

AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RE- LATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS,
Washington, DC.

NONDEPARTMENTAL WITNESSES

[The following testimonies were received by the Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies for inclusion in the record. The submitted materials relate to the fiscal year 2015 budget request for programs within the subcommittee's jurisdiction.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE ACADEMY OF NUTRITION AND DIETETICS

Dear Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies: The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony for the fiscal year 2015 appropriations. The Academy is the world's largest organization of food and nutrition professionals, and is committed to improving the nation's health with nutrition services and interventions provided by registered dietitian nutritionists. Nationwide, The Academy has over 75,000 members.

As Congress begins work on fiscal year 2015 appropriations, we strongly urge you to fully fund Federal nutrition programs that will provide a return on investment to improve health. Investment in these programs through the appropriations process will help prevent costly healthcare expenses due to chronic diseases.

AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND NUTRITION RESEARCH

As you consider the fiscal year 2015 budget, we ask for your support of the President's budget for the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) funds agriculture and nutrition research that is vital for communities and the nation to have new technologies and intervention to have healthy Americans. In doing so, we ask that you:

- Continue to support NIFA research efforts that work with local communities and states to conduct high-quality research to help assure that our food supply is adequate for the future; and
- Consider restoring the funding for Agricultural Research Services (ARS) to 2014 levels. ARS is an essential in-house, scientific research agency. This agency often provides the solutions to food and nutrition problems that affect Americans every day, from field to table.

SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP)

NUTRITION EDUCATION AND OBESITY PREVENTION GRANT PROGRAM (SNAP-ED)

SNAP helps to put food on the table for about 47 million people each month. SNAP participation closely follows changes in unemployment and underemployment and so is responsive to changes in need. SNAP-Ed empowers participants to make healthy food choices using this knowledge received from the innovative and engag-

ing nutrition education to purchase, prepare and store nutritious foods. During this appropriations cycle, we ask that you:

- Support SNAP as it continues to respond to the elevated need for food assistance with timely benefits; and
- Fund SNAP-Ed at \$407 million, as mandated in the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008.

THE EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TEFAP)

TEFAP is a win/win for farmers, producers, processors and low-income consumers to assure access to healthy foods through our nation's charitable food system, delivering nutrient-rich food through pantries, shelters, and kitchens and providing support for storage and distribution. The TEFAP program staff works in tandem with SNAP-Ed staff to help assure the consumption of these foods through nutrition education including preparation and safe storage. We ask that you:

- Provide the authorized funding level of \$100 million for TEFAP storage and distribution funds. The current funding level of \$49 million only covers 33 percent of the cost of distributing TEFAP commodities.
- Fund TEFAP commodities at \$324 million, as provided by the 2014 farm bill. TEFAP commodities are distributed to low-income people through food banks, pantries, kitchens and shelters.

COMMODITY SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD PROGRAM (CSFP)

CSFP provides a nutritious monthly food package to approximately 580,000 low-income participants, primarily to vulnerable low-income seniors. The CSFP food package is designed to meet the specific nutritional needs of this target population, combating the poor health conditions often found in food insecure seniors. We ask that you:

- Fund CSFP at \$208 million, the amount necessary to maintain current caseload; and
- Provide an additional \$5 million allow CSFP to serve the six additional states who meet the criteria set out by USDA for a quality program (CT, HI, ID, MD, MA, RI).

CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS

Child nutrition programs operate in school, daycare, after school, and summer settings, providing nutritious meals and snacks to fuel children with the energy they need to thrive in the classroom and beyond.

School Meals

We ask that you:

- Support the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Summer Food Service Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, and the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program to provide children with nutritious meals and snacks; and
- Provide \$35 million in grants for school meal equipment to help schools upgrade their kitchen equipment. This will allow schools to serve healthier meals at a more reasonable price, and will expand access to feeding programs. This is a long overdue change for schools.

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

WIC serves low-income women and young children until the age of five, providing them with a nutritious monthly food package, nutrition education, healthcare and social service referrals to ensure that this at-risk population receives the quality nutrition and healthcare essential for healthy growth and development. Please:

- Fund WIC at \$6.823 billion to support a projected caseload of 8.7 million participants. Monitor food cost inflation and caseload to ensure that appropriated levels meet anticipated needs. Provide \$150 million to replenish the WIC Contingency Fund for unforeseen food cost or participation increases.
- Provide \$60 million for breastfeeding peer counselors to improve breastfeeding initiation and duration among the target population, \$30 million for Management Information Systems/Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) funding to improve client access, retailer efficiency, and program integrity, \$14 million for infrastructure improvements, and \$5 million for program research and evaluation.

SUPPORTING LOCAL FARMERS AND IMPROVING HEALTH

To support local farmers while improving the health of Americans, we ask that you:

- Provide \$17 million for WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP), which provides vouchers to low-income women, infants, and children;
- Provide \$21 million for the Seniors Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, which provides vouchers for low-income seniors; and
- Provide \$9 million for Community Food Projects to meet food needs of low-income people, increase community self-reliance, and promote comprehensive responses to food, farm and nutrition issues.

DEVELOPING LEADERS

To ensure a pipeline of leaders dedicated to improving health and reducing hunger in our country, we ask that you:

- Provide \$3 million for the Congressional Hunger Center for the operation of the Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellowships and Mickey Leland International Hunger Fellowships, which focus on developing solutions to hunger based on experience at local field placements and national policy organizations.

We appreciate your support on these recommendations. We know that these expenditures will make for smart, long-term investments into the health of Americans.

[This statement was submitted by Mary Pat Raimondi MS, RD Vice President, Strategic Policy and Partnerships Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.]

PREPARED STATEMENT THE OF ACADEMY OF NUTRITION AND DIETETICS

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics has submitted testimony for the fiscal year 2015 appropriations. We would like to add an additional request that will help improve the health of Americans. As we shared in our previous letter, the Academy is the world's largest organization of food and nutrition professionals, and is committed to improving the nation's health with nutrition services and interventions provided by registered dietitian nutritionists. Nationwide, the Academy has over 75,000 members.

The newly-passed Agricultural Act of 2014 offers new opportunities for healthy foods to be incorporated in the diet. Pulse foods are some of the best sources of important nutrients including dietary fiber, vegetable protein, iron and potassium that one can have in his or her diet. Introducing children to pulse foods early in life will help develop life-long habits to incorporate these foods in their diets. Encouraging healthy eating habits in our school children will help prevent chronic health issues, like obesity and type-2 diabetes. Pulse foods are also known to be economical sources of protein that can help to reduce hunger throughout the world.¹ Having research dollars for pulse foods will promote the benefits and identify new ways of increasing consumption of these foods. We asked that you include the following in funding:

PULSE CROP HEALTH INITIATIVE-FISCAL YEAR 2015 APPROPRIATION REQUEST \$25 MILLION

The Pulse Crop Health Initiative was included in Section 7209 (e) of the Research Title of the Agricultural Act of 2014. The law provides an authorization of \$125 million dollars over the next 5 years to find solutions, through research on pulse crops, to the critical health, functionality, sustainability and food security challenges facing U.S. citizens and the global community. The initiative will focus on three major research areas: health and nutrition, increasing functionality and enhancing productivity and sustainability of pulse crops. We ask you to fully fund the Pulse Crop Health Initiative in the Agriculture Act of 2014 with an appropriation of \$25 million for fiscal year 2015.

SCHOOL PULSE CROP PRODUCTS PROGRAM-FISCAL YEAR 2015 APPROPRIATION REQUEST \$2 MILLION

The Pulse Crop Products program was included in Section 4213 of the Nutrition Title of the Agricultural Act of 2014. The law authorizes \$10 million dollars over the next 5 years. The purpose of the Pulse Crop Products program is to increase awareness of nutrient-dense pulse crops and increase their use in school meals. We ask you to fully fund the School Pulse Crop Products program in the Agricultural Act of 2014 with an appropriation of \$2 million for fiscal year 2015.

¹Dilis V, Trichopoulou A (2009) Nutritional and health properties of pulses. *Mediterranean Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism* 1: 149–157.

[This statement was submitted by Mary Pat Raimondi, Vice President, Strategic Policy and Partnerships of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE AGRICULTURE AND FOOD RESEARCH INITIATIVE (AFRI) COALITION

The Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) Coalition is pleased to submit the following testimony on the fiscal year 2015 appropriation for the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI). The AFRI Coalition, comprised of more than forty scientific societies and science advocacy organizations is dedicated to raising awareness of the importance of AFRI and the critical research it funds.

The AFRI Coalition is concerned with the Administration's proposed funding level for AFRI, and strongly urges Congress to fund AFRI with at least \$360 million in fiscal year 2015, far less than its authorized level of \$700 million.

AFRI, administered by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), is the premier competitive grants program for fundamental and applied research, extension and education in support of our nation's food and agricultural systems. AFRI funds high priority research grants in areas of critical concern to the United States including: food safety and security, agricultural production and products, plant and animal health, nutrition and human health and agricultural economics and others.

Research supported by AFRI aims to solve critical scientific, agricultural and societal problems and deserves steady, predictable and sustainable funding. The future of our food and agricultural systems, a basis for human health, rely on it. Additionally, for every Federal dollar spent on publicly funded agricultural research, \$20 or more is generated in the U.S. economy.¹ A strengthened commitment to investments in science for food and agriculture, especially during difficult economic times, is essential to maintain and grow our nation's food, economic and national security.

The AFRI Coalition appreciates the opportunity to provide written testimony and would be pleased to assist the Subcommittee as it considers the fiscal year 2015 appropriation for AFRI. To learn more about the Coalition or to see a list of members, please visit: <http://africoalition.org>.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE ALLIANCE FOR A STRONGER FDA

Chairman Pryor and Ranking Member Blunt: The Alliance for a Stronger FDA respectfully requests that the Subcommittee recognize the critical role and expanding public health mission of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration by providing fiscal year 15 budget authority appropriations of \$2.784 billion for the agency. This amount is \$223 million above fiscal year 14 BA appropriations funding and \$200 million above the President's request for BA appropriations.

The Alliance is a 200-member coalition of all FDA's stakeholders—consumers, patients, health professionals, trade groups and industry. Our sole purpose is to advocate for increased appropriated resources for the FDA, an agency that oversees 100 percent of drugs, vaccines, medical devices, dietary supplements and personal care products and 80 percent of our nation's food supply.

Altogether, the products and industries regulated by FDA account for nearly 25 percent of all consumer spending in the United States. A strong FDA is essential to the U.S. economy, jobs, and the balance of trade and is critical to homeland security. Unlike other U.S. regulatory agencies, all FDA stakeholders (including consumers, patients and industry) support increased funding for the agency.

The current year's budget authority (BA) appropriation of \$2.561 billion helped FDA rebound from the fiscal year 13 sequester and regain and slightly advance above its fiscal year 12 funding level. However, in the interim, the continuing growth of FDA's responsibilities has meant that the appropriation is still dramatically less than the amount the agency needs. The agency's mission is "at risk."

RECOGNIZING THAT FDA'S PUBLIC HEALTH MISSION IS VITAL AND GROWING

New laws take enormous resources to implement. Once implemented, they permanently increase agency responsibilities. Since 2009, Congress has identified a num-

¹ The Economic Returns to U.S. Public Agricultural Research, Alston, Julian M.; Andersen, Matthew A.; James, Jennifer S.; Pardey, Philip G., University of Minnesota, Department of Applied Economics, July 2011, <http://purl.umn.edu/95522>.

ber of additional public health needs that fall within FDA's jurisdiction, resulting in at least seven new laws:

- Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act (2009)
- Biologics Price Competition and Innovation Act (2010)
- Secure and Responsible Drug Disposal Act (2010)
- Combat Methamphetamine Enhancement Act (2010)
- Food Safety Modernization Act (2011),
- FDA Safety and Innovation Act (2012), including re-authorization of the Best Pharmaceuticals for Children Act and the Pediatric Research Equity Act
- Drug Quality and Security Act (2013)

Other growing responsibilities include: globalization, scientific complexity, promoting innovation to benefit patients and consumers, public health emergencies, national security, and increasing industry size and activity. In sum, the current appropriations level is totally inadequate to make up for decades of underfunding AND new and growing responsibilities, including but not limited to new laws enacted since 2009.

GLOBALIZATION AND SCIENTIFIC COMPLEXITY REQUIRE FDA TO EXPAND ITS ACTIVITIES EACH YEAR TO PROTECT AND EXPAND PUBLIC AND INDIVIDUAL HEALTH

Even were Congress not active in legislating new mandates for FDA, the agency's mission and responsibilities would grow enormously each year for reasons unrelated to new laws. Our remarks will concentrate on two: globalization and increasing scientific complexity.

One of FDA's highest priorities over the last 6 years has been to adjust for the accelerating globalization in all product categories overseen by the agency. For example:

- Food Imports are growing 10 percent annually. Altogether, 10–15 percent of all food consumed in the U.S. is imported. This includes nearly 2/3 of fruits and vegetables and 80 percent of seafood.
- Device Imports are also growing about 10 percent annually. Currently, about 50 percent of all medical devices used in the US are imported.
- Drug Imports are growing quickly, about 13 percent annually. About 80 percent of active pharmaceutical ingredients (API) are manufactured abroad, as are 40 percent of finished drugs.

Inspections at U.S. ports-of-entry are critical, but ultimately less than 2 percent of shipments can be inspected. Instead, FDA is following Congressional direction by increasing foreign inspections and establishing foreign offices to work globally to improve the standards and quality of products entering the U.S.

The value of this approach cannot really be quantified. For example, the cost of illness, death and lost markets—from just a single bad actor in a single food category—can cost as much or more than the entire investment we put into FDA's food safety activities. Drugs and devices are harder to track for a variety of reasons, but there is no reason to doubt a similar effect.

Greater scientific complexity is diffused into every part of the agency and its mission. FDA has adopted a number of initiatives, including creation of a commissioner-level science office, investment in regulatory science, expanded and more intensive training, changes in time and manpower allotments for complex assignments, and significant reworking of the drug and medical device approval pathways to benefit patients. Further, food and medical product safety inspections have also become more complex—requiring more scientific training, more preparation and, often, more time during the inspection itself.

Specifically, we have identified five areas in which FDA is improving product reviews to respond to more complex science and assure that patient need for new therapies is being met. Each comes at a cost in additional dollars/manpower:

- Sponsors Need More Meeting Time and Other Feedback from FDA
- Applications Require More Patients, Study Sites and Analysis
- Enhanced Timeliness and Consistency of Product Review
- Expansion of Pre-and Post-Market Safety
- Enhance Innovation, Speed Approvals

A 2011 study quantified some of the changes that require more FDA resources:

All Therapeutic Areas, All Phases	00—03	08—11	Change 00—11 %
Unique medical and compliance procedures per protocol (median)	20.5	30.4	48%

All Therapeutic Areas, All Phases	00—03	08—11	Change 00—11 %
Total procedures per protocol (median)	105.9	166.6	57%
Total investigative site work burden (median units)	28.9	47.5	64%
Total eligibility criteria	31	46	58%
Median study duration in days	140	175	25%
Median number of CRF pages per protocol (CRF = case report forms) ..	55	171	227%

Source: Getz, Campo, Kaitin. Variability in Protocol Design Complexity by Phase and Therapeutic Area, DJJ 2011 45(4); 413–420; Tufts Center for the Study of Drug Development

FDA’S VITAL, COMPLEX WORLD-WIDE PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSIBILITIES CANNOT BE ACCOMPLISHED WITH ITS EXISTING BUDGET. THE AGENCY’S MISSION IS “AT RISK.”

FDA is a staff-intensive organization. More than 80 percent of its budget is devoted to staff-related costs. If the agency budget fails to grow over the next few years:

- food will be less safe and consumers put at risk,
- drug and device reviews will be slower, conflicting with promises made to consumers, patients and companies,
- problems with imports and globalization will become more numerous, and
- critical efforts to modernize the agency and improve its support for innovation will stall.

FDA has a broad mandate for a relatively small agency. Its activities are a core function of government and its mission and responsibilities are increasing. FDA should be a priority and it deserves exceptional status when appropriations decisions are made.

[This statement was submitted by Kasey Thompson, President, Alliance for a Stronger FDA.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE AMERICAN COMMODITY DISTRIBUTION ASSOCIATION

On behalf of the American Commodity Distribution Association (ACDA), I respectfully submit this statement regarding the budget request of the Food and Nutrition Service for inclusion in the Subcommittee’s official record. ACDA members appreciate the Subcommittee’s support for these vital programs.

We urge the subcommittee to fully fund administrative expense funding for the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) at \$100 million; to approve sufficient funding to maintain caseload in the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) and provide an increase of \$5 million to begin operations in six additional states approved by USDA, and to actively monitor three matters: further changes in sodium standards for school meal programs, recommendations of the Multiagency Task Force on commodity procurement required by Section 4205 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–79), and the National Commission on Hunger established by Section 743 of Division A of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–76).

ACDA is a non-profit professional trade association, dedicated to the growth and improvement of USDA’s Commodity Food Distribution Program. ACDA members include: state agencies that distribute USDA-purchased commodity foods; agricultural organizations; industry; associate members; recipient agencies, such as schools and soup kitchens; and allied organizations, such as anti-hunger groups. ACDA members are responsible for distributing over 1.5 billion pounds of USDA-purchased commodity foods annually through programs such as National School Lunch Program, the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), Charitable Institution Program, and Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR).

TEFAP FOOD DOLLARS NOW AVAILABLE FOR TWO FISCAL YEARS

We previously called upon the subcommittee to make TEFAP food dollars available for two fiscal years, as was done under ARRA. This important change was included in the Agricultural Act of 2014, and we are thankful for it. We also very much appreciate the increase in food funds from \$268,750,000 in fiscal year 2014 to \$324,000,000 provided by the same Act. They are most certainly needed.

If food orders are cancelled by either USDA or vendors for any reason near the end of the Federal fiscal year, state agencies will now have the ability to carryover these unanticipated balances to make responsible decisions and to take maximum advantage of available resources.

ACDA looks forward to working with USDA for the effective implementation of this carryover authority.

FULLY FUND TEFAP ADMINISTRATIVE FUNDS AT \$100 MILLION

We continue to urge the subcommittee to fully fund TEFAP Administrative Funds at \$100 million, and believe that the notable increase in food funds will result in more food, more handling, and more storage. As a result, operating expenses will most certainly increase. In our view, so should the funding for these operating expenses.

Food banks continue to face increased demands, particularly with the reduction in SNAP benefits imposed last November. Higher food prices and tighter food supplies are a significant challenge, so we are very supportive of the increased food support provided by the Agricultural Act of 2014. Food banks for the past several years have found that they have had little choice but to convert food dollars to administrative expense funds in order to maintain their operations. We urge the Committee to not force this choice upon food banks that are experiencing reduced private donations in addition to increased demands.

FUNDING FOR THE COMMODITY SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD PROGRAM

ACDA supports the President's request for \$206,682,000 to maintain the current caseload for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), and urges the Committee provide an additional \$5 million to begin CSFP operations in six states that now have USDA-approved state plans—Connecticut, Hawaii, Idaho, Maryland, Massachusetts and Rhode Island. This additional funding would make CSFP available in 45 states. CSFP overwhelmingly serves elderly individuals, many of whom are homebound, and is being converted to an elderly-only program as a result of Section 4102 of the Agricultural Act of 2014.

MONITORING FURTHER CHANGES IN SODIUM STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL MEALS

As we stated in our 2014 Issue Paper, in 2012, Congress enacted a provision of law requiring USDA to review and evaluate its rule reducing the amount of sodium allowable in school meals for the rule's costs, practicality and scientific support. ACDA supports that provision, but is concerned that USDA will not issue its findings and make any resulting changes in the sodium standards in a timely fashion. The Department has indicated that it will report in 2016, which is 2 years after the information is needed in order for manufacturers and others in the supply chain to develop, test and market new items before the next step in the sodium standards goes into effect. School Food Service authorities have made significant changes in the nutritional quality of foods served as part of the school lunch and breakfast program, and are embarking on additional changes in foods served as part of a la carte meals and sold elsewhere throughout the school. ACDA is committed to improving the quality of school meals, but believes that there needs to be sufficient lead time before the required implementation of any further changes in sodium standards. We urge the Congress to require that any further changes in sodium standards be based on sound science, and that sufficient lead time for the development, testing, and production of new products be provided before any further changes in sodium standards are required. We also urge the Appropriations Committee to continue to monitor this important matter should further action be needed.

INTERAGENCY PANEL FOR EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE USDA FOODS PROGRAM

ACDA applauds the inclusion of Section 4205 of the Agricultural Act of 2014, establishing a multiagency task force at USDA for continuous evaluation and improvement of the USDA Foods program. We thank the Food and Nutrition Service, the Agricultural Marketing Service, Farm Services Agency, and the Food Safety and Inspection Service for the efforts they have made to improve procurement operations over the past few years following meeting with ACDA. We strongly support the USDA Foods program and want to be sure it works effectively. We are prepared to work with all of these USDA agencies and our members to develop any information that USDA may require. We encourage the Committee to monitor developments as this task force gets underway.

NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUNGER

ACDA looks forward to the activities of the National Commission on Hunger established by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, and would be pleased to provide information regarding the operation of commodity-based food assistance programs. We know that most Commission members are yet to be appointed and its agenda fully developed. ACDA hopes that at least one Commission member will have experience with commodity program operations because this experience can be invaluable to the Commission's task. ACDA believes that commodities provided to school food programs, to TEFAP, to CSFP, and to FDPIR are an important link between producers and recipients. They are cost effective and often exceed commercial standards, enabling USDA to be a market influencer.

We look forward to continuing to partner with you and USDA in the delivery of these important food assistance programs.

[This statement was submitted by Wanda Shepherd, President, American Commodity Distribution Association.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

The American Farm Bureau Federation has identified the Renewable Energy for America Program (REAP) as its program for emphasis and funding in the fiscal year 2015 agriculture appropriations bill. REAP offers a combination of grants and guaranteed loans for agricultural producers to purchase renewable energy systems.

Farm Bureau has identified eight other areas of importance for funding. They are:

PROGRAMS THAT PROMOTE ANIMAL HEALTH

Farm Bureau supports a \$2 million increase to the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) for voluntary Animal Disease Traceability (ADT), offset by a \$2 million decrease for Avian Influenza (AI) related programs. The ADT program is essential for animal health, while avian health has generally improved because of success in decreasing the global occurrence of AI.

Farm Bureau supports additional funding through the Agricultural Research Service and National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) for dealing with porcine epidemic diarrhea virus (PEDv). PEDv is an especially virulent disease for which there is currently no vaccine.

Farm Bureau supports \$4.8 million for the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP) administered by NIFA. VMLRP veterinarians ensure animal health and welfare, while protecting the nation's food supply.

Farm Bureau supports funding \$10 million for the Veterinary Services Grant (VSG) program, which was authorized in the Agriculture Act of 2014. The VSG program helps food animal veterinarians become established in rural communities.

Farm Bureau supports funding \$15 million for the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN), which was authorized in the Agriculture Act of 2014. The NAHLN serves as our nation's most vital early warning system for emerging and foreign animal diseases.

Farm Bureau supports funding \$10 million for Section 1433 in the Agriculture Act of 2014, which establishes a new competitive research grants mechanism to address critical priorities in food security, zoonotic disease and stewardship.

Farm Bureau supports \$144.5 million for the FDA's Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM). The CVM oversees the safety of animal drugs, feeds and biotechnology-derived products.

PROGRAMS THAT PROMOTE CONSERVATION

Farm Bureau supports funding for conservation programs but prioritizes working lands programs over retirement-type programs. Farmers and ranchers have made great strides in conserving our natural resources and these gains can continue through working lands programs.

PROGRAMS THAT EXPAND INTERNATIONAL MARKETS FOR AGRICULTURE

Farm Bureau supports funding at authorized levels for:

- The Foreign Agricultural Service to maintain services that expand agricultural export markets.
- Export development and expansion programs such as the Market Access Program, Foreign Market Development Program, Emerging Markets Program and Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops Program. These effective programs

- have resulted in increased demand for U.S. agriculture and food products abroad.
- Public Law 480 programs which provide foreign food aid by purchasing U.S. commodities.
- APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine personnel and facilities, which protect U.S. agriculture from costly pest problems that enter from foreign lands.
- APHIS trade issues resolution and management activities that are essential for an effective response when other countries raise pest and disease concerns (i.e., sanitary and phytosanitary measures) to prohibit the entry of American products.
- APHIS Biotechnology Regulatory Services, which oversees the permit, notification and deregulation process for plant biotechnology products.
- The U.S. Codex Office, which is essential to improving the harmonization of international science-based standards for the safety of food and agriculture products.

PROGRAMS THAT ENHANCE AND IMPROVE FOOD SAFETY AND PROTECTION

Farm Bureau supports funding for food protection at the Food and Drug Administration and Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) that is directed to the following priorities: Increased education and training of inspectors; Additional science-based inspection, targeted according to risk; Effective inspection of imported food and feed products; Research and development of scientifically based rapid testing procedures and tools; Accurate and timely response to outbreaks that identify contaminated products, remove them from the market and minimize disruption to producers; and Indemnification for producers who suffer marketing losses due to inaccurate government-advised recalls or warnings.

Farm Bureau supports funding for a National Antimicrobial Residue Monitoring System (NARMS) to detect trends in antibiotic resistance. NARMS protects human and animal health through integrated monitoring of antimicrobial resistance among foodborne bacteria.

Farm Bureau supports funding for the Food Animal Residue Avoidance Databank (FARAD) at the authorized level of \$2.5 million. FARAD aids veterinarians in establishing science-based recommendations for drug withdrawal intervals.

Farm Bureau opposes the administration's request for new user fees for inspection activities. Food safety is for the public good, and as such, it is a justified use of public funds.

Farm Bureau opposes any provision which would prohibit FSIS from inspecting equine processing facilities under the Federal Meat Inspection Act. Prohibiting the harvest of livestock for reasons unrelated to food safety or animal welfare sets an extremely dangerous precedent for banning meat inspection from every species, including beef, pork, lamb and poultry.

PROGRAMS THAT ENSURE CROP PROTECTION TOOLS

Farm Bureau supports maintaining the current funding level for the Minor Crop Pest Management (IR-4) within NIFA Research and Education Activities. Developing pest control tools has high regulatory costs, and public support has been needed to ensure that safe and effective agrichemicals and biopesticides are available for small, specialty crop markets.

Farm Bureau supports maintaining funding for the National Agricultural Statistical Service (NASS) in general and specifically points out the agricultural chemical-use surveys for fruits, vegetables, floriculture and nursery crops. NASS surveys provide data about the use of agricultural chemicals involved in the production of food, fiber and horticultural products, just as their overall effort is critical to understanding the performance of the sector as a whole.

PROGRAMS THAT STRENGTHEN RURAL COMMUNITIES

Farm Bureau supports USDA implementing a regional approach to give its Rural Development (RD) programs greater flexibility and promote innovation in rural regions.

- Farm Bureau supports maintaining funding at authorized levels for:
- The Value-Added Agricultural Producer Grants, Rural Innovation Initiative, Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program, and Business and Industry Direct and Guaranteed Loans, which foster business development in rural communities.
- Rural Utilities Service for rural broadband and telecommunications services, and the Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program.

- The Revolving Fund Grant Program for acquiring safe drinking water and sanitary waste disposal facilities.
- The Community Facility Direct and Guaranteed Loans, which funds the construction, enlargement or improvement of essential community facilities.
- The Resource Conservation and Development Program, which helps local volunteers create new businesses, form cooperatives and develop agri-tourism activities.
- The Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, which provides participants with the information and skills needed to make informed decisions for their business.
- Agriculture in the Classroom, which helps students gain greater awareness of the role of agriculture in the economy and society.

PROGRAMS THAT SUPPORT WILDLIFE SERVICES

Farm Bureau supports maintaining the funding level for APHIS Wildlife Services programs. Wildlife Services works to prevent and minimize an estimated \$1 billion worth of wildlife damage, while protecting human health and safety from conflicts with wildlife.

RESEARCH PRIORITIES

Agricultural research is vital, particularly research focused on meeting the growing challenges of production agriculture. The United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization predicts that farmers will have to produce 70 percent more food by 2050 to feed an additional 2.3 billion people around the globe. America's farmers are the most efficient in the world, but without a commitment to further agricultural research and technological advancement, even America's farmers could be hard-pressed to meet these challenges.

[This statement was submitted by Bob Stallman, President, American Farm Bureau Federation.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE AMERICAN HONEY PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION AND AMERICAN BEEKEEPING FEDERATION

Chairman Pryor and Members of the Subcommittee, our names are Randy Verhoek, President of the American Honey Producers Association (AHPA) and Tim Tucker, President of the American Beekeeping Federation (ABF). We are pleased today to submit the following statement for the record on behalf of our two organizations. Collectively, AHPA and ABF represent every type of beekeeper across the country, from hobbyists on up to the very largest commercial honey producers and pollinators. The purpose of this statement is to bring to your attention the continued threats faced by American beekeepers and the risk those threats pose to billions of dollars in U.S. agriculture that rely upon honey bee pollination services. To address these threats, AHPA and ABF strongly support the President's fiscal year '15 budget proposal and respectfully request that the attached funding increases (\$25 million for a NIFA Pollination and Pollinator Health (PPH) Institute; a \$4 million increase for ARS honey bee research within crop production funds; and \$2 million increase for NASS honey bee surveys and studies) and report language are included in the fiscal year '15 annual appropriations bill.

A 2013 Time Magazine cover story and thousands of other magazines, newspapers, media outlets and government reports have documented the scourge of Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) and other serious declines in honey bee health since 2006. Unfortunately, those health challenges continue to result in drastic bee colony losses year over year. Still lacking a definitive understanding of the causes after more than 8 years since the onset of CCD, the scientific, agricultural and consumer communities have grown increasingly concerned that more than \$20 billion of pollinator-dependent U.S. agricultural output and a full one-third of our nation's food supply is at serious risk. Just last year the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) estimated more than 35 percent of America's bee colonies did not survive the winter season, and even greater losses were realized by most commercial beekeepers, on average 45 percent. While science has yet to determine a definitive cause, the challenges to honey bee health are clearly multi-faceted, requiring resource intensive and high priority study. USDA has done great work in recent years within its resource constraints, but its research and other programmatic initiatives are woefully underfunded and in need of exponentially increased investments that are commensurate with the seriousness of the challenges they face.

As a result, AHPA and ABF strongly support the President's fiscal year '15 budget proposal and respectfully request that the attached funding increases and report language are included in the fiscal year '15 annual appropriations bill. Doing so will ensure that USDA can, among other things, sufficiently enhance its Federal laboratory and competitive grant research agenda, strengthen pollinator habitat across the country, double the number of acres in the Conservation Reserve Program that are dedicated to pollinator health, and increase funding for surveys to determine the impacts on pollinator losses, all of which are necessary next steps in the battle to ensure commercially viable honey bee populations throughout the United States.

As always, we thank you for your past support of essential honey bee research and for your understanding of the critical importance that Federal funding plays in ensuring a healthy honey bee supply ready to meet the nation's pollination demands.

