

**AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD
AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RE-
LATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS FOR
FISCAL YEAR 2017**

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 2017 budget request for programs within the subcommittee's jurisdiction.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ACADEMY OF NUTRITION AND DIETETICS

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony for the fiscal year 2017 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 2017 appropriations, we strongly urge you to fully fund Federal nutrition programs that will provide a return on investment to improve health and build strong economies. Investment in these programs through the appropriations process will help prevent costly healthcare expenses due to chronic diseases.

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. We are asking you to please:

- Fund WIC at \$6.350 billion to support a projected caseload of 8.02 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 \$80 million for breastfeeding peer counselors to improve breastfeeding initiation and duration among the target population,
- \$75 million for Management Information Systems/Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) funding to improve client access, retailer efficiency, and program integrity,
- \$14 million for infrastructure improvements
- \$26 million for program initiatives and evaluation

AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND NUTRITION RESEARCH

As you consider the fiscal year 2017 budget, we ask for your support of the President's budget for the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). The Na-

tional 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 improve the health and food security of Americans. In doing so, we ask that you:

- Support the President’s budget to the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI). These research efforts 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) AND NUTRITION EDUCATION AND OBESITY PREVENTION GRANT PROGRAM (SNAP-ED)

We recognize that Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a mandatory program, but we want convey the importance of the program, and urge you to protect this vital lifeline for families. 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 engaging nutrition education to purchase, prepare and store nutritious foods. SNAP-Ed is targeted to fit the local communities it serves in all 50 states and territories, and outcomes include sustained changed behavior change towards healthier habits.

During this appropriations cycle, we ask that you:

- Support SNAP as it continues to respond to the need for food assistance with timely benefits; and
- Support SNAP-Ed and protect mandatory investments in this program.

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. 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
- Continue to provide funding, at \$35 million, for grants that would allow schools to purchase kitchen equipment. This will allow schools to serve healthier meals at a more reasonable price, and is a long overdue need for schools.
- Provide adequate funding for training and technical assistance to states for successful implementation of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act. This can be done by:
 - Increasing funding to the National Food Service Management Institute, which successfully ran the USDA’s Team Up for Success mentorship program for food service operators;
 - Fully fund Team Nutrition program, up to \$25 million, in order to provide nutrition education competitive grants to states and localities.
- Summer Food Service Program EBT Demonstrations are innovative ways to tackle the hunger gap that occurs for children when school is out of session. Please meet the request to expand, over a ten-year window, this program to provide monthly food assistance to low-income children in the summer via an electronic benefits transfer (EBT) card. This is an easy way for families to have access to healthy foods in the summer months.

COMMODITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (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. In order to help mitigate declining resources for the purchase of TEFAP foods, the President’s Budget includes a legislative proposal to add an addi-

tional \$30 million for the purchase of TEFAP foods in fiscal year 2017 and returns future funding to fiscal year 2015 levels.

We ask that you:

- Fund TEFAP commodities at \$329 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 low-income seniors living at or below the poverty line. 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. As the senior population continues to grow, we ask that you:

- Fund CSFP at \$236 million. This funding level is enough to support caseload in the existing 46 States, the District of Columbia, and two Indian reservations

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.
- Provide funding for Healthy Food Financing Initiative

FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION FUNDING

- The Academy supports the President's request to the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) regarding implementation of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA).

DEVELOPING LEADERS

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

- Provide \$2 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 OF 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 provide \$329 million for the purchase of commodities to be distributed by the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), to fully fund administrative expense funding for TEFAP at \$100 million; to approve the President's request for \$236,120,000 for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) including an additional 20,000 caseload slots to allow modest expansion of the program; and to continue to actively monitor two matters: flexibility in the operation of school meal programs; and recommendations of the Multiagency Task Force on commodity procurement required by Section 4205 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-79).

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 2.2 billion pounds of USDA-purchased commodity foods annually through programs such as National School Lunch Program (NSLP), 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).

FUNDING FOR TEFAP COMMODITIES

ACDA strongly supports the proposal in the President's budget to provide \$30 million to offset declines in 2014 Farm Bill-authorized funding for commodities under The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). When coupled with the \$299 million provided by the Farm Bill, TEFAP commodity funding would total \$329 million. TEFAP operators continue to find a significant need for TEFAP foods, and without the additional \$30 million these needs are likely to go unmet. We agree with USDA's claim that the need for TEFAP is increasing as certain adult SNAP recipients lose eligibility due to the reestablishment of time limits on their participation.

FULLY FUND TEFAP ADMINISTRATIVE FUNDS AT \$100 MILLION

We continue to urge the subcommittee to fully fund TEFAP Administrative Funds at \$100 million. TEFAP providers face significant needs for food handling and storage, and have experienced increased costs in recent years.

ACDA appreciates the increase to \$54,401,000 provided in the fiscal year 2016 Consolidated Appropriations Act and the President's request for \$59,401,000 for fiscal year 2017, but food banks, Community Action Agencies, and other TEFAP operators continue to find that they have had little choice but to convert food dollars to administrative expense funds in order to maintain their operations. Using food dollars for operating expenses is too often necessary, and reduces the ability of these operators to provide food assistance to more individuals and families who continue to face difficult times. We urge the Committee to not force this choice upon operators 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 \$236,120,000 which would provide for a modest caseload increase for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP). We thank the Congress for having provided an additional \$900,000 in fiscal year 2016. That increase has allowed Virginia to begin CSFP operations. We know that many states have requested caseload increases given the need for this program now focused on seniors. Virginia, along with the seven states that started programs following your action in fiscal year 2015—Connecticut, Florida, Hawaii, Idaho, Maryland, Massachusetts and Rhode Island—would be candidates for this expansion, along with other long-operating programs.

PROVIDING REASONABLE FLEXIBILITY IN SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAMS

ACDA appreciates the action taken in the fiscal year 2015 and fiscal year 2016 Acts to provide reasonable and responsible flexibility in school meal standards, and remains hopeful that these matters will be addressed as part of the reauthorization of child nutrition programs. ACDA appreciates and supports the inclusion of Section 309 of the "Improving Child Nutrition Integrity and Access Act of 2016", as approved unanimously by the Senate Agriculture Committee, providing flexibility in school meal programs. ACDA supports the delay in the Target 2 sodium standard contingent upon the latest scientific research indicating that further reduction in sodium is necessary to safeguard the health of children. However, ACDA members remain concerned about the practicality of meeting a more stringent standard. We also appreciate the whole grain flexibility because various regions continue to experience problems with specific grain items such as bagels, grits, biscuits, and tortillas that are difficult to obtain as whole grain rich products or are not readily accepted by students. ACDA continues to support emphasizing the importance of fruits and vegetables in all forms—fresh, frozen, canned and dried—as noted in the 2015–2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. However, we remain concerned about mandating not just what children are offered in school meals but what they must take, whether they intend to eat it or not. Increasing flexibility to program sponsors in planning menus that meet high nutrition standards but still are within cost targets is of critical importance.

INTERAGENCY PANEL FOR EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE USDA FOODS
PROGRAM

As a result of Section 4205 of the Agricultural Act of 2014, a multiagency task force has been established at USDA for continuous evaluation and improvement of the USDA Foods program. The first annual report was submitted to Congress last year, and work has been undertaken on several important matters. FNS, AMS, and FSA are now engaging in Business Process Reengineering to determine improvements in the ordering, procurement, and receiving of USDA Foods. ACDA expects to actively participate in this project. We encourage the Committee to monitor this and other actions taken by this task force.

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 Ed Herrera, President, American Commodity Distribution Association.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

The American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) would like to acknowledge and thank the subcommittee for its historical work directed to the support of agriculture, our nation's food supply and the well-being of rural America.

2014 FARM BILL PROGRAMS

AFBF strongly opposes reopening the 2014 Farm Bill. That law is a careful balance of priorities and should not be reopened before its expiration in 2018 to achieve additional budget savings. Overall Farm Bill spending—including the nutrition programs—comprises just 2 percent of the total Federal budget. The entirety of the farm safety net constitutes less than one-third of 1 percent of the overall budget. The law was crafted to make a significant contribution to deficit reduction from the farm titles above and beyond the continuing contributions made through sequestration. No other sector of the economy has made similar efforts toward deficit reduction, yet many who benefit from the food, fuel, feed and fiber produced in rural America continue to look to agriculture for additional cuts.

PROGRAM THAT PROMOTES BIOTECHNOLOGY

AFBF supports funding for the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's (APHIS) Biotechnology Regulatory Services if there are appropriate levels of congressional oversight to ensure APHIS' new regulatory considerations are science- and risk-based, transparent and predictable, while promoting innovation in plant breeding and facilitating trade.

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH PRIORITIES

Agricultural research has enabled America's farmers to become the most efficient in the world. However, without a commitment to further agricultural research and technological advancement, even America's farmers could be hard-pressed to meet the challenges of feeding the world's growing population.

AFBF supports funding USDA's Agriculture and Food Research Initiative at the level authorized when the program was established in the 2008 Farm Bill.

AFBF supports funding for the National Agricultural Statistics Service and the Economic Research Service, which provide essential information to farmers.

PROGRAMS THAT PROMOTE ANIMAL HEALTH

AFBF supports adequate funding for APHIS' work on the USDA Antimicrobial Resistance Action Plan.

AFBF supports funding at the authorized level for the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program and the Veterinary Services Grant Program, which allow veterinarians to ensure animal health and welfare, while protecting the nation's food supply.

AFBF supports funding for the National Animal Health Laboratory Network, which provides an early warning system for emerging animal diseases, at the authorized level.

AFBF supports funding for Section 1433 Continuing Animal Health and Disease, Food Security, and Stewardship Research, Education and Extension Programs to address critical priorities in food security, zoonotic disease and stewardship.

AFBF supports funding for the FDA's Center for Veterinary Medicine, which oversees the safety of animal drugs, feeds and biotechnology-derived products.

PROGRAMS THAT EXPAND INTERNATIONAL MARKETS AND SAFEGUARD U.S. AGRICULTURE

AFBF supports funding at authorized levels for the following programs and activities:

- The Foreign Agricultural Service, Market Access Program, Foreign Market Development Program, Emerging Markets Program and Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops Program, all of which increase demand for U.S. agriculture and food products abroad.
- USDA to open and staff an office in Cuba. This office will help U.S. agriculture to expand access, understand opportunities and increase sales into the Cuban marketplace.
- 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.
- 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

AFBF supports funding for food protection at the Food and Drug Administration and Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) directed to the following priorities:

- Implementation of the Food Safety Modernization Act
- 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
- Indemnification for producers who suffer marketing losses due to inaccurate government-advised recalls or warnings.

AFBF supports funding for a National Antimicrobial Residue Monitoring System to detect trends in antibiotic resistance among foodborne bacteria.

AFBF supports adequate funding for the Food Animal Residue Avoidance Databank, which aids veterinarians establish science-based recommendations for drug withdrawal intervals.

AFBF 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.

AFBF opposes any provision that 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.

PROGRAMS THAT ENSURE CROP PROTECTION TOOLS

AFBF supports funding the Minor Crop Pest Management Program (IR-4) because developing pest control tools has high regulatory costs, and this funding ensures safe and effective agrichemicals and biopesticides are available for small, specialty crop markets.

AFBF supports funding the Office of Pesticide Management Policy, which promotes the development of new pest management approaches and is critical for crop protection.

AFBF supports funding the APHIS Plant Pest and Disease programs, which eradicate, suppress and contain plant pests.

PROGRAMS THAT STRENGTHEN RURAL COMMUNITIES AND RURAL HOUSING

AFBF supports funding for the following rural development programs:

- Value-Added Agricultural Producer Grants, the Rural Innovation Initiative, the Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program, Business and Industry Direct

- and Guaranteed Loans, the Resource Conservation and Development Program, the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program and Cooperative Services, which foster business development in rural communities.
- The Rural Utilities Service for rural broadband and telecommunications services, and the Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program.
- Community Facility Direct and Guaranteed Loans, which fund the construction, enlargement or improvement of essential community facilities.
- Agriculture in the Classroom, which helps students gain greater awareness of the role of agriculture in the economy and society.

AFBF supports modifying USDA Section 514 financing to allow farmers who are entering the H-2A program to use the housing built with these funds to house H-2A workers. AFBF also supports allowing farmers to obtain this financing to build new housing for H-2A workers. These modifications will eliminate some of the main impediments from entering the H-2A program.

PROGRAMS THAT SUPPORT WILDLIFE SERVICES

AFBF supports funding the Wildlife Services programs that prevent and minimize an estimated \$1 billion worth of wildlife damage, while protecting human health and safety from conflicts with wildlife.

PROGRAM THAT ENCOURAGES RENEWABLE ENERGY

AFBF supports funding the Renewable Energy for America Program, which offers a combination of grants and guaranteed loans for farmers to purchase renewable energy systems.

[This statement was submitted by Zippy Duvall, President, American Farm Bureau Federation.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

Chairman Moran, Ranking Member Merkley, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for your continued leadership and support for U.S. agriculture. The above signed steering committee members of the Agriculture Workforce Coalition appreciate this opportunity to submit our views regarding the fiscal year 2017 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies appropriations bill, and respectfully requests this statement be made part of the official hearing record.

The labor situation in agriculture has been a concern for many years, but is moving towards a breaking point. Today, large segments of American agriculture face a critical lack of workers, a shortage that makes our farms and ranches less competitive with food from abroad and that threatens the abundant, safe and affordable domestic food supply American consumers enjoy today.

Repeated evidence over the past decades has shown that there are some jobs in agriculture that Americans simply do not want to do. Although many of these jobs offer wages competitive with similar, non-agricultural occupations, they are physically demanding, conducted outdoors in all seasons and weather, and are often seasonal or transitory. It is for this reason that farmers have grown to rely on foreign workers to perform this work.

The overarching challenge to workforce stability in agriculture is the widely acknowledged lack of authorized work status by a large number of agricultural workers despite the prevalence of documentation presented by workers to the contrary. The only option for farmers and ranchers to legally find the workers they need is the H-2A temporary work visa program, a program that has not worked for many agricultural employers.

The H-2A program's basic framework is overly restrictive and difficult to maneuver. In recent years the program has become even more bureaucratic, burdensome and costly to use. But, each year, more and more farms have to turn to the H-2A program for legal foreign labor to meet their workforce needs.

The demand on the program is increasing as producers have nowhere else to turn; yet the administrative weight of the program cannot keep up. H-2A employment has doubled in the past 4 years and will double again in the next 2 years or less. This means bureaucratic red tape and delays in the program result in workers showing up at the farm well after the date they were needed to be there, and millions of dollars in agricultural production is lost in the interim.

To improve access to the H-2A program, specifically the housing requirements, we seek the following:

FARM LABOR HOUSING PROGRAM

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Labor Housing (FLH) program provides loans and grants for the development of on-farm and off-farm housing. The program is operated by USDA's Rural Development Housing and Community Facilities Program office.

Specifically, Section 514 loans are provided to buy, build, improve, or repair housing for farm laborers. The range of eligible tenants was expanded in the 2008 farm bill but legally admitted temporary laborers, such as H-2A workers, remain ineligible.

Amending the list of eligible tenants who can use Section 514 housing to include H-2A workers will incentivize use of the program as a means of accessing a legal workforce. We recommend the following language be included in the fiscal year 2017 appropriations bill:

42 U.S.C 1484(f)(3)(A) is amended to read: (A) such person shall be a citizen of the United States, a person legally admitted for permanent residence or a person legally admitted and authorized to work in agriculture;

HOUSING ALLOWANCE

Currently, the H-2A Program does not allow for the use of housing allowances. Working through USDA's Rural Development Housing and Community Facilities Program office, we recommend the use of housing allowances be allowed under the H-2A program unless the Secretary of Agriculture determines insufficient community based housing exists. The housing allowance could be based on HUD fair market rental rates for a two bedroom dwelling occupied by four individuals.

This change would provide greater flexibility to workers within the H-2A program and removes one of the more significant program barriers. Specifically, we seek the following language as part of the fiscal year 2017 appropriations bill:

8 USC 1188(c)(4) is amended as follows: Provided further that an employer may provide a housing allowance unless the Secretary of USDA determines insufficient community based housing exists.

CONCLUSION

We remain steadfast in our pursuit of broader immigration reform that meets both the short- and long-term workforce requirements of all of agriculture—both those producers with seasonal labor needs, and those with year-round needs. Yet we recognize such reforms may not come to fruition in the near term.

Left with no other alternative, we seek your support for the inclusion of these modest adjustments as you prepare fiscal year 2017 appropriations legislation.

Thank you again, and members of the Subcommittee, for the opportunity to share our views. We look forward to working with the committee to ensure continued benefits for rural communities, consumers, American agriculture and our nation as a whole.

[This statement was submitted by Lisa Van Doren, Vice President & Chief of Staff, Government Affairs, National Council of Farmer Cooperatives.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF AMERICAN FARMLAND TRUST

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

I am John Larson, Executive Director of Programs of American Farmland Trust. I am writing in support of full mandatory funding for agricultural conservation programs administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) as enacted in the Agriculture Act of 2014. We also urge the subcommittee to support the discretionary appropriation of \$860 million for NRCS's Conservation Operations (CO) account.

American Farmland Trust is the only national conservation organization dedicated to protecting farmland, promoting sound farming practices, and keeping farmers on the land. Since its founding in 1980 by a group of farmers and citizens concerned about the rapid loss of farmland to development, AFT has helped save millions of acres of farmland from development and led the way for the adoption of conservation practices on millions more.

Mandatory conservation program funding provided by the Agricultural Act of 2014 is invaluable to producers and landowners in helping implement conservation practices on private agricultural land. Agricultural producers and other private landowners share in the cost, and thus help leverage the Federal investment in con-

ervation. Conservation systems provide protection and restoration of soil health, water quality, water conservation, air quality, wildlife habitat and other natural resource concerns. These are real public benefits. Further, the voluntary adoption of conservation practices can help avoid the need for governmental intervention and regulation on private lands while protecting the landscape.

The American Farmland Trust is keenly aware of the budget deficits plaguing this country and that is why American Farmland Trust supported the Agricultural Act of 2014, which saved taxpayers \$23 billion and consolidated or eliminated over 100 programs. As part of these reductions, mandatory conservation programs were cut by over \$6 billion and close to a dozen conservation programs were eliminated or consolidated. Sequestration has also reduced conservation funding significantly. Additional cuts or Changes in Mandatory Programs (CHIMPS) imposed on conservation programs will seriously reduce the Federal share of investment in conservation on working lands.

As the Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies deliberates on fiscal year 2017 agricultural program funding, I urge you to refrain from imposing caps or other limits on the mandatory funding already established and enacted by Congress in the Farm Bill. These programs include the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). Imposing caps not only cuts fiscal year 2017 funding for needed conservation work, it also has the effect of reducing baseline in future years that further undermines these essential programs.

For example, through the Agricultural Land Easement component of ACEP (and the earlier Farmland Protection Program), millions of acres of productive farmland has been protected from being converted to non-agricultural use. This has occurred primarily through state and local farmland protection programs and land trusts that have partnered with USDA and shared the cost of easements as well as covered most of the transaction costs like appraisals, recording fees, and the like. The proceeds from easements have also allowed producers to install conservation measures on protected lands as well as cover other important business and family expenses while keeping the land in agricultural use.

American Farmland Trust also asks for your support of the full \$860 million in the President's budget proposal for the Conservation Operations account of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Conservation Technical Assistance supports the critical, voluntary conservation practices that ensure soil health, water quality, water conservation, air quality, wildlife habitat and other natural resource concerns. Funding for Conservation Operations allows for the delivery of critical conservation programs and helps ensure the best technical and scientific knowledge is available to producers and landowners. This account funds the "boots on the ground" work of NRCS and it is critical to delivery of conservation benefits.

American Farmland Trust believes conservation of our natural resources requires a strong public-private partnership and mandatory farm bill conservation funding along with the technical assistance provided by the Conservation Operations account is key to providing on-the-ground conservation benefits.

[This statement was submitted by John Larson, Executive Director for Programs, American Farmland Trust.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF AMERICAN FOREST FOUNDATION

The American Forest Foundation (AFF) urges the Subcommittee to support strong funding for fiscal year 2017 for programs that are essential to helping America's 22 million family forest owners, some 282 million acres, conserve and manage their forests to provide the clean water and air, wildlife habitat, sustainable wood supplies, and other benefits, that all Americans benefit from. Maintenance of these programs will help family forest owners adequately prepare for increasing threats and save landowners, communities, and industries from expensive restoration in the future. We urge the Subcommittee to support:

- Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Tree and Wood Pests program at the fiscal year 2016 level of \$54 million and Specialty Crops program at the fiscal year 2016 level of \$156 million;
- Farm Bill authorized levels for the Environmental Quality and Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP);
- NRCS, Conservation Operations at \$761 million to grow conservation technical assistance;

- National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA), Renewable Resources and Extension Program at \$4 million;
- NIFA, McIntire-Stennis, Cooperative Forestry Research at \$34 million; and
- Continuation of the Joint Chief’s Landscape Restoration Partnership.

The American Forest Foundation is a nonprofit conservation organization that works on the ground with family woodland owners through a variety of programs, including the American Tree Farm System®, to protect the values and benefits of America’s family forests, including the clean water, wildlife habitat, and sustainable wood supplies these lands provide all Americans. Families and individuals own over one-third of our nation’s forests, stewarding more acres than the Federal government or forest industry¹. Recent analysis by AFF and other partners shows these lands are at risk. In the West, for example, over 4 million acres of family woodlands that are essential for protecting the west’s already scarce water supply, are at high fire risk. The US Forest Service predicts by 2020, more than 18 million acres of family forests are threatened by housing development. These are just a few of the growing threats to family woodlands. To combat these ever increasing pressures, we must ensure these families have the financial tools, technical information, and policy support to keep their forests as forests, for both current and future generations.

APHIS INVASIVE PEST AND PATHOGEN FUNDING

According to the National Woodland Owner Survey, the threat of forest pests is a top concern for family forest owners. When an invasive species infests a family’s forest, it can destroy their investment, making recovery difficult, as most families don’t generate regular income.

To provide family forest owners with the tools needed to fight this growing threat, Congress should at least provide level funding for the APHIS Tree and Wood Pests program. This program funds eradication efforts for invasive species and works to prevent the further spread of invasive species like the Asian Long-Horned Beetle and the Emerald Ash Borer. Close to 500 species of foreign insects and diseases have become established in the U.S., and a new damaging pest is introduced, every 2 to 3 years. It is APHIS’ responsibility to prevent such introductions and to respond effectively when pests are introduced.

We ask the Subcommittee to continue providing \$156 million to the “Specialty Crops” budget account, which funds APHIS’ program to stop spread of the sudden oak death pathogen via trade in nursery plants. Since 1975, U.S. imports (excluding petroleum products) have risen almost six times faster than APHIS staff capability to conduct inspections of those imports. In just 3 years, from 2009 to 2012, more than 90 new plant pests have been detected in the United States.

FARM BILL CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

Farm Bill Conservation Programs provide tools to family forest owners, leveraging the family’s own resources to implement conservation activities on their lands—treatments that can protect the numerous public benefits we all enjoy. Forest owners participate in programs like the EQIP and CSP, to help them manage invasive insect infestations, reduce wildfire risks, implement water quality improvements, and improve species habitat. The 2014 Farm Bill strengthened these programs for forest owners and increased opportunities to use resources for collaborative conservation efforts on a landscape scale. To realize the full impact, we urge Congress to support full-funding of these programs at the levels authorized in the Farm Bill. Congress should also provide strong support for NRCS Conservation Operations, which fund technical assistance for landowners and support the implementation of Farm Bill conservation programs.

NIFA RENEWABLE RESOURCES EXTENSION PROGRAM

The Renewable Resources Extension Program supports outreach and education to forest owners, so they have the education and tools they need to be good stewards. This is especially important for family forest owners who are currently unengaged in the management of their forests. The extension foresters supported by this program are essential to landowners, providing them with valuable information—everything from dealing with forest management issues to tax advice for new forest owners. This why it is key to support the program with \$4 million in funding.

¹USDA, USPRS National Woodland Owner Survey. 2013 Updated Data.

NIFA MCINTIRE-STENNIS COOPERATIVE FORESTRY RESEARCH

The forestry research carried out by the nation's land grant universities is funded through the McIntire-Stennis Program. This program provides essential tools and information for family forest owners, and also supports critical family forest research, so that we may identify barriers to stewardship. Finally, it helps train the next generation of forestry professionals to provide forest owners the tools and technical assistance they need. Maintaining the funding level at \$34 million will ensure that the research conducted will help family forest owners improve their stewardship.

JOINT CHIEF'S LANDSCAPE RESTORATION PARTNERSHIP

While we don't offer a specific funding level, we also want to recognize the important work happening through the Joint Chief's Partnership. This Partnership between NRCS and the U.S. Forest Service is making significant strides in landscape-scale conservation—allowing these agencies to work together to cross boundary lines and implement conservation and management at a significant scale. For example, in the Blue Mountains of Oregon, with support from the U.S. Forest Service to conduct outreach and engagement with family forest owners, and with cost-share resources from NRCS, a collaborative of Federal and state agencies, university extension programs, and national, state, and local non-profits are partnering to help landowners restore their forests and reduce their fire risk across nearly 200,000 acres, complementing the work of their neighbors- both public or private- all in an effort to increase by four-fold the pace and scale of cross-jurisdictional forest restoration. This is just one of many examples of the incredible success this initiative is having and will have, not just on individual owners, but on a significant scale to protect water, wildlife, wood supplies, and many other benefits.

Thank you for considering these requests. We recognize that the Subcommittee must find areas to reduce spending, but we hope that the Subcommittee will consider the impact these reductions have on millions of family forest owners, along with all other Americans who benefit from well-managed, working forests. We, at AFF, thank the Subcommittee for the opportunity to provide some insight on these programs, and appreciate consideration of our testimony.

[This statement was submitted by Tom Martin, President & CEO, American Forest Foundation.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF AMERICAN FOREST & PAPER ASSOCIATION

INTRODUCTION

AF&PA supports \$6.9 million to provide for implementation of the declaration requirement of the Lacey Act, as amended by the 2008 Farm Bill; recommends maintaining funding for the "Tree and Wood Pests" category to aid in combating these, and other pests and diseases; requests \$33.9 million for the McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Research Program; support the Public-Private Partnership for an Innovation Institute focused on nanocellulosics proposed in the U.S. Department of Agriculture budget, and we would like your support and assistance in ensuring that robust funding is included for the Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition and that Congress expresses its intention to continue funding the operation of the Food Contact Notification (FCN) program.

The American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA) is the national trade association of the forest products industry, representing pulp, paper, packaging and wood products manufacturers, and forest landowners. Our companies make products essential for everyday life from renewable and recyclable resources that sustain the environment.

The forest products industry accounts for nearly 4 percent of the total U.S. manufacturing GDP, manufactures approximately \$210 billion in products annually, and employs nearly 900,000 men and women. The industry meets a payroll of approximately \$50 billion annually and is among the top 10 manufacturing sector employers in 47 states. Within the jurisdiction of this subcommittee, continued resources for protecting forest health and providing adequate resources to enforce existing trade laws are essential. Specific recommendations follow.

ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE (APHIS)—LACEY ACT ENFORCEMENT

AF&PA supports \$5.5 million to provide for implementation of the declaration requirement of the Lacey Act, as amended by the 2008 Farm Bill. Full and effective

implementation and enforcement of the Lacey Act will enable American forest product companies to compete fairly in the global marketplace, help keep jobs in the United States, and deter the destructive impacts of illegal logging on forests and forest-dependent communities in developing countries. When fully implemented, the law requires U.S. importers of wood and wood products to file a declaration identifying the genus/species name and country of harvest—a critical measure intended by the law’s sponsors to increase supply chain transparency and assist Federal agencies in fair and strong enforcement. The prohibition and the declaration requirement affect a wide array of American industries, so it is critical that the declaration process generates data in a streamlined, cost-effective manner without unduly burdening legitimate trade. To that end, APHIS—which is responsible for implementing the declaration provision—needs \$6.9 million in funding to fully implement congressional mandates, including to establish an electronic declarations database and to add internal capacity to perform data analysis needed for monitoring and enforcement purposes.

APHIS —PLANT PESTS

AF&PA recommends maintaining funding for the “Tree and Wood Pests” category to aid in combating these, and other pests and diseases. As world trade continues to expand, global weather patterns shift, and an increasingly affluent world population has the ability to travel to—and demand products from—the far corners of the globe, the inadvertent, yet inevitable introduction of nonnative pests and diseases into the United States continues. Additional funding is vitally needed to aid in combating pests such as the Asian longhorn beetle, the Emerald Ash borer, and the Sirex woodwasp, as well as diseases such as *Phytophthora ramorum*. These are but a sampling of the diseases that harm commercial timber stands, community parks, and private forest landowners. American citizens most certainly will bear the cost of combating these and other emergent threats. We believe a comprehensive, coordinated response to each is more effective and more economical.

