONSERVATION.—A center of excellence established under

paragraph (1) may focus on forest health, sustainable forest management, agroforestry, enhancing forest resilience to catastrophic wildfire, supporting rural infrastructure, and urban and community forestry programs to promote healthy forest ecosystems and resilient communities.

“(H) FOOD SAFETY, BIOPROCESSING, AND VALUE-ADDED AGRICULTURE.—A center of excellence established under paragraph (1) may focus on food safety, bioprocessing, value-added agriculture enterprise development, and innovative food and agriculture product development.”; and

(C) in paragraph (3), by striking “2023” and inserting “2029”.

**SEC. 3. AGRICULTURE AND FOOD PROTECTION GRANT PROGRAM.**

Section 1485 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3352) is amended to read as follows:

**“SEC. 1485. AGRICULTURE AND FOOD PROTECTION GRANT PROGRAM.**

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish a program under which the Secretary will award grants on

1 a competitive basis to eligible entities to support research,  
2 extension, and education activities that improve the capa-  
3 bility of the United States to protect the food and agricul-  
4 tural system from—

5 “(1) a chemical, biological, cybersecurity, or  
6 bioterrorism attack; or

7 “(2) other global catastrophic and existential  
8 threats, as defined in section 7302 of the Global  
9 Catastrophic Risk Management Act of 2022 (6  
10 U.S.C. 821).

11 “(b) USE OF FUNDS.—An eligible entity that receives  
12 a grant under this section shall use funds received through  
13 the grant—

14 “(1) to encourage basic and applied research  
15 on, and the development of, qualified agricultural  
16 countermeasures;

17 “(2) to promote the development and expansion  
18 of teaching programs in agriculture, veterinary med-  
19 icine, and other disciplines closely allied to the food  
20 and agriculture system of the United States to in-  
21 crease the number of trained individuals with an ex-  
22 pertise in agricultural biosecurity and cybersecurity;

23 “(3) to expand or upgrade facilities to meet bio-  
24 safety and biosecurity requirements necessary to  
25 protect facility staff, members of the public, and the

1 food supply while carrying out agricultural biosecu-  
2 rity research;

3 “(4) to cover costs associated with the acquisi-  
4 tion of equipment and other capital costs related to  
5 expansion of food, agriculture, and veterinary medi-  
6 cine teaching programs in agricultural biosecurity  
7 and cybersecurity; or

8 “(5) to otherwise improve the capacity of the  
9 United States to respond in a timely manner to  
10 emerging or existing threats.

11 “(c) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—An entity eligible to re-  
12 ceive a grant under this section is—

13 “(1) a State agricultural experiment station;

14 “(2) a State department of agriculture;

15 “(3) a college or university;

16 “(4) a university research foundation;

17 “(5) a research institution or organization;

18 “(6) a Federal agency;

19 “(7) a national laboratory; or

20 “(8) any group consisting of 2 or more of the  
21 entities described in paragraphs (1) through (7).

22 “(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There  
23 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section  
24 \$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2026 through 2030.”.

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