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE (ARS)

- Funding increase for ARS honeybee research:
 - Request of \$4 million increase in crop production funding for additional Federal laboratory research into honey bee health and Colony Collapse Disorder, including research into bee health improvement and risk assessment of pesticides, bee epidemiology, best management practices and genetics relating to diseases and pests of pollinators. This high priority increase should be offset by redirecting funds from ongoing, lower priority research as detailed in the Administration's fiscal year '15 budget documents.
- ARS Report language:
 - “The Committee is aware that pollinators are responsible for the production of one-third of the Nation's food supply, but the number of managed honeybee colonies in the United States has dropped in half since 1940. Because of the importance of pollinators in the production of the Nation's food supply and their impact on the stability of our agricultural economy, the Committee encourages ARS to increase resources dedicated to protecting the health of both honeybees and other native bees, including continued research into colony collapse disorder.”
- ARS Report language:
 - “ARS is encouraged to study the feasibility of conducting Federal honey bee research in California with the support of a cooperator university that is well situated to conduct field and other research vital to honey bees and the many specialty crops that rely on them. ARS is also encouraged to report on the feasibility of modernizing the honey bee research laboratory in Baton Rouge, which was included in the agency's 2012 capital investment strategy report. Finally, ARS is encouraged to consider investing additional research dollars with Federal laboratories in the upper Great Plains where the largest number of honey bee colonies are available for research during the honey production season.”

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (NIFA)

- Funding for Pollination and Pollinator Health Institute:
 - Request \$25 million in funding, available until expended, for a virtual Pollination and Pollinator Health (PPH) Institute that will foster industry and researcher collaboration and utilize input from stakeholders to develop priorities for addressing biological, environmental and management issues associated with the wide-scale decline of honey bees and other pollinators nationwide. No fewer than \$5 million of these funds should be designated for pollinator health and Colony Collapse Disorder research.
- Report Language:
 - “The Committee acknowledges NIFA's continued commitment to pollinator research under the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative, and it encourages increased prioritization of pollinator and CCD research proposals.”
- Report language:
 - “The Committee emphasizes the important role of the Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI) in addressing the critical needs of the specialty crop industry through research and extension activities, and it encourages NIFA to prioritize proposals for and enhance its overall commitment to identifying and addressing threats to pollinators from pests and diseases.”

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE (NASS)

- Funding increase for enhanced NASS surveys:

- Request of \$2 million in increased funding to enhance its annual survey of bee keepers to include questions related to colony losses, pests and parasites, management practices, crops pollinated and locations served, as well as estimates of revenues and expenses, which will result in improved baseline and annual data to determine the extent of CCD, in addition to providing quantitative information on potential causal factors, essential to the industry. This increase should be offset by reductions consistent with those identified in the Administration's fiscal year '15 budget documents.

NRCS

- Report language:
 - “NRCS, under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), provided \$3 million in technical and financial assistance for farmers and ranchers to help improve honey bee health through better conservation practices that will provide honey bees with nutritious pollen and nectar. Because access to good forage is an ongoing challenge for commercial beekeepers, the Committee supports continuing and expanding this technical and financial assistance program, and recommends that a significant portion of the funds should be devoted to facilitating training by expert researchers and beekeepers of NRCS officials and agents in pollinator conservation practices.”

[This statement was submitted by Mr. Randy Verhoek, President, American Honey Producers Association and Mr. Tim Tucker, President, American Beekeeping Federation]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF AGRONOMY

The American Society of Agronomy (ASA), Crop Science Society of America (CSSA), and Soil Science Society of America (SSSA) urge the subcommittee to support the following areas of the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Research, Education, and Economics (REE) mission areas in fiscal year 2015 budget:

- \$1.149 billion for the Agricultural Research Service (ARS)
- \$1.341 billion for the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)
- Within NIFA, we specifically support:
 - \$360 million for Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI).
 - \$244 million for Hatch Act formula funding

The American Society of Agronomy (ASA), Crop Science Society of America (CSSA), and Soil Science Society of America (SSSA), represent over 18,000 members in academia, industry, and government, 12,500 Certified Crop Advisers (CCA), and 781 Certified Professional Soil Scientist (CPSS), as the largest coalition of professionals dedicated to the agronomic, crop and soil science disciplines in the United States. We are dedicated to utilizing science to manage our agricultural system and sustainably produce food, fuel, feed, and fiber for a rapidly growing global population in the coming decades.

Agriculture and agriculture-related industries contributed \$742.6 billion to the U.S. gross domestic product (GDP) in 2011, a 4.8-percent share. In 2012, 16.5 million full-and part-time jobs were related to agriculture—about 9.2 percent of total U.S. employment. However, even though increased agricultural productivity, arising from innovation and changes in technology, is the main contributor to economic growth in U.S. agriculture not all people at all times have to access to enough food for an active and healthy life. The global number of food-insecure people is estimated at 707 million in 2013, up 3 million from 2012. By 2023, the number of food-insecure people is projected to increase nearly 23 percent to 868 million, slightly faster than population growth. The Nation's economic prosperity and security depend on our dedication to developing innovative, science-based solutions to meet our growing agricultural needs and managing efficient food systems.

We must close the innovation deficit if the United States is to remain the world's innovation leader in agriculture. China continues to exhibit the world's most dramatic R&D growth at 20.7 percent annually, compared to the United States at 4.4 percent growth over the same time period. By 2009, agriculture R&D fell to a historically low 0.035 percent share of the United States economy, a level far below the total U.S. R&D spending and that which is necessary to meet the critical challenges facing U.S. agriculture in the 21st century.

ASA, CSSA, and SSSA supports \$1.149 billion for Agricultural Research Service (ARS), USDA's intramural research and development programs, and applaud their ability to respond to and address agricultural problems of high national priority. ARS's 2,200 scientists are located at 90+ research locations, managing 800 research

projects that help solve current and future crop and livestock production and protection, human nutrition, and environmental quality challenges. ARS programs and technologies ensure high-quality, safe food and other agricultural products; assess the nutritional needs of Americans; help to sustain a competitive agricultural economy; enhance the natural resource base and the environment; and, provide economic opportunities for rural citizens and communities. ARS also forms key partnerships that move new technologies to the marketplace.

These partnerships are especially important to leverage during a time when our nation's economy remains vulnerable and Federal funding is constrained. Such cooperative research and development helps foster American businesses and enhances the position of the U.S. as a global leader in food, feed, fiber, and fuel production.

We support \$1.341 billion for the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), USDA's suite of extramural programs whose primary role is to provide a link between Federal and state research initiatives through partnerships with educational institutions and competitive grant programs. Within NIFA, we specifically support:

- Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI): ASA, CSSA, and SSSA strongly endorse funding AFRI at \$360 million, which is about half of what was originally authorized in the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008. AFRI is the premier competitive grants program for fundamental and applied research, extension and education in support of our nation's food and agricultural systems. Investments in AFRI bolster work performed by ARS, America's land grant colleges and universities, the private sector and the American farmer.
- Hatch Act Formula Funding: ASA, CSSA, and SSSA support \$244 for Hatch Act formula funds. These funds provide research grants to our nation's great land-grant colleges and universities. Any additional cuts to academic funding will reduce the ability of our scientists and students to conduct imperative research such as developing drought resistant wheat varieties.

A balance of funding mechanisms, including intramural, competitive, and formula funding is essential to maintain the capacity of the United States to conduct both basic and applied agricultural research, to improve crop and livestock quality, and to deliver safe and nutritious food products while protecting and enhancing the nation's environment and natural resource base.

Thank you for your consideration. For additional information or to learn more about the ASA, CSSA, and SSSA, please visit www.agronomy.org, www.crops.org, or www.soils.org.

[This statement was submitted by the Karl E. Anderson, Director of Government Relations, American Society of Agronomy]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR MICROBIOLOGY

The American Society for Microbiology (ASM), the largest single life science Society with over 39,000 members, wishes to submit a statement in support of increased funding in fiscal year 2015 for the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The FDA plays a unique and essential role in protecting public health by assuring the safety and efficacy of products accounting for more than 20 percent of all consumer spending in the United States. FDA science based regulatory oversight covers the Nation's food supply, human and veterinary drugs, vaccines and other biological products, medical devices and more. Market globalization and advances in science and technology have significantly increased FDA's responsibilities in recent years. FDA's current strategic priorities include modernizing regulatory science capabilities and building an integrated global food safety system.

The ASM urges Congress to provide additional funding for the FDA in fiscal year 2015 because of the magnitude of its new responsibilities and the need for capacity in critical areas such as food safety.

FDA actions, based on scientific best practices, include consumer alerts and warnings; production guidances and tools for food safety; approval of new devices, diagnostics, treatments and vaccines; strategies to reduce drug resistant microbial pathogens; and safer veterinary medicines and animal foods. Recent FDA investigations of foodborne disease outbreaks, using laboratory tests to confirm, linked illnesses to rice, cheeses and prepackaged salad products. In the past year, FDA consumer alerts warned against oysters linked to norovirus illness, nonsterile pharmaceutical solutions, and carrot and beet juices possibly contaminated with *Clostridium botulinum* bacteria.

FDA SCIENCE

FDA has a strategic plan to strengthen regulatory science including, developing new tools, standards and methods to assess the safety, efficacy, quality and performance of FDA regulated products. FDA staff must access the best possible science and technology, as products move from premarket review to post market surveillance.

Science underlies all the activities of FDA's seven product and research centers, as well as product regulatory actions. Public health often depends upon quick and accurate laboratory analyses. The Office of Regulatory Affairs (ORA) operates 13 high throughput field laboratories, situated across the United States and Puerto Rico. Lab results can support field investigations and regulatory decisions, including the thousands of ORA noncompliance citations issued each year to firms producing foods, medical devices, drugs, veterinary medicines, biologics, etc. Other FDA laboratories operated by the Agency's Foods and Veterinary Medicine Program support the broad responsibilities of the Centers for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN) and Veterinary Medicine (CVM).

The ASM recommends that Congress fund the FDA at the highest level possible in fiscal year 2015.

FDA scientists conduct research that advances the field of regulatory science, while protecting public health, including the following accomplishments in fiscal year 2013:

- An FDA primate study found that FDA licensed acellular pertussis vaccines are effective in preventing whooping cough, but those vaccinated may still become infected with the causative pathogen, *Bordetella pertussis* bacteria and spread infection to others. Acellular vaccines using only portions of the bacteria replaced whole cell pertussis vaccines the 1990s. The study was initiated to help explain increasing whooping cough rates since the 1980s.
- A new FDA developed tool will improve security against intentional food contamination. The software program helps owners and operators of food facilities customize food defense plans to minimize risk in their specific facility. Content of the Food Defense Plan Builder tool is based on FDA guidance documents.
- A handheld FDA developed device to identify counterfeit antimalarial drugs, the Counterfeit Detection Device (CD-3), is being field tested in Ghana under a multiagency partnership. Counterfeit treatments complicate the already difficult global battle against a killer of more than 660,000 each year and whose causative pathogens are increasingly resistant to drugs. Scientists at the FDA's Forensic Chemistry Center developed the easy to operate tool, which uses light of varying wavelengths to compare a product with an authentic sample.

FOOD SAFETY

Food items account for about 75 percent of consumer spending on FDA regulated products. The food industry in the United States contributes about 20 percent of the Gross National Product, employs about 14 million individuals and has ties to an additional 4 million jobs in related industries. FDA's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN) generally oversees all domestic and imported food except meat, poultry and frozen, dried and liquid eggs, which are regulated by the Department of Agriculture (USDA).

CFSAN regulates an estimated \$417 billion worth of domestic food, \$49 billion worth of imported foods and over \$60 billion worth of cosmetics. Several industry and consumer trends have greatly increased CFSAN responsibilities, including globalization of the food supply and demand for imported foods, greater numbers of aging people vulnerable to foodborne illness, new food types and food production methods, emerging foodborne pathogens and growing concern over intentional food contamination.

CFSAN responsibility stretches from the point of US entry or processing to their point of sale. There are more than 377,000 FDA registered food facilities (approximately 154,000 domestic and 223,000 foreign) that manufacture, process, pack or store food consumed by humans or animals in the United States, as well as several thousand cosmetic manufacturers. Possibilities for food contamination are immeasurable and include every step from preharvest conditions to processing, packaging, transportation and preparation. CFSAN personnel routinely examine large numbers of food samples for a long list of specific contaminants that include toxins and microbial pathogens.

Imported foods give regulators fewer opportunities to oversee the food supply chain from farm to table. Food enters ports from about 150 different countries and accounts for about 15 percent of the food supply, including about 50 percent of fresh fruits and 20 percent of fresh vegetables we consume. In mid-2013, FDA proposed new rules that, for the first time, would (1) hold importers accountable for verifying

their foreign suppliers implement adequate food safety practices and (2) raise the standards for third party auditors who inspect as contractors for food companies and importers. In December, the agency proposed a rule requiring larger food facilities, in the United States and abroad, to have a written food defense plan that identifies and resolves processing steps most vulnerable to intentional contamination.

To protect the food supply, FDA inspects facilities and collects samples, monitors imports, responds to adverse event reports and consumer complaints, reviews new food additives, releases regulations and guidelines to stakeholders, conducts lab research, educates food producers and the public and if necessary enforces rules and regulations by recalling or seizing faulty products. These activities demand up to date knowledge and technology utilized by CFSAN's many scientific specialists, including microbiologists, molecular biologists, chemists, toxicologists, food technologists, pathologists, pharmacologists, nutritionists, epidemiologists, mathematicians, physicians and veterinarians.

FDA regularly builds strategic partnerships with other public health institutions. Many of its responsibilities are shared with other Federal agencies like USDA and CDC. Because large amounts of food and cosmetics are imported, CFSAN works with international groups like the World Health Organization and sometimes directly with foreign governments. Products made and sold entirely within a state are regulated by that state, but FDA coordinates with state agriculture and health departments to resolve problems. CFSAN also collaborates with several academic institutions through its Centers of Excellence program, funding food safety and nutrition research at universities in four states.

ADVANCES IN BIOMEDICINE

FDA scientists regularly evaluate biomedical products with considerable public health and economic value, divided among various research centers focused on drugs, medical devices or biologics like vaccines. Examples from the past year show the diversity and medical significance of FDA's involvement in the biomedicine enterprise:

- A newly implemented FDA plan would phase out the use of medically important antimicrobials in food animals for food production purposes to address the public health crisis of rising drug resistance among microorganisms causing human infectious diseases.
- An approved rapid diagnostic is the first test that simultaneously detects tuberculosis bacteria and determines whether they contain genetic markers for resistance to rifampin, an important TB antibiotic. Test results are ready in about two hours versus traditional lab culture methods requiring one to 3 months.
- FDA allowed marketing of the first mass spectrometer system to automatically identify bacteria and yeasts pathogenic to humans. It can identify 193 different microorganisms and perform up to 192 different tests in a single series. Unlike many test systems that require abundant microbial growth pretesting, the new system uses a small amount of material with more rapid results.
- A new drug approved for chronic hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection is the first effective in treating certain types of HCV without co-administration of interferon. It is the third drug designated a "breakthrough therapy" to receive FDA approval. Breakthrough therapies are those shown by early clinical testing to have substantial advantage over available therapies for serious diseases. An estimated 3.2 million or more people are thought to be HCV infected.
- The first genotyping test for HCV infected patients identifies the genotype of HCV infecting a patient. It will help select the best treatment; HCV genotypes respond differently to available drugs. It is approved for patients with chronic infections, not as a screening or diagnostic test.
- FDA approved the first adjuvanted vaccine for H5N1 influenza (bird flu). Not intended for commercial availability, the vaccine will be included in the National Stockpile for distribution if H5N1 develops the capability to spread easily from human to human.
- A newly approved drug to treat HIV-1 infection contains an inhibitor that interferes with one of the enzymes necessary for HIV to multiply. FDA also approved the first rapid HIV test for simultaneous detection of HIV-1 p24 antigen and antibodies to both HIV-1 and HIV-2 in patient blood. Detection of the antigen permits earlier detection than possible with antibodies alone.
- Patients exposed to toxin secreted by botulism causing bacteria can now receive the first antitoxin that neutralizes all of the seven toxin serotypes known to cause botulism.

FDA regulatory actions in biomedicine serve the FDA's partnership in several initiatives, including strategies to halt rising drug resistance among microbial patho-

gens, remedy the growing shortage of new therapeutic drugs or stimulate innovation in personalized medicine. FDA funding not only subsidizes its own invaluable work, but it also supports the FDA's collaborations with other public health agencies at the Federal, state and local levels.

[This statement was submitted by the Public and Scientific Affairs Board, American Society for Microbiology.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR MICROBIOLOGY

The American Society for Microbiology (ASM), the largest single life science society with over 39,000 members, wishes to submit the following statement in support of increased funding in fiscal year 2015 for research and education programs at the US Department of Agriculture (USDA). Funding for USDA research invests in sectors important to public health and the economy, including food safety and food security, production sustainability, bioenergy sources, plant and animal health and the environment. The ASM recommends funding USDA agriculture and science programs to the highest level possible in fiscal year 2015.

Agriculture is important to health and the environment and yields broad economic benefits. The range of industries related to agriculture combines for nearly 5 percent of the national gross domestic product (GDP). In 2012, over 16 million jobs were related to agriculture, over 9 percent of total employment (2.6 million were direct on the farm employment). In recent years, farm asset values have surged upward, while agriculture exports have reached historical highs. At a time when US global competitiveness is being challenged, agriculture exports embody productivity and innovation in the United States. In fiscal year 2013, exports reached over \$140 billion, exceeding the previous record of \$137 billion in fiscal year 2011. The average volume of exports has increased by nearly four million tons annually over the past 5 years. Farm exports also support about one million jobs in the country.

USDA productivity statistics show that total farm production more than doubled between 1948 and 2011, with total output growing at an average annual rate of 1.49 percent. Almost all growth was due to increased productivity, much of it fueled by research. Although USDA research receives considerably less than 5 percent of the USDA budget, USDA's research support has consistently generated high returns.

USDA RESEARCH

USDA research interconnects issues of global food supply and security, climate and energy needs, sustainable use of natural resources, nutrition and childhood obesity, food safety and consumer education. USDA's Research, Education and Economics Action Plan (REE) focuses on a number of efforts using the microbiological sciences to mitigate animal and plant diseases, to reduce foodborne illnesses, to identify bioenergy sources and to protect the environment. Projects involve both national and international collaborations and research results are regularly shared with producers, regulatory agencies, consumers, industry and commodity organizations.

USDA support for research has significant economic consequences. In 2013, the World Organization for Animal Health upgraded the United States' risk classification for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) to negligible risk, expanding market potential (exports of US origin beef and beef products exceed \$5 billion). In December, USDA launched its new, unified emergency response framework to address citrus greening disease, also known as Huanglongbing (HLB), a serious threat to the \$3 billion plus citrus industry. This will coordinate HLB resources, share information and develop operational strategies on a national scale with multiple stakeholders. USDA science underlies numerous policy and regulatory actions like food recalls or guidelines to food processors, exerting significant economic and societal influence within and beyond the agriculture sector.

USDA supports innovation through its intramural research, extramural university research grants, financial awards to small businesses and partnerships with government, academia and industry. The Agricultural Research Service (ARS) serves as the in house research agency, with more than 2,200 scientists and a portfolio of about 800 research projects divided among 18 programs. Extramural research is supported by NIFA, while the Economic Research Service and National Agricultural Statistics Service contribute interdisciplinary analyses that guide USDA involvement in agriculture.

When Congress created NIFA in 2008, it emphasized the national importance of food and agriculture sciences. NIFA supports research, education and extension programs in the land grant university system, primarily through competitive grants distributed by NIFA's Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI). The ASM

urges Congress to fund AFRI with at least \$360 million in fiscal year 2015 as part of a sustained commitment to agriculture research.

NIFA also administers USDA's Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program, which since 1983 has awarded more than 2,000 grants to US owned small businesses. AFRI supports six priority areas: 1) plant health and production; 2) animal health and production; 3) food safety, nutrition and health; 4) renewable energy, natural resources and environment; 5) agriculture systems and technology and 6) agriculture economics and rural communities.

FOOD SAFETY AND FOOD SECURITY

USDA contributes to safeguarding the Nation's food supply and ensuring food security through adequate wholesome foods. Both ARS and NIFA programs fund research to reduce the approximately 48 million foodborne illnesses annually, which cost the economy billions of dollars each year. Working from field offices, the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) regulates the supply of meat, poultry and egg products, and is responsible for recalling contaminated foods. The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) protects the health of animals and plants that are important to the food supply, public health and economy. Much of this collective effort targets pathogenic microorganisms transmitted through food, by identifying microbial threats, studying basic biology of foodborne pathogens, developing technologies for contaminant detection and devising intervention and prevention strategies along the farm to table continuum.

In 2013, USDA researchers reported on food safety studies that included mapping microbes in cattle feedlot soil, a joint risk assessment conducted with the Food and Drug Administration to evaluate listeriosis in retail delis, and an FSIS developed Salmonella Action Plan that outlines the steps needed against Salmonella bacteria in meat and poultry products, the most pressing problem FSIS faces. Every year, there are an estimated 1.3 million illnesses that can be attributed to Salmonella. In large part through USDA efforts, there has been progress: Salmonella rates in young chickens have dropped over 75 percent since 2006. The listeriosis study, which is the first of its kind, concluded that multiple interventions are required to prevent the often fatal infection by *Listeria* bacteria and thus reduce the 1,600 illnesses that occur annually.

ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH

Last year, APHIS transferred one million doses of Classical Swine Fever (CSF) vaccine to Guatemala's Ministry of Agriculture and Food Safety. ARS scientists also genetically altered the CSF virus toward developing better vaccines and invented a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) assay to detect the virus. Although the United States has been CSF free for over 30 years, these actions recognized the globalization of agriculture products, as well as the crucial role played by science and technology in protecting the public. USDA funded research on animal and plant diseases reported in 2013 includes:

- ARS scientists studying foot and mouth disease (FMD) identified a DNA sequence in FMD virus that, when removed, permits pathogens to still multiply in cell culture but the viruses are no longer virulent, suggesting a new approach to vaccine development. Researchers also created a new animal cell line used to rapidly detect FMD virus in field samples, the first capable of identifying all seven FMD serotypes. They incorporated FMD receptor genes cloned from cattle tissue into an established cell line.
- Using a protein interaction reporter (PIR) technology developed by USDA, for the first time researchers have mapped protein structures known as virions that help plant viruses move from plants to insects, through the insects and back into plants. The new technology could lead to methods disrupting plant disease transmission by insects.
- More specific testing for Johne's disease in cattle will be possible with the first discovery of an antibody that binds only to the causative agent, *Mycobacterium avium* subspecies *paratuberculosis* (MAP). The USDA patented antibody will improve diagnostic testing for a disease that costs the US dairy industry more than \$220 million each year.
- Plant geneticists developed new disease resistant pea plants to protect against common root rot of legumes, a fungal disease caused by *Aphanomyces euteiches* that can lead to crop losses of 20—100 percent. Others bred a wheat cultivar with innate resistance to multiple fungal diseases. Of particular concern is stripe rust (fungus *Puccinia striiformis*) which has caused crop losses of up to 40 percent in the Pacific Northwest.

- Adding nickel and phosphite to an existing fungicide spray regimen improves control of the fungus (*Fusicladium effusum*) causing pecan scab, the most destructive disease of pecan in the southeastern United States. The new information is timely as the scab fungus is developing resistance to some currently used fungicides.
- Exposing citrus seedlings to a minimum of 48 hours of temperatures of 104 to 107 degrees Fahrenheit significantly reduces and often eliminates HLB infection, according to USDA field trials. The finding suggests practical measures to slow spread of citrus greening disease.

BIOCONTROL AND BIOENERGY

In recent years, USDA has intensified its research on renewable energy, natural resources and environmental issues. Microorganisms have been particularly useful in studies of bioenergy and biocontrol, including the following examples:

- The fungus *Myrothecium verrucaria*, which naturally attacks the weed Palmer amaranth, is being studied as a possible biocontrol agent against the weed, which can grow two inches a day and crowd out commercial crops. The southern weed is acquiring resistance to glyphosate herbicides, and the ARS reported research is the first showing the fungus' bioherbicidal action against a weed species with glyphosate resistance.
- ARS field trials are assessing effectiveness of spraying avocado trees with foam that contains insect killing fungi against ambrosia beetles, wood boring pests that threaten the nation's \$322 million avocado crop. Earlier lab studies used bioassays to genetically confirm the ability of the fungi to infect and kill the beetles. In those tests, more than 95 percent of beetles exposed to the fungi died.
- Pathogen carrying house flies are being deliberately infected in lab studies with salivary gland hypertrophy virus (SGHV), member of a newly discovered family of viruses called Hytrosaviridae, which stops flies from reproducing.

Bioenergy strategies commonly rely upon fuels converted from widely available biomass like grasses, cereal grains or tree cellulose. Agriculture clearly plays an important role in renewable energy and USDA's biofuels portfolio includes both intramural and extramural projects. In November, for example, USDA awarded nearly \$10 million to a consortium of academic, industry and government organizations across several western states, to evaluate insect killed trees in the Rocky Mountains as a bioenergy feedstock. Since 1996, pine and spruce bark beetles have devastated over 42 million acres of western U.S. forests. The consortium will explore use of scalable, on site thermochemical conversion technologies to better access the beetle killed trees. At ARS, molecular biologists recently created a new strain of yeast that can break down and ferment sugars in corn cobs after xylose has been extracted for other commercial uses, previously impossible with yeasts inhibited by processes required. Since 2006, NIFA has collaborated with the Department of Energy in a joint grant program to improve biomass for biofuels, intent on increasing plant yield, quality and adaptability to harsher environments.

The ASM encourages Congress to increase the fiscal year 2015 budget to the highest amount possible in support of USDA's science, research and food safety programs. USDA funded research is critical to the health of our nation's food and agriculture industries as well as the global economy. USDA science protects human and animal health, prevents crop losses from disease and climate changes, seeks best practices to preserve the environment, encourages innovation in valuable agriculture based products and supports new generations of agriculture scientists and educators.

[This statement was submitted by the Public and Scientific Affairs Board, American Society for Microbiology.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR NUTRITION

The American Society for Nutrition (ASN) respectfully requests that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)/National Institute of Food and Agriculture/Agriculture and Food Research Initiative receive no less than \$360 million and that the Agricultural Research Service receive \$1.2 billion in fiscal year (FY) 2015. ASN has more than 5,000 members working throughout academia, clinical practice, government, and industry, who conduct research to advance our knowledge and application of nutrition.

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD RESEARCH INITIATIVE

The USDA has been the lead nutrition agency and the most important Federal agency influencing U.S. dietary intake and food patterns for years. Agricultural research is essential to address the ever-increasing demand for a healthy, affordable, nutritious and sustainable food supply. The Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) competitive grants program is charged with funding research, education, and extension and integrated, competitive grants that address key problems of national, regional, and multi-state importance in sustaining all components of agriculture. These components include human nutrition, farm efficiency and profitability, ranching, renewable energy, forestry (both urban and agro forestry), aquaculture, food safety, biotechnology, and conventional breeding. AFRI has funded cutting-edge, agricultural research on key issues of timely importance on a competitive, peer-reviewed basis since its establishment in the 2008 Farm Bill. Adequate funding for agricultural research is critical to provide a safe and nutritious food supply for the world population, to preserve the competitive position of U.S. agriculture in the global marketplace, and to provide jobs and revenue crucial to support the U.S. economy.

In order to achieve those benefits, AFRI must be able to advance fundamental sciences in support of agriculture and coordinate opportunities to build off of these discoveries.

Therefore, ASN requests that the AFRI competitive grants program receive at least \$360 million in fiscal year 2015. ASN also strongly supports funding AFRI at the fully authorized level of \$700 million as soon as practical. Current flat and decreased funding for AFRI hinders scientific advances that support agricultural funding and research.

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE

The Agricultural Research Service (ARS) is the Department of Agriculture's lead scientific research agency. The ARS conducts research to develop and transfer solutions to agricultural problems of high national priority. USDA's program of human nutrition research is housed in six Human Nutrition Research Centers (HNRCs) across the nation, that link producer and consumer interests and form the core for building knowledge about food and nutrition. HNRCs conduct unparalleled human nutrition research on the role of food and dietary components in human health from conception to advanced old age, and they provide authoritative, peer-reviewed, science-based evidence that forms the basis of our Federal nutrition policy and programs. Funding for ARS supports all of the USDA/HNRCs and ensures that these research facilities have adequate funding to continue their unique mission of improving the health of Americans through cutting-edge food, nutrition and agricultural research.

Nutrition monitoring conducted in partnership by the USDA/ARS with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is a unique and critically important surveillance function in which dietary intake, nutritional status, and health status are evaluated in a rigorous and standardized manner. (ARS is responsible for food and nutrient databases and the "What We Eat in America" dietary survey, while HHS is responsible for tracking nutritional status and health parameters.) Nutrition monitoring is an inherently governmental function and findings are essential for multiple government agencies, as well as the public and private sector. Nutrition monitoring is essential to track what Americans are eating, inform nutrition and dietary guidance policy, evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of nutrition assistance programs, and study nutrition-related disease outcomes. Because of past funding deficiencies, some food composition database entries do not reflect the realities of the current food supply, which may negatively impact programs and policies based on this information. It is imperative that needed funds to update USDA's food and nutrient databases and the "What We Eat in America" dietary survey, both maintained by the USDA/ARS, are appropriated to ensure the continuation of this critical surveillance of the nation's nutritional status and the many benefits it provides.

It is the job of ARS to ensure high-quality, safe food, and other agricultural products; assess the nutritional needs of Americans; sustain a competitive agricultural economy; enhance the natural resource base and the environment; and provide economic opportunities for rural citizens, communities, and society as a whole. Therefore, ASN requests that ARS receive at least \$1.2 billion in fiscal year 2015. At least ten million dollars above current funding levels is necessary to ensure the critical surveillance of the nation's nutritional status and to continue the many other benefits that ARS provides. With such funding, the ARS will be able to support its vision

of leading America towards a better future through agricultural research and information.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding fiscal year 2015 appropriations for the U.S. Department of Agriculture/National Institute of Food and Agriculture/AFRI competitive grants program and Agricultural Research Service. ASN also supports the Farm Bill provision that authorizes \$200 million in mandatory funding for the new Foundation for Food and Agricultural Research, which will stimulate private investment in agricultural research on food safety and nutrition, plant and animal health, renewable energy, natural resources and environment, agricultural and food security, technology, agricultural economics and rural communities.

[This statement was submitted by the Gordon L. Jensen, M.D., Ph.D. President, American Society for Nutrition]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF PLANT BIOLOGISTS (ASPB)

On behalf of the American Society of Plant Biologists (ASPB), we submit this statement for the official record in support of funding for agricultural research by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). ASPB supports the funding levels of \$383 million for USDA's Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) and \$1.28 billion for the Agricultural Research Service (ARS).

This testimony highlights the critical importance of plant biology research and development to addressing vital issues including: achieving a sustainable food supply and food security; energy security, including attaining reduced reliance on all petrochemical products through game-changing sustainable renewable biomass utilization approaches; and in protecting our environment.

FOOD, FUEL, ENVIRONMENT, AND HEALTH: PLANT BIOLOGY RESEARCH AND AMERICA'S COMPETITIVENESS AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY

We often take plants for granted, but they are vital to our very existence, competitiveness, and self-sufficiency. New plant biology research is now addressing the most compelling issues facing our society, including: identifying creative and imaginative approaches to reaching Congress's goals of achieving domestic fuel security/self-sufficiency; environmental stewardship; sustainable and secure development of even better foods, feeds, building materials, and a host of other plant products used in daily life; and improvements in the health and nutrition of all Americans.