We also support the Public-Private Partnership for an Innovation Institute focused on nanocellulosics proposed in the U.S. Department of Agriculture budget. A collaborative national institute will carry out transformative research, supporting fundamental science and providing opportunities to apply science, technology and advanced practices to create opportunities for new business ventures funded by industry. This institute will ensure that the United States is the leading source of commercial cellulosic nanomaterials research, innovation and production. A National Institute focused on nanocellulosics will promote economic growth, increase the productivity of the agricultural and forestry sector, create new jobs and support existing employment in rural communities and contribute to conservation of the forest resource.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE—MCINTIRE-STENNIS COOPERATIVE FORESTRY RESEARCH

AF&PA requests \$33.9 million for the McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Research Program. Approximately one-third of the United States is forested and these forests enhance our quality of life and economic vitality and are an invaluable source of renewable bioproducts, outdoor recreation, clean water, fish and wildlife habitat, and carbon sequestration. Sustaining these forests in a healthy and productive condition requires a strong, continuing commitment to scientific research and graduate education. Foundational financial support for university-based forestry research and graduate education comes from the McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry program, funded through the USDA’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture. Funds are distributed each of the 50 states with a dollar-for-dollar match required from the states. Additional funding is needed to provide the additional scientific research needed to address critical forest issues such as fires, storms, insects, diseases, urbanization, fragmentation, and lost economic opportunities; and develop new knowledge and innovations to sustain healthy, productive forests and address the challenges facing forest owners, forest products manufacturers and all Americans who benefit from our forest resources.

FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION—FOOD CONTACT NOTIFICATION PROGRAM

AF&PA supports continued funding of the Food Contact Notification Program. The Food Contact Notification (FCN) program protects consumer health, food safety and quality while providing packaging manufacturers with an efficient process that is less burdensome than the food additive approval process. It has allowed packaging manufacturers to bring new, more environmentally-friendly products to market that have extended product shelf life, thereby increasing consumer value.

As Congress begins work on appropriations legislation for FDA in the coming weeks, we would like your support and assistance in ensuring that robust funding is included in the Appropriations bills for the Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, and that Congress expresses its intention to continue the operation of the FCN program. Congress should reject a proposal, included in the Administration's fiscal year 2016 budget request, calling for industry user fees to cover certain costs of administering the FCN program. AF&PA appreciates that the subcommittee has previously rejected proposals to eliminate the FCN program.

[This statement was submitted by Elizabeth Bartheld, Vice President, Government Affairs, American Forest & Paper Association- Government Affairs Department.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF AMERICAN INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION CONSORTIUM

This statement includes a summary of our fiscal year 2017 funding requests for increasing the capacity of the 1994 Institutions so that they might truly begin to fulfill their land-grant vision and mission of self-sufficient, place-based peoples employing an Indigenous model that incorporates holistic planning, traditional knowledge, and the integration of education, research, and extension activities.

SUMMARY OF REQUESTS

The Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act, the legislation that created the 1994 (tribal college) land-grant institutions, was signed into law over two decades ago. In those 20 years, the number of 1994s has grown to 34, but funding for the five 1994-specific programs has grown very little and remains wholly inadequate. We recognize the current economic constraints and believe that the increases recommended in the President's fiscal year 2017 Budget are a solid first step to ultimately achieving a level of equity within the nation's land-grant system. The 1994s' programs are administered by USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and Rural Development. In NIFA, the TCUs request: 1994s' competitive Extension, \$6.7 million in fiscal year 2017; 1994s' competitive Research program, \$3.9 million in fiscal year 2017; 1994s Education Equity Grants, \$3.7 million in fiscal year 2017; a doubling of the corpus in the Native American Endowment fund; and in Rural Development, Rural Community Advancement Program (RCAP), \$8 million for the TCU Essential Community Facilities Grants program to help address the critical facilities and infrastructure needs that advance their capacity to participate as full land-grant partners.

Additionally, funding levels are not the only inequities that exist within the nation's land-grant system. The 1994 institutions are the only Federal land-grant institutions that are prohibited from participating in the McIntire-Stennis (forestry) grants program and from competing for Children, Youth and Families at Risk (CYFAR) and federally Recognized Tribes Extension Program (FRTEP) grants.

—McIntire-Stennis: In 2008, McIntire-Stennis was amended to include Tribal lands in the formula calculation for funding of state forestry programs. However, the 1994 institutions, which are the Tribal Land-Grant colleges, were not included in the funding formula; nor were states required to include them in funding distributions. This oversight is significant, because 75 percent of Tribal land in the U.S. is either forest or agriculture holding. In response to the dearth of American Indian professionals in the forestry workforce in Montana and across the United States, Salish Kootenai College (SKC) launched a Forestry baccalaureate degree program in 2005. In 2013, SKC became the first tribal college land-grant to join the National Association of University Forest Resource Programs, a consortium of 85 forestry schools, the vast majority of which receive McIntire-Stennis funding. However, when SKC recently sought specialty accreditation for its program, the college was told that it was "one forestry researcher short" of the optimum number needed. Participation in the McIntire-Stennis program, even with the required 1-1 match, would help SKC secure the researcher it needs to gain this accreditation. Although currently, only SKC has a baccalaureate degree in forestry, considering the wealth of forested land on American Indian reservations, other such programs could arise at the nation's other 1994 (Tribal College) Land-Grant institutions, to further advance the growth of the Native workforce in this vital area.

—Children, Youth, and Families at Risk (CYFAR) and federally Recognized Tribes Extension Program (FRTEP): The 1994 Institutions are the only land-grant institutions that are statutorily barred from participating in programs administered under Smith-Lever 3(d). However, certain programs therein are intended

to address serious situations that are prevalent in Tribal communities. Access to two programs in particular would be especially valuable to the 1994s.

CYFAR: In some of the 1994 tribal communities, suicide among Native youth is nine to 19 times as frequent as among other youth. Native youth have more serious problems with mental disorders, including substance abuse and depression, than other youth, and perhaps surprisingly, are more affected by gang involvement than any other racial group. American Indians also have the highest high school drop-out rates in the nation and some of the highest unemployment and poverty rates, as well. Yet, our Native children and youth are the only group in the country essentially excluded from the benefits of the CYFAR program, because the 1994 institutions cannot apply for competitively awarded CYFAR grants. CYFAR supports comprehensive, intensive, community-based programs and promotes building resiliency and protective factors in youth, families, and communities. There is no argument that the 34 Tribal College and University land-grant institutions (1994s) are truly community-based institutions.

FRTEP: The USDA's federally-Recognized Tribes Extension Program is only open to 1862 and 1890 Land-Grants. The program's stated purpose is: "supports extension agents on American Indian reservations and tribal jurisdictions to address the unique needs and problems of American Indian tribal nations. Emphasis is placed on assisting American Indians in the development of profitable farming and ranching techniques, providing 4-H and Youth development experiences for tribal youth, and providing education and outreach on tribally-identified priorities (e.g., family resource management and nutrition) using a culturally sensitive approach." Ironically, the 1994 Land-Grants, which are chartered by and directly serve federally recognized American Indian tribes and are located on or near Indian reservations are barred from participating in this program. This apparent oversight in eligibility rights needs to be rectified. A clear step toward recognizing the 1994 Institutions as true partners in the Land-Grant system would be to afford them eligibility to compete for grant funding under the Smith-Lever 3(d) programs, particularly the Children, Youth, and Families at Risk (CYFAR) program; and (2) federally Recognized Tribes Extension Program (FRTEP). We strongly urge the committee to include language in the fiscal year 2017 Agriculture Appropriations bill or accompanying report, to recognize the 1994 Land-Grant Institutions as full partners in the land-grant system by making them eligible to finally participate in these programs open to all other land-grants.

Illustration of Inequities in Land-Grant System Funding: The first Americans were not granted Federal Land-Grant status until 1994. As earlier stated, initial funding of programs established under this Act was very modest and today, over 20 years since the enactment of the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994, funding remains untenably inadequate. A clear illustration of the inequity in land-grant programs funding can be found in the latest appropriations for land-grant programs. In fiscal year 2016, Congress appropriated \$476 million for extension activities. The 1862s (state) received \$300 million in formula-driven extension funds; 1890s (18 HBCUs) received \$46 million; and 1994s (34 TCUs) received \$4.5M for competitively awarded grants. Further, the 1994s cannot access over \$85.5M in Smith-Lever 3(d) grant funds. These inequities cannot be justified or allowed to continue. The first Americans, last to join the nation's land-grant family, deserve parity.

PROGRAMS—SOLID INVESTMENT IN ECONOMIC CAPACITY

In the past, due to lack of expertise and training, millions of acres on Indian reservations lay fallow, underused, or had been developed using methods that caused irreparable damage. The Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994 is helping to address this situation and is our hope for the continued improvement of our reservation lands. Our current land-grant programs remain very small, yet critically important to us. It is essential that American Indians explore and adopt new and evolving technologies for managing our lands and natural resources. With increased capacity and program funding, we will become even more fundamental contributors to the agricultural base of the nation and the world.

CONCLUSION

The 1994s have proven to be efficient and effective vehicles for bringing educational and career opportunities to American Indians/Alaska Natives and the promise of self-sufficiency to some of this nation's poorest and most underserved regions. The small Federal investment in the 1994s has already paid great dividends in

terms of increased employment, access to quality higher education, and economic development. American Indian reservation communities are second to none in their potential for benefiting from effective land-grant programs; and no institutions better exemplify the original intent of Senator Morrill's land-grant concept than the 1994s. We truly appreciate your support and recognition of the 1994s' important role in the nation's land-grant system. We ask you to renew your commitment to help move our students and communities toward self-sufficiency and request your full consideration of our fiscal year 2017 appropriations requests.

[This statement was submitted by Meg Goetz, AIHEC Vice President for Advocacy, American Indian Higher Education Consortium.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF AMERICAN SEED TRADE ASSOCIATION

The American Seed Trade Association respectfully submits the following requests for the U.S. Department of Agriculture fiscal year 2017 appropriations. Founded in 1883, ASTA's mission is to enhance the development and movement of quality seed worldwide. ASTA's diverse membership consists of over 700 companies involved in seed production, distribution, plant breeding and related industries in North America. ASTA represents all varieties of seeds, including grasses, forages, flowers, vegetables, row crops and cereals. For more information about this request, please contact Jane DeMarchi, Vice President for Government and Regulatory Affairs at the American Seed Trade Association.

USDA intramural research programs conduct research that requires a long-term investment leading to high-impact payoff. Management and utilization of vast collections of genetic resources are the type of research that can't be done by an individual university or company. It is important that Congress recognize how vital these collections are to the ability of the U.S to provide the essential materials for food, feed, and fiber for the world.

Agricultural Research Service
National Plant Germplasm System (NPGS)
Request: At least \$44 million

The Agricultural Research Service (ARS) National Plant Germplasm System (NPGS), a network of 26 labs that preserve the genetic diversity of crop plants, is a critical resource for scientists to access genetic diversity. This access helps bring forth new varieties that can resist pests, diseases, and environmental stresses for all types of cropping systems, including organic, conventional and biotech. In addition, it is a vital resource for horticulture and conservation research.

The NPGS is currently funded at approximately \$44 million. This amount is insufficient to maintain and distribute the collections to U.S. researchers who are developing varieties for conventional and organic farmers and other landscape uses. ASTA recommends increasing funding for the NPGS so it can better fulfill its mission.

Agricultural Research Service
National Plant Germplasm System (NPGS)
Germplasm Enhancement of Maize (GEM)
Request: \$2.7 million

The Germplasm Enhancement of Maize (GEM) program within the funding for the ARS NPGS focuses on adapting exotic corn germplasm for use in the U.S. and on identifying useful genetics in exotic landraces to develop new hybrids. These resources are then made available to any breeders who request them. Over 500 inbred lines have been released to date. Because these materials are adapted to temperate U.S. conditions, U.S. seed companies are saved 6–8 years in the breeding cycle.

The continued success of American agriculture is intimately linked to corn production. USDA estimates that 13.6 billion bushels were harvested in 2015. However, U.S. corn production is based predominantly on two races of maize from more than 250 New World races. This limited genetic diversity renders the U.S. corn crop, and therefore, the global food supply, more vulnerable to attack by new diseases. The GEM materials can play an important role in fighting new diseases in the U.S. and globally. Examples include the catastrophic Maize Lethal Necrosis which is causing significant crop losses in Africa, and Late Wilt, a very devastating disease in Egypt which has now been reported in Spain.

GEM is a model public-private partnership between the Federal government, universities, and companies of all sizes. In addition to its significant research contributions, GEM also facilitates development of future researchers. So far, the GEM project has trained 18 Ph.D. and 14 M.S. students. The current funding for GEM is approximately \$1.6 million. Private industry provides over \$625,000 of in-kind support annually for this effort, and industry germplasm contributions to GEM are currently valued at over \$3 billion.

Demand for maize germplasm continues to increase, and GEM has already distributed more than 21,000 seed samples. ASTA supports an increase in GEM funding for both research and operations costs, and the need to establish consistent winter nurseries for seed increases and regeneration. We recommend increasing funding of the Germplasm Enhancement of Maize to \$2.7 million.

GEM Private Cooperators:

3rd Millennium Genetics	Santa Isabel, Puerto Rico
AgiWise, L.L.C.	Ames, IA
AgReliant Genetics, LLC	Lebanon, IN
1BASF Plant Science Breeding, L.L.C.	Research Triangle Park, NC
Beck's Superior Hybrids, Inc.	Atlanta, IN
Brownseed Genetics	Bay City, WI
CRD Advisors, LLC	Kelley, IA
DKD Genetics, Inc.	Vincennes, IN
Dow AgroSciences	Indianapolis, IN
DuPont Pioneer	Johnston, IA
FFR Cooperative	Lafayette, IN
Forage Genetics	Nampa, ID
Genetic Enterprises Int'l	Luther, IA
Global Investors, LP	Des Moines, IA
Hoegemeyer Enterprises	Hooper, NE
Ingredion Inc.	Indianapolis, IN
Illinois Foundation Seeds, Inc.	Tolono, IL
JFS and Associates, LTD	Harlan, IA
MBS Genetics, LLC.	Story City, IA
Monsanto Company	St. Louis, MO
PANNAR Seed	Johnston, IA
Professional Seed Research, Inc.	Sugar Grove, IL
SEEDirect	Woodstock, IL
Summit Genetics	Carroll, IA
Syngenta Seeds, Inc.	Minnetonka, MN
Terrell Seed Research	Wabash, IN
Trimble Genetics International, LLC	Johnstown, IA
Wyffels Hybrids	Geneseo, IL

National GEM Public Cooperators:

Cornell University
 Iowa State University
 Louisiana State University
 North Carolina State University
 North Dakota State University
 Ohio State University
 Purdue University
 Texas A&M University
 The University of Delaware
 The University of Illinois
 The University of Missouri
 The University of Nebraska
 The University of Tennessee
 The University of Wisconsin
 Truman State University
 USDA-ARS multiple locations

USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service
 Plant Material Centers
 Request: \$14.5 million

ASTA recommends that the USDA-NRCS Plant Material Centers be fully-funded at \$14.5 million. The network of 25 PMCs across the country seek out and test plants and plant technologies that restore and sustain healthy natural regional ecosystems. A key function of the centers is to evaluate plants for conservation traits

and to make these materials available to commercial growers, who in turn provide plant materials to the public.

The materials developed by the Plant Material Centers are critical to many USDA goals, including improving soil health, increasing pollinator and wildlife habitat and expanding the availability of new cover crop solutions.

Nationwide, 500 of the 700 releases from the PMCs are currently under commercial production. This work can't be duplicated by the private sector seed industry, which lacks the resources to develop and test materials to address such an extensive range of concerns for the entire United States.

[This statement was submitted by Andrew W. LaVigne, President & CEO American Seed Trade Association.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR MICROBIOLOGY (ASM)

The American Society for Microbiology (ASM) urges Congress to approve the President's proposed fiscal year 2017 budget for research and food safety programs at the Department of Agriculture (USDA). The proposed budget would ensure that the USDA is able to adequately fund programs that support research and development critical to sustaining a safe and competitive food and agriculture system in the United States. The ASM strongly supports funding the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) with \$1.379 billion, including \$700 million for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI), the level authorized by Congress when it was established in the 2008 Farm Bill. The ASM recommends \$1.256 billion for the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), USDA's in house research. Agriculture remains a strong and consistent contributor to the US economy, with the USDA estimating a total of \$775.8 billion in economic activity annually and the source of one in twelve US jobs. However, agriculture research only accounts for 2 percent of Federal R&D spending, regardless of clear links among innovative research, productivity, public health and market value.

USDA RESEARCH ADVANCES US AGRICULTURE AND PRODUCTIVITY

AFRI funding has been well below the \$700 million level authorized by Congress when it established AFRI in the 2008 Farm Bill, re-authorized in 2014. In fiscal year 2014, AFRI received 3,875 proposals, of which 1,640 were recommended for funding, but only 390 won support due to budget constraints. Currently, AFRI is able to fund only one out of 10 grant proposals.

Economic analyses cited by USDA show that investment in agriculture research and extension yields \$20 in returns for every dollar spent. The economic potential is evident in the agency's 883 patent applications and 429 issued patents during 2009–2015. Last year, the USDA technology transfer portfolio included 421 licenses generating income and 301 cooperative R&D agreements, many with small businesses. The value of US exports has risen more than 45 percent since 2009; in 2009–2015, exports totaled over \$911 billion.

Increased funding is needed for NIFA's mission to assure food safety and nutritional security, advance food and agricultural systems through science and technology, support rural economies and create jobs and train the next generation of food and agriculture scientists by supporting research, education and extension activities at US universities and colleges. In its farm bills, Congress outlined the priority areas for AFRI grants: plant health and production and plant products; animal health and production and animal products; food safety, nutrition and health; bio-energy, natural resources and environment; agriculture systems and technology; and agriculture economics and rural communities. AFRI has awarded grants to universities, businesses, foundations, non-profits, community groups, associations and Federal and international partners.

AFRI studies include food processing technologies like irradiation and microwave pasteurization and how pathogens survive on fresh produce. A major effort currently focuses on Huanglongbing (HLB), a bacterial infection commonly known as citrus greening, which last year infected more than 75 percent of the Florida citrus crop. Researchers are developing bactericides, therapeutic delivery systems and new genetic approaches to stop this economically devastating disease.

Each year, AFRI provides funding for the education and training of nearly 2,500 undergraduate, graduate and postdoctoral students for careers in the agricultural, food, natural resource and human sciences. Federal projections through 2020 indicate that, at present funding levels, US education institutions will not graduate sufficient numbers of new workers in agricultural fields, in fact falling short by 22,500. The fiscal year 2017 budget will continue USDA's education of the general public

and agricultural producers. NIFA just announced creation of five centers across the United States to conduct training, education and technical assistance tailored toward small farm owners, food processors and other specific audiences.

The Agriculture Research Service employs more than 6,500 staff to conduct approximately 700 research projects at 90-plus USDA laboratories in the United States and abroad. USDA scientists either access existing or innovate new leading edge science and technology to advance the agency's basic and applied research. This year, as example, ARS will continue development and use of genomics technologies to improve livestock and crop production. Genetically engineered (GE) crops that can resist pests became commercially available for major crops in 1996. By 2013, farmers had planted 170 million acres with GE crops, about half of US farmland in crop use.

The ARS fiscal year 2017 request outlines priority areas that include antimicrobial resistance, climate change, water supplies, avian influenza and foreign animal diseases. Drug resistance is growing and ASM applauds the additional \$22 million requested to address this problem in humans and livestock. Two million Americans have drug resistant illnesses every year and more than 23,000 die. The increase will support vaccines to help reduce nontherapeutic antibiotics in food animals, studies on the gut microbiome and its effects on immune development and identification of specific nutrients with immune benefits. A recent report from the Food and Drug Administration reiterated that US sales of medically important antibiotics approved for livestock use rose by 23 percent between 2009 and 2014, reinforcing concerns about risks to humans. The fiscal year 2017 funding will facilitate much needed research on possible connections and solutions.

USDA RESEARCH PROTECTS FOOD SECURITY AND FOOD SAFETY

USDA regulates the nation's supply of domestic and imported meat, poultry, catfish and processed eggs, to ensure products are wholesome, safe and properly labeled. Each year, there are new reminders of the potentially serious consequences of contaminated food supply systems. One in six Americans gets sick with foodborne illnesses each year, with about 128,000 hospitalized. USDA partners with numerous public health stakeholders to reduce the societal and economic costs of these illnesses.

USDA research that provides science based strategies to stop foodborne threats, preserve productivity and safeguard food security. USDA food guidelines and rules depend upon science; examples are the new Federal standards to further reduce Salmonella and Campylobacter bacteria in certain poultry products. Based on risk assessments, the agency estimates that implementation could prevent an average of 50,000 illnesses annually.

FSIS coordinates its far flung activities, including inspections of food production establishments, with other USDA and non-USDA programs to ensure an integrated farm to table approach. Annual FSIS budgets support approximately 8,000 Federal in plant and field personnel, many of them stationed at about 6,400 slaughtering and processing establishments, import houses and other facilities. FSIS also supports state inspection programs and helps strengthen data infrastructure for nationwide food safety. FSIS relies upon the latest scientific knowledge and capabilities, especially screening technologies that detect contaminants faster and more accurately, are field ready and real time and provide more quantitative data. Currently, USDA is seeking techniques that identify all contaminants in a sample, whether microbiological or chemical. Sample analyses are increasingly reliant upon cutting edge genetics. The fiscal year 2017 request includes USDA implementation of a whole genome sequencing initiative to identify pathogens with great precision and improve the speed and accuracy of outbreak investigations. This also is relevant to USDA's role in the national antimicrobial resistance initiative.

Protecting animal and plant health from threats inside the United States and beyond consistently improves both food safety and food security. The fiscal year 2017 budget proposes additional support against the threat of avian influenza and other animal diseases found in other nations that could enter US agriculture, decimating production and export markets. The 2015 outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza was the worst animal disease outbreak in US history, costing the Federal government over \$1 billion in eradication efforts and the industry huge losses in poultry flocks and export income. More than 400 USDA staff and nearly 3,000 USDA contracted personnel worked with states and industry to eliminate infected flocks at more than 200 locations, killing 50 million birds.

Facing the specter of foot and mouth disease (FMD) is one AFRI supported effort that showcases the need for robust research funding. This highly contagious viral disease is considered the most important animal disease in the world. The US eradi-

cated FMD in 1929, but its persistence around the world makes it very difficult to control. A 2001 outbreak in the United Kingdom cost an estimated \$6 billion. FMD in the United States would shut down our exports of fresh beef, pork and dairy products. When US beef exports dropped in 2003 due to a single case of mad cow disease, the cumulative loss to the economy was an estimated \$16 billion. Some estimates of possible US economic impacts from an uncontrolled FMD outbreak approach \$200 billion. The fiscal year 2017 budget includes additional funds for the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to acquire FMD vaccines for the FMD Vaccine Bank. FMD vaccines must be matched to the specific type and subtype of virus causing the outbreak and available vaccines are not adequate to respond effectively to an outbreak of FMD in the US.

Long term investments in agriculture R&D programs benefit the producers on US farms and ranches, our expansive food industry and individual consumers. USDA food safety programs directly protect the public daily. The ASM asks Congress to fully support the fiscal year 2017 budget requested to guarantee the health and productivity of US agriculture.

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

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR MICROBIOLOGY (FDA)

The American Society for Microbiology (ASM) recommends that Congress appropriate at least an additional \$100 million for the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the fiscal year 2017 budget. This increase would fund the FDA at \$2.8 billion, instead of the \$2.7 billion, or 1 percent increase, proposed by the Administration. Although the total FDA budget, which relies heavily upon user fees, is \$4.8 billion, \$80 million over fiscal year 2016, the Administration's proposed budget would result in flat or lower funding for numerous FDA programs that continue to grow in order to protect the public health and safety and because of legislated responsibilities. FDA regulated products account for about 20 cents of each consumer dollar. FDA oversees all drugs, vaccines, medical devices and cosmetics as well as 80 percent of the nation's food supply. Every year, these product sectors are increasing in volume, diversity and global sourcing and intensifying FDA's regulatory role. The ASM believes it is critical to appropriate additional Federal appropriations for the FDA.

The ASM appreciates that the FDA request does include funding earmarked for important efforts like food safety, the Cancer Moonshot and precision medicine. However, we are disappointed by the lack of substantial increased support for public health related problems under FDA purview, such as the threat of growing drug resistance among infectious diseases and a more forceful implementation of the 2011 Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) passed by Congress.

The ASM asks that Congress provide FDA with the resources needed to fulfill its mission to safeguard the public health, contribute to the discovery of new healthcare and consumer products, and boost US global competitiveness in science and technology.

FDA ACTIONS PROTECT AND SERVE PUBLIC HEALTH

In the past year, FDA efforts have targeted Zika and Ebola viruses, infections acquired in healthcare settings and nontherapeutic antibiotic use in food animals. Contaminated cucumbers, cilantro, ice cream and salad greens were among the newsworthy causes of foodborne outbreaks reminding us that foodborne illnesses require rapid FDA responses. FDA has unique input into the healthcare continuum, by evaluating the safety and efficacy of new and marketed drugs, vaccines, medical devices and other products for human and animal use. As of February, the agency's evaluation of Ebola related products had included at least ten diagnostics and three vaccine candidates, clinical trials of the ZMapp therapeutic and review of unsuccessful drug candidates and blood donor Ebola guidance issued in December. The agency had fast tracked evaluation of ZMapp, granting it an "orphan drug" designation to accelerate testing of the experimental drug. Its collaborative efforts with other stakeholders stimulated R&D on possible countermeasures and broadened patient access to better healthcare. FDA has begun work on improved Zika diagnostics, including assays built upon reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR). FDA is also evaluating proposed vector control through genetically engineered mosquitoes. When new candidate vaccines and drugs have been developed, the FDA will be ready to expedite their review as well.

In 2015, FDA issued approvals for 56 new drugs and biologics, compared to 50 in 2014. Among the approved products are treatments for hepatitis C, multiple myeloma, HIV infection and plague as well as a vaccine for use after anthrax exposure. Two other drugs were the fifth and sixth approved under the Qualified Infectious Disease Product protocol for rare but serious infections, aimed at stimulating drug R&D through priority review. Also approved were a diagnostic test to differentiate among types of HIV infection and an improved duodenoscope design to reduce infection risk during medical procedures.

In the United States, nearly 40 percent of our finished drugs and 80 percent of active ingredients used in drug manufacture are imported. The heightened global sourcing of US consumer products is clear to any shopper, but the chore of FDA oversight is far more complex. FDA regulated products originate from more than 200 countries, entering through more than 300 US ports. FDA estimates that shipments have more than tripled in the past decade, from 8 million import entry lines per year to more than 29 million today. At present, fewer than 2 percent of incoming shipments are inspected by the available FDA staff, often cited as proof of FDA budget shortfalls.

The ASM recognizes the monumental task of guaranteeing our food supply's safety and security. Chronically understaffed, FDA foods inspection, regulatory and investigation programs are challenged daily. FDA registered food producing and manufacturing sites comprise 133,000 foreign and 97,000 domestic facilities. FDA currently has resources to inspect about 1,000 foreign facilities per year. The Department of Agriculture (USDA) estimates that foods grown or processed outside the country account for about 20 percent of the US food supply, including about half of fresh fruits, 20 percent of fresh vegetables and 80 percent of seafood.

Last fall, FDA finalized five of the seven major rules that implement the core mandates of the FSMA legislation. Following huge effort by the agency, interagency partners and public comment, the rules address both domestic and foreign sources. Two of the preventive controls rules focus on modern food manufacturing processes for both human and animal foods, holding food companies more accountable for monitoring facilities. The third rule establishes science based standards to reduce contamination in produce, a frequent source of foodborne illnesses. The others specifically target imports through the Foreign Supplier Verification Program and accreditation of third party certification bodies to audit foreign foods and facilities. The ASM acknowledges the effort leading to these crucial food safety measures. However, the most effective implementation of FSMA goals depends upon both cutting edge FDA science and adequate fiscal support.

FDA SCIENCE ADVANCES PRODUCT SAFETY

In September, the advisory FDA Science Board released its in depth report on the current state of FDA science, *Mission Possible: How FDA Can Move at the Speed of Science*. Report authors were tasked to evaluate how FDA can best review products from emerging and future trends in science and technology, elevate its own scientific culture, and leverage collaborations with other stakeholders. Also included was assessment of intra-agency progress made since the Board's 2007 report, *FDA Science and Mission at Risk*. The report commended proactive moves like the new Office of the Chief Scientist and FDA offices in other countries, plus the effort to better regulate cutting edge technologies like genome sequencing, computing and stem cells.

The ASM agrees with the report's warning that some serious problems persist, indictments of ongoing funding shortfalls. Noted examples are failures to allocate the substantial amounts of FDA funding needed for the FSMA mandate's complete implementation and FDA's own scientific methods and technologies too often lagging behind industry and others. As the agency responsible for the safety and efficacy of huge consumer sectors, FDA clearly must have routine access to the latest science and technologies to best serve the public. The US responses to the 2014-2015 Ebola epidemic, and now the Zika virus, rely upon FDA science to help guide policy development, facilitate clinical trials and undertake fast track reviews of candidate drugs, diagnostics and vaccines. More broadly, next-generation diagnostics now being developed by industry often are based upon metagenomic sequencing that FDA must be prepared to evaluate. Another instance of FDA activities that must be based on sound science is reviewing foods from genetically engineered (GE) plants and animals. In November, FDA announced its approval of GE salmon, the agency's first for a GE animal for human consumption, as well as related guidance documents on labeling. It also released a final guidance for labeling foods derived from GE plants. Beyond the needed laboratory expertise, FDA regulatory actions increasingly require newer types of highly sought technical personnel like bioinformaticians.

Since 2008, the FDA foods program has utilized whole genome sequencing (WGS) to identify the microbial causes of foodborne illnesses faster and more accurately. Continued WGS improvements are dramatically reducing times required for identification from 14 days to just a few days, as well as pinpointing the source of outbreaks down to the farm or facility level. Last year, WGS was used extensively in outbreak investigations, linking contaminated imported cucumbers to a few specific firms and *Listeria* infections to certain ice cream manufacturers. FDA established the first national lab network of whole genome sequencers, called GenomeTrakr, which has accumulated more than 43,000 sequenced microbial isolates since 2013. FDA scientists are also using other next generation technologies like flow cytometry and fluorescence. FDA recently reduced the average number of days to serotype food pathogens to three days.