Our bioeconomy and Federal partnership is based upon foundational plant biology research—the strategic research USDA funds—to make needed key discoveries. Yet limited funding committed to fundamental discovery now threatens our national security and leadership. Indeed, in his 2012 annual letter to the Gates Foundation, Bill Gates wrote, "Given the central role that food plays in human welfare and national stability, it is shocking—not to mention short-sighted and potentially dangerous—how little money is spent on agricultural research."¹ This is especially true considering the significant positive impact crop and forest plants have on the nation's economy (the agricultural sector is responsible for one in 12 American jobs especially true considering the significant positive impact crop and forest plants have on the nation's economy (the agricultural sector is responsible for one in 12 American jobs especially true considering the significant positive impact crop and forest plants have on the nation's economy (the agricultural sector is responsible for one in 12 American jobs.²

Given these concerns and our nation's fiscal situation, the plant science community has been working toward addressing our nation's looming challenges—ASPB organized a two-phase Plant Science Research Summit (held in September 2011 and January 2013). With funding from USDA, the National Science Foundation, the Department of Energy, and the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, the Summit brought together representatives from across the full spectrum of plant science research to develop a community agenda document. Released in August 2013 as *Unleashing a Decade of Innovation in Plant Science: A Vision for 2015–2025* (plantsummit.files.wordpress.com/2013/07/plantsciencedecadalvision10-18-13.pdf), the report puts forth a ten-year consensus plan to fill critical gaps in our understanding of plant biology and address the grand challenge of sustainably feeding the

¹Gates, Bill. (Jan 2012). 2012 Annual Letter from Bill Gates. Retrieved from <http://www.gatesfoundation.org/annual-letter/2012/Pages/home-en.aspx>.

²Vilsack, Tom. (Mar. 9, 2012). Public Comments Before PCAST. Retrieved from http://www.tvworldwide.com/events/pcast/120309/globe_show/default_goarchive.cfm?gsid=1977&type=flv&test.

world and providing other useful plant products in the face of burgeoning population growth, diminishing natural resources, and climate change.

IMMEDIATE RECOMMENDATIONS

The ASPB membership has extensive expertise and participation in the academic, industry, and government sectors. Consequently, ASPB is in an excellent position to articulate the nation's plant science priorities and standards needed as they relate to agriculture. Our recommendations are as follows:

- Since the establishment of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and AFRI, interest in USDA research has increased dramatically—a trend ASPB hopes to see continue in the future. However, an increased, strategic and focused investment in competitive funding and its oversight is needed if the nation is to continue to make ground-breaking discoveries and accelerate progress toward resolving urgent national priorities and societal needs. ASPB encourages Congress to fund AFRI at \$383 million in fiscal year 2015, which, although less than the recently reauthorized level of \$700 million, would provide sound investment in today's fiscal environment.
- The Agricultural Research Service (ARS) provides vital strategic research to serve USDA's mission and objectives and as well as the nation's agricultural sector. The need to bolster and enhance ARS efforts to leverage and complement AFRI is great given the challenges in food and energy security. ASPB is supportive of a strong ARS and recommends a congressional appropriation of \$1.28 billion in fiscal year 2015.
- USDA has focused attention in several key priority areas, including childhood obesity, climate change, global food security, food safety, and sustainable bioenergy. Although ASPB appreciates the value of such strategic focus, we give our most robust support for AFRI's Foundational Program. This program provides a basis for outcomes across a wide spectrum, often leading to groundbreaking developments that cannot be anticipated in advance. Indeed, it is these discoveries that are the true engine of success for our bioeconomy.
- Current estimates predict a significant shortfall in the needed agricultural scientific workforce as the demographics of the U.S. workforce change.³ For example, there is a clear need for additional training of scientists in the areas of interdisciplinary energy research and plant breeding. ASPB applauds the creation of the NIFA Fellows program and calls for additional funding for specific programs (e.g., training grants and fellowships) to provide this needed workforce over the next 10 years and to adequately prepare these individuals for careers in the agricultural research of the future.
- Considerable research interest is now focused on the use of plant biomass for energy production. However, if we are to use crops and forest resources to their full potential, we must expend extensive effort to improve our understanding of their underlying biology and development, their agronomic performance, and their subsequent processing to meet our goals and aspirations. Therefore, ASPB calls for additional funding targeted at efforts to increase the utility and agronomic performance of bioenergy crops using the best and most imaginative science and technologies possible.
- With NIFA, USDA is in a strong position to cultivate and expand interagency relationships, as well as relationships with private philanthropies, to address grand challenges related to food, renewable energy and bioproducts, the environment, and health. ASPB appreciates the need to focus resources in key priority areas. However, ASPB urges a significant increase in funding to individual grantees, in addition to putting in place robust evaluations of group awards and larger multi-institutional partnerships. Paradigm-shifting discoveries cannot be predicted through collaborative efforts alone; thus there is an urgent need to maintain a broad, diverse, and robust research agenda.
- ASPB encourages some flexibility within NIFA's budget to update and improve its data management capabilities.

Thank you for your consideration of ASPB's testimony. For more information about ASPB, please visit us at www.aspb.org.

[This statement was submitted by Tyrone C. Spady, PhD, Director of Legislative and Public Affairs, American Society of Plant Biologists.]

³President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology. (Dec. 2012). Report to the President on Agricultural Preparedness and the Agricultural Research Enterprise, p. 41. Retrieved from www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/pcast_agriculture_20121207.pdf.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE ANIMAL WELFARE INSTITUTE

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony as you consider fiscal year 2015 funding priorities. Our testimony addresses programs and activities administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Research Service (ARS), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), and Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS).

USDA-ARS-NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL LIBRARY—ANIMAL WELFARE INFORMATION CENTER

The Animal Welfare Information Center (AWIC) serves as a clearinghouse, training center, and education resource for those involved in the use of animals for research, testing, and teaching (as well as other entities covered by the AWA), and the need and demand for its services continue to outstrip its resources. AWIC's activities contribute significantly to science-based decisionmaking in animal care, as the Center disseminates scientific literature on subjects including husbandry, handling, and care of animals; personnel training; animal behavior; improved methodologies; environmental enrichment; pain control; and zoonotic disease. Its services are vitally important to the nation's biomedical research enterprise and other regulated entities because they facilitate compliance with specific requirements of the Federal animal welfare regulations governing research. We request that AWIC funding remain level with fiscal year 2014 appropriations.

USDA-APHIS-ANIMAL WELFARE

APHIS's Animal Welfare activities are critical to the proper regulation and care of animals protected under the Animal Welfare Act (AWA), 7 U.S.C. §§ 2131–2159, and the Horse Protection Act (HPA), 15 U.S.C. §§ 1821–1831. AWI requests that, consistent with the President's fiscal year 2015 budget proposal, \$29 million be allocated to Animal Welfare activities.

USDA-APHIS-ANIMAL WELFARE—ANIMAL WELFARE ACT ENFORCEMENT—CLASS B DEALERS

Nearly fifty years after enactment, the AWA routinely fails both to reliably protect pet owners and animals from Class B dealers who sell "random source" dogs and cats for use in research. These dealers use deceit and fraud to acquire animals, who are often subjected to shocking cruelty. A National Academy of Sciences study of the use of Class B dogs and cats in NIH-funded research acknowledged animal welfare and enforcement problems and noted "descriptions of thefts provided by informants in prison . . . and documented accounts of lost pets that have ended up in research institutions through Class B dealers."¹ The study concluded that there is no scientific need for these Class B dealers.

USDA must use a costly and time-consuming enforcement protocol for these random source dealers, involving quarterly inspections (more than any other licensees) and "tracebacks," in order to attempt to verify the source of their animals. Congress, too, has spent an inordinate amount of time reviewing the actions of Class B dealers and prodding USDA and NIH to address their respective Class B dealer problems. As a result of the NAS study, a prohibition on the use of dogs and cats from random source Class B dealers in all NIH-supported research will be fully in place in 2015.

Although few of these dealers remain, they are an unjustifiable drain on USDA resources. But as long as it is possible to issue and renew Class B licenses, this system will continue to waste taxpayer money and perpetuate the inhumane treatment of animals. For this reason, we urge the Subcommittee adopt the following language: Provided, that appropriations herein made shall not be available for any activities or expense related to the licensing of new Class B dealers who sell dogs and cats for use in research, teaching, or testing, or to the renewal of licenses of existing Class B dealers who sell dogs and cats for use in research, teaching, or testing.

USDA-APHIS-ANIMAL WELFARE—HORSE PROTECTION ACT ENFORCEMENT

The Horse Protection Act of 1970 (HPA) was passed to end soring, the cruel practice of applying chemical and mechanical irritants to the legs and hooves of horses through to produce an exaggerated gait. Yet soring, condemned as "one of the most significant welfare issues affecting any equine breed or discipline,"² has continued as limited funding has hampered enforcement. To enable USDA to better meet the

¹National Academy of Sciences Institute for Laboratory Animal Research, Scientific and Humane Issues in the Use of Random Source Dogs and Cats in Research (2009).

²American Association of Equine Practitioners, Putting the Horse First: Veterinary Recommendations for Ending the Soring of Tennessee.

objectives of the HPA, we request that \$893,000 be appropriated for HPA enforcement.

Because USDA inspectors are able to attend a mere fraction of Tennessee Walking Horse shows, monitoring responsibility usually falls to “Designated Qualified Persons” (DQPs), usually industry insiders with a history of ignoring violations. Reliance on DQPs has been an abysmal failure. Statistics clearly indicate that the presence of USDA inspectors at shows results in a far higher rate of noted violations than occurs when DQPs are present. For instance, USDA has released foreign substance results gathered through the Horse Protection Program at horse shows from 2010 through 2013. In 2013, an evaluation of horses at 17 shows revealed that 62 percent of the samples analyzed were positive for soring agents.³ At the 2013 Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration in Shelbyville, Tennessee, 86 of the 128 horses sampled tested positive for soring agents during USDA inspections, and at some 2013 shows every single horse examined had been exposed to soring chemicals.⁴ In 2012, 309 of 478 horses sampled (65 percent) tested positive for soring agents,⁵ while in 2011 and 2010, 97 percent and 86 percent, respectively, had been sored. Data from DQP horse show inspections in 2009 (the most recent year for which reports are available) reveal that for 436 shows at which 70,122 inspections were conducted and 889 violations of any type were cited, only 61, or 0.087 percent of horses inspected, were for prohibited foreign substances.

From this comparison, it is clear not only that horse soring remains a serious problem, but also that there is no substitute for inspections by USDA personnel to ensure compliance with the WALKING HORSES (2008).

HPA. The greater the likelihood of a USDA inspection, the greater the deterrent effect on those who routinely sore their horses. Enforcement should not be entrusted to individuals with a stake in maintaining the status quo. USDA cannot make progress in this area without adequate funding.

USDA-APHIS-WILDLIFE SERVICES—WILDLIFE DAMAGE MANAGEMENT

We request that APHIS-Wildlife Services’ (WS) wildlife damage management budget be reduced by \$13 million and that WS be prohibited from using funds for lethal wildlife control.

The WS program allocates millions of dollars each year to lethal wildlife management efforts, relying on methods that are cruel, ineffective, costly and outdated. WS uses poisons, body-gripping traps, snares and firearms to indiscriminately kill wildlife—including endangered species, family pets, and countless non-target animals—while ignoring humane, cost-efficient approaches to wildlife management that have been proven effective in the field. These irresponsible practices threaten not only target and non-target animals, but also the environment, public safety, national security. Accordingly, we support the inclusion of language prohibiting the use of USDA funds for WS’ lethal wildlife management activities in the fiscal year 2015 agriculture appropriations bill.

In addition to a restriction on funds for lethal control activities, we request a reduction in funding from the fiscal year 2014 allocation and USDA’s fiscal year 2015 request for WS. The program is notoriously secretive, and has repeatedly declined to disclose to both Congress and the public its expenditures on lethal and inhumane wildlife management practices. Despite this glaring lack of accountability, WS’ budget was increased substantially in fiscal year 2014, and the Administration’s budget proposes to maintain that funding level for fiscal year 2015. Alarming, a substantial portion of the fiscal year 2014 increase was allocated to “wildlife damage management,” the division within WS that is responsible for killing millions of animals on public and private lands each year. We request that WS’ Wildlife Damage Management budget be reduced by \$13 million, the program’s estimated annual expenditure for lethal predator control practices intended to protect livestock. It should no longer be the taxpayers’ responsibility to subsidize these inhumane, costly practices to which effective alternatives are readily available.

USDA-APHIS-WILDLIFE SERVICES—WILDLIFE DAMAGE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM, AIRPORT SAFETY

APHIS’ Airport Wildlife Control Program is intended to address the control of wildlife at military and civilian airports to reduce the threat of aircraft striking wildlife, which can lead to aircraft damage, delays, and accidents. While the media often sensationalize such incidents, the statistical likelihood of a bird or other wild-

³ http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_welfare/hp/downloads/show%20tally%202013%20for%20web.pdf

⁴ Id.

life striking an aircraft is exceedingly small. The chances of a strike resulting in aircraft destruction, damage, delay, or an accident is even more remote. Indeed, since 1988, according to the Bird Strike Committee USA, only slightly more than 250 people worldwide have been killed as a result of bird strikes on aircraft. This loss of life is tragic, but when compared to the total number of aircraft passengers (commercial and civilian) worldwide since 1988, it is obvious that the risk of dying as a result of a bird strike is infinitesimal. Similarly, though the Federal Aviation Administration documented 133,000 reported wildlife strikes (bird strikes comprise approximately 97.5 percent of all wildlife strikes) at civilian and military airports in the United States between 1990 and 2011, only an extraordinarily small fraction of these reported strikes resulted in the damage, delay, or destruction of an aircraft or injuries or death to passengers. Furthermore, when the total number of aircraft (private, commercial, and military) takeoffs and landings are considered over that 21 year period, again the risk of an aircraft striking wildlife is exceedingly small.

Recognizing that the risk of wildlife strikes to aircraft is real but not statistically significant, we ask that any funds allocated to the airport wildlife control program be earmarked only for non-lethal management programs. There are a variety of non-lethal strategies that are effective and feasible to address wildlife strikes to aircraft including fencing, habitat management, runway sweeps using pyrotechnics and other noise-making devices, trained falcons, removal of standing water/areas that attract birds/wildlife on airport properties, modification of airport structures to deter bird use, and public/airport employee education to avoid behaviors (i.e., feeding birds) that may attract animals to airports.

USDA-APHIS-WILDLIFE SERVICES—ORAL RABIES VACCINATION PROGRAM

APHIS' oral rabies vaccination (ORV) activities, which are carried out under the National Rabies Management Program, have made significant progress in controlling the spread of rabies in the United States in an effective, humane, and cost-effective manner. To ensure that this success continues, we request that \$23.76 million be allocated to the ORV program for fiscal year 2015, consistent with the program's estimated fiscal year 2014 expenditures.

USDA-APHIS-INVESTIGATIVE AND ENFORCEMENT SERVICES

APHIS' Investigative and Enforcement Services (IES) handles investigations related to enforcement of the laws and regulations for APHIS' programs, which involves: collection of evidence; civil and criminal investigations; and investigations carried out in conjunction with Federal, state and local enforcement agencies. IES, in collaboration with USDA's Office of the General Counsel, also handles stipulations and formal administrative proceedings. We request that IES funding remain level with fiscal year 2014 appropriations so that the Service may fulfill its full range of responsibilities, particularly its increasing HPA and AWA investigatory demands.

USDA-FSIS—HUMANE METHODS OF SLAUGHTER ACT ENFORCEMENT

We appreciate the generous support provided by Congress during the past decade for USDA's enforcement of the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act (HMSA). However, while enforcement has increased in recent years, attention to the issue remains uneven among districts.

An analysis of Humane Activities Tracking System (HATS) data reveals that some USDA districts spend 10–20 times the number of hours on humane enforcement, per animal slaughtered, as other districts. Overall, USDA continues to allot an extremely small percentage of its resources to humane slaughter. For example, in fiscal year 2012, only 2.8 percent of all FSIS verification procedures were performed for activities related to humane handling and slaughter.

Repeat violators present a major enforcement problem for FSIS. Of the 285 federally inspected plants that have been suspended for humane slaughter violations since January 1, 2008, 33 percent have been suspended more than once within a 1 year period. Moreover, 56 plants have been suspended on three or more occasions during the past 5 years.

Federal inspection personnel have inadequate training in humane enforcement and inadequate access to humane slaughter expertise. Enforcement documents reveal that inspectors often react differently when faced with similar violations. District Veterinary Medical Specialists (DVMS) are stationed in each district to assist plant inspectors with humane enforcement and to serve as a liaison between the district office and headquarters on humane matters. However, the work load of each of the DVMSs, which includes visiting each meat and poultry plant within the dis-

strict to perform humane audits and conducting verification visits following suspensions, severely limits the effectiveness of the role.

The problems of inadequate and inconsistent enforcement can be resolved by increasing the number and qualifications of the personnel assigned to humane handling and slaughter duties. No fewer than 148 full-time equivalent positions should be employed for purposes dedicated solely to inspections and enforcement related to the HMSA. In addition, the number of DVMS positions should be increased to a minimum of two per district. Enforcement records suggest that violations are reported with greater frequency in the presence of outside inspection personnel, such as DVMSs. Hiring additional DVMSs will provide for increased auditing and training to help uncover problems before they result in egregious humane handling incidents.

USDA-FSIS—HORSE SLAUGHTER FACILITY INSPECTIONS

In 2013, Congress approved language to prevent the use of tax dollars to fund horse slaughter facility inspections. This language is critical to protect horses, taxpayers, communities, and public health. We strongly support the inclusion of this prohibition in the fiscal year 15 budget.

[This statement was submitted by Christopher J. Heyde, Deputy Director, Government and Legal Affairs, Animal Welfare Institute.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE CAMPAIGN FOR CONTRACT AGRICULTURE REFORM (CCAR)

On behalf of the farmer, rancher, and consumer groups represented by the Campaign for Contract Agriculture Reform (CCAR), I am providing this testimony to urge the Subcommittee to exclude from the bill any legislative riders to limit the authority of the Secretary's regulatory authority under the Packers and Stockyards Act. The member organizations of CCAR include: the Alabama Contract Poultry Growers Association, Contract Poultry Growers Association of the Virginias, Food & Water Watch, Hmong National Development, Inc., National Family Farm Coalition, National Farmers Union, National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, and the Rural Advancement Foundation International-USA.

The Packers and Stockyards Act is one of the most important Federal statutes for our nation's livestock and poultry farmers and ranchers. This is because it prohibits meatpackers and poultry companies from using their market power to subject farmers and ranchers to anticompetitive, deceptive, fraudulent and abusive business practices.

Although the Act was originally enacted in 1921, its importance is even greater now because of the extent to which these firms have become vertically integrated, giving them even greater market power and enabling contracting practices that are even more abusive.

Understanding these trends, the 2008 Farm Bill required USDA to write regulations to address some of the abusive and anti-competitive practices that have become common in the livestock and poultry sectors. Based in part on the Farm Bill requirements, as well as testimony heard during a series of Agriculture Competition workshops hosted by USDA and the U.S. Department of Justice, USDA issued a package of proposed rules in June of 2010 to address many of these concerns.

Since the date these rules were first proposed by USDA's Grain Inspection Packer and Stockyards Agency (GISPA), the meatpacker and poultry company groups have launched a full-scale attack on the regulations and the authority of the Secretary to enforcement many aspects of the proposed GISPA rule.

The appropriations process has been one of the venues for those attacks, and unfortunately, a legislative rider limiting the Secretary's authorities under the Packer and Stockyards Act has been included in the agriculture appropriations provisions of each of the past three fiscal years. While each of the 3 riders has been somewhat different, they each have significantly undermined important basic protections for our nation's livestock and poultry farmers and ranchers.

The GISPA rider included in the fiscal year 2014 appropriations cycle (Section 744, Division A, Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014—H.R. 3547) prohibits the Secretary from taking action on a long list of commonsense protections for our nation's livestock and poultry farmers. Here are just some of the protections that the fiscal year 2014 GISPA rider prohibits:

- Regulations to make it an unfair practice under the Packers and Stockyards Act for meatpackers and poultry companies to retaliate against farmers for exercising their rights to free speech and/or association. This includes providing pro-

- tection for farmers who speak out publicly, or to USDA officials or Members of Congress, about what is taking place on their farms and with their contracts.
- Regulations to require meatpackers and poultry companies to give farmers statistical information and data about how their pay is calculated, if the farmer requests such information.
 - Regulations to prohibit meatpackers and poultry companies from using contracts to force farmers to give up their legal right to a jury trial to address future disputes with the company.
 - Regulations to require meatpackers and poultry companies to submit to GIPSA sample contracts that they are using in their contract relationships with farmers, with a clear statement that all confidential business information and trade secrets are to be redacted.
 - Regulations to clarify that it is an unfair practice under the Act for poultry companies to require farmers to compete against each other for performance pay, unless they are given the same type of birds to raise by the company. This addresses a current poultry company practice of giving one farmer a breed of bird that performs poorly in feed conversion efficiency, while giving another farmer a better-performing breed of bird, and then requiring both farmers to compete for performance pay based on feed conversion success of the bird during grow-out period. This practice is fraudulent because it allows the companies to make farmers pay the cost for a company decision to produce some chickens with lower feed conversion attributes. The farmer has no choice about the quality of chicken placed on his farm by the poultry company, and is rewarded or penalized based on factors outside the farmer's control.
 - Regulations to clarify that the Packers and Stockyards Act does not require farmers to show a competitive injury to the entire industry in order to prove that they have been harmed by unfair and deceptive trade practices or other anti-competitive practices of meatpackers or poultry integrators. In other words, if a poultry company has used fraudulent or deceptive business practices in a manner that defrauds a poultry grower out of thousands of dollars of pay, they should not have to prove that the action by the company is likely to cause a competitive injury across the entire poultry sector. The Packers and Stockyards Act was written specifically to provide protection for individual farmers in their dealings with meatpackers and poultry companies. In recent years, some courts have reinterpreted the law to require that farmers prove competitive injury beyond themselves, and this GIPSA regulation was intended to clarify the original intent and meaning of the statute.

It is important to note that during the 2014 Farm Bill debate, the Farm Bill conferees rejected a strong push by the meatpacker and poultry companies to include a provision in the final bill that would have placed great limits on the authority of the Secretary to enforce many aspects of the Packers and Stockyards Act. This provision, similar but not identical to the GIPSA rider in recent appropriations bills, was firmly rejected by the authorizing Committee, and excluded from the final 2014 Farm Bill.

We strongly urge the House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee to do the same, and reject any legislative riders to limit the Secretary's authority under the Packers and Stockyards Act.

[This statement was submitted by Steven Etka, Policy Director, Campaign for Contract Agriculture Reform.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES

Thank you Chairman Pryor and Ranking Member Blunt for receiving this testimony. Catholic Relief Services (CRS) requests that fiscal year (FY) 2015 appropriations provide at minimum \$1.55 billion for the Food for Peace program, \$200 million for the McGovern-Dole Food for Education program, and \$80 million for the Local and Regional Procurement program. Additionally, we request that you direct amounts of Food for Peace funding to certain specific purposes.

CRS AND THE U.S. CATHOLIC CHURCH

CRS is the international relief and development agency of the U.S. Catholic Church. We are one of the largest implementing partners of U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) food aid programs. Our work reaches millions of poor and vulnerable people in nearly 90 countries. CRS works with people and communities based on need, without regard to race, creed, or nationality. CRS often partners with local institutions of the

Catholic Church and other local civil society groups, which are essential to connecting us with communities that are often inaccessible to others.

THE FOOD FOR PEACE PROGRAM

Approximately 842 million people worldwide face hunger on a daily basis. People facing chronic hunger do not have access to enough food to maintain healthy and productive lives.

Often times it is the most vulnerable in a community who suffer the greatest from chronic hunger—women, smallholder farmers, the elderly and children. Overall, communities that suffer from chronic hunger are less productive and less stable.

U.S. food aid programs, led by Food for Peace, help to address chronic hunger. Food for Peace development programs target assistance to poor and vulnerable communities that improve their long-term food security. CRS implements Food for Peace development programs in ten countries. Through these programs beneficiaries are able to grow more food, earn more to purchase the food they need, and help in infrastructure improvements that bolster community resilience. A good example of our Food for Peace funded is in Madagascar.

CRS leads a consortium implementing the Strengthening and Accessing Livelihood Opportunities for Household Impact (SALOHI) project in Madagascar. For its part, CRS has implemented a diverse array of programming to aid farmers and vulnerable populations. Over 58,000 farmers participated in farmer field schools that introduced improved rice varieties capable of increasing yields. Farmers learn agribusiness skills to better manage their crops post-harvest leading to greater profits, and to create better linkages with rice buyers and agricultural tool suppliers. Food rations are provided in exchange for community labor to rehabilitate critical infrastructure, such as a dam that will help irrigate fields. Community health volunteers in the program have treated 15,000 malnourished children and taught their parents better nutritional practices to use for lasting impact. And, over 30,000 people have joined Village Savings and Loan (VSL) programs that help poor farmers pool, save and manage their money, allowing them to raise capital to purchase additional land to farm and other needs.

In addition to addressing chronic hunger, Food for Peace programs assist the millions of people forced into hunger due to sudden and severe disruptions of their normal lives. Disruptions can take the form of natural disasters, like Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, or they could be the result of armed conflict as we have seen in Syria.

While the emergency needs in the Philippines and Syria have been well documented in the news, we feel additional attention needs to be placed on two other countries in the midst of emergencies—the Central Africa Republic (CAR) and South Sudan. In both cases, internal violence in recent months has sparked a significant number of refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). In CAR, at the peak of the violence CRS worked with private resources to help shelter, feed and care for 40,000 IDPs who had taken refuge at the compound of the Archdiocese of Bossangoa. More than half of the country's 4.5 million people are in need of assistance, with an estimated 625,000 IDPs in CAR and many more in neighboring countries as refugees.

In South Sudan, the violence has led to over 800,000 IDPs and over 250,000 refugees in neighboring countries. CRS is currently reaching more than 12,000 IDP households across South Sudan. CRS had been implementing a Food for Peace development program in South Sudan when fighting broke out. The instability has prevented implementation of the development program in recent months, and CRS has requested a modification to its agreement in order to use program resources to meet emergency needs. We have taken such measures in the past, specifically in Mali in 2013 and in Haiti following the 2010 earthquake, and hope USAID will be able to accommodate this requested modification as well.

FOOD FOR PEACE AND MCGOVERN-DOLE FUNDING REQUESTS

CRS requests that Food for Peace receive at minimum \$1.55 billion, and McGovern-Dole receive at minimum \$200 million in the fiscal year 2015 appropriations. These increases over fiscal year 2014 appropriated amounts are largely to take into account the increased costs for transportation of food that U.S. food aid programs now have to bear as a result of the 2013 Murray-Ryan budget deal.

For the last several years transportation costs related to the overseas shipment of U.S. commodities in food aid programs—Food for Peace, McGovern-Dole, and Food for Progress—have been partially offset by reimbursements provided through Transportation Authorization bills. These reimbursements were reinvested into food aid programs, allowing them to help more people. However, in last year's budget

deal this reimbursement mechanism was struck from the law. The practical effect of this change is that food aid programs will now shoulder the full cost of overseas transportation, which will cut the amount of food that can be purchased and shipped, and ultimately decrease the number of people helped compared to present levels.

CRS estimates that lost transportation reimbursements could be between \$50 and \$70 million each year. Additionally, CRS estimates the McGovern-Dole and Food for Progress programs each will lose between \$10 and \$15 million each year. In order to maintain the reach that food aid programs had in fiscal year 2014, an increase in funding to Food for Peace and McGovern-Dole is necessary. We also note that while Food for Progress is not directly appropriated annually, a \$40 million cap on transportation costs in its authorization gives it no flexibility to absorb additional transportation costs, and we ask the Subcommittee to explore ways of addressing the unique impact that the elimination of reimbursements will have on that program.

We would also like to point out that further increases in food aid funding may be needed to offset another proposed and troubling change. On April 1, 2014, the House passed H.R. 4005, the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2014, which reauthorizes the Coast Guard and maritime transportation legislation for 2 years. Our concern with this bill pertains to Section 318 that requires 75 percent of overseas food aid shipments to be carried on U.S. flagged vessels, an increase from the current 50 percent requirement. According to sponsors of the bill, using U.S. flagged vessels is 30 percent more expensive than using regular commercial channels. Should H.R. 4005 be enacted into law with this provision, an even greater portion of food aid funding will go to overseas transportation instead of providing food and other assistance to hungry people. As such, higher levels of funding for Food for Peace and McGovern-Dole will be required to offset these additional costs and maintain the present reach of food aid programs.

FOOD FOR PEACE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FUNDING

The recently enacted Farm Bill reauthorization maintains a minimum commitment for Food for Peace development programs of \$350 million a year, but also allows the allocation for such programs to rise to 30 percent of overall Food for Peace funding. Food for Peace development programs have been appropriated \$375 million in each of the last two fiscal years, and this figure falls within the new funding range set by the Farm Bill. We hope USAID will consider this as guidance from your Subcommittee in their allocation of Food for Peace funding in fiscal year 2015.

MONETIZATION IN FOOD FOR PEACE

The recently enacted Farm Bill also increased the amount of Food for Peace funding going to its existing cash account, referred to as 202e, and broadened the uses of this funding to include directly paying for Food for Peace program costs. It is our understanding that this change was made primarily to reduce the need to monetize food aid commodities.

Monetization of in-kind food donations is an inefficient means to raise proceeds to pay for Food for Peace program costs. CRS has implemented monetization programs for many years and our experience shows that on average 25 percent of the value in the commodities and shipping costs are lost in these transactions. It is our goal to reduce the need to engage in monetization in Food for Peace programs. As provided in the fiscal year 2014 appropriations, we request that you direct an additional \$35 million in this year's Food for Peace budget to 202e for the express purpose of replacing monetization. This additional \$35 million in 202e, along with the new flexibilities in the Farm Bill, should provide enough cash funding to forgo the use of monetization in all Food for Peace programs except for one (note, the recently passed Farm Bill retains a requirement that at least 15 percent of Food for Peace development resources be dedicated to monetization and the one remaining monetization program is projected to meet this requirement).

LOCAL AND REGIONAL PROCUREMENT PROGRAM

CRS requests that the Subcommittee fund the permanent Local and Regional Procurement (LRP) program, authorized by the recently enacted Farm Bill, at \$80 million for fiscal year 2015. CRS supports the use of LRP in conjunction with McGovern-Dole programming, as was suggested in authorizing language. We also recognize that LRP can be useful in other food assistance programming and should be available to project implementers to achieve food security objectives. CRS has successfully implemented projects in Mali and Burkina Faso in conjunction with McGovern-Dole programs under the auspices of the pilot LRP program authorized by the 2008

Farm Bill. In these projects, we found that using locally sourced food helped lay the ground work for sustainability of the programs, by connecting local farmers to schools, helping these farmers produce appropriate products for local schools, and teaching parent-teacher associations to purchase, prepare, and manage locally grown foods. Food costs were also generally lower, thus making it more likely that national governments could ultimately assume the costs of implementing the program. We also note that replacing US commodities with locally produced ones would require a gradual transition period and that even after this period, US commodities would likely be needed since local crop yields can vary significantly from year to year and thus additional food would be required to fill these gaps.

[This statement was submitted by Dr. Carolyn Woo, President and Chief Executive Officer of Catholic Relief Services.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE CENTER FOR SCIENCE IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

2015. My testimony is focused on appropriations for the food programs at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). We are requesting additional budget authority above the President's request for FDA's Foods Program of \$100 million and for the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) at USDA of \$9.3 million.

The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) is a nonprofit health advocacy and education organization focused on health and nutrition, and food safety issues. CSPI is supported principally by the 900,000 subscribers to its Nutrition Action HealthLetter and by foundation grants. We do not accept government or industry funding.

FDA FUNDING LEVELS

FDA is in the third year of implementing the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). Under FSMA, food producers, importers, and manufacturers are responsible for the safety of the food they market to consumers. FDA is required to oversee the food industry's efforts by issuing risk-based standards for growing, manufacturing, and importing food, and by conducting compliance inspections. For FSMA implementation in fiscal year 2015, the President has proposed a \$20.6 million increase in budget authority for the Foods Program at FDA. Additionally, the President has proposed two new fees to support FSMA activities. The user fee on imported foods would generate \$137.5 million to support border inspections and implementation of FSMA's import provisions. A registration and inspection user fee would generate \$50.7 million to support inspection programs.

In recent years, Congress has recognized the need to increase food safety resources at FDA and fund implementation of FSMA. We are grateful for the Subcommittee's support and urge that it continue to provide the agency with adequate funding to carry out its critical food safety mission.

It is our belief that an increase of \$20.6 million is inadequate, and that it is the two fee proposals that outline the true scope of what the agency needs to fully implement FSMA. However, Congress has not been receptive to new user fee proposals in prior budgets, and we do not anticipate that changing in the current budget cycle. We request that the Subcommittee increase appropriations for food safety, consistent with its past actions, by at least \$90 million for FSMA implementation above the President's request for fiscal year 2015. The basis for our request is the May, 2013, report mandated by FSMA in which the agency estimated its funding will have to increase by \$400 million to \$450 million above the fiscal year 2012 baseline over 5 years to fully implement FSMA. While not fully funding the needs of the agency for implementing FSMA, the requested increase puts FDA's funding level on a closer trajectory to fulfill its responsibilities than would the President's budget.

In addition, we believe FDA needs at least an additional \$10 million to meet critical public health needs in the area of nutrition policy. FDA has made an initial determination to remove the GRAS (Generally Recognized as Safe) status for partially hydrogenated oils (PHO), a decision that would save an estimated 3,000 to 7,000 lives annually. The comment period on this proposal has just closed and it is incumbent on FDA to make a final determination in an expeditious manner and implement an aggressive, but reasonable, timetable for industry to comply.

The Agency has also recently published a proposed revision of the Nutrition Facts label that provides for many important improvements based on today's scientific evidence, including a bolder statement of calories, removal of unnecessary text, and adding a line for "added sugars." Again, it is critical that FDA acts with dispatch in reviewing the comments that this proposal will engender and make a final decision with a timely implementation schedule. It has been more than 20 years since

the Nutrition Facts panel was established and our current knowledge of the roles various nutrients play in our health should be reflected in today's food labeling. Maintaining the momentum on this issue is essential to reaping the benefits of these changes.

FDA also has much unfinished business in nutrition policy. Front-of-package (FOP) labeling and the clarity of ingredient labels need to be addressed. FDA has sponsored consumer research on front-of-package nutrition labels, and 3 years ago the Institute of Medicine (IOM) recommended that FDA mandate a uniform national system of FOP labels. FDA should have seized the opportunity provided by the Nutrition Facts panel changes to address the confusing signals sent by many food packages on the front of the label, which every consumer sees. Yet the primary display panels on packages are often jumbles of messages about healthy aspects of food that are misleading when the food is considered as a whole. Also, ingredient labels on many packages remain painfully difficult to read. FDA should have sufficient resources to address this important outstanding business on labeling.

Moreover, more definitive action on sodium is required. Four years ago, the IOM published a landmark report laying out a road map for FDA to reduce sodium in the food supply. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends that people over 50, African-Americans, and people with hypertension—or more than half of all adults—should limit themselves to 1,500 milligrams of sodium per day. Americans average about 4,000 milligrams of sodium per day. That higher level is causing about 100,000 more deaths per year from heart attacks and strokes than would occur if people were consuming 2,000 milligrams per day. While the revisions to the Nutrition Facts panel include a very modest reduction in the daily value for sodium from 2,400 mg to 2,300 mg, much more is needed, especially the publication of a guidance for industry that would provide targets for lowering sodium.

In addition, FDA has yet to publish the final rule for calorie labeling in chain restaurants, where Americans consume one-third of meals and caloric intake is higher than at home. FDA must not let these matters be further delayed, and for this kind of forward movement on public health, with the potential for saving tens of thousands of lives and tens of billions of dollars annually, the agency requires resources. These critical public health needs require additional funding so that FDA has the scientific base and staff resources to act today, not tomorrow or the day after.

USDA FUNDING LEVELS

The President's budget proposes cutting FSIS by \$9.3 million in fiscal year 2015. This is premised upon the agency achieving savings from implementation of the proposed poultry slaughter inspection program. Since FSIS has not finalized a rule and has not announced a date for doing so, this cut seems to put the cart before the horse. The Subcommittee should reject this premature cut until FSIS can demonstrate that its program is effective at protecting public health and can achieve the projected savings. We request the Subcommittee fund discretionary programs in FSIS at the fiscal year 2014 level of \$1,011 million.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on the fiscal year 2015 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill.

[This statement was submitted by Michael F. Jacobson, Ph.D., Executive Director, Center for Science in the Public Interest.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE CENTRAL ARIZONA WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT (CAWCD)

On behalf of the Central Arizona Water Conservation District (CAWCD), I am writing to ask that you include at least \$17.5 million from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) for the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program in the fiscal year 2015 Appropriation bill. Funding for the salinity control program will help protect the water quality of the Colorado River that is used by approximately 40 million people for municipal and industrial purposes and used to irrigate approximately 4 million acres in the United States.

CAWCD manages the Central Arizona Project (CAP), a multi-purpose water resource development and management project that delivers Colorado River water into central and southern Arizona. The largest supplier of renewable water in Arizona, CAP delivers an average of more than 1.5 million acre-feet of Arizona's 2.8 million acre-foot Colorado River entitlement each year to municipal and industrial users, agricultural irrigation districts, and Indian communities.

Our goal at CAP is to provide an affordable, reliable and sustainable supply of Colorado River water to a service area that includes more than 80 percent of Arizona's population.

These renewable water supplies are critical to Arizona's economy and to the economies of Native American communities throughout the state. Nearly 90 percent of economic activity in the State of Arizona occurs within CAP's service area. CAP also helps the State of Arizona meet its water management and regulatory objectives of reducing groundwater use and ensuring availability of groundwater as a supplemental water supply during future droughts.

NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF CONCENTRATED SALTS:

Natural and man-induced salt loading to the Colorado River creates environmental and economic damages. EPA has identified that more than 60 percent of the salt load of the Colorado River comes from natural sources. Additionally, human activity, principally irrigation, adds to the salt load of the Colorado River. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) has estimated damages at about \$376 million per year. Modeling by Reclamation indicates that damages will rise to approximately \$577 million per year by the year 2030 without continuation of the Program. These damages include:

- A reduction in the yield of salt sensitive crops and increased water use to meet the leaching requirements in the agricultural sector;
- Increased use of imported water and cost of desalination and brine disposal for recycling water in the municipal sector;
- An increase in the use of water and the cost of water treatment, and an increase in sewer fees in the industrial sector;
- An increase in the cost of cooling operations and the cost of water softening, and a decrease in equipment service life in the commercial sector;
- A reduction in the useful life of galvanized water pipe systems, water heaters, faucets, garbage disposals, clothes washers, and dishwashers, and increased use of bottled water and water softeners in the household sector;
- A decrease in the life of treatment facilities and pipelines in the utility sector; and
- Difficulty in meeting wastewater discharge requirements to comply with National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit terms and conditions, and an increase in desalination and brine disposal costs due to accumulation of salts in groundwater basins.

Funding for salinity control will prevent the water quality of the Colorado River from further degradation and significant increases in economic damages to municipal, industrial and irrigation users.

HISTORY OF THE USDA'S COLORADO RIVER BASIN SALINITY CONTROL PROGRAM:

Recognizing the rapidly increasing salinity concentration in the Lower Colorado River and its impact on water users, Arizona joined with the other Colorado River Basin States in 1973 and organized the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum (Forum). In 1974, the Forum worked with Congress in the passage of the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act (Act) to offset increased damages caused by continued development and use of the waters of the Colorado River.

Congress authorized a salinity control program (Program) for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) through an amendment of the Act in 1984. With the enactment of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (FAIRA), Congress directed that the Program should continue to be implemented as part of the newly created EQIP. Since the enactment of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act (FSRIA) in 2002, there have been, for the first time in a number of years, opportunities to adequately fund the Program within EQIP.

In 2008, Congress passed the Food, Conservation and Energy Act (FCEA). The FCEA addressed the cost sharing required from the Basin Funds. In so doing, the FCEA named the cost sharing requirement as the Basin States Program (BSP). The BSP will provide 30 percent of the total amount that will be spent each year by the combined EQIP and BSP effort. With the passage of the Agricultural Act of 2014 the authorities for USDA to implement salinity control activities in the Colorado River Basin were continued.

The Program, as set forth in the Act, is to benefit Lower Basin water users hundreds of miles downstream from the sources of salinity in the Upper Basin. The salinity of Colorado River waters increases from about 50 mg/L at its headwaters to more than 700 mg/L in the Lower Basin. There are very significant economic damages caused downstream by high salt levels in the water. EQIP is used to improve upstream irrigation efficiencies which in turn reduce leaching of salts to the Colo-

rado River. There are also local benefits in the Upper Colorado River Basin from the Program in the form of soil and environmental benefits, improved agricultural production, improved water efficiencies, lower fertilizer and labor costs, and water distribution and infrastructure improvements. The mix of funding under EQIP, cost sharing from the Basin States and efforts, and cost sharing brought forward by local producers have created a most remarkable and successful partnership.

The threat of salinity continues to be a concern in both the United States and Mexico. In 2012, a five-year agreement, known as Minute 319, was signed between the U.S. and Mexico to guide future management of the Colorado River. Among the key issues addressed in Minute 319 included an agreement to maintain salinity standards. The CAWCD and other key water providers are committed to meeting these goals.

CONCLUSION:

Implementation of salinity control practices through EQIP has proven to be a very cost-effective method of controlling the salinity of the Colorado River. CAWCD urges the subcommittee to include at least \$17.5 million from the USDA's Environmental Quality Incentive Program for the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program in the fiscal year 2015 Appropriation bill. If adequate funds are not appropriated, significant damages from the higher salt concentrations in the water will be more widespread in the United States and Mexico.

[This statement was submitted by David V. Modeer, General Manager, Central Arizona Project.]

LETTER FROM THE CHOOSE CLEAN WATER

March 28, 2014

Hon. MARK PRYOR,
Chairman, Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies,
Washington, D.C. 20510

Hon. ROY BLUNT,
Ranking Minority Member, Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies,
Washington, D.C. 20510

DEAR CHAIRMAN PRYOR AND RANKING MEMBER BLUNT: As members of the Choose Clean Water Coalition we are requesting continued support for clean water in the Chesapeake Bay watershed through the conservation programs of the new Farm Bill (the Agricultural Act of 2014). There are 87,000 farms in the Chesapeake region, and those that are well run protect their water resources and add much to our landscape, environment and economy. We want to ensure that these responsible farms and farmers remain economically viable. These conservation programs are critical for maintaining and restoring clean water to the rivers and streams throughout the Chesapeake Bay region, and for the Bay itself. These programs are also essential for the agricultural sector to meet requirements under the Clean Water Act.

We urge you to oppose cuts to mandatory agricultural conservation programs in fiscal year 2015. The recent enactment of a new Farm Bill sets us on a new path toward clean water in our region, but only if key conservation programs are funded as Congress intended.

At least 11 million people in this region get their drinking water directly from the rivers and streams that flow through the cities, towns and farms throughout our region. The quality of this water is critical to both human health and to the regional economy. The efforts to clean the Chesapeake began a generation ago under President Reagan in 1983. In his 1984 State of the Union speech President Reagan said, "Preservation of our environment is not a liberal or conservative challenge, it's common sense."

In order to follow a common sense path to maintain economically viable well run farms and to have healthy local water and a restored Chesapeake Bay, which is critical for our regional economy, we request full funding for the authorized amount in the Farm Bill for the following programs in fiscal year 2015:

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE—NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
(NRCS)

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)—\$1.6 billion

This national Farm Bill conservation program provides a formula based allocation to farmers by state and is used for various conservation practices, such as nutrient management, cover crops, conservation tillage, fencing animals out of streams, restoring vegetative buffers along streams, etc., that are critical to protecting and restoring water quality throughout the region and the nation. EQIP has been essential over the years in this region for farmers to implement and maintain practices that enhance their operations and benefit the local environment. We support full funding for the \$1.6 billion for which this program is authorized in the new Farm Bill. This funding level is also critical to the success of the Regional Conservation Partnership Program that is allocated 7 percent of EQIP funds.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)—\$100 million

We support the \$100 million authorized level of this new Farm Bill program, as well as the President's \$100 million budget request for fiscal year 2015. A number of former Farm Bill programs, including the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative, were ended and incorporated into the new RCPP. In order to continue the success that our region's farmers have had in reducing their impacts to local waters and the Bay over the past 5 years we strongly urge you to fully fund the RCPP in fiscal year 2015 and beyond. This new program is critical to continuing the march toward clean water throughout our region.

Thank you for your consideration on this very important request to maintain funding for these programs which are critical to both our agricultural community and for clean water throughout the mid-Atlantic region.

Sincerely,

1000 Friends of Maryland	Association National Wildlife
American Rivers	Federation
Anacostia Watershed Society Audubon	Natural Resources Defense Council
Naturalist Society Blue Water	Nature Abounds
Baltimore Chapman Forest	New York State Council Trout Unlimited
Foundation	Pennsylvania Council of Churches
Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future	Pennsylvania Council of Trout
Clean Water Action Conservation	Unlimited Piedmont Environmental
Pennsylvania Delaware Nature Society	Council Potomac Conservancy
Elk Creeks Watershed Association	Rivanna Conservation Society Rock
Friends of Dyke Marsh	Creek Conservancy Sassafras River
Friends of Frederick County	Association
Friends of Lower Beaverdam Creek	Savage River Watershed Association
IFriends of the North Fork of the	Shenandoah Riverkeeper Shenandoah
Shenandoah River	Valley Network Stewards of the Lower
IFriends of the Rappahannock Friends of	Susquehanna
the Rivers of Virginia Interfaith	St. Mary's River Watershed Association
Partners for the Chesapeake James	Theodore Roosevelt Conservation
River Association	Partnership Trout Unlimited
Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy	Trout Unlimited Mid-?Atlantic Council
Maryland Academy of Sciences at the	Upper Susquehanna Coalition Virginia
Maryland Science Center	Conservation Network
Maryland Conservation Council	Virginia League of Conservation Voters
Maryland League of Conservation Voters	Waterkeepers Chesapeake
Mattawoman Watershed Society	West Virginia Rivers Coalition
National Parks Conservation	

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE COLORADO RIVER BASIN SALINITY CONTROL FORUM

Waters from the Colorado River are used by approximately 40 million people for municipal and industrial purposes and used to irrigate approximately 4 million acres in the United States. Natural and man-induced salt loading to the Colorado River creates environmental and economic damages. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) has estimated the currently quantifiable damages at about \$376 million per year. Modeling by Reclamation indicates that the quantifiable damages will rise to approximately \$577 million per year by the year 2030 without continuation of the Program. Congress authorized the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program (Program) in 1974 to offset increased damages caused by continued development and use of the waters of the Colorado River. The USDA portion of the Program, as authorized by Congress and funded and administered by the Natural

Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), is an essential part of the overall effort. A funding level of \$17 million to \$18 million annually is required to prevent further degradation of the quality of the Colorado River and increased downstream economic damages.

In enacting the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act in 1974, Congress directed that the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program should be implemented in the most cost-effective way. The Program is currently funded under EQIP through NRCS and under Reclamation's Basinwide Program. The

Act requires that the basin states cost share 30 percent of the overall effort. Historically, recognizing that agricultural on-farm improvements were some of the most cost-effective strategies, Congress authorized a program for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) through amendment of the Act in 1984. With the enactment of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (FAIRA), Congress directed that the Program should continue to be implemented as part of the newly created Environmental Quality Incentives Program. Since the enactment of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act (FSRIA) in 2002, there have been, for the first time in a number of years, opportunities to adequately fund the Program within EQIP. In 2008, Congress passed the Food, Conservation and Energy Act (FCEA). The FCEA addressed the cost sharing required from the Basin Funds. In so doing, the FCEA named the cost sharing requirement as the Basin States Program (BSP). The BSP will provide 30 percent of the total amount that will be spent each year by the combined EQIP and BSP effort. With the passage of the Agricultural Act of 2014 the authorities for USDA to implement salinity control activities in the Colorado River Basin were continued.

The Program, as set forth in the Act, is to benefit Lower Basin water users hundreds of miles downstream from the sources of salinity in the Upper Basin. The salinity of Colorado River waters increases from about 50 mg/L at its headwaters to more than 700 mg/L in the Lower Basin. There are very significant economic damages caused downstream by high salt levels in the water. EQIP is used to improve upstream irrigation efficiencies which in turn reduce leaching of salts to the Colorado River. There are also local benefits in the Upper Colorado River Basin from the Program in the form of soil and environmental benefits, improved agricultural production, improved water efficiencies, lower fertilizer and labor costs, and water distribution and infrastructure improvements. Local producers submit cost-effective applications under EQIP in Colorado, Utah and Wyoming and offer to cost share in the acquisition of new irrigation equipment. The mix of funding under EQIP, cost share from the Basin States and efforts and cost share brought forward by local producers has created a most remarkable and successful partnership.

After longstanding urgings from the states and directives from Congress, NRCS has recognized that this Program is different than small watershed enhancement efforts common to EQIP. In the case of the Colorado River salinity control effort, the watershed to be considered stretches more than 1,400 miles from the Colorado River's headwater in the Rocky Mountains to the Colorado River's terminus in the Gulf of California in Mexico. Each year the NRCS State Conservationists for Colorado, Utah and Wyoming prepare a three-year funding plan for the salinity efforts under EQIP. The Forum supports this funding plan which recognizes the need for \$17.5M in fiscal year 2015. This includes the moneys needed for both on-farm and technical assistance. State and local cost-sharing is triggered by the Federal appropriation. The Forum appreciates the efforts of NRCS leadership and the support of this Subcommittee in implementing the Program.

The Forum is composed of gubernatorial appointees from Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming. The Forum is charged with reviewing the Colorado River's water quality standards every 3 years. In so doing, it adopts a Plan of Implementation consistent with these standards. The level of appropriation requested in this testimony is in keeping with the adopted Plan of Implementation. If adequate funds are not appropriated, significant damages from the higher salinity concentrations in the water will be more widespread in the United States and Mexico.

Concentration of salt in the Colorado River causes approximately \$376 million in quantified damages and significantly more in unquantified damages in the United States and results in poor water quality for United States users. Damages occur from:

- a reduction in the yield of salt sensitive crops and increased water use to meet the leaching requirements in the agricultural sector,
- increased use of imported water and cost of desalination and brine disposal for recycling water in the municipal sector.

- a reduction in the useful life of galvanized water pipe systems, water heaters, faucets, garbage disposals, clothes washers, and dishwashers, and increased use of bottled water and water softeners in the household sector,
- an increase in the cost of cooling operations and the cost of water softening, and a decrease in equipment service life in the commercial sector,
- an increase in the use of water and the cost of water treatment, and an increase in sewer fees in the industrial sector,
- a decrease in the life of treatment facilities and pipelines in the utility sector, and
- difficulty in meeting wastewater discharge requirements to comply with National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit terms and conditions, and an increase in desalination and brine disposal costs due to accumulation of salts in groundwater basins.

Over the years, NRCS personnel have developed a great working relationship with farmers within the Colorado River Basin. Maintaining salinity control achieved by implementation of past practices requires continuing education and technical assistance from NRCS personnel. Additionally, technical assistance is required for planning and design of future projects. Lastly, the continued funding for the monitoring and evaluation of existing projects is essential to maintaining the salinity reduction already achieved.

In summary, implementation of salinity control practices through EQIP has proven to be a very cost effective method of controlling the salinity of the Colorado River and is an essential component to the overall Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program. Continuation of EQIP with adequate funding levels will prevent the water quality of the Colorado River from further degradation and significantly increased economic damages to municipal, industrial and irrigation users.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE CYSTIC FIBROSIS FOUNDATION

On behalf of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation and the approximately 30,000 people with cystic fibrosis (CF) in the United States, we are pleased to submit the following testimony to the Senate Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies for fiscal year 2015. In order to encourage efficient review of drugs for cystic fibrosis and other rare diseases, we urge the Committee to prioritize the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in fiscal year 2015 by providing the highest possible funding level for this essential agency. We encourage special consideration and support for the Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (CDER), its Office of New Drugs (OND), and the Office of Orphan Products Development (OOPD).

The Cystic Fibrosis Foundation is appreciative of the fiscal year 2014 funding level the Committee provided the Food and Drug Administration, an increase of \$91 million over the fiscal year 2013 enacted level. However, as the agency's responsibilities continue to grow and we enter an unprecedented era of innovation in drug development for rare diseases, even more needs to be done.

Cystic fibrosis is a rare genetic disease that causes the body to produce abnormally thick mucus that clogs the lungs and other bodily systems, resulting in life-threatening infections and other complications. There are nearly 2,000 mutations of the CF gene that can impact those with CF. In recent years, genetically-targeted treatments have become a reality for cystic fibrosis patients with particular CF mutations, changing the face of this chronic disease for a small portion people of with CF. Now, therapies that target other mutations are moving through the pipeline.

With these groundbreaking advancements, clinical trial design issues have been identified by cystic fibrosis experts that may arise in review of future treatments. For example, researchers and clinicians are concerned about the challenges inherent in executing placebo-controlled trials for genetically-targeted treatments when successful, genetically-targeted drugs are already approved and on the market. Outcome measures for young children and infants and the need for flexibility for the use of markers reasonably likely to predict clinical outcome are also concerns. How to accelerate classification of biomarkers, test combinations of drugs in populations that might include patients with several different CF mutations, develop and test single and combination therapies in n of 1 trials (those that consist of a single patient), and develop and implement Patient Reported Outcomes (PROs) are all questions that need to be considered as we enter this era of personalized medicine.

The Cystic Fibrosis Foundation and the patients, families, researchers, and clinicians we represent commend the FDA for its flexible and patient-centered approach to drug development. The agency's flexible attitude toward new drug review has pro-

duced significant treatment advances for those with CF, and demonstrates how the funding the agency receives is used effectively and efficiently.

We also note that FDA has moved expeditiously to implement a number of important provisions of the Food and Drug Administration Safety and Innovation Act (FDASIA), including but not limited to the breakthrough therapy designation, and to convene public meetings to consider important questions related to patient-focused drug development in a number of different therapeutic areas.

However, it is important that the FDA use the resources provided by this Committee to make the most of all tools at its disposal as it considers innovative new treatments and confronts the challenges ahead. As the Committee considers next year's funding for the FDA, the CF Foundation encourages the Committee to direct the Food and Drug Administration to fully implement Section 903 of FDASIA, Consultation with External Experts on Rare Diseases, Targeted Therapies, and Genetic Targeting of Treatments. Signed into law nearly 2 years ago, we encourage the FDA to utilize this provision to the fullest extent possible.

Section 903 requires the agency to ensure that opportunities exist for FDA consultation with rare disease experts. Specifically, it states, "The Secretary shall develop and maintain a list of external experts who, because of their special expertise, are qualified to provide advice on rare disease issues The Secretary may, when appropriate to address a specific regulatory question, consult such external experts on issues related to the review of new drugs and biological products for rare diseases and drugs and biological products that are genetically targeted."

Potential topics of consultation are encompassed in the law. They include rare diseases and their severity, the unmet medical need associated with rare diseases, the willingness and ability of individuals with a rare disease to participate in clinical trials, assessment of the benefits and risks of therapies to treat rare diseases, the general design of clinical trials for rare disease populations, and the demographics and the clinical description of patient populations.

The CF Foundation strongly supported the inclusion of section 903 in the user fee reauthorization. This type of case-by-case consultation with external experts, initiated by FDA reviewers, is different from other provisions of FDASIA. Section 903 calls for proactive outreach to rare disease experts when "such consultation is necessary because the Secretary lacks the specific scientific, medical or technical expertise necessary for the performance of the Secretary's regulatory responsibilities." This outreach is on a case-by-case basis on a particular issue. It is not tied to drug sponsors, and it is not part of a pre-scheduled public meeting or workshop. There are 7,000 rare diseases, each with their own demographics, consideration of unmet medical need and disease.

[This statement was submitted by Robert J. Beall, Ph.D., President and CEO, Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE FEDERATION OF AMERICAN SOCIETIES FOR EXPERIMENTAL BIOLOGY

The Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB) respectfully requests a fiscal year (FY) 2015 appropriation of a minimum of \$335 million for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) within the National Institute of Food and Agriculture. We strongly urge a sustained commitment to investment in the critical field of agriculture research, with an ultimate target of the authorized funding level.

FASEB, a federation of 26 scientific societies, represents more than 115,000 life scientists and engineers, making it the largest coalition of biomedical research associations in the United States. Our mission is to advance health and welfare by promoting progress and education in biological and biomedical sciences.

AFRI is the preeminent competitive grant program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), facilitating collaborative, interdisciplinary research at universities and private research institutions across the country to address significant societal challenges such as food safety and security and the need for sustainable agriculture practices. Research funded through AFRI generates knowledge in the food, nutrition, and agricultural sciences and translates these discoveries into practice. AFRI also encourages young scientists to pursue careers in agricultural research by providing funding for more than 1,500 of the nation's most promising pre- and postdoctoral scholars in agricultural, nutrition, and food sciences.

Examples of recent USDA-funded research include:

- New Environmentally Friendly Products: Wood adhesive, used to make plywood and various other composite materials, is traditionally a noxious, petroleum based compound. Researchers at the University of Oregon successfully devel-

- oped a nontoxic and environmentally friendly alternative made from soybean flour. Using the new wood adhesive reduced hazardous air pollutant emissions at production facilities by 90 percent.
- Increasing Food Safety: AFRI-funded researchers developed a new two-step process to eliminate *E. coli* bacteria contamination from spinach. The process involves using ultrasound waves and a chemical washing treatment to eliminate 99.99 percent of bacterial presence from fresh spinach. Industry is exploring ways to broaden the use of this process for other fresh fruits and vegetables to reduce contamination and increase consumer safety.
- Improving the Health of Honeybees: Honeybees are an integral part of the agriculture system and pollinate over 130 fruit and vegetable crops in the U.S. Over the past several years, the honeybee population has been declining due to Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD), which has tripled the cost of maintaining beehives. An AFRI-funded research team identified the varroa mite as a key cause of CCD, helping honeybee breeders to choose variants that protect against the disorder.
- More Efficient and Effective use of Fungicides: Delivering safe, healthy fruit to market is the goal of every grower. Traditionally, growers must estimate the best time to apply fungicide and how much to use to protect their plants from fungal rot. AFRI-funded researchers developed a web-based prediction tool to help growers determine how much fungicide to use and when to apply it. The system has helped growers reduce fungicide use by 50 percent, improving fruit safety for consumers and increasing profits for farmers.

REALIZING THE POTENTIAL OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

With an increasing world population, demand for innovative food and agricultural products has never been greater. Agricultural, nutrition, and food scientists are developing more abundant, nutritious food, creating new biofuel materials, and designing more sustainable agriculture practices. AFRI research and education programs support the translation of cutting edge science into solutions for some of the greatest challenges facing our nation.

Agricultural research directly benefits all sectors of society and every geographic region of the nation. The food, nutrition, and agriculture industries rely on Federal funding for basic scientific research that leads to the development of innovative products that industry can bring to market, as well as programs that train the next generation of agricultural researchers. With rising challenges from foreign competitors and growing demand for agricultural products, AFRI is significantly underfunded. AFRI's budget has not increased since it was established in 2008. FASEB recommends a minimum of \$335 million for AFRI in fiscal year 2015 as part of a sustained commitment to investment in the critical field of agricultural research, with an ultimate target of the authorized level of \$700 million.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer FASEB's support and recommendations for AFRI.

[This statement was submitted by Meghan McCabe, Legislative Affairs Analyst, Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES

On behalf of millions of sportsmen conservationists, livestock producers, and state and private academic research institutions, we ask your help in the end-game strategy for controlling zoonotic diseases in the United States, particularly bovine brucellosis and bovine tuberculosis. These diseases are transmissible between livestock and wildlife—and under certain circumstances, humans. Despite nationwide efforts to eradicate zoonotic diseases in livestock, both bovine brucellosis and bovine tuberculosis remain active in isolated wildlife reservoirs in the West and Midwest. To bring this decades-long campaign to a long-term resolution, we ask the Subcommittee to include language encouraging the use of competitive grants for zoonotic disease research under the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) Animal Health and Disease Research Initiative.

The Agricultural Act of 2014 recognized the need for this research by making the development of improved surveillance and vaccine systems a priority research area under the Competitive, Special, and Facilities Research Grant Act. If funded, researchers nationwide using matching investments and collaboration among state and private research institutions could compete for grants to address bovine brucellosis and bovine tuberculosis. Many partnerships have already been built in this wide network, representing significant non-Federal investment, which includes recent upgrades in laboratories to higher standards of safety for handling the bacteria

that cause these diseases. The persistence of these diseases is an obstacle for wildlife conservation and livestock health. The current strategy of responding to outbreaks by slaughtering or depopulating infected herds and populations sacrifices economic and social values. Depopulation as a management tool necessarily involves the taking of healthy animals along with the sick and deprives economies and communities of benefits from livestock industry and wildlife recreation. False-positive detections using current tests are also a problem, costing ranchers substantial sums out of profit. Financial pressure on livestock operations is also a risk to conservation as these businesses keep America's rural lands as open spaces under good stewardship. When ranches fail and land is developed, wildlife habitat is lost.

The use of competitive grants under the existing Animal Health and Disease Research Initiative ensures that Federal resources to combat this animal health problem are used effectively. We seek to focus the combined efforts of many who are already struggling with the problem diseases in livestock and wildlife. This approach is designed for clear accountability of measurable results.

Thank you for your consideration.

[This statement was submitted by Greg Schildwachter, Watershed Results.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE FRIENDS OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

Mister Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to present our statement supporting funding for the USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS), and especially for its flagship research facility, the Henry A. Wallace Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC), in Beltsville Maryland. We strongly recommend full fiscal-year 2015 funding support for research programs at Beltsville.

Henry A. Wallace Beltsville Agricultural Research Center—the nation's premier agricultural research center that includes the Beltsville Human Nutrition Research Center and the research operations of the U.S. National Arboretum—has spearheaded technical advances in American agriculture for over 100 years. Beltsville celebrated 100 years of research leadership and technical advances in 2010. The long list of landmark research achievements over that time is truly remarkable. Still at the threshold of its second century, Beltsville stands unequalled in scientific capability, breadth of agricultural research portfolio, and concentration of scientific expertise. The location of BARC in close proximity to many other Federal research agencies as well as the University of Maryland allows for significant joint research activities and the leveraging of resources.

Priorities in the President's fiscal year 2015 Budget Request—Now, Mr. Chairman, we turn to key research areas that were highlighted in the President's proposed fiscal year 2015 budget. We were pleased to see that the fiscal year 2015 budget includes increases for crop breeding and protection; animal breeding and protection; enhanced environmental stewardship; food safety; and human nutrition. Obviously, these are areas of great importance to all Americans, and they are certainly among the highest priorities for agricultural research today. All of these research areas are strengths of the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center and they will benefit well from the unique facilities and scientific expertise at the Center. We encourage you to seriously consider funding the proposed budget and to ensure that Beltsville receives the funding that it needs to address these critical research needs.