FDA PARTNERSHIPS SUPPORT NATIONAL INITIATIVES, LEGISLATION

Under its regulatory role, FDA reinforces multiple national efforts against threats to our collective health and quality of life. Some, like FSMA implementation, require extensive FDA actions that seriously stretch agency resources. Another example is FDA's participation in the National Action Plan for Combating Antibiotic Resistant Bacteria (CARB) and other efforts to address rising drug resistance among pathogens. Related FDA efforts encompass the areas of drugs, biologics, medical devices, and veterinary medicine. In 2015, the agency published its final Veterinary Feed Directive rule and an industry guidance to further promote judicious use of antimicrobials in food producing animals, placing their use under veterinary supervision.

To support the newly launched National Cancer Moonshot Initiative, FDA will develop a virtual Oncology Center of Excellence, to leverage collective expertise in drugs, biologics and medical devices to expedite R&D of novel products. The Center additionally will contribute to FDA's current support of the 2015 Precision Medicine Initiative, under which FDA has already approved a targeted therapy and companion diagnostic test for certain lung cancers.

The ASM appreciates that some FDA responsibilities would receive earmarked funding in the fiscal year 2017 budget, but we urge Congress to increase Federal appropriations for the FDA, which includes so many programs that have needs and are critical to public health and safety.

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

PREPARED STATEMENT OF 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 \$700 million and that the Agricultural Research Service receive \$1.161 billion in fiscal year 2017, the Administration's proposed funding levels. 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 \$700 million, the Administration's proposed funding of AFRI, in fiscal year 2017, which would double AFRI funding. 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 \$1.161 billion in fiscal year 2017, with Congress directing the use of some of these funds for both intra- and extramural human nutrition research. Resources above current funding levels are 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.

[This statement was submitted by Patrick J. Stover, Ph.D., President, American Society for Nutrition.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF AMERICAN SOCIETY OF PLANT BIOLOGISTS

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 fiscal year 2017 requested level of \$700 million for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI), which administers competitive funding for innovative research on issues such as food security, global health, and renewable energy. ASPB also supports the fiscal year 2017 requested level of \$1.286 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, attaining reduced reliance on all petrochemical

products through game-changing sustainable renewable biomass utilization approaches; and 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 basic discovery now threatens our national security and leadership. Indeed, 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 jobs²).

Given these concerns and our nation's fiscal situation, the plant science community has been working toward addressing our nation's looming challenges. With funding from USDA, the National Science Foundation, the Department of Energy, and the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, ASPB brought together representatives from across the full spectrum of plant science research to develop a community agenda document, *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, part of an ongoing and iterative process, puts forth a ten-year consensus plan to fill critical gaps in our understanding of plant biology toward addressing the grand challenge of sustainably feeding the 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 the Committee to fund AFRI at the requested \$700 million level in fiscal year 2017.
- 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 the requested \$1.286 billion in fiscal year 2017.
- USDA has focused attention in several key priority areas, including water for food production, food safety, childhood obesity, climate variability and change, and sustainable energy. 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.

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_go_archive.cfm?gsid=1977&type=flv&test.

- 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 ongoing support 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. 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.
- ASPB encourages some flexibility within NIFA’s budget to update and improve its data management capabilities.

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

PREPARED STATEMENT OF AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

On behalf of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) and our 2.5 million supporters nationwide, thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony. Founded in 1866, the ASPCA was the first humane organization in North America. Our mission, as stated by founder Henry Bergh, is “to provide effective means for the prevention of cruelty to animals throughout the United States.” As you craft the fiscal year 2017 Agriculture Appropriations bill, the ASPCA asks that you please consider the following provisions.

CONTINUE THE CURRENT BAN ON FEDERAL FUNDING FOR HORSE SLAUGHTERHOUSE INSPECTIONS

Congress included in the fiscal year 2016 Consolidated Appropriations Act a provision continuing the long-standing ban on Federal funding for USDA inspections at domestic horse slaughterhouses.

Americans do not eat horse meat, and national polling indicates that 80 percent of American voters oppose the slaughter of horses for human consumption. Cruelties associated with horse slaughter are well-documented. Whether in the U.S. or over the border, horses are forced into cramped trailers and trucked long distances to slaughter with insufficient food, water, or rest. Many horses are injured, trampled, and even killed during the journey. Horses that survive endure an inherently cruel slaughter process. As extreme flight animals, horses are ill-suited for stunning. In USDA-regulated plants, many endured repeated blows, sometimes remaining conscious during dismemberment. USDA documented rampant violations and cruelty in domestic horse slaughter facilities, including photos of protruding broken bones, eyeballs hanging by a thread of skin, and open wounds.

As American horses are not raised for food, throughout their lives they are routinely given numerous drugs prohibited by the FDA for use in animals intended for human consumption. A 2010 Food and Chemical Toxicology Journal article detailed the ubiquitous use of phenylbutazone in race horses subsequently sent to auction and then to slaughter only days after medication.¹ A New York Times investigation revealed a virtual arms race of illegal drug use in horses to mask pain and evade drug tests including “cobra venom, Viagra, blood doping agents, stimulants, and cancer drugs,” and the resulting food safety threats.² The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) cannot test for these harmful substances without a system to

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 http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/pcast_agriculture_20121207.pdf.

¹Dodman, N., Blondeau, N., Marini, A.M., “Association of Phenylbutazone Usage with Horses Bought for Slaughter: A Public Health Risk.” Food and Chemical Toxicology: May 2010.

²“Death and Disarray at America’s Racetracks.” The New York Times: March 24, 2012.

track horses' health histories, and trainers are constantly experimenting with new stimulants to gain a competitive edge.

The European Union (EU) announced a ban on imports of horse meat from Mexico to the EU as of January 1, 2015, following a scathing audit of EU-certified Mexican horse slaughter plants, which kill tens of thousands of American horses each year. The report stressed that because horses are not raised as food-producing animals in Mexico or the United States, they are routinely given many medications that are illegal for use in food animals. U.S. tax dollars should not be used to prop up an industry that has no regard for animal welfare or human health.

The ASPCA requests that the Subcommittee continue the prohibition on Federal funding for horse slaughterhouse inspections by the USDA by including the following language:

None of the funds made available in this Act may be used to pay the salaries or expenses of personnel—

(1) to inspect horses under section 3 of the Federal Meat Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 603);

(2) to inspect horses under section 903 of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (7 U.S.C. 1901 note; Public Law 104–127); or

(3) to implement or enforce section 352.19 of title 9, Code of Federal Regulations (or a successor regulation).

ENSURE THAT ARS RESEARCH COMPLIES WITH THE ANIMAL WELFARE ACT

A 2015 New York Times exposé revealed appalling abuse of animals at USDA's U.S. Meat Animal Research Center (USMARC).³ The article revealed a shocking array of animal experiments occurring at the USMARC with little regard for welfare, e.g., a live, unanaesthetized pig dissected and then improperly euthanized, and lambs left to die of exposure to extreme weather and predation in order to develop "easy-care" sheep. The research at the USMARC inflicts terrible suffering on animals at taxpayer expense. Since 2006, USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) has spent nearly \$200 million at USMARC.

The cows, sheep, and pigs used in these experiments are exempt, by statute, from the basic standards of the Animal Welfare Act (AWA), which exempts animals used in agriculture production research. Though exempted by statute, USDA's internal policies mirror some of these basic protections. However, investigative reports from USDA last year noted that USMARC filed to follow its own animal welfare standards.^{4 5 6} In particular, these reports showed a need for further review of internal animal welfare policies and that USMARC's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) was not properly constituted.

The ASPCA appreciates the Subcommittee's continued attention to this important issue. We supported the inclusion of language in the fiscal year 2016 Consolidated Appropriations Act which compels USDA to provide written certification to Congress that its animal welfare policies have been updated to comply with the AWA—including properly constituting IACUCs—and provides funding to facilitate inspection of ARS facilities by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS).

The ASPCA requests that the Subcommittee continue to include language to ensure that all ARS facilities comply with the Animal Welfare Act, including regular APHIS inspections, and we encourage the continuation of funding to support these inspections.

INCREASE AWA ENFORCEMENT FUNDING FOR THE INSPECTION OF LICENSED BREEDERS

One of the functions of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is to ensure the humane care and treatment of animals by enforcing the requirements of the Animal Welfare Act (AWA). Included in this mandate is the inspection of large-scale commercial dog breeding operations. Dogs raised in these facilities typically spend their entire lives in small, crowded cages, continually producing litters of puppies for the pet trade. Although the AWA provides very minimal

³"U.S. Research Lab Lets Livestock Suffer in Quest for Profit." The New York Times: January 19, 2015.

⁴"Findings and Recommendations on the Animal Care and Well-Being at the U.S. Meat Animal Research Center to the Secretary of Agriculture and the REE Under Secretary." Agricultural Research Service—Animal Handling and Welfare Review Panel. Pre-Public Hearing Report. March 9, 2015.

⁵"Findings and Recommendations on the Phase II Review of the Animal Care and Well-Being at the Agricultural Research Service to the REE Under Secretary." Agricultural Research Service—Animal Handling and Welfare Review Panel. Pre-Public Hearing Report. July 6, 2015.

⁶"ARS: U.S. Meat Animal Research Center Review—Interim Report" USDA Office of Inspector General. Audit Number: 02007–0001–31 (1). September 28, 2015.

standards which should be improved, those operations not in compliance with even the very limited Federal requirements must be held accountable. When facilities fall out of compliance, dogs can suffer for extended periods in deplorable conditions, without veterinary care, exercise, food, water, and socialization.

In September 2013, USDA issued a final rule that, for the first time, required commercial breeders who sell puppies directly to the public—sight unseen over the Internet or mail—to be licensed and inspected. At the time, the Department estimated that 2,600–4,640 additional dog breeders, as well as 325 cat breeders, would require licensure. With already limited resources, the addition of thousands of new licensees will make it nearly impossible for USDA to provide the necessary enforcement without an increase in funding.

The ASPCA requests that the Subcommittee increase the current funding for APHIS's AWA enforcement.

PROHIBIT INCREASED LINE SPEEDS FOR POULTRY SLAUGHTER PLANTS

USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) Modernization of Poultry Slaughter Inspection Rule, finalized in 2014, stopped short of increasing already-too-fast line speeds for certain poultry slaughter plants from 140 to 175 birds per minute. Faster slaughter speeds will lead to more live birds entering the scalding tank. As noted in a recent Washington Post article, nearly 1 million chickens are unintentionally boiled alive each year because already-fast-moving slaughter lines fail to kill the birds before they are dropped into scalding water to facilitate defeathering.⁷

The ASPCA requests that the Subcommittee prohibit FSIS from increasing line speeds at poultry slaughter plants.

EXCEED THE STATUTORY FUNDING CAP FOR HORSE SORING ENFORCEMENT

APHIS is also charged with protecting horses through its enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) of 1970. Since passage of the HPA in 1970, a \$500,000 statutory funding cap on activities under the Act has hampered USDA's effective enforcement of horse soring activities. Congress can choose to ignore the cap and fund the program at higher levels, which it did in the fiscal year 2016 Consolidated Appropriations Act by funding HPA enforcement at \$697,000.

The ASPCA requests that the Subcommittee continue to exceed the statutory funding cap to allow the USDA to better enforce the Horse Protection Act and prevent the cruel practice of horse soring.

[This statement was submitted by Nancy Perry, Senior Vice President, Government Relations.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ANIMAL WELFARE INFORMATION CENTER

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on fiscal year 2017 funding priorities for 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 training and education resource for those who use animals for research, testing, and teaching, and the need for its services continues to outstrip its resources. AWIC's activities are vitally important, as they facilitate science-based decisionmaking and compliance with Federal animal welfare regulations. We request that AWIC funding remain consistent with the fiscal year 2017 budget proposal.

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. We request that, consistent with the Department's request, \$29 million be allocated to Animal Welfare activities.

⁷“USDA Plan to Speed Up Poultry-Processing Lines Could Increase Risk of Bird Abuse.” The Washington Post: October 29, 2013.

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

We are grateful that Congress maintained in the fiscal year 2016 omnibus a provision prohibiting the renewal of existing licenses or the issuance of new licenses to Class B dealers who sell random source dogs and cats for use in research, experimentation, teaching, and testing. One existing license doesn't expire until December, so it will be necessary to continue this prohibition into fiscal year 2017. Moreover, it will also be needed to ensure that there is no lapse during which these dealers try to get back into business or others are tempted to apply for new licenses. It is true that very few of these dealers remain—all the more reason to head off challenges to the progress that has been made in shutting down this abuse-ridden industry that has trafficked in stolen pets, consigned animals to misery, and was found to be “not necessary” to NIH-related research. Therefore, we ask you to include the following language in the agriculture appropriations bill for fiscal year 2017: None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to carry out any activities or incur any expense related to the issuance of licenses under section 3 of the Animal Welfare Act (7 U.S.C. 2133), or the renewal of such licenses, to class B dealers who sell random source dogs and cats for use in research, experiments, teaching, or testing. Nothing in this provision, however, should be construed as preventing the Department from carrying out all necessary oversight, inspection, compliance, and enforcement activities with respect to any entity holding a valid class B license who sells random source dogs and cats for use in research, experiments, teaching, or testing, or with respect to any entity doing so without a license as required under 7 U.S.C. 2133.

USDA—APHIS—ANIMAL WELFARE—HORSE PROTECTION ACT ENFORCEMENT

We support and incorporate by reference the testimony submitted by The Humane Society of the U.S. on behalf of AWI and our partner organizations concerning fiscal year 2017 funding for HPA enforcement. The HPA was enacted to end soring, the cruel practice of applying chemical and mechanical irritants to the legs and hooves of horses to produce an exaggerated gait. Yet soring, condemned as “one of the most significant welfare issues affecting any equine breed or discipline,”¹ has continued as limited funding has hampered enforcement. Because USDA inspectors are able to attend a mere fraction of Tennessee Walking Horse shows, monitoring responsibility often falls to “Designated Qualified Persons” (DQPs), usually industry insiders willing to ignore violations. Reliance on DQPs has been an abysmal failure. Statistics show that USDA inspectors' presence at shows results in a far higher rate of violations than occurs when DQPs are present. For example, at the 2013 Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, 86 of 128 horses tested positive for soring agents.² We ask that Congress appropriate \$705,000 for HPA enforcement.

USDA—APHIS—WILDLIFE SERVICES—WILDLIFE DAMAGE MANAGEMENT

APHIS's Wildlife Services (WS) program allocates millions of dollars each year to lethal wildlife management, relying on methods that are cruel, ineffective, costly, and outdated. WS uses poisons, traps, snares, and firearms to indiscriminately kill animals—including endangered species, family pets, and countless non-target animals—while ignoring humane and cost-efficient alternatives. WS' irresponsible practices even threaten public safety and national security (e.g., the use of Compound 1080). Last year, two individuals died during an aerial gunning operation that WS was conducting to exterminate coyotes in New Mexico; unfortunately, this most recent fatal accident is not the first such case. In view of the most recent fatal plane crash, as well as the overall lack of transparency surrounding WS's activities, we urge the Subcommittee to include report language requiring the agency to provide detailed information about its aerial gunning operations. Specifically, WS should identify any additional safety measures the agency has instituted since the most recent fatal accident; the dollar amount spent per operation (e.g., for aircraft rental or lease, fuel costs, personnel costs including fees paid for pilots if not agency personnel, and other payments made to private aerial companies or individuals contracted by WS); funding received from outside sources to carry out aerial gunning activities (whether through cooperator agreements or from state agencies, local governments, or private landowners); specific locations where operations were conducted; the number and species of animals killed per operation; and information re-

¹American Association of Equine Practitioners, *Putting the Horse First: Veterinary Recommendations for Ending the Soring of Tennessee Walking Horses* (2008).

²*Id.*

garding whether targeted animals were identified in a specific conflict or were part of a preemptive shooting mission.

USDA—APHIS—INVESTIGATIVE AND ENFORCEMENT SERVICES

APHIS' Investigative and Enforcement Services (IES) handles investigations related to APHIS programs, which involves: evidence collection; civil and criminal investigations; and investigations in collaboration with Federal, state and local enforcement agencies. IES also works with USDA's Office of General Counsel to handle stipulations and administrative proceedings. Consistent with the fiscal year 2017 budget proposal, we request \$16,410,000 so that the Service may fulfill its responsibilities, particularly its increasing HPA and AWA investigatory demands.

USDA—ARS—ANIMAL WELFARE FOR FARM ANIMALS USED IN AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

Last year the New York Times released an investigation that revealed shocking instances of animal abuse at the U.S. Meat Animal Research Center (MARC). Experiments at this Federal facility over the last several decades were the subject of a year-long investigation by the Times, involving the review of thousands of pages of internal records obtained through the Freedom of Information Act. MARC has received almost \$200 million in Federal funding since 2006, and it is one of approximately 40 Agricultural Research Service facilities that conduct agricultural research involving animals. The Committee took seriously the allegations raised by the Times piece and responded by making 5 percent of the ARS budget for fiscal year 2016 contingent on ARS updating its animal care policies and requiring that all ARS facilities at which animal research is conducted have a fully functioning Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) to ensure compliance with animal welfare standards. The Committee also provided \$400,000 to APHIS to conduct inspections consistent with the AWA at each ARS facility that uses animals in research. We request a continuation in fiscal year 2017 of that \$400,000 to APHIS, as well as a renewed requirement for a fully functioning IACUC at each ARS facility where animal research is conducted, along with the following bill language: "Provided further, That the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and Agricultural Research Service shall work together to ensure an effective animal welfare inspection program for ARS facilities and ensure that these facilities are in full compliance with the Animal Welfare Act."

USDA—FSIS—HUMANE METHODS OF SLAUGHTER ACT ENFORCEMENT

USDA allots an extremely small portion of its resources to Humane Methods of Slaughter Act (HMSA) enforcement. In fiscal year 2015, for instance, only 2.6 percent of all FSIS verification procedures were performed for activities related to humane handling and slaughter. Uneven enforcement among districts, repeat violators, and inadequate training and humane slaughter expertise among inspectors remain serious problems. The problems of inadequate and inconsistent enforcement can be resolved by increasing the number and qualifications of personnel assigned to humane handling and slaughter duties. We request that no fewer than 160 full-time equivalent positions be dedicated to inspections and HMSA enforcement. In addition, a minimum of two District Veterinary Medical Specialists should be assigned per district to provide for increased auditing and training to help uncover problems before they result in egregious humane handling incidents.

USDA—FSIS—HORSE SLAUGHTER FACILITY INSPECTIONS

For years, Congress has 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 continued inclusion of this prohibition in fiscal year 2017.

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

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) requests a minimum of \$1.716 billion in fiscal year 2017 appropriations for the Food for Peace program, and of this urges \$375 million be designated for non-emergency development programs. CRS also requests \$201 million for the McGovern-Dole Food for Education program, and \$80 million for the USDA Local and Regional Procurement program.

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 implementers of U.S. funded foreign assistance. Our work reaches millions of poor and vulnerable people in over 100 countries. CRS works with people and communities based on need, without regard to race, creed, or nationality. CRS often partners with the local Catholic Church within the countries we operate in. This engenders substantial trust in us by local populations and gives us an expansive reach no other aid organization can duplicate.

FOOD FOR PEACE—AGILE, RESPONSIVE, AND IMPACTFUL

The Food for Peace (FFP) program is the flagship international food aid program of the US government. It provides funding for emergency food aid programs that assist communities in acute need and funds long-term development programs that address underlying causes of hunger, both of which CRS currently implements. FFP programs are subject to comprehensive reporting requirements and are targeted to meet specific and measurable goals. More importantly though, FFP directs resources to the most vulnerable people and communities. As such, few other US foreign assistance resources are as important for poverty alleviation and saving lives. The following provides a brief snapshot of the critical work that CRS accomplishes in its FFP-funded projects.

ETHIOPIA—JOINT EMERGENCY OPERATION

Ethiopia, a country with over 90 million people, has been particularly hard hit by the El Nino weather phenomena, leading to the most severe drought the country has faced in decades. About 80 percent of Ethiopia's population are subsistence farmers and 95 percent of farms are rain-fed. Due to El Nino, some regions have not seen rain in over a year, leading to steep declines in crop yields and hundreds of thousands of livestock deaths. Presently, over 10 million Ethiopians are in need of emergency food assistance. Further, while there are expectations that rains will return to dry areas during this year's rainy season (July-September), it is also projected that emergency conditions will persist in drought effected areas through at least September 2016 (see Chart 1).

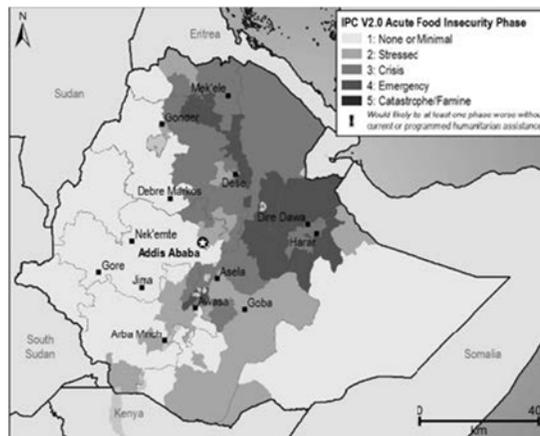


Chart 1—Projected Food Insecurity Levels, Ethiopia, June-Sept 2016. Source: FEWS Net.

Catholic Relief Services manages the Joint Emergency Operation (JEOP), an emergency food aid program funded by FFP. JEOP is implemented through a consortium of international and national NGOs. Its current operational service area includes 76 woredas (counties). Activities are coordinated with the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) and the World Food Program (WFP). In addition to the emergency food distributions targeting the most vulnerable, the JEOP has implemented a Behavior Change Communication strategy to improve nutrition for children, supported the formation of savings and internal lending communities (i.e., microfinance), and has trained community members to regularly provide information on food security indicators that feed into national food security warning systems.

With the onset of the El Nino-driven drought, JEOP has ramped up food distribution operations (see Chart 2). By December 2015, JEOP served almost 2.6 million beneficiaries throughout Ethiopia. Beneficiaries generally receive a ration of wheat or sorghum, yellow split peas and vegetable oil, sourced largely from the United States. JEOP also provides Corn Soy Blend+ and vegetable oil to organizations implementing emergency supplementary feeding. Between September 2015 and January 2016, Food for Peace has supplied the JEOP with three separate commitments for commodities totaling over 360,000 metric tons.

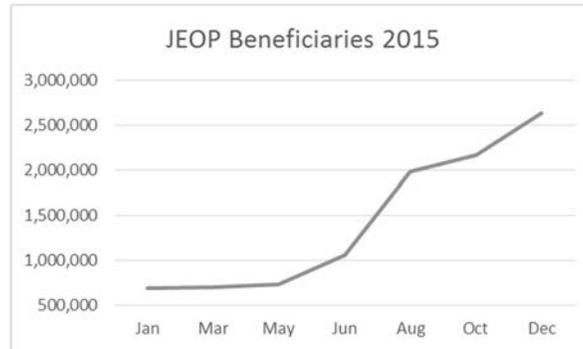


Chart 2—JEOP Beneficiary level 2015.

The JEOP has provided much needed stability for millions of Ethiopians at a critical time. During this same period the GoE and WFP have devoted significant resources to address the country's acute food emergency needs. While the world community has come up short in answering GoE and WFP's calls for additional funding, the U.S., primarily through the JEOP, has remained steadfast in its support to Ethiopia. Despite overall resource constraints, the worst case scenario has thus far been avoided in Ethiopia, thanks in no small measure to the JEOP. Many Ethiopians are alive today thanks to this program. The JEOP presently has enough resources to continue operations through July 2016, and we expect FFP to continue to help Ethiopia get over this hurdle.

SOUTH SUDAN—JONGLEI FOOD SECURITY PROGRAM

South Sudan, bordering Ethiopia to the southwest, is the newest country in the world, having secured independence from Sudan in 2011. To support the new country, USAID awarded Catholic Relief Services funding for a multi-year FFP development program, the Jonglei Food Security Program (JFSP). Operating in Jonglei State, the largest and most populous state in South Sudan, the program was to address root causes of food insecurity through food for work programs to build community assets and support for small farmers, among other things. However, in 2013 the country was plunged into a civil war.

Jonglei was one of the epicenters of the conflict. The ensuing insecurity prevented CRS from continuing JFSP development activities and ultimately damaged or destroyed much of the community assets and farming improvements made through the program. Fleeing for their safety, many residents of Jonglei state left their homes for the safety of camps both inside South Sudan and in neighboring countries. Given the radically different nature of the needs in Jonglei, CRS worked with the Office of Food for Peace to convert JFSP into an emergency response program. From 2014–2015, JFSP funding was used to provide emergency food assistance to nearly 140,000 people. Some areas in need were impossible to reach by land because of the fighting. Partnering with WFP, food supplies were airlifted into remote areas of Jonglei to CRS staff, who then continued emergency food distributions to those hardest hit.

In August 2015, government and opposition forces signed a peace agreement. While fighting continues in some places in the country, the peace has largely held in Jonglei State and staff and officials on the ground credit JFSP in part. The calm has allowed resumption of development activities in some areas, and relief convoys to enter other regions for the first time in over 2 years. Most people and officials in these areas did not believe aid convoys would be allowed in. When convoys began arriving earlier this year, they were met by people cheering and dancing. One local official commented that “this is not food for work but food for hope.” Our staff noted

that “at least in Jonglei, the food convoys have brought a feeling that real peace might be feasible.” We have already seen a number of internally displaced people coming back to Jonglei, and it is our expectation that continued engagement through JFSP will direct most people’s energy and focus back to preparing for the planting season instead of fighting.



Building a dike through Food for Work in South Sudan

MALAWI—WELLNESS AND AGRICULTURE FOR LIFE ADVANCEMENT

In 2014, CRS completed Wellness and Agriculture for Life Advancement (WALA), a five-year development Food for Peace project in Malawi. As with most Food for Peace development projects, WALA took a multi-sectoral approach to food security. The project included helping farmers adopt new and better techniques and technology, connecting them to markets, addressing the nutritional needs of young children and expecting mothers, providing better access to water for agriculture and hygiene, helping communities build productive assets, and among other interventions. While most program success indicators showed strong results, one standout area was in watershed rehabilitation and management.

Heavy rains characterize the wet season in Malawi. Communities targeted by WALA are prone to soil erosion from rushing water running off their land during these rains. In the lean season, many water sources for these communities would dry up and most small farmers could not produce enough food over the year to get them through this period. Given these circumstances, through food for work, WALA introduced a number of communities to techniques, like water absorption trenches, that slow and reduce run off and help water percolate into the soil. Check dams were constructed in areas where run-off had formed gullies. Native cover crops, grasses, and trees were introduced in key areas of farm land to help with soil retention and to improve nutrient content.

The results of these efforts have been dramatic. The water table has risen, resulting in more water availability in wells. Wells and streams that would dry up during the lean season now flow year round. Water clarity in streams has increased also. Over just one or 2 years, check dams have filled gullies, helping farmers reclaim farmland. With more moisture and nutrients in the soil, and more land to cultivate, agricultural yields have increased. Neighboring communities not in the WALA program noted these successes and on their own adopted the knowledge and techniques used in WALA.

These programs demonstrate huge successes—addressing the acute needs of people gripped by severe drought in Ethiopia, being able to shift between emergency and development work as needs change and to capitalize on opportunities for peace in South Sudan, and in making a foundation for a better life more resilient life for people in Malawi. Unfortunately, needs are expanding. The world is seeing more people being impacted by shocks like conflict and weather patterns like El Nino, and potentially La Nina later in the year. The funding requested for FFP, \$1.716 billion, will be critical for the US to respond to the growing emergency needs around the world. Further, directing more than the minimum level of funding to FFP development programs will help more communities get ahead, so that when shocks to strike, they are better prepared to meet their own needs.

MCGOVERN-DOLE AND USDA LRP

McGovern-Dole Food for Education programs provide food for school lunch programs. In many cases, the lunch provided through McGovern-Dole is the only meal children receive all day. Parents who would not otherwise send their children to school are motivated to do so because they know their children will be fed. This has been especially true for girls, whose education is not traditionally encouraged in many parts of the world. Catholic Relief Services currently implements five McGovern-Dole programs. In addition to school feeding, we also use McGovern-Dole resources to strengthen teacher training and to make improvements to schools.

The USDA Local and Regional Procurement (LRP) program, made permanent by the 2014 Farm Bill, is intended to be used in conjunction with McGovern-Dole programming and we view it as critical to the sustainability of school lunch programs. Specifically, we believe these funds can be used to establish the systems needed to source food used in school lunches from local farmers. This will entail helping these farmer grow the quality and quantity needed for school lunches and organizing parent groups to manage school canteens. Ultimately, once these systems are in place, local governments can assume responsibility for these programs.

IMPROVING FOOD AID

Catholic Relief Services supports several improvements to the current food aid system, including the phasing out of requirements to monetize food aid commodities, reducing the burden of agricultural cargo preferences on food aid, and giving implementers greater flexibility to determine how food aid resources are used. We refer you to testimony Catholic Relief Services submitted to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in April 2015 and the House Agriculture Committee in September 2015 for more details concerning these improvements.

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

PREPARED STATEMENT OF UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

On behalf of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committees on Domestic Justice and Human Development and International Justice and Peace, Catholic Charities USA, Catholic Relief Services and Catholic Rural Life, we wish to address the moral and human dimensions of fiscal year 2017 Agriculture Appropriations. We urge you to support robust funding for both domestic and international food aid, and for conservation and rural development programs, and to resist cuts to them. Many of these program areas have already been subject to reductions. Further cuts would be harmful to vulnerable people and communities.

In *For I Was Hungry and You Gave Me Food*, the U.S. bishops wrote, "The primary goals of agricultural policies should be providing food for all people and reducing poverty among farmers and farm workers in this country and abroad." Adequate nutrition is essential to protect human life and dignity. We must also promote good stewardship of the land and natural resources. In our soup kitchens and parish food pantries, we see the faces of poor and hungry people every day. As a faith community, we feed those without work, pregnant women and children, and seniors on limited incomes.

We acknowledge the difficult challenges Congress and the Administration face to match scarce resources with real needs. But a just spending bill cannot rely on disproportionate cuts in essential services to poor and vulnerable people.

The nation continues to see historic levels of food insecurity that have persisted well beyond the end of the Great Recession, and this reality is confirmed by the experience of our food banks, pantries, and congregate meal sites. Catholic Charities agencies continue to provide food services well above pre-recession levels, with agencies reporting 10.4 million food services delivered to clients, a 64 percent increase from 2007. Despite our increased efforts, more than 48 million Americans (nearly 1 in 6) live in food insecure households. With this reality, our nation must prioritize programs that assist poor and hungry people and promote good stewardship. In addition to refraining from making cuts that impact programs like SNAP, which provide greater levels of food security to millions of people, it is vital to provide robust funding for the following programs:

WIC.—Fund the Women, Infants, and Children nutrition program at \$6.37 billion to ensure that all qualified families receive vital nutritional support, investments are made in technology to improve program operations, and sufficient reserves are built to prepare for economic volatility. In particular, we urge investment of \$75 mil-

lion in management information systems and technology to assist with the transition to electronic benefit transfer (EBT) systems to help streamline operations.

TEFAP.—Provide full funding levels as required by the 2014 Farm Bill for the Emergency Food Assistance Program and food distribution grants in local communities. Cuts to the program could force some of our parishes and other charities and food pantries to turn away hungry people when they continue to need our help.

CSFP.—Fund the Commodity Supplemental Food Program at \$236 million to ensure adequate food assistance is provided to the growing population of low-income seniors. Faith communities and other charities are essential in providing food packages to hungry seniors in their local communities and, as the population continues to age, our ministries are experiencing increasing demand for food services from seniors that must be addressed.

CSP.—Provide adequate funding for the Conservation Stewardship Program to help farmers better conserve and care for farm land for future generations. Strong conservation programs are necessary to promote good stewardship of creation and provide needed support to family farms.

VAPG.—Maintain current funding for the Value Added Producer Grants program to help farmers and ranchers develop new farm and food-related businesses to increase rural economic opportunity and help farm and ranch families thrive.

We also ask you to prioritize international food security programs. With an estimated 805 million people chronically undernourished globally (UN-FAO), our nation must support:

International Food Assistance.—The Administration has proposed funding Food for Peace at \$1.35 billion in fiscal year 2017, \$350 million less than what Congress appropriated in fiscal year 2016. Food for Peace provides emergency assistance to people in crises, and is essential to the U.S. response to civil strife around the world as well as to the severe drought in many countries brought on by El Niño. Now is not the time to make drastic cuts to this program. We ask Congress to maintain Food for Peace funding at \$1.716 billion for fiscal year 2017. Similarly, we encourage Congress to reverse the Administration’s proposed cut to school feeding and maintain funding for the McGovern-Dole program at \$201.6 million in fiscal year 2017.

Developmental Food Aid.—Congress must protect and direct an adequate amount of Food for Peace funding to development food assistance programs. These programs build resilience, strengthen agricultural capacity, and improve livelihoods for the most vulnerable, reducing the need to provide future emergency assistance. Pursuant to the 2014 Farm Bill, a minimum of \$350 million of Food for Peace resources must be used in development programs, but more may be directed for this purpose. We request that Congress direct a total of \$375 million of Food for Peace resources to development purposes, and that USAID have the flexibility to use Development Assistance resources to reach part of this total.

Reforms to Food Aid System.—A key reform in the 2014 Farm Bill is the USDA Local and Regional Procurement program, to be implemented in conjunction with McGovern-Dole, which will help responsibly transition school feeding programs to local governments. We request that the full authorized level of \$80 million be provided to the USDA LRP program. Further, we support making food aid programs like Food for Peace more efficient by allowing them to use local and regional procurement when appropriate to local circumstances and efficiency gains should also be reinvested in programs to expand their reach and not used to justify funding cuts. We also encourage Congress to explore changes to agricultural cargo preferences to reduce costs to food aid programs, as a means to achieve greater efficiencies.

At a time of continuing budgetary constraints and competition for agricultural resources, the needs of those who are hungry, poor and vulnerable should come before assistance to those who are relatively well off. With other Christian leaders, we urge the committee to draw a “circle of protection” around programs that serve those in greatest need and to prioritize their needs first. We urge you to protect and fund programs that feed hungry people, help the most vulnerable farmers, strengthen rural communities and promote good stewardship of God’s creation.

Most Reverend Thomas G. Wenski
Archbishop of Miami
Chairman, Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development

Most Reverend Oscar Cantú
Bishop of Las Cruces
Chairman, Committee on International Justice and Peace

Sr. Donna Markham, OP, Ph.D.
 President & CEO
 Catholic Charities USA

Dr. Carolyn Y. Woo
 President
 Catholic Relief Services

Mr. James Ennis
 Executive Director
 National Catholic Rural Life

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CENTRAL ARIZONA WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

On behalf of the Central Arizona Water Conservation District (CAWCD), I am writing to ask that you include at least \$15.2 million from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Environmental Quality Incentive Program Financial Assistance (EQIP FA) for the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program in the fiscal year 2017 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 5.5 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. The canal provides an economic benefit of \$100 million annually, accounting for one-third of the entire Arizona gross state product. 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. Achieving and maintaining these water management objectives is critical to the long-term sustainability of a state as arid as Arizona.

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. With the significant Federal ownership in the Basin, most of this comes from federally administered lands. Human activity, principally irrigation, adds to the salt load of the Colorado River. Further, natural and human activities concentrate the dissolved salts in the River.

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) has estimated damages at about \$382 million per year. Modeling by Reclamation indicates that damages will rise to approximately \$614 million per year by the year 2035 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.

In implementing the Act, Congress directed that the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program should be implemented in the most cost-effective way. The Program at the United States Department of Agriculture is currently funded under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and under Reclamation's Basinwide Program.

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 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. 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 \$15.2 million from the USDA's Environmental Quality Incentive Program Financial Assistance for the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program in the fiscal year 2017 Appropriation bill. Additionally, there is needed sufficient Technical Assistance dollars to adequately implement the program. Continuation of EQIP at the requested funding level will prevent the further degradation of water quality of the Colorado River, and significantly increased damages from the higher salt concentrations to municipal, industrial and irrigation users.

[This statement was submitted by Theodore C. Cooke, General Manager, Central Arizona Project.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CENTER FOR PROGRESSIVE REFORM

A national network of advocates including Oxfam America, the National Employment Law Project, and Nebraska Appleseed have called your attention to the dangerous conditions that workers face in poultry slaughter facilities, owing to the speed with which young chickens and turkeys are processed. The stories presented in their testimonies and comments, along with the data they have provided, should be enough to warrant rejection of any proposal to allow line speeds to increase at those facilities through the appropriations process as it relates to the Food Safety Inspection Service's New Poultry Inspection System.

These comments approach the issue from a slightly different perspective, but arrive at the same conclusion: using the appropriations process to increase line speeds at poultry slaughter facilities violates principles of good government and will cause lasting damage to workers, their families, and their communities.

On both sides of the aisle, Members of Congress for years have derided the use of "earmarks" to direct government spending toward favored projects and policies. As explained below, such derision should apply with greater force to the abuse of the appropriations process to direct spending away from projects and policies that are opposed by a determined minority of members of Congress. Such actions upend the normal legislative process and entrench a system of policymaking that undermines core principles of representative democracy. Last summer, the Center for Progressive Reform published a report on the misuse of appropriations riders to direct agency policymaking.¹ The report's length precludes inclusion in these comments, per the committee's rules, but its key findings are worth noting here:

—Prohibiting agencies from taking actions disfavored by the rider's sponsors is legislating by extortion

Appropriations bills offer ideal vehicles for the use of extortionate riders, because they must be enacted on an ongoing and periodic basis or else the government will cease functioning. As the deadline for completing appropriations bills approaches, the leverage that proponents of particular riders wield to coerce acquiescence in their demands grows greater. With the threat of government shutdown looming, other legislators will feel increasingly compelled to vote in favor of the bill even though they are opposed to a particular rider and would not support it as a stand-alone measure. Similarly, the president may find it difficult to veto an appropriations bill simply because of the antiregulatory riders it contains.

—Negative riders enable secret sabotage of popular safeguards

In contrast to the procedures that govern traditional authorizing legislation, a distinct lack of transparency and accountability marks the appropriations process. In particular, the process of adding riders to appropriations bills is clouded in secrecy, which can make it nearly impossible for the public to hold legislators accountable for sponsoring especially controversial proposals. Because antiregulatory riders are often buried in appropriations bills that run hundreds of pages in length, it is easy for them to slip past the scrutiny of concerned citizens and lawmakers. These bills thus offer the proponents of antiregulatory riders an ideal opportunity to conceal their attacks on popular protections.

The caps on poultry slaughter line speeds, for instance, were a major point of contention when the Department of Agriculture's Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) developed the New Poultry Inspection System. The rule-making process that FSIS followed, rooted in the Administrative Procedure Act, ensured that the final safeguards reflected the views of stakeholders ranging from workers to experts from the Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration. No such process for engaging experts, much less the workers who would be affected by a line-speed increase, is in place here.

—Riders lobotomize the deliberative process that should govern lawmaking

The use of antiregulatory riders also enables lawmakers to engage in a powerful form of substantive policymaking but without the due deliberation that normally accompanies the enactment of authorizing legislation. Broadly speaking, Congress divides the labor of preparing bills for full consideration between the authorization committees—which are responsible for considering substantive legislation creating, modifying, or eliminating Federal

¹"Earmarking Away the Public Interest: How Congressional Republicans Use Antiregulatory Appropriations Riders to Benefit Powerful Polluting Industries," by CPR Member Scholars Thomas McGarity and Richard Murphy, and CPR Senior Policy Analyst James Goodwin (July 2015), available at http://progressivereform.org/articles/Anti-Reg_Riders_1503.pdf.

programs—and the budget and appropriations committees—which are responsible for funding authorized programs. The institutional design and processes of authorization committees renders them far more suitable to engage in substantive policymaking. Antiregulatory riders generally do not receive anywhere near the same level of deliberative consideration from appropriations committees that usually takes place in authorization committees for the provisions of substantive legislation.

—Antiregulatory riders encourage pandering to corporate interests. Because they are adopted with little transparency or deliberation, antiregulatory riders are uniquely well designed to provide individual lawmakers with the ability to confer benefits on favored special interests. Much like traditional earmarks, which Congress has effectively banned, antiregulatory riders are thus highly susceptible to abuse by Members of Congress looking for an easy way to curry favor with politically powerful businesses or industries.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.

[This statement was submitted by Matthew Shudtz, Executive Director, Center for Progressive Reform.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CHOOSE CLEAN WATER COALITION

The undersigned members of the Choose Clean Water Coalition request continued support for clean water in the Chesapeake Bay watershed through the Agricultural Act of 2014 (2014 Farm Bill) conservation programs. There are 87,000 farms in the six-State Chesapeake region; 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. Stopping cuts to these conservation programs is critical to maintain and restore clean water to the rivers and streams throughout the Chesapeake Bay region, and for the Bay itself. These programs are essential for regulated agricultural operations to meet Federal regulations under the Clean Water Act and help farmers meet state regulations that address both farm health and water quality.

We urge you to maintain full funding for mandatory agricultural conservation programs in fiscal year 2017. The 2014 Farm Bill set us on a new path toward clean water in our region, but only if key conservation programs are funded as Congress intended. With the support of much of the conservation community and clean water advocates, the 2014 Farm Bill eliminated nearly a dozen conservation programs (including the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative) and reduced mandatory funding overall to save American taxpayers approximately \$6 billion.

Two-thirds of the 18 million people in the Chesapeake region get their drinking water directly from the rivers and streams that flow through the cities, towns and farms throughout our six State, 64,000 square mile watershed. The quality of this water is critical to both human health and to the regional economy. Much of the work and funding necessary to achieve and maintain clean and healthy water in this region would be accomplished through the Farm Bill's new Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). The President's fiscal year 2017 budget proposes full funding for mandatory conservation programs that are critical to maintaining a fully funded RCPP. In particular, we urge you to fund the Environmental Quality Incentives Program at \$1.65 billion to help willing producers implement conservation practices on their farms.

In May 2014, the Chesapeake Bay Watershed was designated as one of eight Critical Conservation Areas under the new RCPP. For the first 3 years of RCPP funding, the Chesapeake received \$27.6 million, with a few million more going to other projects partially in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. This is a precipitous drop from the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative where our region's producers received \$47.6 million annually for conservation practices. This is a huge shortfall for conservation in our region and any further cuts to the RCPP will exacerbate this funding drop off. We urge you to maintain the 2014 Farm Bill's negotiated mandatory funding levels for all conservation programs, including the RCPP.

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 all conservation programs in the Farm Bill for fiscal year 2017.

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.

American Rivers	Mehoopany Creek Watershed Association
Anacostia Watershed Society	National Aquarium
Audubon Naturalist Society	National Parks Conservation Association
Blue Heron Environmental Network Inc.	National Wildlife Federation
Blue Ridge Watershed Coalition	Natural Resources Defense Council
Blue Water Baltimore	Nature Abounds
Cecil Land Use Association	Otsego County Conservation Association
Chapman Forest Foundation	Otsego Land Trust
Chesapeake Bay Foundation	PennEnvironment
Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage	Pennsylvania Council of Churches
Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future	Piedmont Environmental Council
Clean Water Action	Potomac Conservancy
Coalition for Smarter Growth	Potomac Riverkeeper
Conservation Pennsylvania	Potomac Riverkeeper Network
Conservation Voters of Pennsylvania	Rivanna Conservation Society
Delaware Nature Society	Rock Creek Conservancy
Earth Forum of Howard County	Sassafras River Association
Eastern Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation	Savage River Watershed Association
Environment America	Shenandoah Riverkeeper
Environment Maryland	Shenandoah Valley Network
Environment Virginia	Sidney Center Improvement Group
Friends of Accotink Creek	Sierra Club—Maryland
Friends of Dyke Marsh	Sierra Club—Pennsylvania
Friends of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River	Sierra Club—Virginia
Green Muslims	Sleepy Creek Watershed Association
Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake	South River Federation
Izaak Walton League of America	St. Mary's River Watershed
James River Association	Stewards of the Lower Susquehanna
Lackawanna River Conservation Association	Trout Unlimited
Lynnhaven River NOW	Upper Potomac Riverkeeper
Maryland Conservation Council	Upper Susquehanna Coalition
Maryland League of Conservation Voters	Virginia Conservation Network
Mattawoman Watershed Society	Virginia League of Conservation Voters
	Water Defense
	West & Rhode Riverkeeper
	West Virginia Rivers Coalition

[This statement was submitted by Peter J. Marx, Federal Affairs, Choose Clean Water Coalition.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF 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 5.5 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 \$382 million per year. Modeling by Reclamation indicates that the quantifiable damages will rise to approximately \$614 million per year by the year 2035 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 \$15.2 million in EQIP FA in 2017 is in keeping with the Program's Plan of Implementation and is required to prevent further degradation of the quality of the Colorado River and increases in 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 di-

rected 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 with 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 headwaters 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 3-year funding plan for the salinity efforts under EQIP. The Forum supports this funding plan which recognizes the need for \$15.2 million in EQIP FA allocations in fiscal year 2017. Additionally, there is needed sufficient TA dollars to adequately implement the program. 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 \$382 million annually 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.

[Testimony Submitted by Don A. Barnett, Executive Director, Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF COLORADO RIVER BOARD OF CALIFORNIA

This testimony is in support of fiscal year (FY) 2017 funding for the Department of Agriculture (USDA) associated with the activity that assists Title II of the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act of 1974 (Public Law 93-320). This long-standing and cost-effective salinity control program in the Colorado River Basin is being carried out pursuant to the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act and the Clean Water Act (Public Law 92-500). 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 \$15.2 million in EQIP Financial Assistance (FA) annually is required to prevent further degradation of the quality of the Colorado River and increased downstream economic damages.

The Colorado River Board of California (Colorado River Board) is the state agency charged with protecting California's interests and rights in the water and power resources of the Colorado River system. In this capacity, California participates along with the other six Colorado River Basin states in the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum (Forum), the interstate organization responsible for coordinating the Basin States' salinity control efforts. In close cooperation with the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and pursuant to requirements of the Clean Water Act, the Forum is charged with reviewing the Colorado River's water quality standards every 3 years. The Forum adopts a Plan of Implementation consistent with these water quality standards. The level of appropriation being supported in this testimony is consistent with the Forum's 2014 Plan of Implementation. The Forum's 2014 Plan of Implementation can be found on this website: <http://coloradoriversalinity.org/docs/2014%20Final%20REVIEW%20-%20complete.pdf>. If adequate funds are not appropriated, significant damages associated with increasing salinity concentrations of Colorado River water will become more widespread in the United States and Mexico.

The Program benefits both the Upper Basin water users through more efficient water management and the Lower Basin water users through reduced salinity concentration of Colorado River water. 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. 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 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 Colorado River Board supports this funding plan which recognizes the need for \$15.2 million in EQIP FA allocations in fiscal year 2017. Additionally, there is needed sufficient Technical Assistance dollars to adequately implement the program.

Over the thirty-two years since the passage of the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act, much has been learned about the impact of salts in the Colorado River system. Currently, the salinity concentration of Colorado River water causes about \$382 million in quantifiable damages in the United States annually. Economic and hydrologic modeling by Reclamation indicates that the quantifiable damages could rise to more than \$614 million by the year 2035 without the continuation of the Salinity Control Program. For example, damages can be incurred related to the following activities:

- a reduction in the yield of salt sensitive crops and increased water use to meet the leaching requirements in the agricultural sector,
- increased in the amount of imported water,
- an increased 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,
- 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.

The Colorado River is, and will continue to be, a major and vital water resource to the nearly 20 million residents of southern California, including municipal, industrial, and agricultural water users in Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Ventura Counties. The protection and improvement of Colorado River water quality through an effective salinity control program will avoid the additional economic damages to users in California and the other states that rely on Colorado River water resources.

[This statement was submitted by Tanya Trujillo, Executive Director, Colorado River Board of California.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF 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 2017. 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) by providing at least \$2.85 billion in fiscal year 2017. 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).

Drug approvals by the FDA reached an 18 year high in 2014, and more than 400 rare disease drugs and biologics have been approved in the last 30 years. 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 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, and with the advent of precision medicine, therapies are being customized to treat a patient's specific genetic makeup.

As this new concept in drug development quickly becomes a reality, it opens the door for the advancement of new targeted therapies in many important areas of medicine, including cancer and rare diseases like CF.

There are currently two therapies that have been approved to treat the underlying cause of CF in more than 30 percent of those with the disease. One such therapy, Kalydeco, was approved in 2012 to treat 4 percent of patients with CF based on their underlying CF-causing mutation. The approval was subsequently expanded to treat 8 percent of those with the disease soon after. Kalydeco's initial review time was 3 months, one of the fastest in the FDA's history. A second targeted therapy, Orkambi, was approved in 2015 to treat the most common mutation that causes cystic fibrosis. Orkambi was the first drug to receive the FDA's breakthrough therapy designation, and it underwent a six-month expedited review.

This success is a testament to what can be achieved when stakeholders collaborate across sectors to ensure a swift review of critical drugs for patients. Throughout the review processes for Kalydeco and Orkambi, the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation and renowned CF experts worked closely with the drugs' sponsor Vertex Pharmaceuticals and the FDA to provide valuable insight on specific issues related to CF, clinical research on CF treatments, and other issues related to the product and its review. We believe that the collaboration and efficiency displayed throughout these trials can serve as a model for best practices in clinical trials for rare diseases.

Since its creation, the Breakthrough Therapy Designation at the FDA has been widely successful at accelerating the approval of new treatments that demonstrate substantial improvement over existing medications. Cystic fibrosis treatments were the first designated as breakthrough therapies, and the process has effectively increased efficiency and communication between the FDA and drug sponsors. Unsurprisingly, sponsor requests for the Breakthrough Therapy Designation have increased dramatically since the program's inception in 2012. In the program's first 2 years alone, CDER received more than 200 requests for breakthrough designation, and more than half of the therapies that were granted an expedited review through this program were for rare or orphan diseases, like cystic fibrosis. Sponsor requests for breakthrough therapy designation are expected to increase further in the coming years, and expanded funding and support for this program is critical to ensure that new breakthrough therapies receive an efficient yet rigorous review.

As new, more advanced personalized treatments like Kalydeco and Orkambi move through the pipeline, it is critical that the FDA has the resources necessary to further develop innovative methods for reviewing and evaluating the safety and efficacy of targeted therapies. The CF Foundation has significantly expanded its research investments with leading companies to accelerate the discovery and development of new genetically-targeted treatments. The Foundation is supporting 45 studies in 2016, including examination of several new targeted therapies. One series of studies planned for 2016 has the potential to treat the underlying cause of the disease in more than 85 percent of those with CF. It is crucial that the FDA have sufficient funding to provide a swift and efficient review of new treatments for rare, life threatening conditions, where there is an urgent need for new, targeted therapies.

A number of clinical trial design issues have been identified that may arise in review of rare and precision medicine therapies. As precision medicine continues to develop, robust funding is particularly crucial as the FDA will need to find new, innovative ways to handle unprecedented challenges in drug development and review.

For example, recruiting sufficient numbers of participants to support a classic clinical trial design for a rare disease population is often not possible, simply because there is a smaller pool of patients. This issue becomes even more significant with the advent of precision medicine as therapies become targeted to smaller populations based on unique genetic mutations within the CF population. As potential new therapies come under review, it may be necessary to test combinations of drugs in populations that include patients with several different CF mutations and develop and test single and combination therapies in n of 1 trials (those that consist of a single patient). The FDA needs adequate funding to develop new regulatory pathways and approaches to handling variations in trial design that both maintain safety and efficacy standards while facilitating the development of treatments for patients with rare diseases.

Researchers and clinicians are also 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. In addition to the ethical question of asking trial participants to suspend their use of the best available therapies, there is also a concern that such a request would dissuade participation in clinical trials for the next generation of targeted therapies.

As evaluating the safety and efficacy of targeted therapies becomes more challenging, there is also greater need for the use of biomarkers and the development of additional outcome measures. Biomarkers with the potential to reasonably predict clinical outcomes could play a tremendous role in accelerating drug development and review. However, the FDA needs adequate funding to accelerate classification

of biomarkers and ensure that they are being examined throughout the clinical trials process. Similarly, Patient Reported Outcomes (PROs) are a largely untapped source of valuable data and information that can help advance understanding of efficacy throughout a clinical trial. As the FDA is looking at new and innovative ways of evaluating treatments, the agency needs the resources to consider new sources of valuable data to further inform and accelerate the review process.

Overall, as drug development advances, the FDA must be supplied with the proper resources to balance the need for an efficient and rigorous review process with the flexibility required to accommodate deviations from the standard clinical trial process.

To this end, we commend the regulatory science initiative formed by the NIH and the FDA, which aims to accelerate the development and use of new approaches to evaluate drug safety, efficacy, and quality. With additional funding, the FDA will have greater ability to partner with key stakeholders to promote discussions and workshops of study designs that will maximize the progression of multiple effective and safe therapies through the development pipeline. Continued collaboration of the FDA with the NIH as well as external stakeholders offers immense promise for helping to expedite the drug development process and put safe and effective drugs in the hands of patients. However, this type of collaboration cannot move forward without adequate funding.

In addition, the CF Foundation is enthusiastic about the potential for clinical trial, clinical care, claims, and other healthcare-related data to be utilized to improve drug discovery, development, and delivery. The Foundation has been a pioneer in the development and utilization of a robust data repository through the CF patient registry, and our therapeutics development network (TDN) has successfully encouraged clinical trial partners to share data. We ask that Congress support efforts by the FDA to explore strategies and guidelines for clinical trial data sharing. As drug development research advances, data sharing is vital to the acceleration and efficiency of new discovery.

This is a time of great hope and optimism for the cystic fibrosis community and those with other rare diseases as more therapies that treat the underlying cause of CF move through the pipeline. However, the FDA faces critical challenges as targeted therapies are being brought up for review, including small patient populations and the need for greater flexibility in trial design. Additional funding to foster stakeholder collaboration to find solutions to these challenges and encourage clinical trial data sharing will help move much-needed treatments more efficiently to those who need them most.

Once again, we urge the Committee to make funding for the Food and Drug Administration a priority in fiscal year 2017 by providing at least \$2.85 billion in funding for the agency through the appropriations process. The CF Foundation stands ready to work with the Committee, FDA, and Congressional leaders on the challenges ahead. Thank you for your consideration.

[This statement was submitted by Preston W. Campbell, III, MD., President and CEO, Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA

The Entomological Society of America (ESA) respectfully submits this statement for the official record in support of funding for agricultural research at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). ESA requests discretionary appropriations of at least \$1.884 billion in fiscal year (FY) 2017 for USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), including at least \$700 million for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI). The Society also supports a discretionary funding level of at least \$1.286 billion for the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), including funding for the ARS Crop Protection budget at a minimum of the fiscal year 2016 enacted level of \$195 million to preserve valuable pest management research programs in fiscal year 2017.

The international stature of the United States as a producer and exporter of food, fiber, and other agricultural commodities has long been associated with innovation-fueled increases in productivity. Steady growth in agricultural output over the past half-century has been accompanied by substantially smaller increases in inputs¹, so that today fewer farmers are producing more food, without expanding land in cultivation, at lower costs to consumers. Increased productivity has been achievable through improved technology, spurred by Federal investment in research and development. There are signs, though, that longstanding growth in productivity may be slowing, at a time when demands on the agricultural sector are steadily increasing.

Ensuring food safety, security, quality, and environmental sustainability are among today's greatest challenges to U.S. agriculture—yet the U.S. global share of public investment in agriculture and food research and development has declined significantly in the past three decades.

Cutting-edge agriculture science, including entomology, is critical to meeting these challenges. Globalized trade has led to major redistribution of pest species, from indigenous areas where they are kept in check by natural enemies to new areas where they can rapidly expand their ranges. Beyond competing directly with humans by consuming crop plants, invasive insect pests also threaten food security by acting as vectors of plant diseases. The Asian citrus psyllid, the principal vector of the invariably fatal bacterial citrus greening disease, for example, has already caused over \$9 billion in losses to citrus growers in Florida alone.¹ Moreover, by outcompeting and displacing native species, invasive arthropods compromise ecosystem services provided by biotic communities, including pollination, nutrient cycling, and water regulation and purification.

As NIFA's premier competitive research program, AFRI funds a wide range of agricultural research, education, and extension projects at universities and research institutions nationwide. In addition, AFRI's Education and Literacy Initiative supports more than 2,000 trainees annually that will become the next generation workforce of agricultural and food scientists. ESA appreciates the Subcommittee's efforts to increase the AFRI budget since the program's establishment and enthusiastically supports the requests for \$700 million for AFRI in fiscal year 2017, the full amount authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill. ESA also supports the proposed inclusion of pollinator health as a special area of emphasis within the AFRI Foundational Program, including plans to allocate \$10 million for new grants in the area of pollinator health to continue to support the government-wide initiative. America's insect pollinators contribute to the production of over 90 fruit, vegetable, nut, and fiber crops; collectively, pollination services of managed and wild pollinators in the US have been valued at more than \$17 billion annually. Populations of many of these pollinators, however, have been declining even as demand for pollination services for expanding acreages of fruit, nut, and vegetable crops has increased.

To maximize its limited resources, AFRI supports projects that address key societal challenges and build foundational knowledge in high-priority areas of the food and agricultural sciences, such as food safety and food security. For example, annual honey bee colony losses due, in part, to infestation by the varroa mite have created enormous problems for U.S. beekeepers and for the growers dependent on honey bees for pollination services. Scientists funded by AFRI have used genomic resources to identify receptor targets in the nervous system unique to the mite and are designing and testing synthetic analogues of the neuropeptides that interact with those receptors for mite control, thereby sparing honey bees and other non-target species.² In addition to AFRI, other NIFA grants support programs to study and implement scientifically based approaches to reduced-risk integrated pest management (IPM), which has implications for human health, the environment, and the economy.

As USDA's intramural research agency, ARS funds research of broad consequence to our nation's agriculture enterprise, including in the areas of crop and livestock production and protection, human nutrition, food safety, and environmental stewardship. The ARS Crop Protection research program builds knowledge and develops approaches that are made available to crop producers, enabling better control of pest and disease outbreaks as they occur. In addition, the ARS Crop Production research program develops and approves safe and effective strategies for reducing crop loss and providing a dependable food supply. ESA supports maintaining level funding with President's fiscal year 2016 budget request, with \$195 million for the Crop Protection account and \$218 million for the Crop Production account. In addition to the additional funding proposed within AFRI and ARS, ESA supports USDA's participation in multi-agency activities to investigate pollinator health and develop implementation plans to prevent, slow, or reverse pollinator population decline.

ESA, headquartered in Annapolis, Maryland, is the largest organization in the world serving the professional and scientific needs of entomologists and individuals in related disciplines. Founded in 1889, ESA has over 7,000 members affiliated with educational institutions, public health agencies, private industry, government laboratories, the U.S. military, and many nonprofit organizations. Members include

¹National Academy of Sciences, 2014. *Spurring Innovation in Food and Agriculture: A Review of the USDA Agriculture and Food Research Initiative Program*. Washington: National Academies Press.