In summation, we would highlight these spheres of excellence:

Crop Breeding and Protection: Beltsville scientists have an extensive record of ongoing research relating to protecting crops from pests and emerging pathogens. Beltsville's Bee Research Laboratory is at the forefront of efforts to determine the cause of colony collapse disorder that is devastating the bee industry that is critical for the pollination of many crops. Beltsville houses matchless national biological collections that are indispensable to the well-being of American agriculture. In addition to the actual collections, Beltsville scientists are internationally recognized for their expertise and ability to quickly and properly identify insect pests, fungal pathogens, bacterial threats, and nematodes. This expertise is crucial to preventing loss of crops ensuring that invasive threats to American agriculture are identified before they can enter the country, thus helping to protect homeland security, and ensuring that American exports are free of pests and pathogens that could prohibit exports. At BARC, research on the breeding of crops and plants has led to improved varieties of vegetables, nursery stock, fruits and even turf grasses.

Animal Breeding and Protection: Beltsville conducts extensive research on animal production and animal health. The U.S. Poultry industry depends on Beltsville scientists to develop new and more effective vaccines and immunological approaches to prevent losses to flocks. Animal scientists at BARC have been using cutting-edge

genomic approaches to increase the feed efficiency of animals used for food and to improve disease resistance in farm animals. Many of the emerging diseases affecting humans are zoonotic in that they arise first in animals. By understanding these diseases in animals and how they might be controlled, BARC scientists are helping human as well as animal health. BARC has worked with the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History to ensure the continued curation of the National Animal Parasite collection and with the dairy industry to transfer the technology to enhance milk yield in dairy cows. Both of these activities allow for BARC scientists to continue to meet the needs of commodity groups and producers and to leverage its resources to expand research activities.

Enhanced Environmental Stewardship: BARC scientists are at the forefront of research aimed at development of climate resilient land, crop, grazing and livestock production systems. Beltsville became actively engaged in climate change research long before climate change became a topic of intense media interest; scientists have been able to increase our understanding how climate change affects crop production and the effects of climate change on growth and spread of invasive and detrimental plants such as weeds. The facilities at BARC to replicate environmental changes and to model changes in plant production are truly unique. Since BARC is an actively farmed facility that is close to an urban center and drains into the Chesapeake Bay, it is significantly involved in research on agriculture at the ag-urban interface and for controlling agricultural impacts on the environment.

Food Safety: BARC houses the largest food safety laboratory in the Agricultural Research Service. It is highly regarded for its research on improving the safety of animal products by improving pathogen reduction on the farm. This is a significant issue as this research is able to reduce the use of antibiotics in agriculture and greatly reduce the development of antibiotic resistant organisms in the environment and in humans. Beltsville scientists have been and continue to be involved in research aimed at keeping pathogens out of our fruits and vegetables and to develop effective and efficient ways of monitoring contamination of these important commodities.

Human Nutrition: The Beltsville Human Nutrition Research Center (BHNRC) is the nation's largest, oldest and most comprehensive Federal human nutrition research center. Unique activities at BHNRC include conducting the What We Eat in America survey, which is the government's nutrition monitoring program, and the National Nutrient Databank, which is the gold standard reference of food nutrient content that is used throughout the world. These two activities are the basis for food labels, nutrition education programs, food assistance programs including SNAP, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, school feeding programs, and government nutrition education programs. Human feeding studies conducted by BHNRC scientists were the first ever to demonstrate the harmful effects of trans fats in the human diet and they have worked with the food industry develop alternatives for their removal from the food supply.

Food Quality Laboratory: The Laboratory concerned with maintaining and enhancing fruit and vegetable food quality is to be redirected, but the research funding is to remain at the Center. We are supportive of keeping the funding for these projects concerning food quality at the Henry A. Wallace Beltsville Agricultural Research Center.

You can see that the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center conducts impactful research in those areas that are a priority in the President's fiscal year 2015 budget. It is perhaps one of the real strengths of the Center that research is conducted in each of these areas thereby allowing for unique multidisciplinary activities that cut across each of these priorities. It is not uncommon at BARC to see plant scientists working side by side with animal scientists. The Beltsville Human Nutrition Research Center hired a climate change scientist over 10 years ago. The research conducted at BARC not only adds to our scientific knowledge but truly improves the quality of life for all Americans and significantly impacts American agriculture.

Lastly, Mr. Chairman, I would like to call to your attention an urgent facilities need that is highlighted in the President's fiscal year 2015 budget. The Center has aggressively moved to consolidate space and reduce costs and has been very successful at doing so. However, these plans require the renovation of a building—Building 307A—that was vacated some years ago in anticipation of a complete renovation. In the past, Congress approved partial funding for this renovation, and those monies were retained pending appropriation of the full amount required for the renovation. Unfortunately, those funds now have been lost to ARS. Consequently, renovation of this vacant, highly useful building is on indefinite hold. While we realize that funding is extremely tight, we affirm that Beltsville urgently needs a renovated Building 307A for adequate, high quality lab space. Moreover, a renovated Building 307A would not only yield substantial energy savings and reduce operating costs, but also

would allow Beltsville to move forward with other long-delayed relocation and consolidation plans. At a minimum, funds are urgently needed to stabilize this vacant building from continuing deterioration.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes our statement. Thank you for consideration and support for the educational, research, and outreach missions of the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center.

[This statement was submitted by James D. Anderson, Ph.D., President, Friends of Agricultural Research.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL WALKING HORSE ASSOCIATION
(IWhA)

We submit the following testimony seeking funding for the USDA/APHIS Horse Protection Program of \$893,000 for fiscal year 2015. We recognize that Congress is focused on the imperative of cutting Federal spending. But we believe that it should be possible to achieve meaningful reductions in the overall budget while still addressing shortfalls in very specific accounts that are vital and have been seriously underfunded. This \$893,000, the same amount provided by the Senate committee in its fiscal year 2014 bill, is urgently needed to begin to fulfill the intent of the Horse Protection Act—to eliminate the cruel practice of soring—by allowing the USDA to strengthen its enforcement capabilities for this law.

In 1970, Congress passed the Horse Protection Act to end soring, the intentional infliction of pain to the hooves and legs of a horse to produce an exaggerated gait, practiced primarily in the Tennessee Walking Horse show industry.

For example, caustic chemicals—such as mustard oil, diesel fuel, and kerosene—are painted on the lower front legs of a Tennessee Walking Horse, then the legs are wrapped for days in plastic wrap and bandages to “cook” the chemicals deep into the horse’s flesh. This makes the horse’s legs extremely painful and sensitive, and when ridden, the horse is fitted with chains that slide up and down the horse’s sore legs, forcing him to produce an exaggerated, high-stepping gait in the show ring. Additional tactics include inserting various foreign objects such as metal screws or hard acrylic between a heavy stacked shoe and the sole of the horse’s hoof; pressure shoeing—cutting a horse’s hoof down to the sensitive live tissue to cause extreme pain every time the horse bears weight on the hoof; and applying painful chemicals such as salicylic acid to slough off scarred tissue, in an attempt to remove evidence of soring.

The Horse Protection Act authorizes the USDA to inspect Tennessee Walking Horses, Racking Horses, and Spotted Saddle Horses—in transport to and at shows, exhibits, auctions and sales—for signs of soring, and to pursue penalties against violators. Unfortunately, since its inception, enforcement of the Act has been plagued by underfunding. As a result, the USDA has never been able to adequately enforce the Act, allowing this extreme and deliberate cruelty to persist on a widespread basis.

To eliminate soring, the goal of the Act, USDA officials must be present at more shows. However, limited funds allow USDA attendance at only about 20 percent of more than 500 Tennessee Walking Horse shows. Thus, the agency set up an industry-run system of certified Horse Industry Organization (HIO) inspection programs, which are charged with inspecting horses for signs of soring at the majority of shows. These groups license examiners known as Designated Qualified Persons (DQPs) to conduct inspections in a self-regulatory role. To perform this function, some of these organizations hire industry insiders who have an obvious stake in preserving the status quo. Statistics clearly show that when USDA inspectors are in attendance to oversee shows affiliated with these organizations, the numbers of violations recorded are many times higher than at shows where industry inspectors alone are conducting the inspections. Unfortunately, the largest, most popular HIOs in the industry are the most conflicted, resulting in ongoing, widespread abuse of horses. By all measures, the overall DQP program as a whole has been a failure—the only remedy is to abolish the conflicted industry-run inspection programs charged with self-regulation and have USDA oversee a legitimate inspection program.

The USDA appears to have attempted to step up its enforcement efforts in recent years, and has begun to work with the Department of Justice in prosecuting criminal cases as provided for under the Act. In 2011, a Federal prosecutor sought the first-ever criminal indictments under the Act and as a result, a well-known, winning trainer in the Spotted Saddle Horse industry served a prison sentence of over 1 year. A former Walking Horse Trainers’ Association Trainer of the Year and winner of the Tennessee Walking Horse World Grand Championship, Jackie McConnell,

was indicted in 2012 on 52 counts (18 of them felony) of violating the Act and pleaded guilty to felony conspiracy to violate the Act. He was sentenced to 3 years of probation and a \$75,000 fine in Federal court. Another Tennessee trainer, Larry Wheelon, and three of his employees have been indicted on 19 counts of aggravated animal cruelty charges under state law in a case flowing from a USDA Office of Inspector General investigation.

While these are significant actions which should have a deterrent effect, there are scores of other violators who go undetected and many cases that go unprosecuted due to a lack of resources. USDA needs enhanced resources to carry out its responsibilities under this Act, as Congress, and the public, expects.

In years past, inspections were limited to physical observation and palpation by the inspector. Protocols for the use of new technologies, such as thermography and “sniffer” devices (gas chromatography/mass spectrometry (GC/MS) instruments), have been implemented, which can help inspectors identify soring more effectively and objectively. The results of USDA’s recent GC/MS testing for prohibited foreign substances used by violators on the legs of horses (either to sore them, or to mask underlying soring and evade detection by inspectors) are staggering: 62 percent of samples taken by the USDA at 17 horse shows in 2013 tested positive for illegal foreign substances, including soring, masking, and numbing agents. In 2012, 65 percent of samples tested at 24 horse shows by USDA tested positive for illegal foreign substances.

Effective though this inspection protocol may be, due to budget constraints, USDA has been unable to purchase and put enough of this testing into use in the field, allowing for industry players to continually evade detection. In 2013, USDA was able to afford to collect and test samples at only 17 of the industry’s largest shows; in 2012, only 24. With increased funding, the USDA could purchase more equipment and dispatch more inspectors to use it properly, greatly increasing its ability to enforce the HPA.

Currently, when USDA inspectors arrive at shows affiliated with some industry organizations, many of the exhibitors load up and leave to avoid being caught with sored horses. While USDA could stop these trailers on the way out, agency officials have stated that inspectors are wary of going outside of their designated inspection area, for fear of harassment and physical violence from exhibitors. Armed security is frequently utilized to allow such inspections, at additional expense to this program. The fact that exhibitors feel they can intimidate government officials without penalty is a testament to the inherent shortcomings of the current system.

Lack of a consistent presence by USDA officials at events featuring Tennessee Walking Horses, Racking Horses, and Spotted Saddle Horses has fostered a cavalier attitude among industry insiders, who have not stopped their abuse, but have only become more clandestine in their soring methods. The continued use of soring to gain an advantage in the show ring has tainted this segment of the horse industry, and creates an unfair advantage for those who are willing to break the law in pursuit of victory. Besides the indefensible suffering of the animals themselves, the continued acceptance of sored horses in the show ring prevents those with sound horses from competing fairly for prizes, breeding fees and other financial incentives, while those horse owners whose horses are sored may unwittingly suffer property damage and be duped into believing that their now abused, damaged horses are naturally superior.

The egregious cruelty of soring is not only a concern for horse industry and animal protection organizations, but also for veterinarians. In 2008, the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) issued a white paper condemning soring, calling it “one of the most significant welfare issues faced by the equine industry.” It called for the abolition of the DQP Program, saying “the acknowledged conflicts of interest which involve many of them cannot be reasonably resolved, and these individuals should be excluded from the regulatory process.” The AAEP further stated, “The failure of the HPA to eliminate the practice of soring can be traced to the woefully inadequate annual budget . . . allocated to the USDA to enforce these rules and regulations.”

The USDA Office of Inspector General conducted an audit of the Horse Protection Program, and issued its final report in September of 2010. The report recommends the abolition of the DQP program, and an increase in funding for APHIS enforcement of the Horse Protection Act. The agency concurred with the findings and recommendations in the report, specifically Recommendation 2: “Seeking the necessary funding from Congress to adequately oversee the Horse Protection Program,” indicating that it would develop a budgeting and staffing plan to phase in the resources needed to adequately oversee the Horse Protection Program.

It is unacceptable that more than 40 years after passage of the Horse Protection Act, the USDA still lacks the resources needed to end this extreme form of abuse.

It is time for Congress to give our public servants charged with enforcing this Act the support and resources they want and need to fulfill their duty to protect these horses as effectively and safely as possible.

We appreciate the opportunity to share our views about this serious problem, and thank you for your consideration of our request.

[This statement was submitted by Mark Matson, President, International Walking Horse Association.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE MEDS & FOOD FOR KIDS (MFK)

Meds & Food for Kids (MFK) appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony to the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies, and requests that the Subcommittee fully fund the Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement Project (LRP) at \$80 million for fiscal year 2015, as authorized in section 3207 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (the Farm Bill) and administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS). The LRP is a critical tool for international development that saves and improves lives by quickly purchasing necessary food aid locally or regionally, while also increasing resiliency through the further development of local food systems.

MFK is a U.S. non-profit organization that manufactures high quality, peanut-based ready-to-use therapeutic and supplementary foods in Haiti that are used to treat and prevent malnutrition in young children. MFK intimately knows the importance of local production and procurement of food aid, including ready-to-use foods for treating children with malnutrition, to Haiti's vulnerable populations. MFK has been fighting malnutrition and poverty, its root cause, in Haiti since 2003. After the earthquake MFK transported all its available stocks to Port au Prince for use in hospitals, clinics and orphanages. In total we have saved the lives of over 120,000 in the last 10 years. Most of those children were treated after we scaled up in 2012, by building a new \$3.2 million state-of-the-art factory in Cap Haitien, increasing our annual production capacity from 80 to 800 metric tons (MT). We made this urgent investment because every life saved, every body healed; every brain protected, is an investment in Haiti's future. MFK believes that Haiti, and countries like it, deserve a bright future.

MFK is working not only to rescue children from malnutrition, but create a sustainable solution to the problem of food insecurity. We do this by igniting economic development and building local technical capacity. This longer-term mission just isn't possible without funding for local and regional food aid procurement. We must move beyond rescue to establish sustainable, locally-based solutions to achieve real and lasting change. To this end, MFK employs 48 Haitian people in the production of our peanut-based RUFs. MFK has also trained over 1,120 small-scale peanut farmers and supplied them with a reliable customer for their peanuts. MFK is working with Clinton Giustra Foundation to create Haitian agricultural "middle men" to supply inputs to farmers. MFK will buy 50 MT of Haitian peanuts this year and has invested more than \$200,000 in local procurement of peanuts since 2008. In complement, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has donated to MFK over \$100,000 of peanut equipment and funding for farmer training.

With the help of development partners like USAID and USDA, we are building sustainable supply chains, and creating expertise in food safety and manufacturing. To date, MFK has passed three international food safety audits, the only entity in Haiti to have done so. MFK also recently completed a \$1 million USDA McGovern Dole Micronutrient Fortified Food Aid Pilot Project (MFFAPP) to develop and test a nutritious school snack in Haiti. Making local and regional procurement funds available to further projects like this one would only add value to the McGovern Dole investment. MFK is an example of a success story in helping to build resilience and sustainable food systems in Haiti. By supporting local and regional food and agricultural supply chains through the LRP, we will see more success stories in the future.

From our experience, the addition of local and regional procurement of food to the U.S. Government's aid toolbox allows the policy and programming flexibility necessary to best meet the needs of vulnerable populations. It also helps to support and protect local farmers and food manufacturers, allowing for longer term economic development. For this reason, we support full funding of the Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement Project along with the development of a strategy that will be beneficial to both the world's most vulnerable populations and the American tax-payers.

Thank you for providing MFK the opportunity to submit testimony regarding the Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement Project. Please do not hesitate to contact me if the Subcommittee has any questions or would like further information.

[This statement was submitted by Dr. Patricia Wolff, Executive Director, Meds & Foods for Kids.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING MANAGEMENT
ASSOCIATION (NAHMA)

Thank you, Chairman Pryor and Ranking Member Blunt for the opportunity to submit this testimony on behalf of the National Affordable Housing Management Association (NAHMA). My testimony concerns the fiscal year 2015 budget for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and in particular, funding for the USDA-Rural Development (RD) multifamily housing programs. The majority of my testimony will discuss RD's requested funding and new legislative authorities for its Section 521 Rural Rental Assistance (RA) Program.

ABOUT NAHMA

NAHMA members manage and provide quality affordable housing to more than two million Americans with very low to moderate incomes. Our membership consists of presidents and executives of property management companies, owners of affordable rental housing, public agencies and national organizations involved in affordable housing, and providers of supplies and services to the affordable housing industry. In addition, NAHMA serves as the national voice in Washington for 19 regional, state and local affordable housing management associations (AHMAs) nationwide.

FUNDING FOR RD MULTIFAMILY HOUSING PROGRAMS

Section 521 Rural Rental Assistance: The Section 521 Rural Rental Assistance (RA) program is project-based rental assistance administered by USDA-RD. It is often used in conjunction with Section 515 housing or farm labor housing to pay apartment owners the difference between tenants' contributions (30 percent of their income) and the monthly rental rate.

For fiscal year 2015, USDA requests \$1.089 billion for Section 521 Rural Rental Assistance. RD believes this request is sufficient to accommodate renewals. NAHMA urges the Subcommittee to review this request thoroughly, as it is based on assumptions for new legislative authorities that affect the level of necessary funding. NAHMA firmly believes that appropriations for this program must be sufficient to provide 12 months of funding for all contracts.

This year, RD also requests legislative changes which would:

- Remove the requirement to fund RA contracts for a 1 year period, and replace it with language to fund contracts "up to 1 year";
- Eliminate the automatic renewal of rental assistance contracts that occur within the 12-month contract period; and
- Provide that "rental assistance will be renewed at the discretion of the Secretary."

RD believes these changes will provide greater predictability in the RA budget, as well as the necessary flexibility to prioritize RA contract renewals during times of funding uncertainty (such as continuing resolutions or under sequestration). NAHMA is concerned that the specific language proposed is too broad, and we recommend that it be revised to more closely reflect its stated intent.

After the RA shortfall which resulted from fiscal year 2013 sequestration, it is clear that RHS needs some degree of flexibility in its contract renewal procedures during times of extraordinary budget uncertainty. That said, the flexibility must not absolve the agency of its financial obligations to owners for payment of RA during the term of the contract, nor should it be used as a budget gimmick to request less appropriations than are necessary to provide 12 months of contract funding at the time of renewal.

Likewise, NAHMA respectfully suggests that an advanced appropriation would offer a more straightforward mechanism to ensure RD has the necessary funding for contract renewals when the agency must operate under a continuing resolution. Advanced appropriations have been used successfully for several years to renew HUD's Project-Based Section 8 and Housing Choice Voucher contracts during the first quarter of the fiscal year when continuing resolutions are in place.

In section 725 of USDA's proposed general provisions, the Agency also requests authority to access the same interagency databases used for income verification by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). RD is especially

interested in using this authority to reduce improper payments in its RA program. NAHMA supports this request in concept. If Congress provides such authority, NAHMA recommends that USDA-RD implement it by seeking access to HUD's Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) System for RHS staff, as well as for authorized property owners and managers. EIV obtains monthly Social Security and Supplemental Security Income benefits data from the Social Security Administration, and monthly employer new hires (W-4), quarterly wage for Federal and non-Federal employees, and quarterly unemployment data from the Department of Health and Human Services' National Directory of New Hires (NDNH). It would seem more efficient for RD to use the EIV system for income verification than to create an entirely new system.

Section 515: Section 515 Direct Rural Rental Housing Loans are competitive mortgage loans which finance affordable multifamily rental housing for low-income families, the elderly and persons with disabilities in rural America. The 2015 budget request proposes \$28.432 million for the Section 515 direct loan program. NAHMA supports funding at a level of at least \$28.432 million.

Section 538: The Section 538 Multifamily Loan Guarantee program provides loan guarantees which encourage construction, acquisition, or rehabilitation of rural multifamily housing for low-income residents. NAHMA supports RD's request of \$150 million for this program.

Multifamily Preservation and Revitalization (MRP) Program: The Multifamily Housing Revitalization Program funds tenant protection vouchers, property rehabilitation and preservation demonstration programs. RD requests \$28 million for this program. Of this total funding, \$8 million would be directed to the Rural Housing Voucher Program, which provides a rental subsidy to any low-income household (including those not receiving rental assistance) residing in a property financed with a Section 515 loan which has been prepaid after September 30, 2005. Likewise, \$20 million is proposed for the demonstration program to preserve and recapitalize aging rural multifamily rental properties. NAHMA supports funding for MRP program at a level of at least \$28 million. We are, however, concerned about the proposed reduction in voucher funding from nearly \$12.58 million in the fiscal year 2014 Omnibus Appropriations Act to \$8 million in RD's fiscal year 2015 budget request. We urge the Subcommittee to carefully consider whether \$8 million will be sufficient to meet the demand for these Rural Housing Vouchers in fiscal year 2015.

CONCLUSION

Thank you again for the opportunity to submit this testimony. I look forward to working with the Subcommittee to ensure that USDA-RD's multifamily housing programs are fully funded and properly administered.

[This statement was submitted by Kris Cook, CAE, Executive Director, National Affordable Housing Management Association.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL ANIMAL HEALTH LABORATORY NETWORK

I am writing to urge your support for the inclusion of the National Animal Health Laboratory Network in the fiscal year 2015 Agriculture Appropriations Bill. The NAHLN was authorized in the recently passed Farm Bill (Section. 12105). Serving as our nation's most vital early warning system for emerging and foreign animal diseases, we are urging the members of the Appropriation Committee to fund the NAHLN at \$15 million for fiscal year 2015.

The NAHLN was developed in response to the Public Health Security and BioTerrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002, and the Homeland Security Presidential Directive-9 (HSPD-9) of 2004 to "develop nationwide laboratory networks for food, veterinary, plant health and water quality that integrate existing Federal and State laboratory resources, are interconnected, and utilize standardized diagnostic protocols and procedures".

During the past 12 years the NAHLN, composed of Federal, university, and state veterinary diagnostic laboratories, has established the framework of a surveillance and emergency response system (not research) that provides critical and ongoing resources for laboratory testing, surveillance, information management, quality assurance and the development and validation of new tests.

Funding of NAHLN at \$15 million would result in improved compliance with HSPD-9 by: 1) expanding surveillance and surge capacity of the NAHLN by increasing the number and level of participating state laboratories; 2) additional development of the infrastructure for electronic transmission of data between sample collectors, laboratories and state and Federal databases; and 3) increasing efficiency and effectiveness of laboratory personnel training and employment both regionally and

nationwide. Federal funding for the NAHLN at \$15 million would be leveraged over six times by direct state appropriations. A survey of 34 NAHLN laboratories conducted by the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians revealed direct state appropriations of \$100 million to NAHLN laboratories toward total laboratory operation expenses of \$186 million.

The NAHLN enables laboratories to test for economically devastating diseases such as mad cow disease, foot-and-mouth disease, avian and swine influenza, and classical swine fever. Without the NAHLN and the early disease detection it provides, an outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) could cost US agriculture an estimated \$128 billion. This includes decreased revenues for corn and soybean of \$44 billion and \$24.9 billion, respectively. This loss translates into roughly 154,000 jobs over the course of the outbreak.

An August 2011 report from the GAO and a report from the Commission on the Prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction, Proliferation and Terrorism both gave the nation a failing grade for its ability to respond to and recover from a biological attack, natural disaster or animal disease event as required by HSPD-9. In order for the nation to adequately respond to, and recover from, a biological attack; the NAHLN needs \$15 million to ensure such a threat would be quarantined in a timely manner.

Wisconsin has benefited from the Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory being a NAHLN laboratory on several occasions. Having the ability to rapidly deliver foreign animal disease diagnostic samples to the local laboratory has provided test results to State Animal Health Officials hours or days before the same reports were received from the National Veterinary Services Laboratory due to the time it takes to ship samples. This early reporting has allowed the state to release quarantines which were impacting commerce at slaughter facilities or livestock production sites.

Thank you for your leadership on this vital issue to the agriculture industry and consideration of this funding in the fiscal year 15 Agriculture Appropriations Bill.

[This statement was submitted by Ben Brancel, Secretary, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL FARMERS UNION

On behalf of the family farmer and rancher members of National Farmers Union (NFU), thank you for the opportunity to present funding requests for fiscal year 2015. As a general farm organization, NFU has a broad array of interests in the agricultural appropriations process. This letter enumerates a few of the highest priorities for our members.

Additionally, the recent passage of the 2014 Farm Bill deserves the attention of the subcommittee. I ask that programs that were granted discretionary funding through the farm bill receive their full appropriations, and that the subcommittee not reduce other program funding through changes in mandatory programs.

REQUEST: No legislative riders or targeted funding reductions to limit or restrict the enforcement, legal defense or study of Country-of-Origin Labeling (COOL).

The 2008 Farm Bill requires retailers to notify customers through labeling of the source of nearly all muscle cuts and ground meat, along with fish, fruits, vegetables, nuts and a variety of other generally unprocessed products. As of 2013, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) enacted rules that require the labeling of production steps—for example, “Born, Raised, and Harvested in the U.S.”—as directed by a World Trade Organization (WTO) dispute. Another WTO proceeding is currently underway to review the new COOL regulations’ compliance with trade agreements. A lawsuit is pending in U.S. court regarding implementation of the new labels and initial attempts to enjoin the new COOL requirements were defeated. Additionally, the 2014 Farm Bill requires a study on the economic impact of COOL.

NFU opposes any funding cuts or legislative riders that would circumvent enforcement, implementation, legal defense or study of COOL. Studies have found that more than 90 percent of consumers support COOL. Any threats of retaliation from Canada and Mexico are extremely premature, as WTO appeals are slow-moving and typically last for years.

REQUEST: No legislative riders to limit or restrict the USDA’s rulemaking and enforcement authority under the Packers and Stockyards Act of 1921.

Because of appropriations riders in the last 3 years, USDA has not been allowed to write rules that would provide greater fairness for livestock sellers and poultry growers in the agriculture marketplace, as directed by the 2008 Farm Bill. This includes prohibiting deceptive or fraudulent buying practices and permitting farmers

and ranchers to seek protection under the Packers and Stockyards Act if they have been harmed by unfair trade practices.

While the last three legislative riders on GIPSA have varied, they each have significantly undermined important protections for livestock and poultry ranchers and growers. These provisions must not be prevented; thus, NFU strongly urges the Subcommittee to reject any legislative riders that would undermine GIPSA's authority and ignore congressional intent.

REQUEST: Funding for the Food and Drug Administration to implement the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) and to study its economic impacts on farmers.

NFU asks that the FDA be adequately funded at the president's request level for fiscal year 2015 with \$253 million to be used for implementation of FSMA. There are many areas of possible improvement within the proposed FSMA rules, but it is imperative that the process be provided resources in order to be effective. Of particular importance is funding to provide food safety training to family farmers and small processors. The president's request to spend \$2.5 million on that initiative is a low amount but a good start to prepare our members to work well within the upcoming FSMA rules.

Additionally, I ask that no action be taken during the appropriations process that would derail or detract from FDA's study of the economic impacts of FSMA on farmers, as mandated by the 2014 Farm Bill.

REQUEST: Report language on public cultivar development through the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI).

The 2008 Farm Bill created the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI), which called for AFRI to make "conventional" plant and animal breeding a priority for research grants. Implementation of these directives has been slow. NFU asks that the fiscal year 2015 appropriations bill include report language that reiterates the need to prioritize funding for classical plant and animal breeding within the AFRI process.

REQUEST: Provide \$25.9 million to the Genetic Improvement and Translational Breeding Initiative, along with report language directing funds to the development and release of regionally adapted, public cultivars.

The administration's fiscal year 2015 budget requests \$25.9 million for a new Genetic Improvement and Translational Breeding Initiative to be administered by the Agricultural Research Service. Given the very substantial private and public investments in genomics and the lack of funding for classical breeding for public cultivar development, clear language ought to be included to direct ARS to focus all of the funding provided for this initiative on the development and release of regionally adapted, publicly held, cultivars to benefit farmers and ranchers across the country.

REQUEST: Fully fund farm bill energy title programs at discretionary funding levels and do not reduce program funding through changes in mandatory programs. Also, allow 2014 Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP) funds to carry over into 2015 if they are not expended.

The 2014 Farm Bill makes substantial investments in existing energy programs such as the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP), Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP), and Biorefinery Assistance Program (BAP). NFU asks that the subcommittee not reduce any of the funds allocated to these programs. In addition, because USDA may not expend all funds for BCAP in 2014, NFU asks that language be inserted allowing for unexpended 2014 BCAP funds to be carried over into 2015.

REQUEST: Provide \$10 million for competitive grants and formula-based funding for animal health and disease research.

Public investment in animal science has slipped in recent years, especially in comparison to the economic impact of animal agriculture. By 2050, global meat consumption is expected to increase by 73 percent, dairy production by 57 percent, and per capita egg consumption in developing countries is projected to rise by almost 40 percent. Animal agriculture has a clear impact on rural America, as livestock and poultry sales account for 40 percent of all U.S. farm income.

The 2014 Farm Bill revitalized the structure of a public funding opportunity for animal science. I ask that \$10 million be made available to establish the new competitive grants program on sound financial footing.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests.

[This statement was submitted by Roger Johnson, President, National Farmers Union.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE COALITION

Thank you for the opportunity to present our fiscal year 2015 funding requests. The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition is a national alliance of over 100 organizations that advocates for policies that support the sustainability of agriculture, natural resources, and rural communities. Our USDA requests are as follows, in the order they appear in the appropriations bill:

DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION

Office of Advocacy and Outreach. The Office of Advocacy and Outreach coordinates policy and outreach in three vital areas—small and beginning, socially disadvantaged, and veteran farmers. We urge that \$1.4 million be provided for the OA&O, as requested by USDA.

Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers. We urge you to provide \$10 million in discretionary funding and no limitation in mandatory program spending to restore total program funding to its historical level in order to meet the increased demand for outreach and technical assistance by military veteran farmers, and other historically underserved producers.

AGRICULTURE RESEARCH SERVICE

New Priority Research Initiative. We urge you to support the reallocation of \$25.9 million for a new Genetic Improvement and Translational Breeding Initiative, as proposed by the Administration, provided that report language directs ARS to use the funding to advance classical breeding research and germplasm infrastructure to protect agricultural genetic diversity and address long-term challenges to agriculture such as climate change and global food security.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program. We urge you to fund this innovative competitive grants program at \$30 million. The fiscal year 15 Budget Request once again proposes to combine research, education, and extension into a single line item. We do not oppose consolidation, so long as funding is increased to cover all functions outlined in statute, including Federal-state matching grants (7 U.S.C. 5813). To that effect, we urge the reiteration of the fiscal year 14 Senate report language (113–46) clarifying that “all three activities authorized in Subtitle B of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990 are vital to the success of the SARE program, and the Committee directs the Department to ensure that each activity remain intact in the future.” SARE has helped turn farmer-driven research, education, and extension into profitable and environmentally sound practices for over 25 years. At \$30 million, SARE would be at just half its authorized level, half the level recommended by the National Academy of Sciences, and nearly a quarter of the authorized level if that level were updated to 2014 dollars. There is no other REE competitive grant program that has a bigger bang for the buck.

Organic Transitions Integrated Research Program. We request \$5 million to invest in innovative organic research with strong farmer delivery mechanisms built in. This level of funding is critical to help keep organics from falling further behind in its fair share of the research budget.

Food Safety Outreach Program. We request \$5 million to help small and mid-size farms and small processing facilities comply with new proposed food safety regulations. FDA is in the process of proposing new, expansive food safety regulations for farmers and food processors under the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). This FSMA-authorized Food Safety Training Program will provide farmers with the training they need to implement and comply with new food safety rules. We are thrilled USDA has requested funding to begin this program, but believe their request of \$2.5 million is insufficient and therefore urge you to launch this urgently needed program at \$5 million to ensure that multiple regions of the country can benefit rather than just a single region.

AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE

Federal-State Market Improvement Program. FSMIP provides matching funds to state departments of agriculture to help grantees conduct research and create innovations to increase new markets for farmers. We request \$1.363 million, the same as fiscal year 2014 funding.

Organic Production and Market Data Initiatives. As the organic industry surpasses \$31 billion a year in sales, organic market reporting is vital to creating fair risk management tools and collecting adequate data on organic markets. We request

\$0.3 million for AMS to continue and enhance reporting on organic production, marketing, and pricing data. We also support ongoing organic data collection and analysis through NASS and ERS.

Local Food Data Collection and Analysis. Information concerning state and regional food needs is not readily available to food system developers and investors who need to gain a better understanding of the opportunities and challenges that exist for agricultural food systems across the country. We support the President's request of \$2.6 million for AMS to partner with Federal and state agencies, Land-Grant Universities, Regional Planning Commissions, and other entities to conduct 6 to 10 state local and regional food system assessments. We would also encourage the Committee to include report language directing AMS to incorporate data collection and assessments of market price information for direct and intermediated local and regional food markets.

FARM SERVICE AGENCY

Direct Farm Ownership Loans, Direct Operating Loans, and Individual Development Accounts. Direct loans provide capital for beginning farmers and others not served by commercial credit. This is critical in light of the increasing age of farmers and the land access challenges faced by beginning farmers. Similarly, the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Individual Development Account (IDA) program, authorized by the 2008 and 2014 Farm Bills, will enable limited-resource beginning farmers and ranchers to save for asset-building purchases, including farmland, equipment, breeding stock, or similar expenditures.

Through the IDA program, FSA will offer competitive grants, with a 50 percent local match required, and financial management training as the core component of the program. We support the President's fiscal year 15 Budget Request for program levels of \$1.5 billion for Direct Farm Ownership loans, \$1.252 billion for Direct Operating Loans, and \$2.5 million for the IDA program. We also request an additional \$4 million in ACIF administrative expenses¹ specifically to allow FSA to provide intermediary technical assistance and loan delivery services to new microloan borrowers. This combined package will serve new, beginning, and veteran farmers well, and at a reduction in the actual appropriated amounts relative to fiscal year 14—\$46 million in budget authority and approximately \$51 million in outlays, a net reduction in actual appropriations of \$24 million and approximately \$16 million, respectively, according to OMB's figures.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Conservation Technical Assistance. CTA, a subset of Conservation Operations, helps farmers develop and implement conservation plans to conserve resources on their farms. NRCS also uses CTA funds to assess conservation practices and systems, and to collect, analyze, and disseminate data on the condition of the nation's natural resources. We urge you to provide no less than \$717 million for CTA, as requested in the President's fiscal year 15 budget request.

RURAL BUSINESS AND COOPERATIVE SERVICE

Value-Added Producer Grants. VAPG offers grants to farmers and ranchers developing farm- and food-related businesses that boost farm income and create jobs in rural America. VAPG encourages the kind of entrepreneurship that enables rural communities to grow economically. Growing interest in local and regional foods means greater need for regional supply chains and enterprises that aggregate local production, exactly the kind of rural development strategy VAPG is designed to support. We request no changes in mandatory program spending as well as \$15 million in discretionary funding for VAPG, the same level as included in the final fiscal year 14 bill.

Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program. RMAP provides business training, technical assistance, and microloans to owner-operated businesses with up to ten employees. It is specifically targeted at very small business development, the leading job creator in rural communities. The 2014 Farm Bill renews a modest investment of \$3 million per year in direct farm bill spending for RMAP loans and grants. The President's fiscal year 15 Budget Request includes \$3.3 million in discretionary funding for RMAP loans, as well as no changes in mandatory program spending. For a second year in a row, the Budget Request recommends that Congress combine the RMAP grant component with several other rural development programs. Congress

¹ See "Agricultural Credit Insurance Fund Program Account" on page 104 of the President's Budget Appendix

considered this proposal during the fiscal year 14 appropriations process and during farm bill proceedings, and in both cases, wisely rejected the consolidation proposal. We support the President's fiscal year 15 Budget Request of no changes in mandatory program spending, as well as \$3.3 million in discretionary funding; however, we urge that this discretionary funding be provided for the cost of loans and grants. This level of appropriation combined with the new farm bill funding will result in over \$40 million in new microloans plus expanded entrepreneurial development training, an incredibly smart investment.

Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas. The ATTRA program, also known as the National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service and reauthorized by the 2014 Farm Bill, provides critical support to farmers, Extension agents, and conservation and energy specialists throughout the country. We urge \$2.5 million for ATTRA for fiscal year 2015.

Rural Cooperative Development Grants. RCDG invests in rural development by helping individuals start or expand cooperatives. We oppose the Administration's proposal to consolidate RCDG into a Rural Business and Cooperative Grants program. We request \$9.1 million for RCDG, including \$3 million for centers targeting socially disadvantaged producers.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Repeated annual cuts to the Conservation Stewardship Program, Environmental Quality Incentives Program, and other farm bill conservation programs have created enormous backlogs of applications among highly qualified producers and made it difficult for farmers to maintain healthy soil, protect water, and mitigate and adapt to the impacts of drought. We strongly oppose changes in mandatory program spending to these critical conservation programs.

Finally, we oppose the inclusion of any policy riders that limit implementation and enforcement of the Packers & Stockyards Act. Limiting farmers' free speech rights to consult with Members of Congress and limiting USDA's ability to protect market transparency has no rightful place in the appropriations bill or any other legislation.

[This statement was submitted by Juli Obudzinski, NSAC Senior Policy Specialist.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS SOCIETY

Ms. Chairwoman and Members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony regarding funding of critically important Federal programs that impact those affected by multiple sclerosis. We urge the Subcommittee to provide \$3.784 billion in discretionary spending for the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is an unpredictable, often disabling disease of the central nervous system that interrupts the flow of information within the brain, and between the brain and body. Symptoms range from numbness and tingling to blindness and paralysis. The progress, severity, and specific symptoms of MS in any one person cannot yet be predicted. Most people with MS are diagnosed between the ages of 20 and 50, with at least two to three times more women than men being diagnosed with the disease.

The National MS Society sees itself as a partner to the government in many critical areas. For instance in fiscal year 2013, we dedicated approximately \$48 million in MS research through funds generated through the Society's fundraising efforts. While we're here to advocate for Federal funding, we do it as an organization that commits tens of millions of dollars each year to similar or complementary efforts as those being funded by the Federal government, including partnerships with the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

ADMINISTRATION

The FDA is the United States' pre-eminent public health agency. Its role as the regulator of the country's pharmaceutical industry provides invaluable support and encourages vital progress for people living with MS and other diseases. In its capacity as the industry's regulator, the FDA ensures that drugs and medical devices are safe and effective for public use and provides consumers with confidence in new technologies. Because of the tremendous impact the FDA has on the development and availability of drugs and devices for individuals with disabilities, the National MS Society requests that Congress provide \$2.784 billion in discretionary appropriations. This funding will allow FDA to complete its current mandates, which include

developing a biosimilar approval pathway and appropriately implementing the Food and Drug Administration Safety and Innovation Act (FDASIA) of 2012.

Advancements in medical technology and medical breakthroughs play a pivotal role in decreasing the societal costs of disease and disability. The FDA is responsible for approving drugs for the market and in this capacity has the ability to keep healthcare costs down. Each dollar invested in the life-science research regulated by the FDA has the potential to save upwards of \$10 in health gains. Breakthroughs in medications and devices can reduce the potential costs of disease and disability in Medicare and Medicaid and can help support the healthier, more productive lives of people living with chronic diseases and disabilities, like MS.

The approval of low-cost generic drugs saved the healthcare system \$140 billion in 2010 and nearly \$1 trillion over the past decade. However, recent funding constraints have resulted in a 2 year backlog of generic drug approval applications and could potentially cost the Federal government and patients billions of dollars in the coming years. Similarly, FDA was tasked with creating a biosimilars approval pathway in 2010, which still needs to be finalized. This pathway is expected to allow a cheaper alternative for some very expensive biologic medications. The potential for these cost-saving medical breakthroughs and overall healthcare savings relies on a vibrant industry and an adequately funded FDA.

Entire industries are working to enhance the lives of Americans with new medical devices and pharmaceuticals with tens of billions of dollars being spent annually by the NIH and industry in pursuit of new breakthroughs. The FDA has a comparatively small budget yet is charged with ensuring the safety and efficacy of these new products.

CONCLUSION

The National MS Society thanks the Committee for the opportunity to provide written testimony and our recommendations for fiscal year 2015 appropriations. The agencies and programs we have discussed are of vital importance to people living with MS and we look forward to continuing to working with the Committee to help move us closer to a world free of MS. Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions.

[This statement was submitted by Ted Thompson, Vice President of Federal Government Relations, National MS Society.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION

On behalf of the National Wildlife Federation (NWF), the nation's largest conservation advocacy and education organization, and our more than four million members and supporters, we thank the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture for the opportunity to provide fiscal year 2015 funding recommendations for the Department of Agriculture. We urge the Subcommittee to oppose all cuts to mandatory agricultural conservation programs in the fiscal year 2015 agriculture appropriations legislation.

After several years of negotiation, Congress recently passed Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act (Public Law 113-79) with broad bipartisan support. This recently passed Farm Bill includes much needed funding for conservation priorities, and it is critical that Congress ensure that all of this allocated funding, as signed into law, can be spent as Congress intended.

Farm Bill Conservation programs—including the Conservation Reserve Program, Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Regional Conservation Partnership Program, Agricultural Conservation Easement Program, Conservation Stewardship Program, and Voluntary Public Access Program—have been disproportionately cut in recent appropriations cycles and in this last farm bill.

From fiscal year 2003-2012, Changes in Mandatory Program Spending (CHIMPS) for farm bill conservation programs have increased steadily, threatening to undermine our most critical conservation programs. According to the Congressional Research Service (CRS), total CHIMPS to mandatory agricultural programs from fiscal year 2003-2010 equaled \$7.5 billion.¹ These cuts increased to over \$9 billion in fiscal year 2012. The Conservation Title of the Farm Bill has been unduly targeted, accounting for over 50 percent of cuts to mandatory agricultural programs from fiscal year 2003 to fiscal year 2010 and 83 percent of all Farm Bill CHIMPS from fis-

¹Jim Monke and Megan Stubbs, Reductions in Mandatory Agriculture Program Spending, CRS Report for Congress (Congressional Research Service, May 19, 2010), <http://www.nationalaglawcenter.org/assets/crs/R41245.pdf>.

cal year 2007 to fiscal year 2010.² Since the enactment of the 2002 Farm Bill, appropriators have taken roughly \$4.4 billion from Farm Bill mandatory conservation spending.³ On top of this, conservation programs were cut by an additional \$6 billion in the latest Farm Bill.

With increased pressures on working lands to produce food, fuel, and fiber for our nation and the world, farm bill conservation programs critically important now more than ever. These conservation programs are crucial to the health and viability of agriculture and rural America. They help farmers, ranchers and foresters to voluntarily address their key resource concerns and assist them in complying with local, state, and Federal regulations. They deliver demonstrated environmental benefits including clean air, healthy soil, clean water, and abundant habitat for wildlife. And they bring important economic benefits and jobs to rural areas, including increased revenues from hunting, fishing, and other recreational activities. The demand for enrollment in these programs routinely exceeds the funds available, even without any cuts.

Mandatory funding levels for farm bill programs were just agreed upon by Congress during the Farm Bill reauthorization process; it is unacceptable to continue to slash these programs yearly during the appropriations process and to continue to disproportionately target farm bill conservation programs. We ask the Appropriations Committees to recognize the importance of agricultural conservation programs by rejecting cuts to mandatory Farm Bill conservation programs and allowing these programs to receive the full allocation as set by the Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act (Public Law 113–79).

[This statement was submitted by Aviva Glaser, Senior Agriculture Policy Specialist, National Wildlife Federation.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE OREGON WATER RESOURCES CONGRESS (OWRC)

The Oregon Water Resources Congress (OWRC) strongly supports the budget for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and we are very excited about the new Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) in the recently passed 2014 Farm Bill. However, because the RCPP combines the authorities of several existing programs, clarification is needed on how some of the provisions will be implemented. Specifically, we request detail on how the new RCPP will cover existing multi-year agreements funded under the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) or Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI). OWRC also requests that the Columbia River Basin and Klamath River Basin be considered for inclusion in the Critical Conservation Areas (CCAs). Furthermore, it is crucial that the RCPP has adequate resources to leverage partnerships and tackle the complex natural resources conservation issues facing the nation. Lastly, we are strongly supportive of coordinated Federal agency watershed planning and funding for the Small Watershed Rehabilitation Program.

OWRC was established in 1912 as a trade association to support the protection of water rights and promote the wise stewardship of water resources statewide. OWRC members are local governmental entities, which include irrigation districts, water control districts, drainage districts, water improvement districts, and other agricultural water suppliers that deliver water to roughly 1/3 of all irrigated land in Oregon. These water stewards operate complex water management systems, including water supply reservoirs, canals, pipelines, and hydropower production.

CLARIFICATION OF RCPP PROVISIONS

OWRC is requesting that funding for the NRCS RCPP be clarified to ensure that projects with existing AWEP and CCPI agreements are eligible for funding. OWRC has members with multi-year agreements with NRCS under AWEP and/or CCPI and they are concerned that the remainder of those years may not be funded. This concern is based on remarks made by USDA officials in Washington DC stating that AWEP and CCPI "went away" with the new Farm Bill. As OWRC and its national partners understand the 2014 Farm Bill, it was the intent to consolidate the authorities and maximize the benefits of AWEP and CCPI, not to eliminate these valuable programs. Our organization is hopeful that clarification will be provided so that NRCS can merge the existing agreements into the new RCPP program in a seam-

²Monke and Stubbs, Reductions in Mandatory Agriculture Program Spending. National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, comparison of budget authority to appropriations bills. Note: does not include rescissions.

³National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, comparison of budget authority to appropriations bills.

less manner. It is in the best interest of those holding current multi-year agreements that this is done as quickly as possible so that they can continue with these beneficial long-term projects that leverage the investments of multiple state and Federal partners.

OWRC also strongly supports the additional 7 percent (7 percent) of funding on top of the \$100 million that is to be transferred from AWEF and other related conservation programs that are being combined into the RCPP. It is important to note that we are concerned about implications for program expenditures since the April 1st deadline referenced in Section 2401 for any uncommitted funds returning to each covered program has now passed. Ideally, solicitations for RCPP projects should be issued between Oct-Dec 2014 in order to obligate funds in a timely fashion to meet the March 31st commitment date.

Additionally, as the Secretary of Agriculture considers recommendations regarding the new Critical Conservation Areas (CCAs) under the 2014 Farm Bill, OWRC requests that the Columbia Basin and the Klamath Basin be considered for inclusion as CCAs. Both Basins are facing significant natural resources challenges, span multiple states, and would be excellent candidates to more efficiently promote soil, water and habitat conservation programs on a regional level. The Columbia Basin, which covers parts of seven states and is the fourth largest watershed in the nation, continues to be one of the nation's largest environmental challenges as it wrestles with implementing recovery efforts under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) while balancing other diverse resource needs. The Klamath Basin, which covers parts of Oregon and California, is also facing a complex set of ESA issues that have been further compounded by a devastating drought that has dire impacts for the both agricultural and environmental resources. NRCS funding and participation are an essential part of the cooperative conservation efforts for addressing the complex ESA needs in both of these basins.

RCPP NEEDS

Federal support of water conservation activities funded through NRCS programs, including the RCPP is essential to the conservation of our natural resources and critical to protecting our food, energy and water supply. Financial assistance has diminished in recent years and there is a backlog of unmet need. We worry that a further decline of funding for fiscal year 2015 will severely impact districts and other agricultural water suppliers. For example, in 2013, Oregon requested \$24.7 million in financial assistance for NRCS funding, but received approximately \$20 million. Because of the large unmet need, we are strongly supportive of providing allocations for fiscal year 2014 year to meet state requests that have been unfunded in recent years.

While we recognize that the Administration has increased funding for some of the NRCS programs, the need for additional financial assistance with conservation projects still far outweighs the budget. NRCS programs are essential to irrigation districts in developing and implementing conservation projects that benefit not only the individual farmers they serve but also the entire watershed and community as a whole. Furthermore, conservation projects also benefit the economy through job creation and ensuring the future viability of American agriculture.

RCPP helps fill a funding void for multi-partner conservation projects. Often large conservation projects do not include individual on-farm projects which limits the effectiveness of the project. RCPP allow farmers to pool together and leverage the dollars invested in the off-farm project with the addition of EQIP on-farm projects. And as previously mentioned, due to the large number of successful project applications for AWEF, USDA should continue to fund existing AWEF projects within the new RCPP program to finish out existing multiyear projects. It is important that the funding for these projects not be interrupted so that they may be completed. However, it is equally important to have funding available for new eligible RCPP projects that simultaneously benefit the environment and economy.

RCPP BENEFITS

OWRC strongly supports the new RCPP, which we see as a critical tool for districts and other agricultural water suppliers in developing and implementing water and energy conservation projects in Oregon. In the past AWEF has been highly successful in developing cooperative approaches on a basin-wide scale, and historically, the CCPI partnerships in the past allowed Federal, State and Local interests to address ESA and Clean Water Act (CWA) issues in watershed basins and sub basins.

We are hopeful the RCPP will continue to allow districts and other agricultural water suppliers to partner with farmers to address regional water quantity and quality issues in local watersheds. It is our belief that water supply issues in Or-

egon and elsewhere in the nation can be resolved best at the local level, in cooperative partnership efforts that promote conservation with a more aggressive Federal funding partnership as defined in RCPP.

EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL AWEF PROJECTS IN OREGON

Oregon has had several successful AWEF applicants over the past several years, three from our member districts (described below).

- The Whychus Creek/Three Sisters Irrigation District Collaborative Restoration Project focuses on irrigation water efficiency with irrigation improvements in the Upper Division of the Three Sisters Irrigation District, which is the project partner. The effort will improve stream flows and water quality for native fish while providing farmers a reliable supply of water. Fiscal Year 2013 Funding: \$180,000; Fiscal Year 2012 \$251,300
- The Talent Irrigation District Project works with agricultural producers to install conservation practices that will properly utilize limited surface water resources, improve water quality on flood irrigated land by converting to more efficient irrigation systems, and apply irrigation water management to eliminate irrigation runoff. Fiscal Year 2013 Funding: \$0; Fiscal Year 2012 Funding: \$4,470
- The Willow Creek Project helps landowners in the Lower Willow Creek Watershed portion of Malheur County convert to water-saving irrigation systems, reduce irrigation runoff, and improve water quality in Willow Creek and Malheur River. The project partner is the Vale Oregon Irrigation District. Fiscal Year 2013 Funding: \$180,000; Fiscal Year 2012 \$251,300
- In Oregon, NRCS is helping develop the Save Water, Save Energy Initiative, a multi-agency cooperative effort to develop a clearinghouse of information on financial incentives and technical expertise to assist districts and their water users in implementing conservation measures.

Additional innovative projects like the ones above could be developed and implemented in Oregon if more funding is made available.

SMALL WATERSHED REHABILITATION PROGRAM AND WATERSHED PLANNING NEEDS

OWRC also strongly supports the Small Watershed Rehabilitation Program. One of our members, Sutherlin Water Control District (SWCD) has two dams that were built under PL-566. Both dams are reaching 50 years old and while they were built to seismic standards 50 years ago, they are no longer up to par. In 2010, SWCD received \$40,000 (\$20,000 for each dam) for a needs assessment study that determined that both dams are high hazard and in immediate need of retrofit and repair. The two dams are in such desperate need of repair that they are numbers 1 and 2 on Oregon NRCS' priority list for funding. A more thorough seismic study is needed to determine how to bring the dams up to code, but it is important to note that even a small earthquake (less than a 2.0 on the Richter scale) has the potential to damage the dams severely enough to cause breaches, flooding and damaging property and resources in the surrounding area. NRCS needs significant funding so it can address its high priority dams, like the ones in the SWCD. A minimum of \$250 million dollars in funding is needed for NRCS to address and repair high priority dams, like the ones in the SWCD. It would also be beneficial if the program was given flexibility to include piping and water conservation projects that have multiple environmental, farming and safety benefits.

OWRC also reiterates requests made in previous years that the "Bridging the Headgates" MOU be reactivated and expanded to include other Federal agencies. The need for continued coordination among Federal agencies, including NRCS, the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), NOAA Fisheries, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE), is a significant issue. With the historic loss of watershed planning funding, reactivating and expanding this program to other Federal agencies would be a very cost-effective alternative.

In the past, Oregon NRCS used a watershed resources planning team to conduct Rapid Watershed Assessments throughout Oregon. This planning program helped prioritize projects to bring about the most benefit in critical watersheds and getting on-the-ground conservation projects completed in a timely manner. A number of NRCS funded district projects have been implemented using the data from this program.

Following in the vein of the Rapid Watershed Assessments, Oregon has adopted a Strategic Approach to Conservation. The goal is to invest technical and financial resources to strategically solve natural resource problems and be more effective, efficient, and accountable for staffing, funding and partnerships. This strategy is in-

tended to accelerate the conservation implementation and leverage technical and financial resources required to solve the problem. These types of program activities are effective tools that need a consistent funding source.

CONCLUSION

Our member districts, the farms and other water users they serve, and the communities in which they are located benefit greatly from the NRCS programs described in our testimony. Oregon's agricultural community is actively committed to water conservation programs, but those programs require Federal participation if the agricultural community is to be able to continue its efforts to address Oregon's water supply needs through water conservation. Increasing the budget for NRCS programs is a strategic investment that will pay both environmental and economic dividends to Oregonians and America as a whole. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony for the record on the proposed fiscal year 2015 budget for the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

[This statement was submitted by April Snell, Executive Director, Oregon Water Resources Congress.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE ORGANIC TRADE ASSOCIATION (OTA)

Chairman Aderholt, Ranking Member Farr, and Members of the Subcommittee, I am Laura Batcha, Executive Director and CEO of the Organic Trade Association (OTA).¹ The organic agricultural economy continues to be one of the fastest-growing sectors of American agriculture and is a job creator. The Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 (OFPA) set in motion the creation of a vibrant marketplace that has grown to \$35 billion in sales over 22 years, at a 2012 growth rate of over 10 percent.² The industry is comprised of over 17,000 organic businesses in the U.S., and is creating jobs in the manufacturing sector at four times the rate of the economy as a whole.³

Organic is more than simply a marketing seal; it is a distinct production system with independent marketplace dynamics. When viewed as a distinct class, organic ranks fourth in food/feed crop production at farm-gate values.⁴ This parallel stream of commerce and agricultural production is a bright spot in the American marketplace of innovation and entrepreneurship. Organic is no longer a niche product category, it is a mainstream market.

The Farm Bill passed into law earlier this year recognizes this, and brings an enhanced array of authorities and resources to help the organic sector continue to grow, innovate, create new markets and jobs, provide certified operations new tools to succeed, and ensure access to safe and nutritious food supply. To facilitate this, we respectfully request the following funding levels for programs pertinent to the organic industry: USDA (AMS) National Organic Program—\$9.1 million; USDA (AMS) Organic Data Initiative—\$309,000; USDA (NASS) Organic Data Initiative—\$250,000; USDA (NIFA) Organic Transition Research Program—\$4 million; USDA (RCBS) Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas—\$2.5 million; USDA (ARS) Genetic Improvements and Translational Breeding Program—report language directing the funding be fully allocated to regionally adapted public cultivar development; and USDA (NIFA) Food Safety Outreach Program—\$2.5 million.

NATIONAL ORGANIC PROGRAM (NOP)

OTA requests \$9.1 million for the National Organic Program, which is charged with regulating the organic sector, and not only enforcing the organic regulations, but ensuring they evolve to keep pace with consumer expectations. This program is vital to meeting growing consumer demand for organic products. Recognizing continued growth of the industry and the need for fiscal restraint, we ask for \$9.1 million, the amount in the President's Budget and an amount that reflects the over 10 percent growth rate of the sector. The industry currently returns over \$200 for every \$1 spent on the NOP, so an increased investment would garner a strong return for the Federal government.

¹ The Organic Trade Association is the membership-based business association representing more than 6,500 organizations in the organic industry including growers, shippers, processors, certifiers, farmers' associations, distributors, importers, exporters, consultants, retailers, and others. OTA's mission is to promote and protect the growth of organic trade to benefit the environment, farmers, the public, and the economy.

² 2013 Organic Trade Association Organic Industry survey.

³ National Organic Program database.

⁴ NASS USDA 2011 Organic Production Survey.

ORGANIC DATA INITIATIVE (ODI)

ODI collects and disseminates data regarding organic agriculture through the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) and the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). This program has been successful in providing valuable information to Congress, government agencies, and the organic industry at a low cost. Because ODI was appropriately funded with mandatory funding in the 2014 Farm Bill, we ask for a modest amount of \$309,000 in discretionary funding for AMS and \$250,000 in discretionary funding for NASS.

AMS collects organic prices and disseminates the data through Market News Reports, which give producers and buyers farm-gate selling prices for several organic products, helping to create a more stable organic market. This is an excellent first step, but organic pricing information falls far behind what is available to conventional agriculture. Organic producers currently receive farm-gate prices for only a limited number of products, while conventional producers receive farm-gate, terminal, and retail price information for many products in all regions of the country. Organic producers, processors, and retailers need this information to maintain a stable organic market. Moreover, this information is necessary for the Secretary to fulfill his recently announced policy directive regarding crop insurance. We therefore request \$309,000 for AMS to continue and expand organic price reporting services in fiscal year 2015.

NASS provides surveys based on Census of Agriculture data. In October 2012, NASS released the Organic Production Survey (2011), the second survey to provide a state-by-state collection of the amount of farmland used for organic production and gross farm sales of organic products. Such information has long been provided for conventional production, and should continue to be funded for organic production. OTA requests that NASS receive \$250,000 in fiscal year 2015, to continue work on the next Organic Production Survey.

ORGANIC TRANSITION RESEARCH PROGRAM (ORG)

OTA requests that ORG be funded at \$4 million in fiscal year 2015, the same level that is included in the President's budget. Authorized by Section 406 of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998, ORG provides funding for research grants that specifically study the relationship between organic agriculture and improving critical water quality problems. This program consistently receives many more funding requests than it can accommodate.

Organic retail sales have grown to over 4 percent of retail agriculture sales, but research funding provided to organic agriculture has never exceeded 2 percent of all agriculture research dollars. Without continued funding of ORG as an organic-specific research grant program, this gap will only increase. The program should be funded at \$4 million to facilitate growth of this important research.

APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER FOR RURAL AREAS (ATTRA)

We request \$2.5 million to fund ATTRA, the amount that is found in the President's budget. ATTRA helps thousands of organic and conventional farmers across the country by supplying information about a wide range of issues. Topics that are routinely asked about include creating rural jobs by encouraging farming; developing new marketing opportunities by focusing on local foods, farm-to-school, and farmers' markets; reducing the use of herbicides and pesticides; employing farm practices that help protect air, water, and soil resources; and reducing energy and water use. ATTRA reports that 30 percent of the calls received relate to organic practices.

GENETIC IMPROVEMENTS AND TRANSLATIONAL BREEDING PROGRAM

OTA requests that the entirety of the funding dedicated to the Genetic Improvements and Translational Breeding Program be dedicated to regionally adapted public cultivar development. Public resources for classical breeding have dwindled in recent decades, and our capacity for public breeding is in critical condition. U.S. agricultural productivity and resilience will be strengthened by the development of new public breeds, lines, and strains with better climate adaptation, drought tolerance, disease resistance, nutritional value, production efficiencies, and impact on the environment. It is essential that the work done by USDA on breeding—investment of public monies—be dedicated entirely to regionally adapted public cultivar development. Public monies should go to public research, not research on privately held breeding technologies.

FOOD SAFETY OUTREACH PROGRAM

OTA requests that the Food Safety Outreach Program be funded at \$2.5 million, the amount that is in the President's budget. This will provide food safety training and technical assistance, education, and extension to owners and operators of small farms, small food processors, and small fruit and vegetable vendors affected by the Food Safety Modernization Act of 2011 (FSMA). This money will help farmers and food processors understand, interpret, implement, and comply with the new food safety regulations currently being proposed by the FDA.

CONCLUSION

Organic agriculture creates economic opportunities for farmers and rural communities, while improving and conserving the condition of the environment and giving consumers the choice to buy foods and other products that are produced according to organic standards. Meeting these funding requests will help to ensure the continued growth of U.S. organic agriculture by promoting and supporting the integrity of the organic label, providing important data, and continuing to support research for organic agriculture.

I thank the Committee and look forward to working with you to advance the organic industry.

[This statement was submitted by Laura Batcha, Executive Director and CEO of the Organic Trade Association (OTA).]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE OUTREACH AND ASSISTANCE TO SOCIALLY
DISADVANTAGED AND VETERAN FARMERS AND RANCHERS

As the subcommittee considers fiscal year 2015 Agriculture Appropriations, we urge you to provide adequate funding for a set of critical programs that make a real difference in communities that most need support. While only a fraction of the full agriculture budget these are the lifeblood for socially disadvantaged, new entry and veteran producers, farmworkers and communities:

Outreach and Assistance to Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers: We request that the committee restore the funding base of the OASDVFR Program to allow the Secretary of Agriculture to assist both socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers and ranchers in participating equitably in the full range of USDA agricultural programs. Specifically we urge you to provide not less than \$10 million in additional funding to supplement the direct funding of \$10 million annually in order to assure the program can accommodate both the traditional and new constituencies of the program, and ensure that Veteran Farmers and Ranchers are able to fully benefit from the program.

The OASDVFR Program helps our nation's historically underserved producers gain access to the United States Department of Agriculture's credit, commodity, conservation and other programs and services by supporting technical assistance to producers through community-based organizations, tribes and educational institutions best prepared to reach and serve them. Established in Section 2501 of the 1990 Farm Bill, OASDFR provides technical assistance to reduce the trend among socially disadvantaged producers of engaging in fewer farm program payments, fewer and lower-valued loans, and less outreach and training than other producers.