²AFRI Competitive Grant, 2016, "Development of honey bee-safe acaricidal peptidomimetics," <http://portal.nifa.usda.gov/web/crisprojectpages/1009168-development-of-honey-bee-safe-acaricidal-peptidomimetics.html>.

academic scientists, teachers, extension service personnel, administrators, marketing representatives, research technicians, consultants, students, pest management professionals, and hobbyists, among others.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice support from the Entomological Society of America for USDA research programs.

[This statement was submitted by May Berenbaum, PhD, President, Entomological Society of America.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF FEDERATION OF AMERICAN SOCIETIES FOR EXPERIMENTAL BIOLOGY (FASEB)

DEPARTMENT/OFFICE ADDRESSED IN TESTIMONY: USDA AFRI AND ARS

The Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB) is composed of 30 societies with 125,000 members, making it the largest coalition of biomedical research associations in the United States. FASEB enhances the ability of scientists and engineers to improve health, well-being, and productivity through research and is recognized as the policy voice of biological and biomedical researchers.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) funds research through a competitive grants system, the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI), and an “in-house” effort administered by the Agricultural Research Service (ARS). These programs support research that addresses some of the grand challenges of our time: food production, global food security, human nutrition, agriculture economics, and sustainable bioenergy. Grants are awarded to state agricultural experiment stations, colleges, university research foundations, and other research institutions, as well as private organizations. AFRI funded over 1,200 research projects in all 50 states between 2009 and 2011. ARS currently supports more than 2,000 scientists at 90 laboratories throughout the country.¹

Since AFRI was established in 2008, the program has supported research to develop new varieties of wheat and barley that will better tolerate changes in climate and lettuce that requires less water, which will allow farmers to conserve resources and save money. Other projects established methods to improve communication, analysis, and data sharing about corn farming practices in order to ensure production can be sustained despite the threat of extreme weather events. In addition, a USDA-funded team of engineers and scientists created a mobile application to help farmers comply with Environmental Protection Agency regulations that mandate the collection and submission of data on soil, crops, and nutrient management plans. ARS scientists have discovered genes and molecular markers in honey bees that have led to the breeding of new bees that are resistant to the adverse effects of mites and chalkbrood disease, as well as the application of technologies to help reduce exposure of the bees to pesticides.

Examples of promising USDA-funded research include:

- Laser Tool Detection of Salmonella: Scientists funded by USDA at Purdue University have developed a new method for the detection of Salmonella bacterial contamination in food. By using a laser to scan bacteria isolated from food samples, the new technology can identify potential contamination about three times faster than traditional methods. This rapid screening could ultimately lead to more thorough and rapid food inspections, thus reducing morbidity from Salmonella food poisoning.²
- Molecular Mechanisms of Herbicide Resistance: Compounds called safeners are routinely applied to cereal crops to protect them from weed-killing herbicides. However, the precise mechanism by which these safeners work remained largely unknown. Recently, USDA-supported researchers at the University of Illinois have discovered that specific molecules for detoxifying herbicides in cereal plants are upregulated when safeners are applied. This insight will aid in the management of herbicide use, and similar detoxification processes in plants may prove to be useful traits for resistance to other stressors, including drought, pests, or disease.³
- Computer Modeling of Food-borne Pathogen Growth: One of the greatest challenges in food safety is to ensure that different foods are handled properly to prevent the growth of harmful, contaminating microbes. In order to enhance the

¹ <http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/np/ARSImpacts/ARSImpacts.pdf>.

² <http://www.purdue.edu/newsroom/releases/2014/Q1/laser-tool-speeds-up-detection-of-salmonella-in-food-products.html>.

³ <http://www.grainnet.com/articles/University-of-Illinois-Researchers-Learn-More-About-Herbicide-Defense-Switch-in-Cereal-Crops-146822.html>.

ability of food companies to ensure the safety of their products, ARS scientists at the USDA Eastern Regional Research Center have developed a software package that models the growth and proliferation bacteria in different environments. These models can then be used to develop effective management practices that reduce the instance of foodborne illness.⁴

- Uncovering the Links between Maternal Traits and Fetal Development: An important area of ongoing research seeks to understand how mothers' health during pregnancy might affect children's growth and development. Using advanced imaging techniques, USDA ARS-funded researchers at the Arkansas Children's Nutrition Center have discovered a relationship between maternal obesity during pregnancy and brain structure in newborns. This study is part of a growing literature suggesting previously unknown ways in which maternal health has profound neurological effects on fetal development. Such studies therefore not only shed light on fundamental mechanisms of human brain development, but also could help with design of dietary and exercise interventions for expecting mothers that improves infant health.⁵
- Development of Drought and Disease Resistant Corn: Drought represents a major threat to crop production. To begin to address this problem, USDA-funded researchers at Texas A&M University have been exploring the genetics of corn varieties grown in different regions of the United States. Through this work, the team has begun to breed more productive varieties of corn that show greater resistance to drought and opportunistic infections. These efforts will be especially important for growers in the most drought prone regions.⁶
- Improving the Safety of Leafy Green Vegetables: Bleach, hydrogen peroxide, or other toxic chemicals are often used to remove bacteria from leafy vegetables. Researchers at the University of Arizona supported by the USDA have discovered that non-toxic plant antimicrobial and other organic compounds can be just as effective in cleaning produce. Pursuing these alternative strategies has the potential to both increase food safety and reduce the adverse health and environmental impacts of using harsh cleaning agents on food plants.⁷
- Combating the Spread of Antimicrobial Resistance: The proliferation of antibiotic-resistant microbes poses a significant threat to both human and animal health. However, scientists are only beginning to understand the details of how antibiotic resistance emerges and spreads, both within agricultural and non-agricultural settings. To address this, AFRI-funded scientists are playing an integral role as part of broader national efforts to deal with this critical challenge. For example, researchers at the University of Minnesota have begun to study the evolution of antibiotic resistant *E. coli* and *Salmonella* on poultry farms in the hopes of developing better management strategies that will improve both food safety and public health.⁸

NEW INVESTMENTS WILL ACCELERATE THE PACE OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

New technologies and improved techniques are needed to address serious agricultural-related crises facing our country including the ongoing drought in California, childhood obesity, pollinator collapse, and citrus greening. Other challenges include changing weather patterns that shift growing seasons and threats posed by increasing varieties of invasive weeds, pests, and pathogens. Investment in USDA will help us to better understand the relationship between food consumption and behaviors, dietary patterns, and various health outcomes, including those related to obesity and the development of chronic diseases. USDA-funded research leads to nutrition education and obesity prevention strategies and interventions that advance public health.

Federal funding for competitive agriculture research can provide the answers that will build the foundation of knowledge to help solve current and future societal problems. Harnessing this potential would generate new knowledge in the food, nutrition, and agricultural sciences, and translate those fundamental discoveries into practical solutions that benefit all sectors of society and every geographic region in the country. Sustaining a competitive agriculture economy is also critical in order to respond to new and emerging problems, such as identifying ways to better manage the avian flu epidemic.

⁴ <http://portal.errc.ars.usda.gov/PMP.aspx>.

⁵ <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25919924>.

⁶ <http://nifa.usda.gov/blog/breeding-program-brings-better-safer-corn-south>.

⁷ <http://nifa.usda.gov/blog/improving-safety-leafy-greens>.

⁸ <http://portal.nifa.usda.gov/web/crisprojectpages/1005062-systems-approach-to-identifying-targeted-interventions-for-minimizing-antibiotic-resistance-in-the-poultry-production-system.html>.

Accelerating the pace and productivity of agricultural research will require sustained increases for AFRI and ARS. A National Research Council (NRC) review of the AFRI program concluded that, “ARFI plays a critical and unique role in the nation’s overall research and development (R&D) portfolio because its mandated scope, mission, and responsibilities are focused on the most important national and international challenges facing food and agriculture. But it has not been given the adequate resources needed to meet contemporary and likely future challenges.”⁹ The NRC report further recommended that the U.S. should strengthen its public investment in agricultural R&D to ensure that it continues its ability to remain a global leader in innovation, food production, and health promotion.

Opportunities for agricultural research are growing, as Congress recognized by expanding USDA’s research mandate in the 2014 Farm Bill to include diseases that can be transmitted from animals to humans and the effectiveness of conservation practices in addressing nutrient losses. Despite receiving increased funding over the last few years, AFRI’s budget is still only half of the level authorized in the 2014 Farm Bill, limiting the program’s capacity to satisfy the expanded research focus areas mandated by Congress. In addition, inadequate funding combined with AFRI’s multi-year commitments to existing projects have reduced the availability of funds for individual, investigator-initiated grants.

AFRI’s continued success will depend on securing additional funding to meet the recommended authorization level. With a budget of \$700 million (an increase of \$350 million over fiscal year 2016), AFRI could support more than 500 new research grants. An ARS budget of \$1.2 billion (\$60 million above fiscal year 2016) will allow for the continued growth of agricultural research efforts.

FASEB recommends a minimum of \$700 million for AFRI and \$1.2 billion for ARS in fiscal year 2017. These funding levels represent a first step toward a longer-range commitment to sustain the vital field of agricultural research.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer our support and recommendations for USDA research programs.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF FOOD FOR PEACE TITLE II (FFP)

As you prepare appropriations legislation for fiscal year 2017, we thank you for your past leadership in protecting poverty-focused international development and humanitarian assistance accounts specifically related to food security and nutrition. As a group of organizations that are supportive of these programs, we would like to thank Congress for the increase to Food for Peace Title II (FFP) funding we saw in fiscal year 2016, and call upon Congress to continue to provide similarly robust funding for Food for Peace in fiscal year 2017. Further, we request that Congress direct at least \$375 million of Food for Peace funding to long-term development oriented non-emergency programs.

For over 60 years, Food for Peace has enabled the United States to reach more than 3 billion people with food assistance, addressing not only food security needs, but helping to build stability in regions that might otherwise pose greater national security concerns. As we consider the protracted conflicts in Syria, South Sudan, Yemen, and Iraq, as well as ongoing cyclical weather patterns like El Niño and a potential La Niña, projected global needs in fiscal year 2017 will be significant. Providing robust funding of FFP as was done in fiscal year 2016 will allow the U.S. to reach over 47 million people with lifesaving food aid and maintain its global leadership.

As the largest U.S. government food aid program, Food for Peace Title II also provided funding for non-emergency development programs that focus on the underlying sources of chronic hunger through multiyear investments in nutrition, agricultural productivity, and diversification of household incomes. These programs help poor communities build resilience to droughts and floods, improve farming practices and integrate into local markets, allowing them to better withstand shocks and reduce the need for emergency assistance. These programs move poor farmers away from poverty and help them realize the dignity of providing for their families. In parallel with robust funding to the overall Food for Peace budget, we request at least \$375 million of FFP funding—a small increase over the minimum level of \$350 million required by the Farm Bill—be directed to development, non-emergency programming. Additionally, we remain supportive of the Community Development Fund including its use within non-emergency food assistance programming.

⁹The National Academies Press. *Spurring Innovation in Food and Agriculture: A Review of the USDA Agriculture and Food Research Initiative* (2014).

We look forward to continuing to work with you in advancing efforts that address food insecurity, and we once again thank you for your leadership in protecting international humanitarian and development assistance accounts including Food for Peace Title II.

- 1.) Mercy Corps
- 2.) Food for the Hungry
- 3.) ADRA International
- 4.) Catholic Relief Services
- 5.) CNFA
- 6.) World Vision US
- 7.) PCI
- 8.) ACDI/VOCA

PREPARED STATEMENT OF FOOD FOR PEACE (PUBLIC LAW 480)

The undersigned organizations support sustained funding for the Food for Peace (Public Law 480) and Food for Progress international food aid programs and oppose proposals to reduce funding or to shift these resources to overseas commodity procurement and cash assistance. These bedrock food aid programs have enjoyed strong bipartisan support for over 60 years because they share America's agricultural bounty with those who need it most.

Our food aid programs have constantly evolved and improved over the years. They provide well-honed and dependable systems for identifying the appropriate commodities for targeted populations, and for procuring and shipping these commodities through an aid pipeline that is second to none. The transparency, accountability, and reliability of this system are the result of decades of cooperation through a uniquely sustainable public-private partnership among tens of thousands of committed Americans at faith-based and other non-governmental organizations, and in agriculture, labor, industry, and government.

Growing, manufacturing, bagging, and shipping nutritious U.S.-grown food creates jobs and economic activity here at home, provides crucial cargo for our U.S. Merchant Marine, which is essential to our national defense sealift capability, and sustains a robust domestic constituency for these programs not easily replicated in alternative foreign aid programs. Overseas, Food for Peace has an established track record of preventing childhood starvation and providing life-saving tools that families need to work their way out of the most dire poverty. Food for Progress fights hunger by promoting free enterprise in emerging democracies through development of the agricultural sector. Both of those programs are proven methods for tackling food insecurity head-on with concrete results.

In addition to feeding the hungry and facilitating developmental programs to end the cycle of hunger, U.S. food aid programs are also some of our most effective, lowest-cost national security and diplomatic tools. Bags of U.S.-grown food bearing the U.S. flag and stamped as "From the American People" serve as ambassadors of our Nation's goodwill, which can help to address the root causes of instability. In a time of growing global food insecurity and extremism, these programs need to be expanded, not eliminated or slashed to fund dubious proposals.

We therefore oppose shifting food aid resources to overseas commodity procurement and cash assistance, and strongly encourage sustained funding for Food for Peace and Food for Progress, preserving the unique qualities that have made them the world's most successful, most dependable humanitarian assistance programs.

American Association of Port Authorities	Sailors' Union of the Pacific
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives	Euro-America Shipping & Trade, Inc.
American Great Lakes Ports Association	Schuyler Line Navigation Company, LLC
National Potato Council	Hapag-Lloyd USA, LLC
American Maritime Congress	Seafarers International Union
National Sorghum Producers	Intermarine, LLC
American Maritime Officers	Texas Cargo Transport (America), LLC
Navy League of the United States	International Organization of Masters,
American Maritime Officers' Service	Transfer Logistics LLC
North American Millers' Association	Mates & Pilots
American Soybean Association	Transportation Institute
Potomac Maritime, LLC	Liberty Maritime Corporation
APL Limited	US Dry Bean Council
Potomac Shipping International, LLC	Maersk Line, Ltd.
Central Gulf Lines, Inc.	US Rice Producers Association

Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association	National Association of Wheat Growers
USA Dry Pea and Lentil Council	Virginia Port Authority
Maritime Institute for Research and	National Barley Growers Association
USA Maritime	Waterman Steamship Corporation
Industrial Development	National Corn Growers Association
USA Rice	

[This statement was submitted by Bryant E. Gardner, Partner, Winston & Strawn LLP.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF FOOD & WATER WATCH

On behalf of the non-profit consumer advocacy organization Food & Water Watch, I welcome this opportunity to express our views on the fiscal year 2017 appropriations bill under your jurisdiction.

FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE

We remain opposed to the New Poultry Inspection System (NPIS) that is being implemented for several reasons: 1) there is still no proof that this privatized inspection model will make poultry safer. In fact, when we asked agency officials at a recent meeting for testing statistics from plants that have actually shifted to NPIS to demonstrate that poultry that is slaughtered under this new system is safer, they could not do so; 2) the agency still has not addressed the issue of designating certain strains of Salmonella and Campylobacter as adulterants. It is baffling to us that the Obama Administration has failed to request this authority from the Congress; 3) we remain concerned that the company sorters who are taking over inspection responsibilities on the slaughter lines have not received proper training; 4) the reticence of the poultry industry to shift to this new system illustrates to us that it is not confident that NPIS will work. The excuses that the agency lists in its fiscal year 2017 Explanatory Notes for not achieving its salary savings goals for fiscal year 2016 are not accurate; 5) the agency still seems to be interested in increasing line speeds in poultry facilities. There are rumors that there might be a rider attached to the fiscal year 2017 Agriculture Appropriations bill to revoke the 140 birds per minute cap for young chicken plants shifting to NPIS. We strongly oppose any such efforts. The one remaining USDA inspector left on the slaughter line in NPIS plants is responsible for inspecting 2.33 birds every second. This is an impossible task. To increase the line speed to 175 is totally irresponsible. We urge the subcommittee to provide vigorous oversight over the implementation of NPIS because it is not achieving the food safety goals that the agency touted when the rule was finalized.

We support the agency's \$4.5 million funding request so that it can perform genomic sequencing in its pathogen identification work, and its \$3 million request to expand laboratory analysis. We do not support its \$1 million request for advanced analytics for its Public Health Information System (PHIS). As we have alerted the subcommittee on several occasions in the past, the implementation of PHIS has been problematic. Our concerns were corroborated by the USDA Office of Inspector General in its August 2015 audit report of the IT system. When we recently asked agency officials what this additional money would be used for, they were equivocal. Instead of giving the agency additional money to prop up a failed IT system, we strongly urge that the subcommittee get concrete answers from the agency regarding this funding request. We should not be throwing good money after bad for a system that has already cost substantially more than originally estimated.

We also urge the subcommittee to request from the agency a detailed plan on how it intends to deal with the chronic staffing shortages in the inspection workforce across the country. There are some FSIS regions that continually have double-digit vacancy rates. This is impacting the ability of the remaining inspectors to complete their inspection tasks. Food & Water Watch published an analysis of the impact of the staffing shortages in September 2015.¹

Food & Water Watch supported the rule to transfer the inspection of siluriformes from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to FSIS. We were disappointed with the length of time for the final rule to be published and with the interference of the Office of U.S. Trade Representative in the development of that rule. We are concerned with the length of the transition period contained in the rule, especially for exporting countries. We did not see in the agency's budget request additional funding for more import inspection personnel to deal with imported siluriformes. We

¹ See <http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/news/usda-records-reveal-staffing-shortages-undermining-food-safety>.

urge the subcommittee to ask the agency how intends to deal with the inspection of imported siluriformes at our ports-of-entry.

We are concerned with the agency's recent publication of audit reports for the poultry inspection system in the People's Republic of China (PRC), in which it has concluded that it intends to move forward with rulemaking to permit the PRC to export its own poultry to the U.S. The food safety system in the PRC is weak at best and corrupt at worst. On March 7, a story appeared in a food trade publication in which the head of the PRC's Food and Drug Administration admitted that his agency could not keep up with investigating all of the cases of adulterated food that had entered into that country's food supply.² We have always been suspicious that the PRC poultry equivalency determination has had a nexus with the re-opening of the Chinese market to U.S. beef. Trade cannot trump food safety and we urge the subcommittee to insert statutory language in the fiscal year 2017 bill to require the agency to provide regular reports to Congress on this issue.

Furthermore, we urge the subcommittee to continue to prohibit USDA from purchasing poultry products from the PRC for the various nutrition programs it administers, including the National School Lunch Program.

GRAIN INSPECTION PACKERS AND STOCKYARDS ADMINISTRATION

We urge the subcommittee to exclude any legislative riders that limit the authority of the Secretary of Agriculture under the Packers & Stockyards Act (P&SA) of 1921. The P&SA is a vital Federal statute that protects livestock farmers and ranchers from unfair, deceptive, fraudulent and anticompetitive business practices by the meatpacking and poultry companies. The 2008 Farm Bill directed USDA to write rules to address the market power and predatory business practices of the highly consolidated and vertically integrated meatpacking and poultry industries that were finalized in a considerably diminished form in 2011, but previous agricultural appropriations provisions have hindered USDA from providing basic protections and safeguards for U.S. farmers and ranchers. The 2014 Farm Bill did not revisit these provisions and the Consolidated Appropriations Act of fiscal year 2016 did not include any version of the prior policy riders. The subcommittee should continue to exclude any policy riders that undermine the work of the Secretary and the Agriculture Committees.

FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION

We are concerned that the funding request made by the administration for the implementation of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) is not adequate. The administration, again, is relying on user fees to fund most of the implementation work for fiscal year 2017 even though it knows that Congress will not enact such fees. We urge the subcommittee to work with the agency to determine a realistic appropriations request so that the implementation of FSMA can continue.

We are requesting \$10 million to help small and mid-size farms and small processing facilities comply with new proposed food safety regulations. This training program, authorized in FSMA, is one of the best and least costly ways to improve food safety outcomes without resorting to excessive farm regulation. The program received \$5 million in fiscal year 2016. The President's fiscal year 2017 budget requests \$5 million. We are requesting \$10 million for fiscal year 2017, because food safety training for family-scale operations is critical at this stage of FSMA implementation.

[This statement was submitted by Wenonah Hauter, Executive Director, Food & Water Watch.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF FRIENDS OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH—BELTSVILLE

Mister Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to present our statement supporting funding for the Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service (ARS), and especially for its flagship research facility, The Henry A. Wallace Beltsville Agricultural Research Center in Beltsville, Maryland. We strongly recommend full fiscal-year 2017 funding for the Beltsville center.

The world-famous agricultural research center has led national agricultural progress for well over a century. A national and world treasure—home to the world-

² See <http://www.foodnavigator-asia.com/Policy/Food-safety-chief-FDA-struggling-to-cope-with-scale-of-adulteration>.

famous Beltsville Small White Turkey—the center generates enormous benefits for our country.

NOTABLE RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The American Chemical Society recently named Beltsville a National Historic Chemical Landmark for the discovery and isolation of the light-sensitive plant pigment phytochrome. Hailed as a leading plant science discovery of the 20th century, the research required 41 years of intensive research effort.

A natural nitrogen-fixing strain of *Rhizobium* bacteria identified and patented at Beltsville is used to inoculate some 55 million acres of soybeans in the United States. A reduced reliance on petroleum-based nitrogen fertilizer remains an essential goal for our country.

The Food Components and Health Laboratory of the Beltsville Human Nutrition Research Center recently found that tree nuts have lower calorie content than currently listed on food labels. These findings improve food labeling and help consumers make better food choices.

Dr. Hyun Soon Lillehoj, a Beltsville senior research molecular biologist, received a 2015 Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medal in Career Achievement (“the Sammies”), for her research to reduce the use of antibiotics in commercial poultry.

Yet, Beltsville faces devastating decline and obsolescence from long-deferred essential maintenance and repairs to buildings, roadways, and its electrical grid infrastructure. Roadways are in great need of repairs and an independent assessment of some of the bridges revealed such disrepair as to become “life safety issues.”

These issues cry out for attention. We estimate and recommend that a dedicated annual appropriation of \$3 million is needed to address long-delayed repairs and maintenance. The Beltsville campus consists of approximately 6,000 acres and 308 buildings containing laboratories, offices, greenhouses, animal facilities, repair shops, farm buildings, and other specialized facilities. There are 37.6 miles of paved roadways, many of which are in an urgent need of repair. Most buildings were constructed in the 1920s and 1930s, the oldest in 1805.

WE TURN NOW TO SELECTED ITEMS WITHIN THE PRESIDENT’S FISCAL YEAR 2017 BUDGET PROPOSAL

First, we would confirm our sincere appreciation and gratitude that the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2016 includes \$37.1 million in Federal funding to modernize research laboratories at the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center. As mentioned before many Beltsville laboratories were built in the 1920s, 1930s 1950s and 1960s and are now more than 60 years old. This funding will be used to modernize Building 307, which has been largely vacated because its space is no longer functional for research activities.

We also are very pleased that the President’s fiscal year 2017 budget includes increases in critically important research initiatives, which would lead to creating new jobs, enhancing American agriculture competitiveness in the global economy, assuring future food security, protecting crops and animals from diseases and reducing their vulnerability to climate change, while improving the economic and environmental sustainability of American agriculture. The scientists of the Henry A. Wallace Beltsville Agricultural Research Center are recognized world leaders in the scientific disciplines that are necessary to successfully execute the President’s proposed research initiatives. Specifically, we would like to highlight the following initiatives that will enhance the Center’s research programs.

CLIMATE CHANGE-RESILIENCE CROPS THAT RESPOND AND ADAPT TO CLIMATE CHANGE

The proposed budget provides \$292,500 for the Henry A. Wallace Beltsville Agricultural Research Center to identify and evaluate management practices that maximize plant genetic potential to achieve optimal yield. This will be achieved by determining how rising temperatures and carbon dioxide alter physiological processes, growth, and crop quality and how genetic make-up makes plants adaptable or resistant to environmental changes. Also, these additional funds will be used to advance our understanding of the effects of climate change on pests and beneficial insects, so crops can be better protected against insect pests.

CLIMATE CHANGE-REDUCE VULNERABILITY OF AGRO-ECOSYSTEMS TO CLIMATE CHANGE

The budget proposes \$90,000 in new funding to the Henry A. Wallace Beltsville Agricultural Research Center to model the impact of long-term weather, using Long-Term Agro-Ecosystem Research (LTAR) data, on crop and livestock productivity. In 2012, ARS organized ten of its existing research watersheds, ranges, and farms into

a LTAR network to conduct research to support sustainable agricultural production. In fiscal year 2014, ARS added eight additional LTAR sites, thereby increasing coverage in key agricultural production regions, while strengthening ties between USDA science and the Nation's land grant university system. Thus ARS began to transform existing long-term research infrastructure, both within and outside of USDA, to address all components of agricultural sustainability (i.e., productivity, economics, environmental quality, ecosystem services, and human and social well-being). The fiscal year 2017 \$90,000 increase will fund the newly designated unfunded site in the Chesapeake Bay.

COMBATING ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE

The budget proposes \$2,890,800 of new funding for the Henry A. Wallace Beltsville Agricultural Research Center to create new tools to combat antimicrobial resistance in animals and the environment. Among expected benefits are novel approaches to boosting animal natural immune systems for resistance to parasitic infections, gut stabilization against pathogens, or novel strategies using antimicrobial growth promoters to limit the consequences of host reactivity to pathogens and protection of public health.

SAFE AND ABUNDANT WATER SUPPLIES

A \$225,000 increase is provided for the Henry A. Wallace Beltsville Agricultural Research Center to develop safe and abundant water supplies to support U.S. agricultural production by using non-traditional water sources.

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

[This statement was submitted by Allan Stoner, Ph.D., President, Friends of Agricultural Research—Beltsville, Inc.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF FRIENDS OF AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS AND ANALYSIS

The undersigned groups, which include various members of the Friends of Agricultural Statistics and Analysis, strongly support Federal investment to advance agricultural statistics and research in the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Economic Research Service (ERS) and the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). We support funding for these agencies in fiscal year 2017 (fiscal year 17) at levels that are at least \$91.3 M for ERS and \$176.6 M for NASS.

USDA produces valuable data that directly informs decisions by food and agricultural market participants; agricultural input and food businesses; banks and other credit institutions; and those who make food, farm, economic development, and trade policy. American agriculture, rural America, food, and resource-based industries depend on the reliable production of timely, accurate, and objective food, agricultural, rural economic, and resource statistics and market information. Additionally, the statistics and analysis made possible by these agencies provides a greater understanding of farm household dynamics, advances evidence-based policy approaches, and gives insight into the health of the farm economy.

The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) is committed to providing timely, accurate, and useful statistics in service to U.S. agriculture. The agency conducts hundreds of surveys every year and prepares reports and information to communicate the survey results. Production and supplies of food and fiber, prices paid and received by farmers, farm labor and wages, farm finances, chemical use, and changes in the demographics of U.S. producers are only a few examples of the information gathered. NASS reports the facts on American agriculture, facts needed by people working in and depending upon U.S. agriculture. A primary concern of NASS is to "safeguard the privacy of farmers, ranchers, and other data providers, with a guarantee that confidentiality and data security continue to be our top priorities."

The mission of the Economic Research Service (ERS) is to inform and enhance public and private decisionmaking on economic and policy issues related to agriculture, food, the environment, and rural development. To accomplish this mission, ERS manages a comprehensive program of economic research and analysis (including development of economic and statistical indicators), which is coordinated with NASS efforts. ERS also works with NASS to develop the content of and covers the cost of more than half of the Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS), NASS's largest farm operator survey. Also, ERS independently conducts its own National Household Food Acquisition and Purchase Survey. Connecting with and work-

ing closely with researchers across the U.S., ERS issues cooperative agreements and grant awards and works with land-grant partners on many projects. These essential collaborations could be threatened if support waivers. Finally, the ERS is a primary source of economic information and research in USDA; the work it does improves the Department's program effectiveness.

USDA's data products and analytical programs provide the U.S. with an important edge against increasingly fierce global agricultural competition. These programs benefit the entire supply chain, starting at the farm gate and enhancing decisions throughout national and international food, feed, fiber, and fuel economies. Public data products and projections serve to improve the accuracy of the expectations of market participants, reducing market pricing errors. The U.S. agricultural data information and analysis system is second to none, worldwide. Today, NASS is experiencing increased demand for its statistical products and reports. Similarly, ERS is experiencing significant requests for its research, data products, and services. To continue to build future trade and finance capacity in an increasingly competitive marketplace, the U.S. must invest in and leverage all of its strengths, including the food and agricultural data and information system.

We encourage you to support these agencies so that they can continue to provide essential information to farm and agribusiness, government agricultural program, and food policy decision makers.

Thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration of this information.