- The OASDVFR Program in recent years has served more than 100,000 rural constituents and is an invaluable resource for the more than 400 counties in more than 35 states serving a wide range of socially disadvantaged recipients living in persistent poverty areas of the country.
- The program is bringing diverse producers back to USDA or in the door for the first time greatly increasing participation in the NRCS High-tunnel program and the FSA microloan program. OASDVFR programs are fundamental to the goals and work of Secretary Vilsack's Strikeforce Initiative.
- The 2014 Farm Bill expanded the program to include Veteran Farmers and Ranchers, but with a 50 percent reduction from previous funding levels to provide only \$10 million in direct funds annually. With adequate resources, the OASDVFR Program can also provide critical support for veteran farmers and ranchers. The 2010 Census identified 21.9 million veterans in 2009, including 156,000 American Indian Veterans, 2.4 million African American Veterans, 1.2 million Hispanic Veterans, and 265,000 Asian Veterans. Many Veterans are from rural areas.
- The lack of funding for the program in fiscal year 2013 has meant that groups receiving support have already or are laying off hundreds of experienced staff as the final year of their contracts have expired creating a service gap to thou-

sands of producers who need their assistance to access USDA programs. Restoring these services is essential with a new Farm Bill coming into effect.

We strongly support this important program and ask you to support funding at the fully authorized level to ensure both the traditional constituencies and the expanded constituency of Veteran Farmers and Ranchers are able to fully benefit from the program.

USDA Coordination Activities: Beginning and socially disadvantaged producers have long needed an office at USDA to help better understand and utilize the wide array of USDA services. The Office of Advocacy and Outreach, established in the 2008 Farm Bill, is in full operation and working effectively with communities across the nation to provide equitable access to its programs and enhance the viability and profitability of our nation's diverse and new entry producers. We urge you to provide the full \$2 million authorized to support OAO's staffing and operational needs and activities related to the new Military Veterans Agricultural Liaison as well as the Farmworker Coordinator and the OASDVFR Program; overseeing the Advisory Committees on Minority Farmers and Ranchers, and Beginning Farmers and Ranchers; and managing the 1890, 1994 and Hispanic serving institutions programs. Adequate OAO funding will enhance coordination among USDA agencies as a new Farm Bill takes effect to include underserved constituencies and Strikeforce areas.

In order to provide critically needed services to tribal producers, we urge you to expand funding for the federally Recognized Tribal Extension Program (FRTEP) to at least \$10 million for fiscal year 2015 to reach at least 100 of the 566 Tribes. Congress mandates research and extension services in every county in the nation—over 3,100 offices nationwide, funded cooperatively by county, state, and Federal levels of government. Extension services are not extended to Indian Reservations, except through the limited Federal funds provided through USDA to the FRTEP. Tribes contribute in-kind cost share for office space and a small portion of operating expenses.

Only 36 extension agents are supported on Indian reservations with current funding of \$3 million. The inadequate funding of FRTEP has a profound negative impact on the long-term viability of tribal agriculture, which remains a critical basis for the economic security, health and nutrition of Native Americans.

Fewer than 4 percent of American Indians living on America's Indian reservations have access to these programs, yet more than 97 percent of America's counties have had robust programs since 1914. Increased funding would allow FRTEP to serve better the many tribes who have repeatedly requested full access to these programs. It is time that Native American producers, families, youth and reservation residents receive the same level of service as US citizens who are not reservation-bound. In order to correct this grave inequity, we urge you to provide \$10 million for this program in the fiscal year 2015 Agriculture Appropriation.

The Beginning Farmer and Rancher Individual Development Account (BFRIDA) Program is designed to help beginning farmers and ranchers of limited means finance their farming endeavors through business and financial education and matched savings accounts. This new program helps individuals with financial training and assistance so they can build assets and make needed purchases to get started in agriculture. We urge you support of \$2.5 million fiscal year 2015 appropriation for BFRIDA so it can work together with other new farmer initiatives to create economic opportunities and greater stability for both urban and rural beginning farmers. We further urge you to support the President's fiscal year 2015 Budget Request for program levels of \$1.5 billion for Direct Farm Ownership loans and \$1.252 billion for Direct Operating Loans. We also urge you to instruct FSA to develop price information to improve eligibility and lending capabilities for farmers growing for local and regional food markets.

We also urge you to ensure that farmers and ranchers who are in economic trouble receive fair loan restructuring and servicing of their loans by funding the Federal match for State Mediation Programs at \$5 million. These programs currently operate in 40 states.

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE)—We request that you invest in critical sustainable agriculture research and education conducted at the field level by farmers themselves by including funding for fiscal year 2015 of \$30 million the SARE program.

Healthy Food Financing Initiative: We urge you improve health outcomes and increase access to healthy foods for low-income people by strengthening local food systems through significant investments of funds from both the Department of Agriculture and Department of Treasury necessary to get the Healthy Food Financing Initiative fully operational in fiscal year 2015.

Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer BT (SEBTC) pilot projects: For the past 2 years, USDA has been conducting pilot projects in eight states and two Indian nations that used electronic benefits to reach children when school meals are unavailable. These pilots have been proving remarkably successful at reducing childhood hunger and we urge they be continued with a \$30 million investment.

Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI): We support inclusion of report language and funding for increased public research and development of seed varieties and livestock breeds to ensure the diversity of our nation's food supply. Specifically, we urge the inclusion of report language on public cultivar development be included under AFRI, and for USDA to see classical plant and animal breeding as a priority area within the AFRI process.

Rural Cooperative Development Grants: We urge you to provide \$9.1 million for RCDG, including \$3 million for centers targeting socially disadvantaged producers to assist individuals in beginning and expanding cooperatives. We oppose the Administration's proposal to consolidate RCDG into a Rural Business and Cooperative Grants program.

Rural Microenterprise Assistance Program: We urge you to foster development in rural areas by preserving the full mandatory funding of \$3 million as provided in the 2014 Farm bill and by adding an additional \$3.3 million in discretionary funding, for total support of \$6.3 million.

Value-Added Producer Grants: VAPG offers grants to farmers and ranchers developing farm- and food-related businesses that boost farm income and create jobs in rural America. Growing interest in local and regional foods means greater need for regional supply chains and enterprises that aggregate local production, exactly the kind of rural development strategy VAPG is designed to support. We request no changes in mandatory program spending as well as \$15 million in discretionary funding for VAPG, the same level as included in the final fiscal year 14 bill.

Food Safety Training: We urge you to provide funding to assist farmers to adapt to coming Food Safety and Modernization Act rules for Food Safety Training at \$5 million for fiscal year 2015.

Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas: We urge you to provide \$2.5 million to ATTRA for fiscal year 2015 to provide support to farmers and extension agents across the country.

Organic Transitions Integrated Research Program: We urge you to provide \$5 million to invest in new organic research with farmer delivery systems included and allow organics a fairer portion of the research budget.

Federal-State Market Improvement Program: We request funding be continued at the fiscal year 2014 level of \$1.363 million. This program is critical in matching funds to state departments of agriculture to assist with research and creating new markets for farmers.

Conservation Programs: We further urge you to protect and maintain direct funding for agricultural conservation programs including the Environmental Quality Incentive Program and the Conservation Stewardship Program, and other programs that help producers across the nation protect their land. The diverse producers we represent are returning to USDA through these programs, and building up small operations that care for the land and contribute to the economic viability of small rural communities in some of the poorest areas of the nation.

Implementation and Enforcement of Existing Laws: We strongly support allowing USDA to implement and enforce existing laws relating to provisions of Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) and the Grain Inspection Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) as included in the 2008 Farm Bill. We strongly oppose the use of riders within the appropriations process to limit the authority of the USDA to enforce these important laws.

As you proceed with funding for these important programs for fiscal year 2015, we urge you to consider the impacts of your funding decisions on the next generation of American farmers and ranchers, and with great care to being inclusive of beginning, minority, tribal, women, and limited resource farmers who are often in most need of these important programs.

Rural Coalition/Coalici Rural, Washington, DC Community Food & Justice Coalition, Oakland, CA Farmers Veteran Coalition, Davis, CA

Federation of Southern Cooperatives Rural Training and Research Center, Epes, AL

National Alliance of Farmworker Women, Oxnard, CA National Family Farm Coalition, Washington, DC National Hmong American Farmers, Inc., Fresno, CA

National Latino Farmers and Ranchers Trade Association, Washington, DC

National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, Washington, DC

North Carolina Association of Black Lawyers Land Loss Prevention Project, Durham, NC

21st Century Youth Leadership Movement, Eutaw, Alabama
 Alabama State Association of Cooperatives, Forkland, AL
 Albany Food Justice Coalition, Albany, NY
 American Federation of Government Employees Local 3354, St. Louis, MO
 American Indian Mothers Inc., Shannon, NC
 Arkansas Land and Community Development Corporation, Brinkley, AR
 Ashtabula, Geauga, Lake Counties Farmers Union (Ohio), OH
 Atrisco Land Grant, Atrisco, New Mexico
 California FarmLink, Santa Cruz, CA
 Carolina Farm Stewardship Association, Pittsboro, NC
 CASA del Llano, Hereford, TX
 Center for Social Inclusion, New York, NY
 Citizens For Water, New York, NY
 Colorado Latino Farmers and Ranchers, Antonito, CO
 Concerned Citizens of Wagon Mound and Mora County, Wagon Mound, NM
 Dakota Rural Action, Brookings, SD
 Damascus Citizens for Sustainability, Milanville, PA
 Delgado Farms, El Paso, TX
 Ecohermanas, Washington, DC
 Environmental Justice and Health Alliance for Chemical Policy Reform, Washington, DC
 Fair World Project, Portland, OR
 Farmworker Association of Florida, Apopka, FL
 Fernandez Ranch, Centerville, WA
 FOCUS Churches of Albany, Albany, NY
 Food Chain Workers Alliance, Los Angeles, CA
 Grassroots International, Boston, MA
 Hmong National Development, Inc., Washington, D.C.
 Hunger Action Network of New York State, New York, NY
 Indian Country Agriculture and Resource Development Cooperation, Anadarko, OK
 Indian Nations Conservation Alliance, Twin Bridges, MT
 Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, Minneapolis, MN
 Land Stewardship Project, MN
 Latino Economic Development Center, Minneapolis, MN
 Local Matters, Columbus, OH
 Los Jardines Institute (The Gardens Institute), Albuquerque, NM
 Maine Rural Partners, Orono, MAINE
 Michael Fields Agricultural Institute, East Troy, WI
 Mississippi Association of Cooperatives, Jackson, MS
 Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society, Ceresco, NE
 Northern New Mexico Stockmans' Association, Espanola, New Mexico
 Northwest Farm Bill Action Group, Seattle, WA
 Northwest Forest Worker Center, Albany, CA
 NYH2O, New York, NY
 Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project, Inc., Oklahoma City, OK
 Operation Spring Plant, Inc., Oxford, NC
 Orangeburg County Young Farmer, Orangeburg, SC
 Pesticide Action Network, Oakland, CA
 Pululu Farms, Arroyo Seco, NM
 Quote...Unquote, Inc, Albuquerque, NM
 Roots of Change, Oakland, CA
 Rural Advancement Fund, Orangeburg, SC
 Rural Development Leadership Network, New York, NY
 San Diego 1 in 10 Coalition, San Diego, CA
 San Diego Hunger Coalition, San Diego, CA
 Slow Food California, Sacramento, CA
 South Valley Regional Association of Acequias, Albuquerque, NM
 Southwest Workers Union, San Antonio, TX
 Taos County Economic Development Corporation, Taos, NM
 Victory Garden Foundation, Oakland, CA
 Viva Farms, Burlington, WA
 Western Sustainable Agriculture Working Group, Austin, NV
 WhyHunger, New York, NY
 Winston County Self Help Coop, Louisville, MS
 World Farmers, Inc., Lancaster, MA

[This statement was submitted by Lorette Picciano, Rural Coalition.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE PICKLE PACKERS INTERNATIONAL, INC.

CONCERN FOR SUSTAINED AND INCREASED RESEARCH FUNDING USDA/AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE

Summary

Sustained and increased funding is desperately needed to maintain the research momentum built over recent years and to defray rising fixed costs at laboratory fa-

cilities. Companies in the pickled vegetable industry generously participate in funding and performing short-term research, but the expense for long-term research needed to insure future global competitiveness is too great for individual companies to shoulder on their own.

Additional Budget Requests for fiscal year 2015

Funding needs for USDA/ARS laboratories are as follows:

I. Requests for Program Enhancement—Pickled Vegetables

	Amount
Emerging Disease of Crops	\$500,000
Quality and Utilization of Agricultural Products & Food Safety	500,000
Applied Crop Genomics	500,000
Specialty Crops	500,000
Total Program Enhancements Requested—Pickled Vegetables	\$2,000,000

USDA/ARS RESEARCH PROVIDES:

- Consumers with over 150 safe and healthful vegetable varieties providing vitamins A, C, folate, magnesium, potassium, calcium, and phytonutrients such as antioxidant carotenoids and anthocyanins.
- Genetic resistance for many major vegetable diseases, assuring sustainable crop production with reduced pesticide residues—valued at nearly \$1 billion per year in increased crop production.
- Classical plant breeding methods combined with bio-technological tools, such as DNA markers, genetic maps, and genome sequence to expedite traditional breeding and increase efficiency.
- New vegetable products with economic opportunities amidst increasing foreign competition.
- Improved varieties suitable for machine harvesting, assuring post harvest quality and marketability.
- Fermentation and acidification processing techniques to improve the efficiency of energy use, reduce environmental pollution, and reduce clean water intake while continuing to assure safety and quality of our products.
- Methods for delivering beneficial microorganisms in fermented or acidified vegetables, and produce reduced sodium, healthier products.
- New technology and systems for rapid inspection, sorting and grading of pickling vegetable products.

HEALTH AND ECONOMICAL BENEFITS

- Health agencies continue to encourage increased consumption of fruits and vegetables, useful in preventing heart disease, cancer, stroke, diabetes and obesity.
- Vegetable crops, including cucumbers, peppers, carrots, onions, garlic and cabbage (sauerkraut), are considered “specialty” crops and not part of commodity programs supported by taxpayer subsidies.
- Current farm value for just cucumbers, onions and garlic is estimated at \$2.4 billion with a processed value of \$5.8 billion. These vegetables are grown and/or manufactured in all 50 states.

A STATEMENT OF CONCERN FOR SUSTAINED AND INCREASED RESEARCH FUNDING USDA/ AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE

The pickled vegetable industry strongly supports and encourages your committee in its work of maintaining and guiding the Agricultural Research Service. To accomplish the goal of improved health and quality of life for the American people, the health action agencies of this country continue to encourage increased consumption of fruits and vegetables in our diets. Accumulating evidence from the epidemiology and biochemistry of heart disease, cancer, diabetes and obesity supports this policy. Vitamins (particularly A, C, and folic acid), minerals, and a variety of antioxidant phytochemicals in plant foods are thought to be the basis for correlations between high fruit and vegetable consumption and reduced incidence of these debilitating and deadly diseases.

As an association representing processors that produce over 85 percent of the tonnage of pickled vegetables in North America, it is our goal to produce new products that increase the competitiveness of U.S. agriculture as well as meet the demands

of an increasingly diverse U.S. population that is encouraged to eat more vegetables. The profit margins of growers continue to be narrowed by foreign competition. This industry can grow by meeting today's lifestyle changes with reasonably priced products of good texture and flavor that are high in nutritional value, low in negative environmental impacts, and produced with assured safety from pathogenic microorganisms and from those who would use food as a vehicle for terror. With strong research to back us up, we believe our industry can make a greater contribution toward reducing product costs and improving human diets and health for all economic strata of U.S. society.

Many small to medium sized growers and processing operations are involved in the pickled vegetable industry. We grow and process a group of vegetable crops, including cucumbers, peppers, carrots, onions, garlic, cauliflower, cabbage (Sauerkraut) and Brussels sprouts, which are referred to as 'minor' crops. None of these crops are in any "commodity program" and do not rely on taxpayer subsidies. However, current farm value for just cucumbers, onions and garlic is \$2.4 billion with an estimated processed value of \$5.8 billion. These crops represent important sources of income to farmers and rural America. Growers, processing plant employees and employees of suppliers to this industry reside in all 50 states. To realize its potential in the rapidly changing American economy, this industry will rely upon a growing stream of appropriately directed basic and applied research from four important research programs within the Agricultural Research Service.

APPLIED CROP GENOMICS

The USDA/ARS has the only vegetable crops research unit dedicated to the genetic improvement of cucumbers, carrots, onions and garlic. ARS scientists account for approximately half of the total U.S. public breeding and genetics research on these crops. Their efforts have yielded cucumber, carrot and onion cultivars and breeding stocks that are widely used by the U.S. vegetable industry (i.e., growers, processors, and seed companies). These varieties account for over half of the farm yield produced by these crops today. All U.S. seed companies rely upon this program for developing new varieties, because ARS programs seek to introduce economically important traits (e.g., pest resistances and health-enhancing characteristics) not available in commercial varieties using long-term high risk research efforts. The U.S. vegetable seed industry develops new varieties of cucumbers, carrots, onions, and garlic and over twenty other vegetables used by thousands of vegetable growers. Their innovations meet long-term needs and bring innovations in these crops for the U.S. and export markets, for which the U.S. has successfully competed.

ARS scientists have developed genetic resistance for many major vegetable diseases that is estimated at \$670 million per year in increased crop production, not to mention environmental benefits due to reduction in pesticide use. New research has resulted in cucumbers with improved disease resistance, pickling quality and suitability for machine harvesting. New sources of genetic resistance to viral and fungal diseases, tolerance to environmental stresses, and higher yield have recently been identified along with molecular tools to expedite delivery of elite cucumber lines to U.S. growers.

There are still serious vegetable production problems which need attention. For example, losses of cucumbers, onions, and carrots in the field due to attack by pathogens and pests remains high, nutritional quality needs to be significantly improved and U.S. production value and export markets should be enhanced. Genetic improvement of all the attributes of these valuable crops are at hand through the unique USDA lines and populations (i.e., germplasm) that are available and the new biotechnological methodologies that are being developed by the group. The achievement of these goals will involve the utilization of a wide range of biological diversity available in the germplasm collections for these crops. Classical plant breeding methods combined with bio-technological tools such as DNA markers, genetic maps, and genome sequences to expedite traditional cucumber, carrot and onion breeding and increase its efficiency. With this, new high-value vegetable products based upon genetic improvements developed by our USDA laboratories can offer vegetable processors and growers expanded economic opportunities for U.S. and export markets.

QUALITY AND UTILIZATION OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS & FOOD SAFETY

The USDA/ARS maintains a food science research unit that our industry looks to for new scientific information on the safety of our products and development of new processing technologies related to fermented and acidified vegetables. Major accomplishments include: pasteurization treatments currently used for most acidified vegetables; the preservation technology used for manufacturing shelf stable sweet pickles; and fermentation technology (purging) used to prevent the formation of air

pockets within fermented pickles. With the passage of the Food Safety Modernization Act, commercial producers of acidified foods must prove that they meet critical limits established for microbial safety. USDA-ARS has supplied technical expertise and the scientific data needed to define safe processing conditions for domestic and imported pickled vegetable products, saving considerable expense to the industry for microbial challenge studies. These data are currently used to support required process filings, and have helped establish a scientific basis for acidified food regulations. Additional funding is needed to support the important research initiatives detailed below.

First, nearly all retail pickled vegetables are pasteurized for safety and shelf stability. Current steam and water bath pasteurizers rely on technology from the 1940s and 50s. Promising new technologies include continuous flow microwave technology and “hot-fill-and-hold” pasteurization. The objective is to reduce water use and significantly improve energy efficiency with new, scientifically validated thermal processing technology.

Second, additional research that offers significant economic and environmental advantages to the U.S. industry includes the reduction or replacement of salt in commercial vegetable fermentations and bulk acidification. Calcium substitution of salt in commercial vegetable processing has the potential to significantly reduce chloride levels in waste waters and sludge currently delivered to landfills; and create opportunities to manufacture healthier, calcium enriched, reduced sodium vegetable products. Reducing environmental impact and production costs for the manufacture of healthier products is essential to the sustainability of the U.S. industry.

Third, the market of refrigerated vegetable products is rapidly growing in the U.S. These products are attractive to conscientious customers targeting healthier, beneficial and bioactive food formulations. Fermented vegetables presented in the refrigerated sector deliver natural microbiota perceived as probiotic bacteria by a growing market. New processing technologies and knowledge of the intrinsic value of the natural microbiota in fermented vegetables are needed to develop genuine, high value, probiotic vegetable products that provide health benefits for the average U.S. citizen.

SPECIALTY CROPS

The USDA/ARS conducts research on the development of innovative technologies for rapid, nondestructive measurement and grading of fruits and pickling vegetables to enhance product quality and marketability and achieve labor cost savings. The research program is nationally and internationally recognized for its pioneering research and development and technology transfer effort in imaging and spectroscopic inspection technologies, which have found wide applications in food quality and safety inspection. Currently, ARS researchers are developing a spectral imaging-based common inspection platform and other related sensing technologies with substantially improved capabilities for quality evaluation and grading of pickling vegetables and fruits at the processing facility and in the field.

Development of new and/or improved sensing technologies will help growers and processors assess, monitor, inspect, and grade pickling vegetables and horticultural products rapidly and accurately for internal and external quality characteristics at various steps of harvest and postharvest handling and processing operations. This will minimize postharvest losses of food that has already been produced, ensure high quality, consistent final product and consumer satisfaction, and reduce production cost. Expansion of the USDA/ARS research in food quality sensing and automation is critically needed, so that it can develop and deliver these much needed technologies to the specialty crop industry.

EMERGING DISEASE OF CROPS

USDA/ARS vegetable research addresses national problems confronting the vegetable industry of the southeastern U.S. The mission of the laboratory is to develop disease and pest resistant vegetables, and also new, reliable, environmentally-sound disease and pest management practices that do not rely on conventional pesticides. Programs currently address 14 crops, including those in the cabbage, cucumber, and pepper families, all of major importance to the pickling industry. USDA/ARS research is recognized world-wide, and its accomplishments include over 150 new vegetable varieties and many improved management practices.

Expansion of this program would directly benefit the southeastern vegetable industry. Vegetable growers depend heavily on synthetic pesticides to control diseases and pests. Without the availability of certain pesticides that have been eliminated for use, producers are likely to experience crop failures unless other effective, non-pesticide control methods are readily identified. In this context, the research on im-

proved, more efficient and environmentally compatible vegetable production practices and resistant varieties continues to be absolutely essential. This research can help provide U.S. growers with a competitive edge they need to sustain and keep their industry vibrant, allowing it to expand in the face of increasing foreign competition. Current cucumber varieties are highly susceptible to a new strain of the downy mildew pathogen which has caused considerable damage to commercial cucumber production in eastern states in recent years. A new plant pathologist position could address this critical situation.

FUNDING NEEDS FOR THE FUTURE

It remains critical that funding continues the forward momentum in pickled vegetable research that the U.S. now enjoys and to increase funding levels as warranted by planned expansion of research projects to maintain U.S. competitiveness. The diverse array of companies making up our industry assumes responsibility for short-term research, but the expense and risk are too great for individual companies to commit to the long-term research needed to insure future competitiveness.

It is important to note that fiscal year 2013 Enacted funding for USDA/ARS laboratories totaled \$10,212,000. However, fiscal year 2013 Enacted funding for all cucurbits equaled just \$3,665,000 with only \$1,876,000 directed toward cucumber and pickled vegetable research. For fiscal year 2015, PPI is requesting an additional \$2,000,000 in program enhancements that will provide needed research for cucumber and pickled vegetables.

EMERGING DISEASE OF CROPS

There is a critical need to establish and fund a plant pathology position to address cucumber diseases, especially the disease caused by a new strain of the downy mildew pathogen responsible for recent extensive damage to cucumber production in eastern states. The pathologist is needed to characterize pathogen strains and to develop new management approaches, as well as resistant cucumber varieties, to combat the disease. Ultimately, this proposed plant pathologist would accomplish research that results in effective protection of cucumbers from disease without the use of conventional pesticides.

	Amount
Fiscal year	
2013 Enacted	\$425,000
2014 Estimate	\$425,000
2015 (Proposed budget)	To be determined
2015 Additional Request (Plant Pathologist & support)	\$500,000

QUALITY AND UTILIZATION OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS AND FOOD SAFETY

The current funding includes research and development for a variety of vegetable products, including fermented and acidified vegetables. For new research initiatives to reduce energy and water use, reduce environmental impact from commercial fermentations, and develop new health-promoting food (probiotic) technology, we request additional support of \$500,000. This will provide support for Post-Doctoral or Pre-Doctoral research associates along with necessary equipment and supplies.

	Amount
Fiscal year	
2013 Enacted	\$599,000
2014 Estimate	\$599,000
2015 (Proposed budget)	To be determined
2015 Additional Request (Post-doctoral and Pre-doctoral Research Associate & support)	\$500,000

APPLIED CROP GENOMICS

Emerging and persisting diseases, such as downy mildew, southern root knot nematode, and angular leaf spot of cucumber, threaten production of the crop in all production areas. We request an additional \$500,000 to fully fund the scientists and support staff, including graduate students and post-doctorates for identifying and researching new sources of genetic resistance to emerging diseases.

	Amount
Fiscal year	
2013 Enacted	\$421,000
2014 Estimate	\$421,000
2015 (Proposed budget)	To be determined
2015 Additional Request (Post-doctoral and Pre-doctoral Research Associate & support)	\$500,000

SPECIALTY CROPS

The current funding is far short of the level needed to carry out research on inspection, sorting and grading of pickling cucumbers and other vegetable crops to assure the processing and quality of pickled products. An increase of \$550,000 in the current base funding level would be needed to fund the research engineer position.

	Amount
Fiscal year	
2013 Enacted	\$145,000
2014 Estimate	\$145,000
2015 (Proposed budget)	To be determined
2015 Additional Request (Research Engineer & support)	\$500,000

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE RURAL COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT GRANT (RCDG)

CooperationWorks! is requesting the Rural Cooperative Development Grant (RCDG) program of USDA's Rural Business—Cooperative Service be continued in the fiscal year 2015 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

The President's fiscal year 2015 budget request, like the previous fiscal year 2014 budget request, contains a proposal to eliminate a number of rural development programs, including the Rural Cooperative Development Grant (RCDG) program, and consolidate them into a new \$57.5 million economic development grant program. CooperationWorks! is seriously concerned with the elimination of the only program in the Federal government focused on the development of cooperative enterprise, providing needed technical assistance for cooperative expansion and start-up. The consolidation of the RCDG program in our view will diminish the agency's focus and mission of supporting the advancement of self-help programs, and cooperatives specifically, and further takes away the ability of Congress to establish priorities and accountability for the programs that Congress has historically authorized and funded.

As the only network of technical assistance providers in the United States, connecting over 100 professionals in rural and urban areas alike, covering all 50 states, CooperationWorks! expresses its strong support for the Rural Cooperative Development Grant (RCDG) program and encourages the committee to support it through funding in fiscal year 2015 and beyond that will continue to allow cooperative development centers to operate and further expand its reach into more rural communities to provide the types of technical assistance to cooperatives that allow for economic growth and job creation. In addition, we request for initial funding of a new inter-agency working group that was created in the recent Farm Bill and which is to be coordinated and chaired by USDA. This funding would help to further efforts to foster cooperative development and ensure coordination with Federal agencies and national and local cooperative organizations that have cooperative programs and interests.

The RCDG program is a competitive grants program, administered by USDA's Rural Development, Rural Business-Cooperative Services Program. The primary objective of the RCDG program is to improve the economic condition of rural areas by assisting individuals or entities in the startup, expansion, or operational improvement of rural cooperatives and other business entities. Grants are awarded competitively on an annual basis to nonprofits or institutions of higher education that operate cooperative development centers who provide technical assistance to those seeking to form cooperatively owned businesses in rural areas. The maximum grant amount that USDA provides in a fiscal year is \$200,000. There is a 25 percent cost share requirement of the total project cost (5 percent cost share for 1994 Institutions). Cooperative development centers currently serve rural communities in all 50 states. They use the grants to fund critical technical assistance for economic development, such as legal and accounting assistance, feasibility studies, business

planning, board education, and other services that help ensure the success of these businesses.

We understand that in this current fiscal environment, Federal funding is limited and Congress has to make tough spending choices. We believe funding in the RCDG account is a sound investment toward rural economic development and job growth for more Americans. Through outcome surveys conducted among the RCDG recipients in our membership, which includes over half of all RCDG funded centers, we found that in 2011 for every \$1,362 in Federal dollars there was a result of one job saved or created. This efficient use of program funds is possible because of the matching funding requirement in the program, the self-help nature of the cooperative business model, and the efficient use of funds stewarded by RCDG program recipients.

[This statement was submitted by Tom Pierson, Advocacy Chair for CooperationWorks!]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH RESEARCH (SWHR)

SWHR is pleased to submit written testimony to urge the Committee to prioritize and provide an increase to the fiscal year 2015 budget authority (BA) appropriations (non-user fees) for the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) of \$2.784 billion, a \$223 million increase over fiscal year 2014 and \$200 million above the President's budget proposal for FDA. In addition, SWHR supports an allocation of \$7 million for the FDA Office of Women's Health (OWH) for fiscal year 2015. These recommended allocations will allow the FDA to address resource shortages across all centers, implement critical improvements in infrastructure, and continue investment in OWH, the critical voice on women's health and women's health research within the Agency.

The FDA, as regulator of products covering more than a quarter of the US economy, should receive priority funding as its responsibilities are critical to the health and well-being of all Americans. Each year, Congress adds to FDA's ever increasing responsibilities but does not provide appropriate funds to meet those demands reasonably, straining the FDA's abilities. The fiscal year 2015 appropriations must reflect an amount that meets the needs of the Agency demanded by Congress.

More than 47 percent of Americans have a chronic disease and 22 percent have multiple conditions. Eighty-two percent of Americans take over the counter or prescription medications and 30 percent take more than 5 medications. American consumers and patients expect proactive scientific and research leadership from the FDA while demanding assurance of the safety and effectiveness of their food, drugs and cosmetics. To meet this expectation, the FDA spends over 80 percent of its budget on salary costs in maintaining and recruiting talented and smart researchers and scientists who can keep pace with scientific innovation. Globalization and the complexity of our scientific research world have put demands on the FDA that need additional appropriated resources. Unfortunately, due to congressional funding levels and COLA requirements, FDA annually is challenged and must frequently postpone needed investments in infrastructure, technology, and human collateral due to budget constraints.

While SWHR recognizes that Congress is focused on reducing our Federal deficit, appropriate budgetary allocation must be provided to allow FDA to react in a proactive manner for new scientific innovation and against emerging or known threats to food and drug security. As the thought leader in research on biological sex differences in disease, SWHR is dedicated to transforming women's health through science, advocacy, and education and believes that sustained funding for the FDA and its regulatory responsibilities is absolutely essential if the U.S. is to meet the needs of its citizens, especially women, and maintain its gold standard.

In the past two decades, scientists have uncovered significant biological and physiological differences between men and women. Traditionally, the term women's health represented a women's reproductive capability because science and medicine believed that women and men were biologically the same. We now know this is not the case.

Biological and physiological differences and hormonal fluctuations play a role in the rate of drug absorption, distribution, metabolism, elimination as well as ultimate effectiveness of response in females as opposed to males. Information about the ways drugs may differ in various populations, however, is often unexplored. As was noted by the FDA in a recent The 60 Minutes segment (Feb. 9, 2014), women may require a lower dosage of some drugs because of different rates of absorption or metabolism (Ambien). The 60 Minutes highlighted the importance of sex and gender differences research and the need to examine sex from the earliest phases of research, starting in basic science.