Agricultural & Applied Economics Association
 American Association of Mycobacterial Diseases
 American Dairy Science Association
 American Society of Agronomy
 American Society of Animal Science
 American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers
 American Statistical Association
 American Sugar Alliance
 Consortium of Social Science Associations
 Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics
 Crop Science Society of America
 Deere & Company
 FASS
 Global Cold Chain Alliance
 International Association of Refrigerated Warehouses
 Mycobacterial Disease of Animals Multistate Initiative
 National Association for the Advancement of Animal Science
 National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
 National Coalition for Food and Agriculture Research
 National Farmers Union
 National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
 North American Regional Science Council
 Poultry Science Association
 Restaurant Services, Inc.
 Soil Science Society of America
 The Fertilizer Institute

[This statement was submitted by Steve Pierson on behalf of the undersigned members of the Friends of Agricultural Statistics and Analysis.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES

On behalf of the undersigned horse industry, veterinary, and animal welfare organizations, and former Senator Joseph Tydings, we submit the following testimony seeking funding for the USDA/APHIS Horse Protection Program of \$705,000 for fiscal year 2017. 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 \$705,000 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 “big lick” segment of the Tennessee Walking Horse show industry. Caustic chemicals—such as mustard oil, diesel fuel, and kerosene—are

painted on the lower front legs of the 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 foreign objects such as hard acrylic between a heavy stacked shoe and 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 horses, including the three specific breeds known to be involved in soring—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 and meet the goals of the Act, USDA officials must be present at more shows. However, limited funds allow USDA attendance at less than 20 percent of the approximately 400 Tennessee Walking Horse shows held annually. So 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. 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 noted violations are many times higher than at shows where industry inspectors alone are conducting the inspections. 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.

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. In 2013, another Tennessee trainer, Larry Wheelon, and three of his employees were 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 Wheelon’s case was dismissed on a technicality, evidence of soring in his barn was plentiful and horrifying.

These are significant actions that should have a deterrent effect, but there are many 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—or GC/MS—machines), 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: 175 of the 200 random samples (87.5 percent) taken by the USDA at the industry’s pinnacle event—the 2015 Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration—tested positive for illegal foreign substances including soring, masking, and numbing agents.

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 2015 and 2014, USDA was able to afford to collect and test samples at only 11 of the Big Lick industry’s largest shows; in 2013, only 17; and 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 sore 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 in the designated area 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 sore 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 sore 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.

Keith Dane, Senior Advisor, Equine Protection
The Humane Society of the United States

Former U.S. Senator Joseph Tydings
Original sponsor of the Horse Protection Act

Teresa Bippen, President
Friends of Sound Horses, Inc.

W. Ron DeHaven, DVM MBA
Executive Vice President
American Veterinary Medical Association

Kathleen Anderson, DVM, President
American Association of Equine Practitioners

Chris Heyde, Deputy Director, Government and Legal Affairs
Animal Welfare Institute

Nancy Perry, Senior Vice President, Government Relations
American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA)

Robin Lohnes, Executive Director
American Horse Protection Association

Donna Benefield, Vice President
International Walking Horse Association

Angie Biddison, President
Plantation Walking Horses of Maryland

Jayne Clark, President
National Plantation Walking Horse Association

Susan Crotty, President
Plantation Walking Horse Association of California

Ian Walker, President
United Pleasure Walking Horse Association

Lucy Rangel, President
Gaitway Walking Horse Association, Inc.

Bonnie Yeager, President
International Pleasure Walking Horse Registry

Penny Austin, President
One Horse At a Time, Inc. Horse Rescue

Kristin Herman, M.D., Vice President
Northern California Walking Horse Association

Raydene Walker
Tennessee Walking Horse Association of Oklahoma

Wayne Eastman, President
New York State Plantation Walking Horse Club

Libby Wright
San Francisco Bay Area Tennessee Walking Horse Club

Burl Latshaw, President
Pennsylvania Pleasure Walking Horse Association

David Green, Director
Tennessee Walking Horse Exhibitors' Association of Oregon

[This statement was submitted by Keith Dane, Vice President of Equine Protection, The Humane Society of the United States.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on fiscal year 2017 funding for the following USDA accounts of great importance to The Humane Society of the United States:

- FSIS/Horse Slaughter—language mirroring fiscal year 2016 omnibus provision
- APHIS/Animal Welfare Act Enforcement—\$28,696,000
- APHIS/Horse Protection Act Enforcement—\$705,000
- ARS/Animal Welfare for Farm Animals Used in Agricultural Research—language maintaining APHIS inspections of ARS facilities to ensure AWA compliance, including fully functioning IACUCs for each facility at which animal research is conducted
- APHIS/Investigative and Enforcement Services—\$16,410,000
- FSIS/Humane Methods of Slaughter Act Enforcement—language to ensure compliance with humane handling rules for live animals as they arrive and are offloaded and handled in pens, chutes, and stunning areas; robust national training in humane handling and inspection techniques; and annual program evaluation for humane handling inspections

- OIG/including Animal Fighting Enforcement—\$100,998,000
- NIFA/Veterinary Medical Services Act—\$6,500,000
- APHIS/Emergency Management Systems/Disaster Planning for Animals—\$969,000
- APHIS/Animal Welfare Act Enforcement—language to maintain bar on licensing Class B dealers of “random source” dogs and cats

At this time of intense budget pressure, we appreciate your outstanding past support for enforcement of key animal welfare laws by USDA and urge you to sustain this effort in fiscal year 2017. While we understand the focus on reducing Federal spending, we believe there should be room for careful decisionmaking within the budget to achieve macro-level cuts and at the same time ensure adequate funding for specific accounts that are vital and have previously been underfunded. We therefore request the following for fiscal year 2017:

FSIS/HORSE SLAUGHTER

We request inclusion of the same language barring USDA from the expenditure of funds for horse slaughter inspections as was included in the fiscal year 16 omnibus. This provision is vital to prevent renewed horse slaughter activity in this country, particularly given discoveries of horsemeat in other food products in the EU and U.S. Horse slaughter is cruel and poses serious public health risks. American horses are raised to be companions, athletes and work horses, and they are often treated with drugs, both legal and illegal, that can endanger the food supply. There is currently no system in the U.S. to track drugs and veterinary treatments given to horses to ensure that their meat is safe for human consumption. Horse slaughter is also inherently inhumane and cannot be made humane for horses. The methods used to kill horses rarely result in quick, painless deaths, as horses are skittish animals and often endure repeated blows to make them unconscious, sometimes remaining conscious during the slaughtering process. USDA reports show that over 92 percent of horses going to slaughter are healthy and could have gone on to lead productive lives. However, “kill buyers” profit by selling horsemeat from healthy horses that bring the best price per pound for their meat, and they frequently outbid rescue groups at auctions. Inclusion of language to bar the expenditure of funds on horse slaughter inspections would protect consumers and horses, and would prevent the needless waste of American taxpayer dollars (particularly at a time when budget pressures are so great) on a practice that 80 percent of the American public opposes.

APHIS/ANIMAL WELFARE ACT (AWA) ENFORCEMENT

We request \$28,696,000 for AWA enforcement under APHIS. We commend the Committee for responding in recent years to the urgent need to properly fund the Animal Care division to improve its inspections of approximately 10,399 sites, including commercial breeding facilities, laboratories, zoos, circuses, and airlines, to ensure compliance with AWA standards. In May 2010, USDA’s Office of Inspector General released a report criticizing the agency’s history of lax oversight of dog breeders—finding that inhumane treatment and horrible conditions often failed to be properly documented and yielded little to no enforcement actions. Secretary Vilsack called for more inspections and a tougher stance on repeat offenders and the agency must have the resources to follow through on that commitment. USDA is also implementing new regulations to cover large-scale commercial dog breeders selling puppies directly to the public via the Internet and other means, and to end imports from foreign puppy mills where puppies are mass produced under inhumane conditions and forced to endure harsh long-distance transport. Animal Care is actively licensing new facilities that now require USDA regulatory oversight under the retail pet store rule. Animal Care currently maintains 112 inspectors (with 12 vacancies) who perform and oversee animal welfare compliance inspections, compared to 64 inspectors at the end of the 1990s. Animal Care also maintains cadres of species specialists (6) who support inspectors with complex regulatory compliance issues and compliance specialists (9) who support the pre-licensing process and other aspects of compliance assurance. An appropriation at the requested level would allow the agency to continue to address the concerns identified by the OIG, enforce the new rule on direct sales and the puppy import ban, and provide adequate oversight of the many licensed/registered facilities.

APHIS/HORSE PROTECTION ACT (HPA) ENFORCEMENT

We request \$705,000 for strengthened enforcement of the Horse Protection Act. Congress enacted the HPA in 1970 to make illegal the abusive practice of “soring,” in which unscrupulous trainers deliberately inflict pain on Tennessee Walking Horses’ hooves and legs to create an exaggerated, high-stepping gait and gain unfair

competitive advantage at horse shows (e.g., applying caustic chemicals, using plastic wrap and tight bandages to “cook” those chemicals deep into the horse’s flesh for days, attaching heavy chains to strike against the sore legs and heavy, stacked horseshoes that force the horse’s legs into unnatural angles, jamming hard objects into the sensitive areas of the feet, cutting the hooves down to expose the live tissue, and using salicylic acid or other painful substances to slough off scarred tissue or numbing agents in an attempt to disguise the sores). A report released in October 2010 by USDA’s OIG documents significant problems with the industry self-monitoring system on which the APHIS inspection program currently relies, and calls for funding to enable the agency to more adequately oversee the law. Several horse show industry groups, animal protection groups, and the key organization of equine veterinarians have also called for funding to enable USDA to do a better job enforcing this law. With the current level of funding, Animal Care has been able to attend less than 20 percent of the approximately 400 Tennessee Walking Horse shows held annually. Sustained support is essential to ensure that this program doesn’t lose ground now that it is finally beginning to address the need for additional inspectors, training, security (for threats of violence against inspectors), and advanced detection equipment (thermography and gas chromatography/mass spectrometry machines).

ARS/ANIMAL WELFARE FOR FARM ANIMALS USED IN AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

We request language to ensure that Federal dollars are not used for agricultural research without conforming to AWA standards. An investigation last year by the New York Times revealed shocking instances of animal mistreatment and neglect associated with experiments conducted on farm animals at the USDA/ARS U.S. Meat Animal Research Center, and repeated disregard for objections raised by the Center’s own veterinary staff. We appreciate that the Committee took these concerns seriously and commend the Committee for its ongoing oversight. In the omnibus, 5 percent of the ARS budget for fiscal year 2016 was made contingent on ARS updating its animal care policies and requiring that all ARS facilities at which animal research is conducted have a fully functioning Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee to ensure compliance with standards and principles of scientific integrity equivalent to the AWA. In addition, \$400,000 was allocated to APHIS to conduct inspections at each ARS facility using animals in research. We request a continuation in fiscal year 2017 of that \$400,000 to APHIS (included in the request above for \$28,696,000), as well as a renewed requirement for a fully functioning IACUC at each ARS facility where animal research is conducted, along with the following bill language: “Provided further, That the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and Agricultural Research Service shall work together to ensure an effective animal welfare inspection program for ARS facilities and ensure that these facilities are in full compliance with the Animal Welfare Act.”

APHIS/INVESTIGATIVE AND ENFORCEMENT SERVICES (IES)

We request \$16,410,000 for APHIS Investigative and Enforcement Services. We appreciate the Committee’s consistent support for this division, which handles many important responsibilities, including the investigation of alleged violations of Federal animal welfare laws and the initiation of appropriate enforcement actions. The volume of animal welfare cases is rising significantly, and an appropriation at the requested level would enable the agency to keep pace with the additional enforcement workload.

FSIS/HUMANE METHODS OF SLAUGHTER ACT (HMSA) ENFORCEMENT

We request language to ensure strengthened HMSA enforcement. We appreciate the committee’s inclusion of language in the fiscal year 16 committee report regarding humane slaughter. USDA oversight of humane handling rules for animals at slaughter facilities is vitally important not only for animal welfare but also for food safety. Effective day-to-day enforcement can prevent abuses like those previously documented in undercover investigations, and reduce the chance of associated food safety risks and costly recalls of meat and egg products. We therefore urge inclusion of language directing FSIS to ensure that inspectors hired with funding previously specified for HMSA enforcement focus their attention on overseeing compliance with humane handling rules for live animals as they arrive and are offloaded and handled in pens, chutes, and stunning areas, and that all inspectors receive robust national training in humane handling and inspection techniques. In addition, past OIG and GAO audits have revealed inconsistent enforcement and documentation, and recommended that USDA develop more objective criteria and metrics for determining HMSA enforcement actions. We therefore also request that the agency de-

velop an annual program evaluation for its humane handling inspections program that includes document review, field staff surveys, and monitoring to assess the degree of consistency and objectivity of implementation of the HMSA by all levels of inspection staff.

OIG/ANIMAL FIGHTING ENFORCEMENT

We request \$100,998,000 for the Office of Inspector General to maintain staff, improve effectiveness, and allow investigations in various areas, including enforcement of animal fighting laws. We appreciate the Committee's inclusion of funding and language in recent years for USDA's OIG to focus on animal fighting cases. Congress first prohibited most interstate and foreign commerce of animals for fighting in 1976, established felony penalties in 2007, and strengthened the law as part of the Farm Bills enacted in 2002, 2008, and 2014. We are pleased that USDA is taking seriously its responsibility to enforce this law, working with state and local agencies to complement their efforts and address these barbaric practices, in which animals are drugged to heighten their aggression and forced to keep fighting even after they've suffered grievous injuries. Dogs bred and trained to fight endanger public safety, and some dogfighters steal pets to use as bait for training their dogs. Cockfighting was linked to an outbreak of Exotic Newcastle Disease in 2002–2003 that cost taxpayers more than \$200 million to contain. It's also been linked to the death of a number of people in Asia reportedly exposed through cockfighting activity to bird flu. Given the potential for further costly disease transmission, as well as the animal cruelty involved, we believe it is a sound investment for the Federal government to increase its efforts to combat illegal animal fighting activity. We also support the OIG's auditing and investigative work to improve compliance with the AWA, HPA, HMSA and downed animal rules.

NIFA/VETERINARY MEDICAL SERVICES ACT

We request \$6,500,000 to continue implementation of the NVMSA (Public Law 108–161). We appreciate that Congress is working to address the critical maldistribution of veterinarians practicing in rural and inner-city areas, as well as in government positions at FSIS and APHIS. A 2009 GAO report identified that an inadequate number of veterinarians to meet national needs is among the foremost challenges facing veterinary medicine. Having adequate veterinary care is a core animal welfare concern. To ensure adequate oversight of humane handling and food safety rules, as well as our nation's defense against bioterrorism (the Centers for Disease Control estimates that 75 percent of potential bioterrorism agents are zoonotic—transmitted from animals to humans) and public health problems such as those associated with pet overpopulation, parasites, rabies, chronic wasting disease, and bovine spongiform encephalopathy (“mad cow” disease), USDA must be able to fill vacancies in its veterinary positions. Educational debt has more than doubled since 2003 when Congress authorized this program. Veterinary school graduates face a crushing debt burden of \$135,000 on average (for 88 percent of them, the burden averages \$170,000), with an average starting salary of just \$70,000. Nearly 1,000 veterinarians have applied for assistance under this program since 2010; at current funding levels, fewer than 60 awards can be made each year. We also support the Veterinary Services Grant Program authorized in the 2014 Farm Bill to help address gaps in veterinary shortage situations by preparing veterinarians for rural practice.

APHIS/EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS/DISASTER PLANNING FOR ANIMALS

We request \$969,000 for Animal Care under APHIS' Emergency Management Systems line item. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita demonstrated that many people refuse to evacuate if they are forced to leave their pets behind. The Animal Care division develops infrastructure to help prepare for and respond to animal issues in a disaster and incorporate lessons learned from previous disasters. These funds are used to support state and local governments' efforts to plan for protection of people with animals, and to enable the agency to participate, in partnership with FEMA, in the National Response Plan.

APHIS/ANIMAL WELFARE ACT ENFORCEMENT/CLASS B DEALERS

We request language to maintain the bar on expenditures for licensing of Class B dealers who sell “random source” dogs and cats for use in research, teaching, or testing. We commend the Committee for including language to protect pet owners and animals from Class B dealers who sell “random source” dogs and cats for use in research and are notorious for subjecting animals to shocking cruelty and using

fraudulent means (including pet theft) to acquire them. This language also protects taxpayers, since overseeing Class B dealers has been an unjustifiable drain on USDA resources and the National Academy of Sciences determined that there is no scientific need for these dealers. We urge inclusion of the following language: “None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to carry out any activities or incur any expense related to the issuance of licenses under section 3 of the Animal Welfare Act (7 U.S.C. 2133), or the renewal of such licenses, to class B dealers who sell random source dogs and cats for use in research, experiments, teaching, or testing. Nothing in this provision, however, should be construed as preventing the Department from carrying out all necessary oversight, inspection, compliance, and enforcement activities with respect to any entity holding a valid class B license who sells random source dogs and cats for use in research, experiments, teaching, or testing, or with respect to any entity doing so without a license as required under 7 U.S.C. 2133.”

We are very grateful for the Committee’s past support, and hope you will be able to accommodate these modest requests to address some very pressing problems affecting millions of animals in the United States. Thank you for your consideration.

[This statement was submitted by Mimi Brody, Director of Federal Affairs, The Humane Society of the United States.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA

FUNDING FOR FARM BILL CONSERVATION PROGRAMS & NATURAL RESOURCES
CONSERVATION SERVICE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The Izaak Walton League of America thanks the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding fiscal year (FY) 2017 appropriations. With 43,000 members in nearly 240 chapters nationwide, the League is one of the most established conservation organizations in the United States. Our membership recognizes the important role of conservation initiatives in maintaining and enhancing both the environmental integrity and economic viability of agricultural landscapes.

Securing full mandatory funding for Farm Bill conservation programs in fiscal year 2017 is an appropriations priority for the League. Additionally, a modest increase in discretionary technical assistance funding for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is essential to meet the demand from producers who voluntarily seek to incorporate conservation planning on their farms and ranches. Therefore, we urge the Subcommittee to support full mandatory conservation program funding in the fiscal year 2017 appropriations cycle, and support the President’s budget request to fund Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA), part of the Private Lands Conservation Operations account, at \$761.7 million.

Mandatory Conservation Program Funding

The 2014 Farm Bill provides mandatory funding for critical existing conservation programs—including the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)—as well as new conservation initiatives, such as the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) and Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP). These programs offer essential opportunities for farmers and ranchers to voluntarily implement valuable conservation practices on their land with financial and technical assistance. However, the funding levels set in the most recent Farm Bill amount to \$6 billion in cuts to conservation programs when accounting for sequestration,¹ making it impossible for these programs to meet the demand from the many farmers.

Shortly after these reduced funding levels were agreed to in the Farm Bill, the fiscal year 2015 appropriations cycle cut nearly \$600 million more from programs like CSP and EQIP through direct funding and acreage reductions.² Both programs serve as covered programs for RCPP, meaning these cuts effectively reduced funding for this popular, innovative program early in its implementation. While the League was encouraged that cuts were not made to CSP in fiscal year 2016, the substantial

¹National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, 2014 Farm Bill Drill Down: The Bill by the Numbers, published February 4, 2014. <http://sustainableagriculture.net/blog/2014-farm-bill-by-numbers/>.

²National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, Final Budget Bill Guts Conservation Funding and Farming Protections, published December 11, 2014. <http://sustainableagriculture.net/blog/fy15-final-cromnibus/>.

\$321 million cut to EQIP will further limit access to conservation funding for producers and, in turn, reduce the environmental benefits delivered to the American public.

For the first time in recent memory, the President's fiscal year 2017 budget proposes no cuts to Farm Bill conservation programs.³ We urge the Subcommittee to follow suit and support full funding for these programs. Changes in mandatory program spending (CHIMPS) have become all too common, with disproportionate impacts on the Farm Bill's Conservation Title.⁴ The more than five billion dollars cut from conservation programs since the 2002 Farm Bill⁵ have had real consequences for farmers interested in protecting natural resources on their land. This is money that could help producers take voluntary actions to improve wildlife habitat. It is money that could help farmers install buffer strips along rivers and streams, protecting water quality for rural residents and downstream municipalities. And it is money that could promote soil health practices, such as cover crops, that improve the long-term productivity of our nation's agricultural lands—productivity that will be essential to feeding a growing population and supporting rural economies.

Conservation Technical Assistance Funding

Farmers developing conservation plans for their operations rely on assistance from NRCS staff. Funding for this technical assistance comes from the CTA portion of the Conservation Operations account and also supports implementation of the Farm Bill conservation programs. The President's fiscal year 2017 budget proposes a modest increase in CTA funding, setting aside \$761.7 million for this critical agency function.

Providing landowners with technical assistance to develop and implement conservation plans promotes efficiency by helping producers tailor best management practices to meet their needs, fit their property, and address specific resource concerns. It is estimated that the proposed increase in CTA funding will put an additional 8,300 conservation plans on as many as 2.9 million additional acres.⁶ The League strongly supports this much needed increase in discretionary spending for CTA.

Farm Bill conservation programs are delivering tremendous benefits, but have yet to reach their full potential due to consistent and excessive cuts. In fiscal year 2017, the League urges the Subcommittee to support full mandatory funding levels for conservation programs, honoring the commitment to these programs agreed upon by Congress in the 2014 Farm Bill. Furthermore, CTA provides critical assistance to producers attempting to protect natural resources on their farm through conservation planning and practice implementation. We urge the Subcommittee to provide \$761.7 million for CTA, which is consistent with the President's fiscal year 2017 budget request.

[This statement was submitted by John Sisser, Conservation Associate, Izaak Walton League of America.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MEADVOCACY.ORG

There is an urgent need for a systemic overhaul at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), including the National Institute of Health (NIH) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), in regards to its funding and handling of the disease myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME).

Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME) is chronic, serious disabling, neuroimmune disease that affects an estimated one million American men women and children in the U.S. Yet, the past three decades, since the major Lake Tahoe outbreak where the disease was defined, there have been very little scientific advances and no FDA approved treatments for this heavily burdened disease. This is due to the fact HHS,

³Izaak Walton League of America, President's Budget Fully Funds Agriculture Conservation Programs, published February 9, 2016. <http://www.iwla.org/news-events/news/2016/02/10/budget-fully-funds-agriculture-conservation-programs>.

⁴From fiscal year 2003–2010, over 50 percent of all farm bill CHIMPS targeted the Conservation Title. Between fiscal year 2007–2010, that number increased to 83 percent. National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition report using Jim Monke and Megan Stubbs, Reductions in Mandatory Agriculture Program Spending, CRS Report for Congress (Congressional Research Service, May19, 2010).

⁵National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition comparing budget authority to appropriations bills.

⁶Office of Budget and Program Analysis, USDA. 2017 President's Budget, Natural Resources Conservation Service. <http://www.obpa.usda.gov/27nrscs2017notes.pdf>.

NIH and CDC have marginalized, neglected, underfunded and mistreated this patient community.

Advances in the science of the disease have been mostly squashed by the gross lack of funding by NIH for this severely disabling disease. In addition, misinformation and badly outdated information published by the CDC, along with the lack of education about the disease in medical schools, have caused a dearth of palliative care for patients nationwide. Most importantly, after 30 years, we still are not any closer to finding a possible treatment or cure to help the millions of ME patients.

MEadvocacy.org is a growing grassroots movement of advocates and patients who are rising up and saying it is time for a change. We are lawyers, laborers, teachers, students, fathers, mothers, and children. Our productive lives have been cut short by this debilitating disease and we have no hope of treatment or cure. We have had enough and are saying, "No More!"

ME INCIDENCE AND PREVALENCE

ME, also known in the U.S. as chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) and myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS), sickens an estimated 850,000 to 2.5 million people in the U.S. and 17 million worldwide. A majority of patients are disabled, unable to work, attend school or participate in activities of daily life. A quarter are so severely affected as to render them bedbound, unable to care for themselves.

ME HISTORY, CRITERIA AND NAME

ME has a long history, appearing worldwide in epidemic and endemic forms. A 1955 outbreak in London resulted in Dr. A. Melvin Ramsay describing it as an infectious neuromuscular illness and coining the term "myalgic encephalomyelitis." Disregarding this, the CDC broadly redefined the disease and renamed it the marginalizing name, chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS), in response to 1985 cluster outbreaks of the disease in Incline Village, Nevada and Lyndonville, New York. This redefinition resulted in three decades of confused research findings rather than answers to the cause and treatment of this disease. In addition, the undignified name and poor criteria caused stigmatization and marginalization of patients.

DISEASE BURDEN AND FUNDING

Some ME patients have died prematurely from complications of ME. Others have died at their own hands due to the severity and length of their suffering without proper palliative care, as well as dismissal and stigmatization by the medical community. If we do not act on behalf of these severely affected patients, we are complicit in their suffering and untimely deaths. The patients will not carry this burden quietly any longer and we are looking at Congress to require HHS to properly fulfill their duty to ME sufferers.

In 2009, Dr. Nancy Klimas, the director of AIDS research at the Miami Veterans Affairs Medical Center stated:

"My H.I.V patients for the most part are hale and hearty thanks to three decades of intense and excellent research and billions of dollars invested. Many of my CFS patients, on the other hand, are terribly ill and unable to work or participate in the care of their families. I split my clinical time between the two illnesses, and I can tell you if I had to choose between the two illnesses, (in 2009) I would rather have HIV. But CFS, which impacts a million people in the United States alone, has had a small fraction of the research dollars directed towards it. ""(http://consults.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/10/15).

In the intervening 7 years, nothing has changed. It is very clear that real change at HHS regarding this disease will not come about naturally. We have come to you, the Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, for help in addressing this dire need for oversight and investigation.

It is estimated that the burden to the economy for ME is between \$17 to 24 billion, yet NIH funding for research has stagnated at a mere \$5 million a year, less than funding for hay fever. HHS has placed funding for ME at the rock bottom of their funding budget list. The yearly allocation for ME/CFS is a fraction of what other similarly burdened diseases receive.

HHS/NIH funding data for 2014 US patient population Funding per patient—HIV/AIDS—\$2 billion 978 million 1,200,000 \$2,481; M.S.—\$102 million 400,000 \$255; Parkinson's—\$139 million 1,000,000 \$139; Alzheimer's \$564 million 5,300,000 \$106; ME/CFS—\$5 million 1,000,000 \$5.

The great divide between NIH funding for ME and other diseases cannot be explained away. Simply advising and recommending that NIH increase funding for ME, has not worked. The Secretaries of Health and Human Services have not responded to most of the nearly 100 recommendations made by the Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Advisory Committee (CFSAC) during the past 10 years. It ignored specific requests by CFSAC, medical experts, patient advocates, patients and their families to adopt ME expert-authored, well-defined criteria for the disease.

The department did not heed the call by President Obama as a result of a call out at a townhall meeting by the wife of a patient. It has not listened to the many recommendations by this Appropriation Committee over the past twenty years. In order to fund ME on par with MS, a similarly serious disease, ME would need \$250 million a year to bring them on par with other similarly burdened diseases yet, gets a mere \$5 million.

We need a different approach and a complete overhaul at all agency levels. We need an investigation by Congress into the mishandling and neglect of ME by HHS, NIH and CDC and active, ongoing Congressional oversight until HHS' negative bias is rectified. We are therefore coming to you for help in this matter.

The following are the recommendations and goals that we at MEadvocacy.org feel the Appropriations Committee needs to require that HHS meet, in order to bring Myalgic Encephalomyelitis back on par with other similarly burdened diseases:

1. Fund biomedical research for ME commensurate with its severity and burden to patients and the economy. We are asking for specific funding in the amount of \$250 million, the amount we believe is needed to bring ME on par with other similarly burdened diseases. HHS should clearly allocate funds to study patients from past ME cluster outbreaks as well as the study of the epidemiology of patients with severe ME. The additional funding needed for ME might be accomplished by means of a sliding scale of allocation from other diseases related to immune, cognitive and nervous system dysfunctions.

2. Heed the ME stakeholders' request to adopt the diagnostic and research criteria authored by those experienced in the disease, namely the 2003 Canadian Consensus Criteria (CCC), which has been adopted by the International Association of Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (IACFS/ME). In a letter to the Secretary of HHS, 50 experts in the disease declared their consensus agreement to adopt the CCC. This was endorsed by a letter signed by 171 advocates as well as a petition signed by over 6,000 patients. The 2011 revision known as the International Consensus Criteria (ICC) would be an alternatively acceptable criteria for adoption.

3. Retain the historical name for this disease, myalgic encephalomyelitis, which has been coded since 1969 by the World Health Organization under neurological disease with the code G93.3. In addition, ME appears in the 2015 U.S. ICD Codes as U.S. ICD-10-CM with the same coding. Additionally, we request that the Appropriation Committee recommends HHS:

4. Return ME to the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease (NIAID) or place it in the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS), which also manages similar neuroimmune diseases such as MS, fibromyalgia, and Lyme Disease. The Office of Research on Women's Health, where ME is currently housed, is entirely inappropriate for disease, which also strikes men and children.

5. Provide opportunities for dissemination of information through the development of a curriculum for all U.S.-based medical schools, as well as physician continuing education, about ME as defined solely by disease experts, in order to provide the tools needed for physicians and other medical professionals to appropriately recognize and treat this disease. Currently, this would mean using either the 2003 Canadian Consensus Criteria or the 2011 International Consensus Criteria, not the overly broad criteria developed by the non-expert IOM panel. In addition, the CCC or ICCPrimer should be widely distributed and made available to clinicians, particularly primary care physicians, nationwide in order to facilitate the best care for their ME patients.

6. Partner openly and transparently with stakeholders within 1 year to establish a comprehensive, aggressive and fully-funded cross-agency strategy and implementation plan, with well-defined objectives and milestones, and to develop a plan to monitor progress and provide for Congressional oversight.

"We've documented, as have others, that the level of functional impairment in people who suffer from CFS is comparable to multiple sclerosis, AIDS, end-stage renal failure, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. The disability is equivalent to that of some well known, very severe medical conditions."

[This statement was submitted by Dr. William Reeves, former CDC Chief of Viral Diseases Branch MEadvocacy.org.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF
ANIMAL SCIENCE (NAAAS)

As President of the National Association for the Advancement of Animal Science (NAAAS), I am writing to request the subcommittee's support for critical animal science research within the National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and the Agricultural Research Service (ARS). Specific programmatic requests for NIFA include:

Hatch Act	\$244,000,000
Agriculture and Food Research Initiative	700,000,000
Smith Lever, Section 3(b) and (c)	300,000,000
Section 1433	10,000,000
Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program	5,000,000
Veterinary Services Grant Program	2,500,000
Food Animal Residue Avoidance Database Program	2,500,000
Food and Agriculture Defense Initiative	10,000,000

The 2014 farm bill includes an important expansion of Section 1433 to establish a new competitive research grants mechanism to address critical priorities in food security, one health and stewardship. The expanded authority came in response to a historic funding disparity for the animal sciences and represents a strong opportunity to address significant challenges facing animal agriculture.

The new competitive grants program in Section 1433 provides a mechanism to focus resources on high priority areas to help animal agriculture meet future challenges. It is important to get the new competitive program started as soon as possible. We respectfully request that \$10 million for Section 1433 in fiscal year 2017, as an important step toward the goal of meeting the program's authorized level of \$25 million.

For ARS, NAAAS recommends \$1,286,000,000 for fiscal year 2017. ARS has the potential to make significant progress towards solving problems facing America's livestock and poultry producers but is consistently receiving funding disproportionate to its contributions to the farm economy. ARS intramural research is uniquely suited for projects that require a long term investment leading to high-impact payoffs, while maintaining the capacity and readiness to respond to emerging and pressing problems. ARS also plays a critical role in partnering with the universities and industry to advance science and address emerging issues. NAAAS requests that the committee to provide funding at least \$1.286 billion for ARS in fiscal year 2017. Within this total, NAAAS supports the President's budget request for \$95 million for buildings and facilities. This level would enable ARS to continue its work to address high priority facility needs.

BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

As the world's population grows and natural resources become limited, animal agriculture research is necessary now more than ever to improve efficiency in order to continue providing safe and abundant food supplies for the growing global community. It is imperative that the increased food production be done in a manner that will protect our natural resources while maintaining America's global competitiveness in producing animals and animal products. Global demand for food is expected to increase from 70 to 100 percent by 2050. Meat consumption is estimated to increase by 73 percent, dairy consumption is estimated to increase 57 percent, and per capita egg consumption in developing countries is expected to rise by almost 40 percent.

Innovations in animal science will play an important role in the future success of animal agriculture and the rural economy. Livestock and poultry sales account for 40 percent of all farm income. When feed crops consumed by livestock are included, the contribution to farm income is 60 percent. The United States must step up its investments in agricultural research to maintain its status as a leading producer of safe, affordable and abundant food and meet increasing demands.

Unfortunately, current funding by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to support the animal sciences is not proportionate with the economic contributions of animal agriculture. In fact, investment in the animal sciences has been declining for many years, even for programs such as the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) that have received increased appropriations. This trend was highlighted by National Academy of Sciences in its report "Critical Role of Animal Science Research in Food Security and Sustainability" (see <http://www.nap.edu/>

openbook.php?record_id=19000) that was released in January 2015. The report recognizes the historic underfunding of animal sciences and calls for increased investments. This imbalance in support for animal science puts U.S. animal agriculture at a major disadvantage at a critical time when livestock and poultry producers are striving for global competitiveness, improving sustainability and working to feed a growing global population.

To address this shortfall in Federal investments supporting the animal sciences, new resources must be dedicated to meet critical priorities in animal science. The National Association for the Advancement of Animal Science (NAAAS) has identified a series of value propositions where additional Federal investments can drive innovation in the high priority areas of Food Security, One Health and Stewardship.

FOOD SECURITY—CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

With a projected increase in global population by 2050, food production must double which requires increased efficiency of the use of limited natural resources to meet expected increases in meat and milk consumption by 73 percent and 58 percent, respectively. With land, water and other natural resources being limited relative to this demand, maintaining or reducing the environmental impact of increased production will be challenging. New knowledge and technology offers meat and dairy producers and the allied pre- and post-harvest industries that support them an opportunity to increase income using sustainable production methods while meeting expanding demand.

Accelerated research in systems biology and genomics can provide sustainable increases in overall production efficiency by 50 percent in 2025 through enhanced performance. Such applications will provide abundant, safe, nutritious and affordable food from animal sources to consumers across the world.

ONE HEALTH CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The one health concept recognizes that animal, human and ecological health are inextricably linked and are best addressed using a systems approach as alluded to in the National Institutes of Health Roadmap (see <http://nihroadmap.nih.gov>). The human and livestock genome projects are providing revolutionary insights for improving human health; however, the application of genomics biology to animal agriculture offers much more for our global society. It is clear that an abundant, affordable and safe food supply continues to be the foundation for human health, economic stability and political stability necessary for improved quality of life in the United States and worldwide. A major opportunity of the One Health concept is to enhance vital agricultural and biomedical capabilities that embrace functional genomics, proteomics and bioinformatics to sequence, map and explore genomes of important species of animals, crops and microbes. This is essential for increasing profitability of livestock enterprises through improved production efficiencies and approaches to enhance animal health and wellbeing.

Modern transportation, global movement of animals and people, and intensive livestock management systems create increased risks for either accidental or intentional introduction of infectious diseases. Zoonoses pose risk of disease transmission from animals to people and vice versa, with both health and economic impacts. Some 58 percent of new human diseases are zoonotic, and environmental conditions influence the transmission of disease. The results of outbreaks of highly infectious diseases in animals cause mortality and morbidity, as well as catastrophic trade and other economic impacts. A major concern with such outbreaks is the need to employ systems of containment and eradication that ensure continuity of business operations during intervention, especially in intensive livestock production systems. Interdisciplinary research can help understand how pathways are integrated in complex organisms, determine how disturbances in these pathways lead to disease and disease resistance, and desired phenotypes that enhance production agriculture and animal health, as well as mitigate transmission of zoonotic diseases.

Through this approach of using systems biology to generate new knowledge and technologies, major opportunities will be forthcoming to improve human and animal health using sustainable management practices, as well as advanced methods for early detection, prevention, and recovery from outbreaks of disease and to produce safer foods of animal origin.

STEWARDSHIP CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Livestock operations must continue to make major advances in the efficiency and sustainable use of natural resources for both extensive and intensive production systems. More effective use of land, water, energy and other natural resources that generate inputs to animal production as well as for animal production itself are

needed. Stewardship of the animals and their relationship to the communities in which they exist are key elements of the total equation. As demand for food increases, animal production will be increasingly forced to use marginal lands where stewardship is even more challenging. New innovations and technologies are urgently needed to meet future demands for foods of animal origin, stewardship of natural resources, and economic survival of food animal production. Science-based information for appropriate policy and regulatory paradigms is required. Modern science, ranging from basic research in plant and animal genomics, transcriptomics and bioinformatics is essential to underpin genetic selection for development of new and more drought-resistant feeds and forages to improve overall food animal production efficiencies and management practices. This approach is essential to realizing advances in animal and plant agriculture required to meet demands and maintain a healthy, natural resource base.

In order to realize the innovations and outcomes identified, increased public funding of agricultural research will be needed. NAAAS appreciates the opportunity share its views on the drivers for innovation in animal science and the need for increased Federal investments. Please let us know if you have any questions or if NAAAS can be of any assistance as the committee continues its work on the Federal investment in science.

[This statement was submitted by Ken Odde, President of the National Association for the Advancement of Animal Science.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF NUTRITION AND AGING SERVICES PROGRAMS (NANASP)

On behalf of the National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP), an 1,100-member nonpartisan, nonprofit, membership organization for national advocates for senior health and well-being, and on behalf of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, a 76,000 member organization of food and nutrition professionals, committed to improving the nation's health through healthy and safe food choices, we thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of the Department of Agriculture's proposed increases for the following programs within the Food and Nutrition Services:

- \$900 million for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), including \$10 million to implement state options to streamline application processes for older adults;

- \$14 million for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program

We also support the \$20.6 million request for the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program.

One in six older Americans struggles with hunger and food insecurity. These numbers continue to grow with the growth of the aging population; more than 10,000 seniors turn 65 every day. However, only 39 percent of eligible seniors are enrolled in SNAP—meaning that millions of seniors are going hungry.

One reason commonly given for lack of older adult enrollment in SNAP is lack of ability to fill out the application. Therefore, the President's request for \$10 million to implement state options to streamline application processes for seniors based on successful state demonstrations in increasing senior participation in SNAP is incredibly important. By streamlining the process, seniors will be able to apply more easily, thus making it more likely that they will complete the application and receive the benefits they desperately need.

We also support the proposed increase for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program. It currently serves more than 600,000 low-income people nationwide, and it is the only USDA nutrition program that provides monthly food assistance specifically targeted at low-income seniors. However, the program is funded at a set level annually and therefore cannot serve all eligible seniors. It is also unavailable in Alabama, Virginia, West Virginia and Wyoming. This increase would address current demand and fund new caseloads to a total of 639,000 participants.

Finally, at a minimum, we support the President's request for \$20.6 million for the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program. This program puts fresh produce into the hands of low-income seniors and supports local markets, roadside stands, and community-supported agriculture operations (CSAs). However, fewer than 836,000 seniors were able to participate in 2013 and received an average benefit of only \$31/year in groceries since the program is funded at a set level. Further, it is unavailable in seven states. Thus, we support its expansion and higher funding for this program if at all possible.

Investments in these nutrition programs are cost-effective because many common chronic conditions such as hypertension, heart disease, diabetes, and osteoporosis can be effectively prevented and treated with proper nutrition. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics estimates that 87 percent of older adults have hypertension, high cholesterol, diabetes, or some combination of all of these. These seniors need healthy meals to avoid serious medical care—and this care would place an expensive burden on Medicare and Medicaid.

Older adults who are not receiving proper meals can also become malnourished and undernourished. This makes it harder for them to recover from surgery and disease, makes it more difficult for their wounds to heal, increases their risk for infections and falls, and decreases their strength that they need to take care of themselves. Malnourished older adults are more likely to have poor health outcomes and to be readmitted to the hospital—their health costs can be 300 percent greater than those who are not malnourished on entry to the healthcare system.

As more than 10,000 seniors turn 65 every day, now is the time to provide a greater investment in these proven and cost-effective programs.

Thank you for your past and future support.

[This statement was submitted by Ann Cooper, Chair and Robert Blancato, Executive Director National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE DEPARTMENTS OF
AGRICULTURE

As Congress prepares legislation for fiscal year 2017 appropriations for Federal agencies, the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) encourages you to support important programs to ensure a safe, affordable, and abundant food supply. NASDA represents the Commissioners, Secretaries, and Directors of agriculture in all fifty states and four territories. As elected and appointed officials, our members are strong advocates for agriculture and partner with a number of Federal agencies in regulating, marketing, and serving the agricultural industry.

FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION

Integrated Food Safety System: Increase for the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) state implementation programs at \$100 million NASDA estimates state programs will need an investment of \$100 million annually. The requested amount is necessary for the development and operation of programs which will implement the three major FSMA programs (Preventive Controls: Human Food, Preventive Controls: Animal Food, and Produce Safety). The sooner FDA's expenditures to states reach the \$100 million per year mark, the more systematic and timely the implementation of FSMA will be at the state level. While the U.S. arguably has the safest food system in the world we can do better if we focus on prevention.

Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM): Fund CVM program areas at \$196.7 million; National Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring System (NARMS) funding at \$10.8 million; Combating Antibiotic Resistance Initiative at \$35 million for USDA CVM oversees the safety of animal drugs, feeds and biotechnology-derived products. Further, we request that the new user fees established by the Animal Drug User Fee Act (ADUFA) of \$22.977 million be included in the fiscal year 17 appropriations bill. ADUFA establishes a system of performance standards to improve the new animal drug review process at CVM. NASDA thanks Congress for increasing NARMS funding for meat testing by \$3 million last year and supports the Administration's request for an additional \$35 million for the USDA and \$1 million for the CVM for research, monitoring, and surveillance under the CARB.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS): Fully fund the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program at the authorized amount of \$72.5 million; fully fund the Specialty Crop Multi-State Program at the authorized amount of \$4 million. The SCBG Program is critical to the expanding the availability of high quality, safe, and nutritious specialty crops to consumers while adding value to producers through research and extension activities.

Agricultural Research Service (ARS): Fully fund ARS at \$1.426 billion; fully fund Office of Pest Management Policy (OPMP) at \$3 million; fully fund National Agricultural Law Center (NALC). ARS works towards solving problems facing America's crop, livestock and poultry producers as well as natural resources, human nutrition, food production and food processing. NASDA urges the committee to fully fund the OPMP at \$3 million as they provide crucial leadership in the coordination of inter-

agency activities between USDA, EPA, FDA, and state agencies. NASDA encourages continued extramural funding for the NALC and its partners in the Agricultural & Food Law Consortium through the USDA–ARS National Agricultural Library. Requested report language: The Committee expects USDA–ARS National Agricultural Library extramural research consortium projects to be funded at no less than the fiscal year 2014 levels.

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS): Fund APHIS program areas at \$901 million; fully fund Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS) Program; fully fund Wildlife Services at \$105 million; fully fund Feral Swine Control at \$20 million; new research funding for National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS). Any reductions to APHIS' budget could result in deterioration of essential services and impair the Agency from carrying out its fundamental mission, which is “to protect the health and value of American agriculture and natural resources.” The CAPS program, WS programs and the national control program for feral swine programs are crucial to state, industry and Federal coordination in researching, detecting and resolving conflicts with pests and animals. NASDA supports fully funding NAHMS for antibiotic research which conducts studies on the health and management of U.S. livestock populations.

Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS): Remove Prohibitions on USDA Horse Meat Inspections; fully fund State Food Safety and Inspection at \$63 million. We encourage the committee to resist attempts to include language that would prohibit funding for USDA ante-mortem horse inspection. Further, NASDA urges the committee to restore funding for State Food Safety and Inspection programs to \$63 million, which is critical for states that provide state meat inspections under a variety of programs regulated by FSIS.

Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS): Market Access Program (MAP) at \$200 million; Foreign Market Development (FMD) program at \$34.5 million. MAP and FMD encourage the development and expansion of commercial agricultural export markets and assists small businesses in accessing foreign markets.

National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS): Funding for NASS of at least \$176.6 million. NASS statistics provide the information necessary for producers, agribusinesses, farm organizations, economists, and others for critical decisionmaking in agricultural marketing and investing. NASS data is vital to keeping agricultural markets stable, efficient, and fair by making available objective data to commodity market buyers and sellers.

National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN): Fully fund NAHLN at \$15 million. NAHLN is a cooperative effort between USDA–APHIS, NIFA, university, and state veterinary diagnostic labs. NAHLN is an early warning system for emerging and foreign animal diseases and we urge the committee to fund NAHLN at the authorized amount.

National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA): Fund National Agriculture in the Classroom (AIC) at \$1 million; Fully fund Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) at \$700 million; Funding for Veterinary Medical Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP) at \$5 million; the Veterinary Services Grant Program (VSGP) at \$2.5 million; Fund Food Animal Residue Avoidance Database (FARAD) at \$2.5 million and Section 1433 at \$10 million. AIC is a critical educational tool in inspiring our next generation of farmers, workforce members and consumers. Further, NASDA is supportive of language directing AFRI to address pollinators, antibiotic resistance and advancing drug approvals to treat minor species. Also, the expanded Section 1433 maintains the program for animal health and disease and adds a competitive grant program focusing on priorities in food security, one health and stewardship.

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS): Fully fund—the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) at \$1.65 billion; the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) at 10.34 million acres; the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), the Agriculture Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) at \$500 million. Farm Bill Title II conservation programs are invaluable programs in helping farmers, ranchers, and landowners address conservation concerns. Voluntary, incentive-based conservation programs are the bedrock for agriculture's efforts to improve water and air quality, soil health, and address water quantity concerns and resist overly burdensome regulatory efforts.

U.S. Forest Service: Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) program at \$83 million. The FIA program surveys America's forests and provides information for monitoring trends in habitat, wildfire risk, insect and disease threats and other resource questions.

CONCLUSION

NASDA asks that you give our requests careful consideration as work to fund the nation's agricultural policy priorities in fiscal year 17. NASDA is a partner and co-regulator with Federal agencies in the implementation of a host of food, agricultural and natural resources programs. NASDA Members have a unique wealth of information, experience, and expertise. NASDA stands ready to work with you and your staff to expeditiously pass the agriculture appropriations bill. Thank you for your consideration, and please let us know if you have any questions.

[This statement was submitted by Barbara P. Glenn, Ph.D., Chief Executive Officer—NASDA.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE ENERGY OFFICIALS
(NASEO)

Chairman Moran and Ranking Member Merkley, I am David Terry, Executive Director of the National Association of State Energy Officials (NASEO), and I am testifying in support of fiscal year 17 funding for the energy title of the Farm Bill. The mandatory levels of the energy title of the Farm Bill should be preserved. Specifically, we support funding of at least \$19 million in additional discretionary spending for the Rural Energy for America (REAP) program (Section 9007 of the last multi-year Farm Bill), in addition to \$49 million in mandatory funding for REAP. The REAP program was created in the 2002 Farm Bill and it has been a huge success. Over 10,000 energy efficiency and renewable energy projects have been implemented in every state since 2003. With a required \$3 match of non-Federal funds for every Federal dollar invested in REAP, over \$1.6 billion in matching funds have been provided. This program has specifically benefitted farmers, ranchers and rural small businesses. NASEO's State Energy Office members work directly with eligible entities, as well as state agricultural agencies and rural interests to promote this successful program. REAP is about rural economic development. The Biomass Crop Assistance Program supports producers who will supply biomass feedstocks for advanced biofuels. We urge the Subcommittee to provide \$50 million for this effort in fiscal year 17, \$24 million above the mandatory funding. Finally, we support \$15 million in mandatory funding and \$4 million in discretionary funding, a total of \$19 million for the Rural Energy for America Loans program.

NASEO represents the energy offices in the states, territories and the District of Columbia. The REAP program, and the other critical programs in the energy title of the last multi-year Farm Bill, helps create jobs, increases agricultural productivity, saves energy for farmers, ranchers and rural small businesses, generates energy, promotes use of alternative fuels, reduces our dependence on imported petroleum and saves money in rural America. The cost is very low and the payback is very high.

In fiscal year 2017, we urge your support for the REAP program, the Rural Energy for America Loans program, the Biomass Crop Assistance Program.

[This statement was submitted by David Terry, Executive Director, National Association of State Energy Officials.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WHEAT GROWERS

The National Association of Wheat Growers joins the National Wheat and National Barley Improvement Committees in urging the Committee to provide an additional \$3.3 million over the budget request for funding the USDA-ARS US Wheat & Barley Scab Initiative (USWBSI). This increase would provide the full \$10 million authorized by section 7303 of the Agricultural Act of 2014. We are also requesting an additional \$3.44 Million to support a Small Grains Genomic Initiative within the Agricultural Research Service.

Wheat is a very important crop and source of economic activity. As USDA's Economic Research Service has reported, the United States is a major wheat-producing country, with output typically exceeded only by China, the European Union, and India. Almost half of the U.S. wheat crop is exported. Wheat is the principal food grain produced in the United States. In the last decade, wheat ranked third among U.S. field crops in both planted acreage and gross farm receipts, behind corn and soybeans. According to the National Agricultural Statistics Service, more than 2 billion bushels of wheat with a weighted average farm price value of approximately \$12 billion was harvested from more than 46 million acres across 42 states.

We appreciate that you have provided important support for scab research over the past several years. Since fiscal year 2003, Congress has annually provided \$6.7 million. The mission of the USWBSI is to enhance food safety and supply by reducing the impact of Fusarium Head Blight (scab) on wheat and barley. The USWBSI is an organization of grower, researcher, and industry stakeholders, providing annual recommendations to ARS for a mission directed competitive grant program. The USWBSI is the consortium of land-grant colleges and universities authorized in farm bills over the years, in partnership with USDA-ARS scientists and research locations throughout the US.

However, the increase of \$3.3 million is necessary because scab is an emerging threat in new regions of the country, including the Western states of Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, California and Washington. Wet conditions throughout the US in 2014 resulted in widespread scab outbreaks, negatively impacting yields and resulting in high levels of the mycotoxin deoxynivalenol (DON, aka vomitoxin) in grain that was rejected by elevators, mills, and maltsters, causing disruptions in supply, economic losses to growers, and increased costs for end users.

The additional programmatic funding of \$3.3 million requested is proposed to be allocated 50 percent to the USWBSI and 50 percent in permanent base funding increases to ARS units conducting scab and supporting research.

For the \$1.65 million increase proposed for the multi-institutional and multi-discipline directed competitive grant program of the USWBSI, we recommend the following allocations to enhance research in states currently receiving funding and to expand to other states where research is needed.

Budget	Allocation
Accelerated Breeding	\$500,000
Scab Management	500,000
Genomic Selection	300,000
Research infrastructure in emerging areas	100,000
Additional DON testing	250,000
Total USWBSI Request	1,650,000

We also propose that ARS, in consultation with the USWBSI Executive and Steering Committees (comprised of grower, researcher, and industry stakeholders), determine how to allocate the \$1.65 million proposed for permanent base funding increases to ARS locations conducting scab research or supporting research.

We also request an additional \$3.44 Million to Support a Small Grains Genomic Initiative under the ARS Salaries and Expenses Account. Those funds would be distributed as follows.

—Next Generation Genotyping—Funding of \$1.5 million is needed so that all four USDA-ARS Small Grains Regional Genotyping Laboratories (Fargo, ND; Manhattan, KS; Raleigh, NC; Pullman, WA) can meet their mission to facilitate application of genomic information and DNA marker technologies for improvement and breeding of wheat, barley, and oat varieties. Small grains breeders must be equipped with genotypic data that give them rapid access to traits of value so they can be incorporated into improved varieties to counter threats to the crops from diseases, insects, and climate; maintain grain quality; increase yields, and improve other agronomic characters. Of particular importance is the hiring of a bioinformatics support scientist to analyze and interpret data to meet the needs of scientists doing research on breeding and genetics of small grains, and to integrate the enormous amounts of generated data into the nationwide “Big Data” network being developed by the USDA-ARS. The scientist will also oversee and maintain local genotyping lab computing resources.

—Barley & Wheat Quality Phenotyping and Research—Funding of \$1.79 million is needed so that all five USDA-ARS Barley and Wheat Quality Laboratories (Madison, WI; Fargo, ND; Manhattan, KS; Wooster, OH; Pullman, WA) can meet their missions to advance the quality and utilization of barley and wheat grain in the U.S. for the betterment of U.S. consumers, farmers, and the brewing, milling, baking, and processing industries.

In this age of modern genomics, substantial resources have been directed at cutting edge DNA technologies, but adequate resources for the phenotyping (measurable characterization) of barley and wheat quality have not been provided. Wheat and malting barley varieties developed with the aid of genomic technology, but lacking the quality characteristics required for domestic and export market end-users, are of little value.

The remaining \$150,000 of our request for the Small Grains Genomic Initiative would be for barley doubled haploid work.

The National Association of Wheat Growers, working with its team of 22 state wheat grower organizations to benefit the wheat industry at state and national levels, appreciates your consideration of our requests.

[This statement was submitted by Gordon Stoner, President National Association of Wheat Growers.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF NATIONAL COMMODITY SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD PROGRAM
ASSOCIATION

Mister Chairman and Subcommittee members, thank you for this opportunity to present information regarding the USDA/FNS Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP). The National Commodity Supplemental Food Program Association (NCSFPA) requests that the Senate Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee fund CSFP for fiscal year 2017 at \$236,120,000 as requested by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. NCSFPA would also like to thank the Subcommittee for providing sufficient funding in fiscal year 2016 to bring on 1 additional new state with a previously approved plan of operation by USDA. Low-income seniors in the state of Virginia will begin receiving the nutritionally balanced CSFP food packages this year.

CSFP is a unique program which brings together Federal and state agencies, along with public and private entities. In fiscal year 16, the CSFP provides services through 150 non-profit community and faith-based organizations at 1,800 sites located in 47 states, the District of Columbia, and two Indian Tribal Organizations (Red Lake, Minnesota and Oglala Sioux, South Dakota). Each month 619,000 participants are authorized to receive a nutritionally balanced food box. The program has moved to serve exclusively elderly participants, as required by the Agricultural Act of 2014. Our association thanks the Subcommittee for funding that enables us to continue serving our vulnerable population. Even though the budget request would provide assistance to an additional 20,000 seniors, it is important to note that current participating states have requested another 142,149 caseload slots to meet the need in their service areas. We are sure the additional caseload will be well used.

CSFP continues to be a testimony to the power of community partnerships with faith-based organizations, farmers, private industry and government agencies. The CSFP offers a unique combination of advantages unparalleled by any other food assistance program:

- The CSFP specifically targets one of our nation's most nutritionally vulnerable populations: low-income seniors.
- The CSFP provides a monthly selection of food packages tailored to specific nutritional needs.
- The CSFP purchases foods at wholesale prices, directly supporting American farmers. The average food package cost is estimated at \$23, while the retail value is approximately \$50.00.
- The CSFP involves the entire community. Thousands of volunteers and private companies donate money, equipment, and most importantly time and effort to deliver food to needy and homebound seniors. These volunteers not only bring food but companionship and other assistance to seniors who might have limited support systems.

The 2013 supplemental report by Ziliak and Gundersen for the National Foundation to End Senior Hunger; The State of Senior Hunger in America 2011: An Annual Report demonstrated that seniors continue to face ever increasing food insecurity challenges despite the end of the Great Recession. The proportion of seniors age 60 or older facing hunger increased by over 15 percent from 2010 to 2011. Additionally, from 2001 to 2011, the number of seniors experiencing the threat of hunger, the risk of hunger, and hunger has increased by 88 percent, 109 percent, and 200 percent, respectively.

The 1997 report by the National Policy and Resource Center on Nutrition and Aging at Florida International University, Miami— Elder Insecurities: Poverty, Hunger, and Malnutrition indicated that malnourished elderly patients experience 2 to 20 times more medical complications, have up to 100 percent longer hospital stays, and incur hospital costs \$2,000 to \$10,000 higher per stay. Proper nutrition promotes health, treats chronic disease, decreases hospital length of stay and saves healthcare dollars.

In a 2013 NCSFPA survey, more than half of seniors living alone reported an income of less than \$750 per month. One-half of respondents from two-person house-

holds reported an income under \$1,000 per month. 25 percent were enrolled in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and 50 percent said they ran out of food during the month. 70 percent of senior respondents said they choose between medicine and food.

In 2012, an informal NCSFPA senior participant survey revealed individual accounts of the value of CSFP benefits. An Arkansas recipient tells us that they would not otherwise be able to eat the balanced meals that CSFP provides each month. Arkansas program operators talk about the importance of interaction between seniors and program staff, saying this interaction is very important for the well-being of recipients, and recipients are able to live more stable, self sufficient lives as a result. Colorado participants say that they would not be able to have juice and cereal without CSFP, and many appreciate the program because they are homebound. Seniors in St. Louis, Missouri, say that CSFP foods help them get through to their next checks. Participants in Nebraska say that they don't know what they would do without this food, calling the program a "lifesaver". New Hampshire participants tell us that they use CSFP as a primary source of nutrition each month and would see a dramatic loss in food availability without the program. One Wisconsin recipient said that they would starve without the program, while others said that CSFP on their limited income meant that they could pay their telephone and electric bills.

America is aging and CSFP is an integral part of senior nutrition programming that is a cost effective and nutritionally sound way to ensure that today's seniors remain productive, healthy, and independent to maintain a good quality of life. It is of note that many seniors are now continuing to work at least part-time beyond retirement age to ensure that they can afford basic necessities. As such, CSFP is an important tool for them to remain healthy so that they may continue to be an active part of the work force.

The CSFP Local Agencies are committed grassroots operators with dedicated volunteers fulfilling a mission to provide quality nutrition assistance economically, efficiently, and responsibly. In cooperation with USDA, NCSFPA seeks to meet the current and emerging needs of CSFP participants. NCSFPA wishes to commend the Food Distribution Division of Food and Nutrition Service of the Department of Agriculture for their continued innovations to strengthen the quality of the food package and streamline administration.

The Senate Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee has consistently supported CSFP, acknowledging it as a cost-effective way of providing nutritious supplemental foods. We urge the Subcommittee to provide \$236,120,000 million for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program in order to allow us to provide needed services.

Again, thank you for your continuing support. We look forward to working with you on behalf of CSFP participants.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF NATIONAL COTTON COUNCIL

The NCC is the central organization of the United States cotton industry. Its members include growers, ginners, cottonseed processors and merchandizers, merchants, cooperatives, warehousemen and textile manufacturers. A majority of the industry is concentrated in 17 cotton-producing states. The downstream manufacturers of cotton apparel and home furnishings are located in virtually every state. Farms and businesses directly involved in the production, distribution and processing of cotton employ almost 200,000 workers and produce direct business revenue of more than \$27 billion. Annual cotton production is valued at more than \$6 billion at the farm gate, the point at which the producer markets the crop. Accounting for the ripple effect of cotton through the broader economy, direct and indirect employment surpasses 420,000 workers with economic activity well in excess of \$100 billion. In addition to the cotton fiber, cottonseed products are used for livestock feed, and cottonseed oil is used as an ingredient in food products as well as being a premium cooking oil.

The NCC welcomes the opportunity to provide the following recommendations and requests for fiscal year 2017 appropriations for programs which make important contributions to our industry's ability to compete and prosper in a world market.