The FDA has a critical role in human subject research in assuring female recruitment and retention is set at appropriate levels and not too low to provide statistically significant results in research. American women should have the confidence that drugs, devices and biologics that have been approved for use in both men and women have been appropriately analyzed for sex differences and the finding publicly reported to a meaningful way for usage by both healthcare providers and patients. America's biomedical development process, while continuing to deliver new and better targeted medications to combat disease, does not routinely analyze and report sex differences. FDA's must enforce its own requirement that the data acquired during research of a new drug or device's safety and efficacy be reported and analyzed by sex.

Pursuant to Section 907 of the Food and Drug Administration Safety and Innovation Act of 2012 (FDASIA), the FDA released a report on August 20, 2013 on the inclusion of demographic subgroups in clinical trials and data analysis in drugs, biologic and device applications submitted to the agency. The report, both the summary and the data, coordinated and written by OWH and the Office of Minority Health (OMH) demonstrated that while demographic data was submitted significant gaps still existed with respect to representation, reporting and analysis of the data for women, minorities and the elderly. The FDA is currently designing an action plan, with short and long term recommendations and implementation strategies to help FDA transform its approach toward important demographic data. SWHR believes this will result in greater knowledge of reactions to drugs and medical treatments by sex, age, race and ethnicity, and further, greater understanding of devices and their usage or limitations in women.

SWHR has long advocated that sex differences data discovered from clinical trials be presented in a meaningful way to the medical community and to patients through education, drug labels and packaging inserts, and other forms of alerts directed to key audiences. Through more accurate, sex-specific drug and device information and labeling the FDA will better serve male and female patients, and will ensure that appropriate sex specific data analysis of post-market surveillance is placed in the hands of physicians and ultimately the patient in a timely manner.

SWHR believes that Congress must commit to continued investment in FDA's informational technology to assure continued advancement of data standardization, collection and analysis. In our ever evolving digital world, the FDA needs to keep pace with scientific discoveries and must have the tools to do so. Congress must dedicate resources from appropriated dollars and user fees to FDA's IT systems and infrastructure to meet this demand.

FDA OFFICE OF WOMEN'S HEALTH (OWH)

OWH must have a steady and sustained investment to remain the key resource in advancing regulatory science in women's health and reporting of sex differences. OWH's programs ensure that sex and gender differences in the efficacy of drugs (such as metabolism rates), devices (sizes and functionality) and diagnostics are taken into consideration in reviews and approvals. OWH seeks to correct sex and gender disparities and monitors women's health priorities, through leadership and active engagement with the FDA Centers.

American women rely on the tools OWH provides to them to help with their healthcare decisions. Each year, OWH consumer pamphlets are the most requested of any documents at the government printing facility in Colorado, with more than 8 million distributed to women across America, including target populations such as Hispanic communities, seniors and low-income citizens on topics such as breast cancer screening, diabetes, menopause hormone therapy, and medication use during pregnancy.

In partnership with the National Institutes of Health Office of Research on Women's Health, OWH created a website for an on-line sex and gender course to provide additional educational tools for medical practice and scientific innovation. Most recently, a third course in the series will be going on-line. All courses offer free continuing education credits for physicians, pharmacists and nurses. In addition, OWH developed a toolkit and curriculum in a joint effort with the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy. It is a Women's Health curriculum elective given for credit by the schools and also contains a tool kit so teachers can incorporate elements into other courses. Further, OWH is a strategic partner in the planning of the research roadmap for FDA, helping to align the research and structural needs for the agency for the next 3 years.

Women across our great nation rely on OWH's high quality, timely information to make medical decisions on behalf of themselves and their families. OWH's highly regarded website is a vital tool for consumers and physicians, providing free,

downloadable fact sheets on over one hundred different illnesses, diseases, and health related issues for women. OWH has created medication charts on several chronic diseases, listing all the medications that are prescribed and available for each disease. These are vital functions that our healthcare professionals and the public understand and utilize daily to make healthcare decision and must be maintained.

[This statement was submitted by Martha Nolan, Vice President, Public Policy, Society for Women's Health Research (SWHR).]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER

The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) submits this testimony regarding the dangers posed to workers and consumers by the pending regulation proposed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service entitled "Modernization of Poultry Slaughter Inspection," 77 Fed. Reg. 4,408–4,456 (Apr. 26, 2012). If implemented, this regulation threatens the health and safety of thousands of poultry slaughter and processing workers. The rule is part of the agency's overhaul of its food safety inspection program, proposed changes that have been harshly criticized by food safety and workers' rights advocates alike. The USDA's proposed budget for the coming fiscal year reflects cuts to food safety inspection funds that indicate intent to implement this ill-advised rule.

1. THE USDA'S PROPOSED RULE PUTS WORKERS AND CONSUMERS AT RISK.

The FSIS's proposed rule would increase the already intolerably fast speeds of the poultry slaughtering and processing lines throughout the country, from between 70 and 140 birds per minute, depending on the number of food safety inspectors, to a new maximum of 175 birds per minute. Currently there is no state or Federal line speed standard designed to protect the safety of workers who produce this food. The USDA's regulations are the only limit on line speeds for this industry. The Subcommittee's intervention to halt or amend this rule, and to restore the funding needed to avoid its implementation, would protect workers as well as consumers.

Numerous studies find strong correlations between rates of repetitive motions and likelihood of musculoskeletal injuries such as carpal tunnel syndrome, which suggests that faster speeds will increase the risk of worker injuries. The SPLC believes that the rule must therefore be withdrawn in its entirety. If the proposed rule is not withdrawn, the USDA should at least incorporate meaningful and enforceable work speed safety standards to protect plant employees from repetitive motion injuries and other musculoskeletal disorders. The rule should at a minimum be stayed until adequate measures are incorporated into the regulations to ensure that the health and safety of workers in poultry processing plants are protected.

The Southern Poverty Law Center and Alabama Appleseed Center for Law and Justice recently published a report entitled *Unsafe at These Speeds: Alabama's Poultry Industry and its Disposable Workers*,¹ providing a unique inside look at the operation of poultry plants and documenting health, safety, and other conditions affecting workers in all positions in the poultry industry—from chicken catchers, live hangers, and rehangers to deboners, skin pullers, and box stackers. The data and information included in this report leaves no question that the current line speeds are too fast and any regulation that increases these speeds and allows the industry to regulate itself is unacceptable.

Alabama alone produces more than 1 billion broilers per year—ranking it third among states behind Georgia and Arkansas. The broiler chicken industry has an \$8.5 billion impact on the state—generating about 75,000 jobs and 10 percent of Alabama's economy—and one that plays a vital economic role in numerous small towns. But it all comes at a steep price for the low-paid, hourly workers who face the relentless pressure of the mechanized processing line.

Nearly three-fourths of the 302 workers whom we interviewed revealed that they had suffered some type of significant work-related injury or illness, yet 68 percent felt that they could not ask their supervisors to improve health or safety hazards. In spite of many factors that lead to undercounting of injuries in poultry plants, the employer-reported data collected by the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) reflected an injury rate of 5.9 percent for poultry processing workers in 2010, a rate that is more than 50 percent higher than the 3.8 percent injury rate for all U.S. workers.

¹A copy of the report is available at: <http://www.splcenter.org/get-informed/publications/Unsafe-at-These-Speeds>.

The realities workers discussed with us demonstrate an ongoing health and safety crisis in the poultry processing industry, principally driven by the punishingly fast speeds at which slaughtering and processing lines currently operate. Over three-fourths (78 percent) of workers said that an increase in the line speed makes them feel less safe, makes their work more painful, and causes more injuries. These speeds are a predominant factor in the most common type of injuries, called musculoskeletal disorders. The most common injuries suffered involved debilitating pain in workers' hands and upper limbs, gnarled fingers and other permanent changes to workers' bodies, cuts, and skin and respiratory problems. Workers in jobs most sharply affected by processing line speeds and the high rates of repetitive motions reported the highest rates of musculoskeletal injuries. Plant workers, many whom are immigrants, are often treated as disposable resources by their employers. Threats of deportation and firing are frequently used to keep them silent about injuries and abuses, even if they are United States citizens or have lawful immigration status.

In light of these findings, we respectfully urge members of the Subcommittee to use their oversight authority and ask the Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service to withdraw its proposed rule entitled "Modernization of Poultry Slaughter Inspection," especially the provisions that would increase maximum permitted line speeds to 175 birds per minute and replace independent Federal food safety inspectors with plant employees already too intimidated to ask for protections for their own health. If the proposed rule is not withdrawn altogether, the Food Safety and Inspection Service should, at a minimum, require plants that opt into the new inspection system to permit the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health to conduct health hazard evaluations, as the FSIS previously required in its Salmonella Initiative Program rule, published at 76 Fed. Reg. 41,186. We further urge the Subcommittee to restore funding to the USDA's budget to avoid implementation of the proposed rule and to preserve food safety inspector capacity to adequately inspect every chicken slaughtered for consumption as required under the Poultry Products Inspection Act.

Increases in the speeds at which slaughter and evisceration lines run put the safety of all categories of workers in poultry plants at risk. First, the workers most directly affected will be workers known as live hangers. These workers must pick up and hang every live chicken arriving at a plant at a pace fast enough to keep up with slaughter line speeds. A live hang worker often must hang 60 birds per minute. Second, the proposed rule would in essence create a new job classification of plant workers sorting carcasses for defects. These workers would have to collectively review and sort 175 birds per minute. USDA employees currently conducting this work already suffer repetitive motion injuries and file workers' compensation claims as a result.

This risk would be, if anything, heightened for plant employees now assuming these duties. Third, rehang workers, who must hang carcasses on shackles or place them onto cones for other workers to cut, debone, or otherwise process, would face increased risks of repetitive motion injuries. Fourth, while it is possible for processing lines that are located after the area known as the "chiller" to operate at different speeds from the slaughter and evisceration lines that are most directly affected by the USDA's proposed rule, additional birds slaughtered at new, higher speeds would still need to be processed within a limited time of slaughter, making it unlikely that there would be no changes in other areas of plants. As an example, an increase in a worker's rate of motion by even just one bird per minute equates to approximately 480 additional cutting, trimming, hanging, or other motions in a typical work shift, and to approximately 2,400 additional motions in a standard work week, during which each worker already performs tens of thousands of such strenuous motions. Even what may seem superficially like a small increase in the burden on each individual worker may have long-term and permanent disabling effects on her body.

2. NIOSH'S RECENT HEALTH HAZARD EVALUATIONS FOUND SEVERE HEALTH AND SAFETY HAZARDS RELATED TO FAST WORK SPEEDS AND REPETITIVE MOTIONS, AND DO NOT SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF A RULE PERMITTING INCREASED LINE SPEEDS.

The SPLC particularly wishes to clarify the import of two recent reports issued by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). The USDA has stated to the public that NIOSH's health hazard evaluation from a poultry processing plant in South Carolina suggested that line speeds may be increased without adverse effect on the health and safety of plant employees. However, NIOSH evaluated conditions in a plant that did not increase work speeds and was not implementing the same changes as USDA has proposed. The USDA should not draw con-

clusions about what the results would be if the rule were published based on a study of a plant operating under different conditions.

The NIOSH report confirmed that poultry processing workers suffer extraordinarily high rates of painful and often permanently crippling injuries on the job and validates the fact that fast work speeds pose a serious risk to workers' health and safety. It evaluated working conditions at one plant in South Carolina—a plant not operating in the agency's HIMP pilot program. The plant was evaluated after it requested a waiver from the USDA to combine two evisceration lines into one.

USDA should not use an evaluation showing consistently dangerous conditions related to work speed in a plant where work speeds remained steady to justify letting companies increase such speeds elsewhere. Key differences in the operations of the plant evaluated for this report and plants that will implement the rule when it is finalized make comparisons impossible. It is inaccurate for the USDA to conclude that NIOSH's study shows no effect from a line speed increase. The key differences include:

- NIOSH did not test the effects of an increase in work speed at the South Carolina plant.
 - The number of birds processed per minute by each worker did not change.
 - The South Carolina plant did not make the same types of line-related changes that plants will likely make under the USDA's proposed rule.
 - Following the initial NIOSH evaluation, the plant reconfigured its evisceration lines from two lines to one, but did not increase work speeds.
- What the NIOSH poultry plant evaluation does clearly show are extraordinarily high levels of crippling injuries at current work speeds. For example:
- 42 percent of workers in the evaluation had evidence of painful and often permanently disabling carpal tunnel syndrome.
 - Moderate or severe mononeuropathy, a type of nerve damage, was found in 80 percent of workers with carpal tunnel syndrome.
 - Reports of hand or wrist symptoms of musculoskeletal disorders from workers on the evisceration line increased from 53 percent of the workers to 62 percent after the evisceration line reconfiguration.

The employer also failed to implement NIOSH's recommendations for better protecting worker safety and health, including reducing repetition and hand and wrist activity in job tasks to reduce carpal tunnel syndrome. In its final report, NIOSH again recommends that the employer design job tasks so that they are below the recommended threshold limits to minimize the risk for developing carpal tunnel syndrome. NIOSH specifically recommends "reducing the speed of all cone lines to reduce repetition."

The findings of the recent NIOSH report do not justify the USDA moving forward with its proposed rule to increase evisceration line speeds and the removal of food safety inspectors from those lines.

3. CONCLUSION

A central aspect of any effort to "modernize" the poultry industry must be an end to the epidemic of repetitive motion injuries. This could be accomplished by limiting line speeds and the number of repetitions required of workers; by enforcing rights to bathroom and other rest breaks; and by requiring other ergonomically sound practices. These minimal worker safety protections must not be sacrificed. The health and safety of these workers should be of utmost concern to this Subcommittee and the agencies it oversees. This is why the SPLC, along with Nebraska Appleseed and a total of fifteen civil rights and workers' rights organizations, filed a formal rulemaking petition with OSHA and the USDA on September 3, 2013 calling for these agencies to promulgate a clear, enforceable, and slower work speed safety standard in meat and poultry processing plants.² We have yet to receive a formal response from either agency.

We thank you for this opportunity to discuss our findings, the problems they pose, and possible solutions.

[This statement was submitted by Tom Fritzsche, Staff Attorney, Southern Poverty Law Center, Immigrant Justice Project.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

The Wildlife Society appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony concerning the fiscal year 2015 budgets for the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Farm Service Agency. The Wildlife Society was founded in 1937 and is a non-profit scientific and educational association representing nearly 10,000 professional

wildlife biologists and managers dedicated to excellence in wildlife stewardship through science and education. Our mission is to represent and serve the professional community of scientists, managers, educators, technicians, planners, and others who work actively to study, manage, and conserve wildlife and habitats worldwide. The Wildlife Society is committed to strengthening all Federal programs that benefit wildlife and their habitats on agricultural and other private land.

ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE

Wildlife Services, a unit of APHIS, is responsible for controlling wildlife damage to agriculture, aquaculture, forest, range, and other natural resources, monitoring wildlife-borne diseases, and managing wildlife at airports. Its activities are based on the principles of wildlife management and integrated damage management, and are carried out cooperatively with state fish and wildlife agencies. In fiscal year 2015, the budget proposal includes funding to continue a national feral swine control program, working cooperatively with the States currently experiencing issues with feral swine. In recognition of the important work that Wildlife Services performs regarding methods development and wildlife damage management, we request that Congress support the President's request of \$106 million to Wildlife Services in fiscal year 2015.

A key budget line in Wildlife Service's operations is Methods Development, which funds the National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC). Much of the newest research critical to state wildlife agencies is being performed at NWRC. In order for state wildlife management programs to be the most up-to-date, the work of the NWRC must continue. We recommend funding Methods Development at \$19 million in fiscal year 2015.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

The Renewable Resources Extension Act (RREA) provides an expanded, comprehensive extension program for forest and rangeland renewable resources. RREA funds, which are apportioned to State Extension Services, effectively leverage cooperative partnerships at an average of four to one, with a focus on private landowners. The need for RREA educational programs is greater than ever because of continuing fragmentation of land ownership, urbanization, diversity of landowners needing assistance, and increasing societal concerns about land use and increasing human impacts on natural resources. The Wildlife Society recommends that the Renewable Resources Extension Act be funded at \$10 million.

The McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Program is essential to the future of resource management on non-industrial private forestlands while conserving natural resources, including fish and wildlife. As the demand for forest products grows, privately held forests will be increasingly needed to supplement resources obtained from national forest lands. However, commercial trees take many decades to produce. In the absence of long-term research, such as that provided through McIntire-Stennis, the nation might not be able to meet future forest-product needs as resources are harvested. We appreciate the \$34 million in fiscal year 2014 and urge that amount to be continued in fiscal year 2015, per the President's request.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Farm Bill conservation programs are more important than ever, given the huge backlog of qualified applicants, increased pressure on farmland from biofuels development, urban sprawl, and the concurrent declines in wildlife habitat and water quality. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), which administers many Farm Bill conservation programs, is one of the primary Federal agencies ensuring our public and private lands are made resilient to climate change. NRCS does this through a variety of programs that are aimed at conserving land, protecting water resources, and mitigating effects of climate change.

One key program within the overall NRCS discretionary budget is Conservation Operations. The fiscal year 2015 request for Conservation Operations is \$815 million. We urge you to provide \$843.4 million for Conservation Operations, which includes Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA). Due to the General Services Administration's recent decentralization of responsibility for making building rental payments, the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) will for the first time have to make rental payments out of the Conservation Operations budget. NRCS expects to pay \$28.6 million in rent in fiscal year 2015. When this change is taken into account, the Administration's request of \$814.8 million for Conservation Operations would actually reduce the amount of funding available for conservation operations by \$26.6 million relative to fiscal year 2014.

Conservation Operation's Technical Assistance (TA) sub-activity provides funding for NRCS to support implementation of the various Farm Bill programs. The fiscal year 2015 budget proposal recommends \$717 million in funding for TA, a slight increase from fiscal year 2014. The Wildlife Society encourages you to support funding for TA at \$717 million.

Overall, The Wildlife Society believes strong support for TA delivery is needed. Implementing the changes in the 2014 Farm Bill will require significant conservation planning and producer education effort. In the 2014 Farm Bill, Congress showed strong support for the use of mandatory funds for TA, though these funds can only be used in association with a specific farm bill program. Appropriated funds for Conservation Technical Assistance are still essential for NRCS to provide good customer service and strong conservation results.

The Wildlife Society also supports the continuation of funding for the Conservation Effects Assessment Project. Information gathered from this effort will greatly assist in monitoring accomplishments and identifying ways to further enhance effectiveness of NRCS programs.

After several years of negotiations, Congress recently passed the Agriculture Act of 2014 with broad bipartisan support. This recently passed Farm Bill renewed a suite of extremely popular and effective conservation programs, but reduced mandatory funding by \$4 billion. It is critical that Congress ensure that all of direct spending on conservation programs, as provided by the authorizing committees in the Farm Bill, can be spent as Congress intended in fiscal year 2015. The Wildlife Society recommends Farm Bill conservation programs be funded at levels mandated in the 2014 Farm Bill. Demand for these programs continues to grow during this difficult economic climate at a time when greater assistance is needed to address natural resource challenges, including climate change, soil quality deficiencies, declining pollinator health, disease and invasive species, water quality and quantity issues, and degraded, fragmented and lost habitat for fish and wildlife.

We do have some concerns about the absorption of the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP), a voluntary program for landowners who want to improve wildlife habitat on their land, into the Environmental Quality Habitat Incentives Program, as mandated by the 2014 Farm Bill. EQIP was funded at \$1.374 billion in fiscal year 13 and the President's fiscal year 2015 request is \$1.35 billion. While at least 5 percent of EQIP funds must go towards wildlife conservation, we remain concerned that this \$88 million decrease in overall funding coupled with the additional program responsibilities due to the absorption of WHIP could translate into lesser emphasis on critical wildlife conservation efforts.

FARM SERVICE AGENCY

The Administration's request would slightly reduce funding for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) to \$1.957 billion in fiscal year 2015. Lands enrolled in CRP are important for the conservation of soil on some of the Nation's most erodible cropland. These lands also contribute to water quantity and quality, provide habitat for wildlife that reside on agricultural landscapes, sequester carbon, and provide a strategic forage reserve that can be tapped as a periodic compatible use in times when other livestock forage is limited due to drought or other natural disasters. We strongly encourage Congress to fund CRP at a level that fully utilizes program enrollment authority through CRP general sign-up.

Thank you for considering the views of wildlife professionals. We look forward to working with you and your staff to ensure adequate funding for wildlife conservation.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAM USA

The World Food Program USA, on behalf of the world's hungriest people, urges the subcommittee to provide the strongest possible funding to US international food aid programs. Specifically, we request the following fiscal year 15 funding levels for three programs within the jurisdiction of the subcommittee:

- Title II Food for Peace—\$1.84 billion
- McGovern Dole Food for Education—\$209.5 million
- Local and Regional Food Purchase program (LRP) newly authorized in the 2014 Farm Bill—\$80 million (full authorized level)

There are 842 million hungry people in the world. Global hunger threatens US international economic and national security interests. Robust funding for the three United States international food aid programs described in this testimony is vital to preserving US leadership and encouraging other countries to contribute their fair share in the fight against global hunger. The Senate Appropriations Committee has

been a leader over the years in ensuring adequate funding for U.S. food aid programs. We encourage you to continue that proud tradition of leadership for fiscal year 2015.

FOOD FOR PEACE

Food for Peace provides emergency food and development assistance to millions suffering from hunger and malnutrition. For the past 50 years, Food for Peace (FFP) has been the primary vehicle for providing food aid in response to natural disasters, crises, and conflicts around the world. Maintaining robust funding for Food for Peace Title II and finding ways to stretch that funding further is imperative.

While the United States remains the largest donor of global food assistance, the reach of U.S. food assistance has dramatically declined due to a sharp net drop of over a half billion dollars in Food for Peace programs since 2009. With the ongoing Syria crisis and emergency food requirements in Africa and parts of Asia, global need will likely increase in 2014 and 2015. Supporting FFP at \$1.84 billion would allow the U.S. to reach approximately 50 million people with lifesaving food aid and maintain its global leadership.

FFP programs are the foundation of global efforts to confront hunger and malnutrition. FFP includes emergency programs that keep people alive through natural disasters, conflict, and food security crises and nonemergency developmental programs that address underlying sources of chronic hunger through multiyear investments in nutrition, agricultural productivity and diversification of household incomes.

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) is the largest US food aid partner, implementing programs that account for roughly 90 percent of Food for Peace emergency food aid funding. WFP estimates \$6.2 billion will be required to fund its 2015 emergency food assistance programs. Over \$ 2 billion—about 1/3 of total WFP emergency needs—will be required just for the humanitarian crisis in Syria and Syrian refugees in neighboring countries. Needs will continue to persist across Sub-Saharan Africa, including Ethiopia, Sudan, Niger, Somalia, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Chad, as well as in parts of South-west Asia of interest to the US such as Yemen, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Food for Peace provides the bulk of funding for the US to contribute its historical average of about 30 percent of WFP emergency, relief, and recovery programs. Other countries provide over 60 percent of the annual contributions to WFP, which means that US food aid channeled through WFP helps leverage significantly additional international assistance.

MCGOVERN DOLE INTERNATIONAL FOOD FOR EDUCATION AND CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAM

The McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program provides U.S. agricultural products and technical assistance for school feeding projects in low income, food-deficit countries that are committed to universal education. The McGovern-Dole program provides school-age children in poverty-stricken countries with what is often their only full meal of the day and protects vulnerable children, especially during times of natural disasters and economic shocks.

Serving food at school helps solve chronic hunger and can be life-changing for the world's poorest children. School meals also help get students into the classroom, giving them an important key to a better future: an education. In areas where enrollment rates for girls are low, McGovern-Dole supported programs work with families and communities to make it possible for more girls to attend school. This sometimes includes giving girls take-home rations that encourage families to send daughters to school and also benefit younger children at home.

Girls' education has a powerful ripple effect on families and communities. One study has shown that the more education girls have, the less likely their children will be malnourished. School meals can help break the cycle of hunger and poverty for the world's most vulnerable children.

The UN World Food Programme calculates that \$3.2 billion is needed per year to reach all 66 million primary school-age children that go to school hungry every day. While an investment of \$209.5 million for school feeding represents a small fraction of overall global investment in school feeding programs by donor and host country governments, U.S. resources remain critical for low-income countries to continue school feeding programs. We urge the committee to fund the McGovern-Dole program at a level of \$209.5 million in fiscal year 15.

LOCAL AND REGIONAL FOOD PROCUREMENT PROGRAM

We recommend fully funding the Local and Regional Procurement (LRP) Program which was newly authorized at \$80 million in the Agricultural Act of 2014. Senate leadership in the 2014 Farm Bill conference was essential to authorizing this new program. We hope Senate appropriators will be equally visionary in funding the LRP program implementation.

Rigorous analysis of the USDA Local and Regional Procurement (LRP) Pilot Project has shown that, compared with traditional U.S. food aid shipments, LRP practices typically enable both emergency and non-emergency assistance to be delivered more quickly, at considerable savings, with the ultimate benefit of reaching larger numbers of vulnerable people. LRP also generates important developmental impacts by spurring local economic activity and helping form and strengthen local markets.

The 2014 farm bill conference report's statement of managers affirms that the intent of LRP programming is to complement existing food aid programs, especially the McGovern-Dole Food for Education program. Linking the new USDA LRP program to the McGovern-Dole program improves the chances of long-term sustainability of school-feeding programs supported by McGovern-Dole. A fundamental objective of U.S. support to international school feeding is for countries to eventually take over, manage, and fund their own school-feeding programs. This means developing locally sustainable systems for the purchase and management of food used in school-feeding programs to move away over time from reliance on U.S.-donated commodities. U.S. support for LRP can help countries make that transition to national ownership. Funding the newly authorized LRP program would provide McGovern-Dole supported programs with an LRP option that currently does not exist.

In order to encourage the link between the new LRP program and McGovern-Dole, WFP USA recommends the committee include the following language in its fiscal year 15 Appropriations bill report.

SUGGESTED REPORT LANGUAGE:

"Funds appropriated for Local and Regional Procurement are expected to be used for programs and activities that complement the existing McGovern-Dole Food for Education program."

[This statement was submitted by Richard Leach, President, World Food Program USA]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE U.S. NATIONAL ARBORETUM (USNA)

INCREASED FINANCIAL SUPPORT IS NECESSARY AT THE U.S. NATIONAL ARBORETUM

The US National Arboretum (USNA), located in northeast Washington, DC, is part of the Agricultural Research Service, Beltsville Unit. The USNA conducts wide-ranging basic and developmental research on trees, shrubs, turf, and floral plants. It is also engaged in the development of new technologies for the floral and nursery industries. The Friends of the National Arboretum request funding sufficient to recover support lost to sequestration and other reductions over the past few years.

Gardens are a signature feature of the USNA. Single-genus groupings include: azalea, boxwood, daffodil, daylily, dogwood, holly, magnolia, and maple. Major garden features include: aquatic plants, the Asian Collections, the Fern Valley Native Plant Collections, the Flowering Tree Collection, the Flowering Tree Walk, the Friendship Garden, the Gotelli Dwarf and Slow-Growing Conifer Collection, the Introduction Garden, the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum, the National Capitol Columns, the National Grove of State Trees, and the National Herb Garden.

The budget for the Arboretum has steadily eroded over the past decade. The budget for the USNA prior to sequestration was \$12.1 million, nearly a million dollars below its highest level of funding. As a consequence of additional reductions, the current level of funding is about \$11.1 million, requiring the facility to be closed to visitors during the week and making it impossible to sustain its full research, education, and visitor responsibilities. The Friends of the National Arboretum are requesting an increase in resources for USNA to enable it to restore its level of research and education, and become a premier visitor destination in the Nation's Capital.

THE ARBORETUM CONTRIBUTES TO THE AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY

The USNA is an important facility for the USDA's fundamental missions of research and education on horticultural and nursery issues, and serves as an impor-

tant tourism and visitor destination in the Nation's Capital. Nurseries and horticulture are major components of the national agricultural economy. According to the American Nursery and Landscape Association, the horticulture industry's production, wholesale, retail, and landscape service components have annual sales of \$163 million, and sustain over 1,150,000 full and part-time jobs.

To serve this industry, the USNA conducts a wide-ranging program of basic and developmental research on trees, shrubs, turf, and floral plants. The Arboretum is also engaged in the development of new technologies for the floral and nursery industries. The staff also participates in the development of plants with superior characteristics through a program of testing and genetic improvement. They are actively involved in the taxonomy and nomenclature of ornamental plants and their wild relatives. Finally, USNA staff are leaders in the collection and preservation of plant germplasm with ornamental potential.

As a consequence of their work, the USNA has contributed 678 official plant releases, eight patents and two EPA biopesticide registrations. In addition, USNA staff have published over 150 scientific articles in professional and trade journals in the last 3 years.

An important aspect of the Arboretum's leadership role in horticultural research is its cooperative research relationships with land grant schools and associations across the country. Cooperative relationships exist with Alfred State University, Auburn University, Brooklyn Botanic Garden, Cornell University, Danforth Plant Science Center, Iowa State University, Michigan State University, National Turfgrass Federation, North Carolina State University, Oklahoma State University, Oregon State University, Rutgers University, Tennessee State University, University of Arizona, University of California, University of Connecticut, University of Florida, University of Georgia, University of Maryland, University of Minnesota, University of Missouri, University of Tennessee, University of Utah, University of Wisconsin, USDA Forest Service, US Golf Association, and Washington State University.

THE NATIONAL ARBORETUM HAS IMPORTANT EDUCATION AND VISITOR RESPONSIBILITIES

USNA has an important role in public education about horticulture through symposia, lectures, workshops, and demonstrations plus plant, flower, and art exhibitions; In addition, the Arboretum has been a pioneer in urban gardening through the Washington Youth Garden (WYG), a program of FONA that has, for the past 40 years has inspired children and families to engage in self-discovery, explore relationships with food and the natural world, and contribute to the health and well-being of their communities.

The USNA is part of the largest contiguous parcel of greenspace in Washington, DC, free to all and interesting through all of the seasons of the year. It offers a place for quiet contemplation and to explore nature in the backyard of the Nation's Capital. The Arboretum is also a significant visitor and tourist destination in Washington, with visitors making special trips to enjoy the National Bonsai Museum, the National Herb Garden, the Capitol Columns, the azalea and boxwood collections, and the Asia Collections. The USDA is currently working with the State Department and the Peoples Republic to build a traditional China Garden on the grounds of the Arboretum.

FONA URGES THE COMMITTEE TO PROVIDE MORE RESOURCES TO THE USNA

Budget cuts have reduced the ability of the Arboretum staff to provide adequate maintenance and upkeep on the grounds, has restricted valuable research programs, has restricted the educational role of the USNA, and has limited the days that the USNA is open to tourists and visitors.

The Arboretum and FONA have completed a new strategic plan for the USNA that lays out a roadmap for achieving significant goals for research, education, and visitation. Progress on moving forward on this plan has stalled due to the budget cuts at the USNA.

The Friends of the National Arboretum is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to working with the USDA and the USNA to achieve the goals embodied in the strategic plan through programs of "friend raising", fund raising, and advocacy.

We respectfully request that Congress provide resources sufficient to enable the USDA and the USNA to advance the goals of the strategic plan, and to open the doors of the Arboretum to visitors for additional days each week.

[This statement was submitted by Ms. Barbara Shea, Chair, Friends of the National Arboretum.]