FUNDING PRIORITIES

Cotton Pests (APHIS): The National Cotton Council requests \$11.52 million (level with the fiscal year 2016 and fiscal year 2015 appropriations) for the APHIS Cotton Pests Account. This will allow APHIS to continue to provide coordination, technical assistance and funds for Boll Weevil Eradication and Pink Bollworm Eradication programs. Grower assessments provide the balance of program funds. As these pro-

grams near completion, the Federal funding becomes even more critical to ensure the complete eradication of these cotton pests for the benefit of those in post eradication maintenance. Additional details for the Boll Weevil Eradication Program and the Pink Bollworm Eradication Program are provided below:

Boll Weevil Eradication (APHIS—Cotton Pests): The NCC requests \$8.1 million (level with the fiscal year 2016 and fiscal year 2015 appropriations) for APHIS to provide Federal support to the National Buffer Zone in the Lower Rio Grande Valley (LRGV) in Texas, the last “frontier” for Boll Weevil Eradication efforts since 97 percent of the U.S. cotton acreage is now free of boll weevils. This Zone is also the only remaining active eradication zone in the U.S. APHIS funds are only provided to this active eradication zone in keeping with a commitment that grower assessments provide 100 percent of the cost of maintenance programs once an area or region is declared “weevil free.” The program continues to produce documented economic and environmental benefits. Cotton in the United States is now produced with an average of less than three annual applications of pesticides per acre for all insects. This compares to the 15 to 20 applications per acre prior to boll weevil eradication and adoption of cotton varieties containing Bt technology for worm control.

Continuation of Federal funding is critical as the program strives to complete eradication in the LRGV of Texas. The NCC recognizes that the movement of boll weevils from Tamaulipas, Mexico, into the LRGV has prolonged the eradication efforts of the U.S. However, the eradication efforts in the LRGV continue to make progress and the area also serves as the National Buffer, protecting the remainder of the U.S. cotton acreage from re-infestation of the boll weevil. The NCC’s Boll Weevil Action Committee has created the International Technical Advisory Committee to share and coordinate technical procedures with the Tamaulipas, Mexico program in an effort to enhance their eradication progress thereby ending this weevil migration. In addition, the NCC is cooperating with APHIS in developing another liaison committee to include Mexico program officials to identify additional resources and technical assistance required by the Tamaulipas program.

We also respectfully request that APHIS be directed to make every effort to minimize overhead and administrative expenses for boll weevil eradication to ensure field operations are funded to the fullest extent possible.

Boll Weevil Eradication (FSA)—The NCC requests sufficient funding to allow FSA to make up to \$60 million in loans to eligible producer-controlled organizations carrying out Boll Weevil and Pink Bollworm eradication programs. This authority has existed since fiscal year 2005 and has been critically important to the success of the programs. There has not been a forfeiture on any loan made by FSA for the purpose of carrying out Boll Weevil and Pink Bollworm eradication efforts.

Pink Bollworm Eradication (APHIS—Cotton Pests): The NCC requests \$3.42 million (level with the fiscal year 2016 and 2015 appropriations) be provided to APHIS to continue support for the pink bollworm program. The Pink Bollworm Eradication Program is based predominantly on the mass release of sterile insects generated by a Phoenix, AZ rearing facility.

The funds requested for fiscal year 2017 will enable the Pink Bollworm Rearing Facility (PBRF) in Phoenix, AZ, to maintain a colony of pink bollworm moths with the capability to provide sterile moths for release if a wild moth is captured. The PBRF is a partnership between the California growers and APHIS. The cost share for pink bollworm is essential to provide APHIS’ expertise and operational coordination in mass rearing and area-wide aerial releases of millions of sterile moths.

The Pink Bollworm Eradication Program did not document the capture of any native pink bollworm moths in 2013 for the U. S., which allowed the program to begin a confirmation phase in 2014. There was no documented capture of any native pink bollworm moths in 2014 or in 2015. The density of monitoring traps remained high for the 2014 year in order to verify that no native populations are present. The trapping density will gradually decline over the next several years before eradication is confirmed. A response plan has been developed by technical experts to respond to localized areas as needed if a native capture is documented during this confirmation phase. Growers contribute funds through assessments and incur significant expense associated with purchasing and planting biotech seeds during the active eradication period.

Market Access Program (MAP).—The NCC strongly supports the funding level in the Agricultural Act of 2014 of \$200 million for MAP. Cotton Council International (CCI), the foreign market development arm of the NCC, has the critical mission of maintaining and expanding exports of US cotton and cotton products in Asia, Europe, Africa, and Central and South America. The value of U.S. cotton fiber exports exceeds \$5 billion, and exports of value-added cotton products contribute an addi-

tional \$3 billion to the overall value of cotton exports. Activities carried out using MAP and Foreign Market Development (FMD) funds have been documented as contributing to increased export sales of cotton fiber and value-added manufactured cotton products. Independent studies reveal that for every dollar spent by USDA co-operators, including CCI, U.S. exports increase \$35, a 35-to-1 return on investment. For the cotton industry, this represents over one billion dollars in export value or an additional 7,000 jobs to the U.S. economy. The cotton industry believes CCI's programs are an effective catalyst for private sector investments, with the industry investing \$2.02 for every dollar of MAP funds received.

Foreign Market Development (FMD).—The FMD program is used to encourage and support U.S. commodity groups to undertake long-term market development and trade servicing. These funds are used for programs with detailed market assessments, strategic program development and ongoing evaluations. These funds create unique market development and trade servicing value and, like the MAP funds, are closely monitored by USDA for compliance with U.S. laws. FMD is currently funded at \$34.5 million and requires at least a dollar-for-dollar industry match. The industry requests that funding for FMD be continued at the level authorized in the Agricultural Act of 2014. The cotton industry believes CCI's programs are an effective catalyst for private sector investments with industry investments totaling \$1.31 for every dollar of FMD funds received.

Farm Service Agency (FSA).—The industry supports sufficient funding to ensure FAS is adequately staffed to carry out important market development and trade enhancing functions in headquarters and abroad. The industry supports the Presidential initiative to streamline and make U.S. export programs more effective. We believe FAS's market research and market development assistance combined with the MAP and FMD programs serve as a model for successful public-private partnerships. We believe it is important that U.S. agriculture continue to have an agency like FAS with close links to domestic USDA programs to promote U.S. exports, collect market data, assist exporters, remedy trade disputes and assist in the development of trade policy.

Farm Service Agency (FSA).—The NCC supports adequate funding so that FSA can continue to deliver essential farm and conservation programs and services.

Risk Management Agency (RMA).—The NCC supports adequate funding so that RMA can continue to administer essential insurance products.

Agricultural Research Service (ARS).—The cotton industry continues to be concerned with the financial support of this important intramural research agency. ARS programs and facilities conduct vital research programs in fiber quality, production agronomic systems and textiles that ultimately support U.S. cotton production and post-harvest processing as well as the U.S. textile industry's efforts to remain competitive in global markets. We urge the Committee to instruct USDA not to close any facilities or discontinue any projects without first consulting with industry stakeholders.

The NCC specifically requests an increase of \$1.68 million in funding for the three cotton ginning research units to be distributed as follows: Southwestern Cotton Ginning Research Laboratory, Mesilla Park, NM, \$468,000; Cotton Production and Processing Research Unit, Lubbock, TX, \$752,000; and the Cotton Ginning Research Unit, Stoneville, MS, \$460,000. All three ginning research units need additional funding immediately to address scientific personnel needs, conduct research, and offset the impact of inflation after years of flat or decreasing budgets.

We request that the Committee maintain funding for the research units managing cotton programs conducted at the Southern Regional Research Center in New Orleans, LA, and the various cotton breeding and cotton entomology programs including support for the Cotton Germplasm Collection managed by the Southern Plains Crop Germplasm Unit housed at the Southern Plains Agricultural Research Center in College Station, TX.

We agree with the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) December 2012 report, "Agricultural Preparedness and the Agricultural Research Enterprise," that significant additional funding for agricultural research is warranted for maintaining a viable U.S. industry. However, we differ with the report's emphasis on increasing competitive funding of research. We continue to urge a balanced approach among intramural, competitive and formula funding in order to maintain an effective research infrastructure while encouraging innovative research at the highest levels. For ARS to continue its part in this research enterprise, additional funding is needed. We urge the Committee to provide ARS with additional overall funding as soon as economic conditions allow the Committee to respond to the PCAST report's funding level recommendations.

Thank you for your consideration of our recommendations and of our funding requests for fiscal year 2017. Please contact me with any questions or if additional information is needed.

[This statement was submitted by Reece Langley, Vice President—Washington Operations.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT LAW PROJECT

The National Employment Law Project (NELP) submits the following testimony on the fiscal year 2017 Appropriations for the Food Safety and Inspection Service regarding the New Poultry Inspection System Program. NELP conducts research, education and advocacy to assure that the basic protections afforded by our nation's labor and employment laws extend to all workers, including low wage workers.

NELP opposes any amendment to the Appropriations bill that would allow poultry plants entering the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) New Poultry Inspection System (NPIS) program to increase their lines speeds in defiance of the recently promulgated USDA standard: Modernization of Poultry Slaughter Inspection. We strongly urge the Committee to oppose this amendment that would rewrite the USDA's rule, subverting the normal rulemaking process without any formal public comment or input from the public, who along with poultry line workers, will be negatively affected by any change to this rule.

In August of 2014, the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) promulgated the final rule for the Modernization of the Poultry Slaughter Inspection System. The final rule went through almost 2 years of public comment. When the final rule was published, it did not permit an increase in maximum line speeds in poultry plants.

When this rule was first proposed for public comment in 2012, it contained a proposed increase in maximum line speeds in poultry plants. FSIS asked for comment on this provision, specifically acknowledging the potential for an increase in line speeds to effect employee health and safety. According to USDA, this proposed provision increasing allowable line speeds received the most comments from the public. The comments were focused on the negative effects the increased line speeds would have on the health and safety of workers in the poultry slaughter establishments as well as consumer safety.

In response to all the comments received in the rule making, USDA FSIS decided not to increase the line speed from 140 to 175 birds per minute (bpm) in poultry slaughtering facilities. In the preamble to the final rule, the agency further noted concerns regarding 20 plants that are already in a pilot program (HIMP) that allowed these pilot facilities to increase line speeds to 175 bpm. USDA noted that the data from this existing pilot program found that the average line speed in these plants is 131 bpm—well below the currently allowed 140 bpm and far below the 175 permitted.

The primary concern echoed in the many comments from academia, worker organizations and consumer organization was the detrimental effect of increased line speed on the health and safety of the tens of thousands of workers in the industry. Poultry slaughter and processing workers face many serious job hazards that can lead to serious injury, illness and death. In fact workers in poultry plants are injured at almost twice the rate of workers in private industry. Further the incidence rate of occupational illness cases reported by the industry is more than six times the national average for all U.S. industries. And it is well established, that these rates are under reported. As USDA noted in the preamble to the final rule, and OSHA stated in its new emphasis program in the poultry industry "the literature suggests the likelihood of substantial under-reporting of worker injuries and illnesses by poultry industry employers."

Poultry processing workers make thousands of forceful cuts a day, using knives and scissors, in cold and damp conditions, with acidic chemicals being sprayed over the meat, and incidentally their bodies, as it moves down the line. Work related musculoskeletal disorders (MSD's) are of significant concern among poultry processing workers. These disorders, including carpal tunnel syndrome, tendonitis, and epicondylitis, affect the nerves, tendons and muscles. Poultry workers face incidence rates seven times higher than other manufacturing workers for work related carpal tunnel syndrome. In 2014 and 2015, in cooperation with the USDA, the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) conducted studies at two different poultry processing facilities and found high prevalence rates among production workers for carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS): 42 percent and 34 percent, respectively of CTS among workers.

USDA acknowledged the danger to workers of increased line speeds in the preamble of its final rule, and also acknowledged that more study and review was needed before any change in line speed would be made. There has been no such study or review done since this rule was promulgated. Such a review would have to be prospective and take years—to assure that the safety of the tens of thousands of workers is not sacrificed on the altar of decreased government spending.

Just last month, OSHA sent a hazard alert letter to a poultry company in Ohio for exposing workers to hazardous campylobacter bacteria. Workers at the poultry processing plant had contracted the infection—which can lead to serious gastrointestinal infection. This same company has racked up nearly \$1.9 million in fines from the U.S. Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration from its two plants in Ohio. OSHA had earlier found that this same company fired a 17 year old after his leg was amputated because of a failure by the company to install a safety mechanism.

That is not an isolated instance. The speed of work in poultry plants already causes far too many workplace injuries and may be impacting consumer safety as well. OSHA citations and newly released reports have found that to keep the lines going at full speed, workers are often denied their legal right to use a bathroom, soiling themselves at work. Poultry processing plants also penalize workers for taking any sick days, so workers come to work sick while handling the meat on the line.

As workers get injured because companies don’t comply with basic safety precautions, they don’t file workers compensation and heal. The companies do everything they can to preclude that. So instead, workers leave the plants. Many plants report turnover between 50–100 percent.

Poultry processing workers are among the most vulnerable people in the country. Most are minorities and immigrants; some are newly resettled refugees. They are pursuing the American dream—working hard, arduous jobs in a harsh environment—all to help put food on our table.

Congress should not allow the industry to speed up its lines after the USDA studied the issue, heard from the American public, and promulgated a rule that would not allow such an increase. This would be a subversion of the entire rule making process, it would demonstrate utter disregard for the rule of law, and would be a direct slap in the face to the workers and communities that sacrifice to feed America.

[This statement was submitted by Deborah Berkowitz, Senior Fellow National Employment Law Project.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF NATIONAL YOUNG FARMERS COALITION

Thank you for the opportunity to share our appropriations priorities for fiscal year 2017. Congress and the USDA have made significant progress in recent years towards better serving young, beginning farmers. The National Young Farmers Coalition (NYFC) is excited for the role Federal funding can play furthering this growth.

NYFC represents, mobilizes, and engages young farmers to ensure their success. We envision a country where young people who are willing to work, get trained and take a little risk can support themselves and their families in farming. NYFC has 29 local chapters across the country and represents more than 1,400 dues-paying members.

NYFC requests the following funding be included in the fiscal year 2016 Agriculture Appropriations bill:

1. New, Beginning, and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers Regional Coordinators (\$3.9 mil)
2. NRCS’s Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) at the mandatory program level (\$500 mil)
3. FSA’s Direct Operating Loans (to provide \$1.46 billion in loans) and Direct Farm Ownership Loans (to provide \$1.5 billion in loans)
4. Beginning Farmer and Rancher Individual Development Accounts (\$1.5 mil)
5. Food Safety Outreach Program (\$10 mil)

New, Beginning, and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers Regional Coordinators (\$3.9 mil)

NYFC has been working with the USDA to better serve young and beginning farmers. In contrast to established farmers or those coming from a farm family, beginning first-generation farmers require different services from the USDA and need more help than others finding these services. For example, young farmers often seek

smaller operating loans when launching a business than an established farmer. With this in mind, NYFC helped create the popular microloan program at the Farm Service Agency (FSA) that provides operating loans at an appropriate scale for young farmers. Innovative program design and outreach has a proven track record of reaching previously underserved young farmers.

To build on this success, NYFC has been urging the USDA, and FSA in particular, to provide specialized resources for young, beginning farmers and dedicated staff to help these farmers navigate the USDA. The proposed regional coordinators do precisely this. The twenty-five staff positions funded by this request will help young farmers access the services that are already available to them, but underutilized, such as conservation programs and farm loans. The \$3.9 million in funding for the proposed outreach staff, as requested in the President's budget, is critical to amplify and leverage the resources already provided for farmers at the USDA and build the next generation of our nation's farmers.

NRCS's Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) at the Mandatory Program Level (\$500 mil)

Between 2007 and 2012, over 7 million acres of agricultural land were developed to nonfarm use in the United States.¹ This contributes to the more than 24 million acres converted from agriculture between 1982 and 2010, a disproportionately high amount of which contained prime soils.² Agricultural conservation easements are a proven tool to stem this tide and protect farmland from development. ACEP provides a critical source of matching funds for the land trusts and state and local programs that are purchasing these easements across the country.

The 2014 Farm Bill provided \$500 million in mandatory funding for ACEP in fiscal year 2017. It is critical that this program retains its full, mandatory funding. Even with this full mandatory funding level, this program is funded at \$81 million less than its component programs prior to the 2014 Farm Bill. An additional reduction in funding would be devastating to this program.

FSA's Direct Operating Loans (to provide \$1.46 billion in loans) and Direct Farm Ownership Loans (to provide \$1.5 billion in loans)

FSA operating and ownership loans are crucial for young farmers. Without these loans, many of these individuals would not be able to access credit for their farm. In fiscal year 2015, the funding available for Direct Farm Ownership Loans was dramatically increased—from approximately \$.5 billion to \$1.5 billion. NYFC was excited to see this increase, since we have heard numerous complaints from farmers about insufficient funds in past years.

While this increased loan level met the demand for Direct Farm Ownership Loans in fiscal year 2016, we faced a shortfall for Direct Farm Operating Loans. With the recent fluctuations in crop prices, the lending market has grown more cautious and more farmers have needed to turn to FSA for their credit needs. Without an increase in loan authority, we expect a shortfall in Direct Farm Operating Loans in fiscal year 2017 and a significant backlog of loan applications by beginning farmers and others not served by commercial credit. This would be a serious problem for both these individual farmers and our broader agricultural community, which is facing a shortage of beginning farmers. We strongly support funding for these loan programs sufficient to provide \$1.46 billion in Direct Farm Operating Loans and \$1.5 billion in Direct Farm Ownership Loans.

Beginning Farmer and Rancher Individual Development Accounts (\$1.5 mil)

Individual development accounts (IDAs) help young and beginning farmers become successful entrepreneurs by matching funds that they put into a savings account while taking required business planning courses. IDA programs have been instrumental in helping young people start businesses in states including Michigan, Iowa, and California. The Beginning Farmer and Rancher IDA pilot program was created in the 2008 Farm Bill and reauthorized in 2014. In spite of the successes of privately run programs around the country, the Federal IDA pilot program has never been funded. As the existing farmer population continues to age and the need for young farmers grows, it has never been more important that the Federal IDA pilot program receive \$1.5 million in funding.

¹USDA National Agriculture Statistics Service. (2014). 2012 Census of Agriculture. http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/Full_Report/Volume_1,_Chapter_1_US/st99_1-001_001.pdf.

²American Farmland Trust. (n.d.). Farmland by the Numbers. <http://www.farmland.org/programs/protection/American-Farmland-Trust-Farmland-Protection-Farmland-by-the-numbers.asp>.

Food Safety Outreach Program (\$10 mil)

Food safety training has become a particularly important concern for young farmers. The new food safety regulations, finalized by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) last year, set forth expansive new requirements for farms. Farmers are going to need training and outreach in order to understand the maze of new requirements being asked of them. The Food Safety Outreach Program, administered by USDA's National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA), was authorized to meet this need. It funds farmer and food processor training efforts focused on helping small and mid-sized family farms; beginning farmers; diversified, sustainable, and organic agricultural operations; and on-farm processors adapt to new regulatory pressures.

We are very grateful for the \$5 million funding that was appropriated to this program last year. However, this only scratches the surface of the on-the-ground need for training and outreach. We request the Food Safety Outreach Program be funded at \$10 million. At this funding level, the Food Safety Outreach Program would reach roughly 16,600 farmers across the country. While this number is small relative to the need, without any training, the final FDA regulations will hurt small and mid sized producers and processors and fall far short of the goal of improving food safety.

[This statement was submitted by Eric Hansen Policy Analyst, National Young Farmers Coalition.]

 PREPARED STATEMENT OF NATIONAL ORGANIC COALITION

I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the National Organic Coalition (NOC) to detail our fiscal year 2017 funding requests for USDA programs of importance to the organic sector.

USDA/AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE (AMS)

*National Organic Program
Request: \$9.094 million*

Organic agriculture is one of the fastest growing sectors of agriculture, fueled by strong consumer demand. Over the last decade, sales of organic food and beverages have averaged double-digit annual growth. The organic sector has grown to over \$36 billion industry in annual sales with over 21,764 certified organic family farmers and other businesses.

The National Organic Program (NOP) is the agency charged with regulating and enforcing the USDA organic label. NOP was funded at about \$9.02 million for fiscal year 2016. We are requesting \$9.094 million for NOP, consistent with the Administration's fiscal year 2017 budget request.

USDA (AMS, NASS, ERS)

Organic Data Initiative

*Request: Report language for AMS—Continue and Expand Organic Price Reporting
Request: Report language for NASS—Continue and Expand Organic Data Collection
Request: Report language for ERS—Continue and Expand Organic Data Analysis Work*

Authorized by Section 7407 of the 2002 Farm Bill, the Organic Production and Marketing Data Initiative states that the "Secretary shall ensure that segregated data on the production and marketing of organic agricultural products is included in the ongoing baseline of data collection regarding agricultural production and marketing." In addition to providing mandatory funding, Section 10004 of the 2014 Farm Bill authorizes \$5 million annually in discretionary funding for this effort.

As the organic industry matures and grows at a rapid rate, the lack of national data for the production, pricing, and marketing of organic products has been an impediment to further development of the industry and to the effective functioning of many organic programs within USDA. Organic data collection and analysis at USDA has made significant strides in recent years, but remains in its infancy.

We are requesting report language urging AMS, NASS, and ERS to continue to expand their organic data collection within its base activities.

Organic Transitions Program
Request: \$5 million

The Organic Transition Program, authorized by Section 406 of the Agricultural Research, Education and Extension Reform Act (AREERA) for Integrated Research Programs, is a research grant program to help farmers address some of the challenges of organic production and marketing. As the organic industry grows, the demand for research on organic agriculture is experiencing significant growth as well. This research has broad applications to all sectors of agriculture, even beyond the organic sector.

The Organic Transition Program was funded at \$5 million in fiscal year 2010, and about \$4 million for fiscal years 2011 through 2016. The Administration's fiscal year 2017 budget requests level funding. We are seeking \$5 million to restore the program to its fiscal year 2010 level.

As demand for organic food and beverages continues to grow at a very fast rate, domestic production of organic food has not kept pace, requiring a greater percentage of organic product to be imported to meet the consumer demand. USDA's National Organic Standards Board has identified a list of organic research priorities, many of which would address challenges that have limited the growth in domestic production.

The funding increase that we are requesting would help to address these needs. In addition, we are requesting the following report language to accompany the increase in funding for the program:

"As domestic consumption of organic food and beverages continues to grow, domestic supply is not able to keep up with the demand. USDA's National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) has identified key organic research priorities, many of which would help to address issues that have limited growth in organic production in this country. The Committee provides an increase in funding for the Organic Transition Program, and urges the agency to strongly consider the NOSB organic research priorities when crafting the fiscal year 2017 RFA for the program."

Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI)
Request: Report language on public cultivar development

In recent decades, public resources for cultivar development have dwindled, while resources have shifted toward genomics and biotechnology, with a focus on a limited set of major crops. This problem has been particularly acute for organic and sustainable farmers, who seek access to germplasm well suited to their unique cropping systems and their changing local environments and climates.

In Section 7406 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, the National Research Initiative was merged with the Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems to become the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI). Congress included language within AFRI to make "conventional" plant and animal breeding a priority for AFRI research grants, consistent with the concerns expressed by the Appropriations Committee in preceding appropriations cycles.

Unfortunately, USDA has made only modest progress toward addressing the classical breeding Farm Bill and appropriations directives. We are requesting the following report language stressing that funding for classical breeding and public cultivar development should be a distinct priority and funding stream within AFRI, consistent with report language included in the fiscal year 2016 Senate report:

Section 7406 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 specifies priority areas with the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative [AFRI], including an emphasis on conventional (classical) plant and animal breeding. The Committee strongly concurs with the intent of this section, and notes the importance of having publicly available cultivars and breeds that are specifically bred to be adapted to the soils, climates, and farming systems of farmers of all regions. The Committee reiterates the request made in the fiscal year 2016 Senate report, and strongly urges NIFA to make public cultivar and breed development an increased priority for funding within the AFRI program and to create a separate priority area for this important work. The Committee further requests a report from the agency as to its plans for implementing this important requirement. [NOTE: Most of this is

identical to the language in the fiscal year 2016 Senate Report, except for the bolded text, which is updated.]

Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI)
Request: Report language on organic research

Organic agriculture is one of the fastest growing, and most promising, sectors of the U.S. agricultural economy. The benefits for organic research benefit not only the organic sector, but conventional farmers as well. Research to help farmers with the latest science on addressing pest problems and nutrient needs on their farms without expensive off-farm inputs is extremely helpful to organic and conventional farmers alike. We are requesting the following report language urging NIFA to increase funding for the organic research through the AFRI program, to help keep pace with the rapidly growing organic sector, and to help address the shortage of domestic supply to meet growing demand for organic products:

As in recent years, the Committee continues to prioritize funding for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI), as the flagship competitive grants research program for agriculture. However, in doing so, it is critical that the agency take actions to ensure that AFRI meets the needs of the full spectrum of the U.S. food and agriculture sector. The Committee notes that only about 0.1 percent of AFRI funding was used for research to address challenges of the U.S. organic sector during the period of fiscal years 2010–2014. As the organic sector struggles to boost domestic production in order to respond to the growing consumer demand for organic products, funding for organic research is critical, and the AFRI program should be part of that solution. The Committee urges the agency to execute a plan to incorporate organic research needs into the AFRI program more fully, and requests a report on the progress toward that goal.

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE)
Request: \$30 million

The SARE program has successfully funded on-farm research on environmentally sound and profitable practices and systems, including organic production. The reliable information developed and distributed through SARE grants is very helpful to organic farmers. The President's fiscal year 2016 budget requests \$30 million for SARE, and we are supporting that \$30 million request for the combined activities of SARE.

Food Safety Outreach Program
Request: \$10 million

We are requesting \$10 million to help small and mid-size farms and small processing facilities comply with new proposed food safety regulations. This training program, authorized in the Food Safety Modernization Act of 2010 (FSMA), is one of the best and least costly ways to improve food safety outcomes without resorting to excessive farm regulation. The program received \$5 million in fiscal year 2016. The President's fiscal year 2017 budget requests \$5 million. We are requesting \$10 million for fiscal year 2017, because food safety training for family-scale operations is critical at this stage of FSMA implementation.

Hatch Act Formula Grants
Request: 10 percent increase in funding, targeted to increase the public plant and animal breeding capacity of land grant institutions to address farmers' need for regionally adapted cultivars and breeds.

The capacity of our nation's land grant institutions (LGUs) to address the needs of local farmers for locally and regionally adapted cultivars and breeds has reached crisis levels, and funding for these efforts has been in a steady decline. As a result, farmers must rely on seeds and breeds that are outdated, and have not been improved to address changing climates, pest challenges, farming systems, and consumer demands. For all regions of our nation to optimize their productive capacity in an environmentally sustainable manner, it is critical that the farmers of the region have access to the most up-to-date cultivars that have been bred in that region to meet ever-changing conditions. A recent survey of LGUs shows that since 1994, the U.S. has lost 33 percent of its public plant breeding programs. On a regional basis, the analysis shows a 47 percent loss in public plant breeding programs in the Northeast, a 33 percent loss in the Midwest, a 35 percent loss in the West, and a 21 percent loss in the Southeast.

Therefore, we are requesting a 10 percent increase in funding for Hatch Act formula grants, to be targeted to foster the next generation of public plant and animal breeders at our national LGUs by focusing on the development of publicly available, regionally adapted cultivars and breeds.

USDA/RURAL BUSINESS COOPERATIVE SERVICE

Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA)
Request: \$2.5 million

ATTRA, authorized by Section 6015 on the Agricultural Act of 2014, is a national sustainable agriculture information service providing practical information and technical assistance to farmers, ranchers, Extension agents, and educators interested in sustainable agriculture. ATTRA interacts with the public through its call-in service and website, and provides excellent publications to address some of the frequently asked questions of farmers and educators. We request \$2.5 million for fiscal year 2017 for ATTRA.

[This statement was submitted by Steven Etka, Policy Director, National Organic Coalition.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE COALITION

Thank you for the opportunity to present our fiscal year 2017 funding requests. On behalf of our 44 member organizations from around the country, we submit the following USDA requests, in the order they appear in the appropriations bill:

DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION

Office of the Secretary—Outreach Services Supporting New, Beginning, and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers. We urge you to meet USDA's request for \$5 million for Department-wide enhanced outreach to beginning, women, and military veteran farmers.

Office of Advocacy and Outreach. The Office of Advocacy and Outreach coordinates policy and outreach in four vital areas—small farms and beginning, socially disadvantaged, and veteran farmers. We urge that \$1.2 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 strongly support USDA's request of \$10 million in discretionary funding. Combined with no limitation in mandatory spending, this appropriation would restore the historical program funding level to meet increased demand for technical assistance by military veteran farmers, and other underserved producers.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program. We strongly urge you to meet USDA's request of \$30 million for this competitive grants research program. SARE has helped turn farmer-driven research, education, and extension into profitable practices for over 25 years. The program consistently yields practical farm innovations on a more accelerated timeframe than other competitive research programs. At \$30 million, SARE would be at half its authorized level and half the level recommended by the National Academy of Sciences. Due to high demand and inadequate funding, USDA has been able to fund only 6 percent of SARE pre-proposals for research and education competitive grants in recent years. Increasing funding to \$30 million would begin to address this disparity. It would enable SARE to expand its prized work on soil health, cover cropping, and rotational grazing. It will also allow USDA to expand its backing for research to support beginning farmers, including on-farm research in which innovative young farmers can work with others in the SARE team to experiment with new production and management systems on a portion of their farm. The increase would also help SARE expand its unique graduate student research program, helping create the next generation of agricultural scientists who will make the breakthrough sustainability discoveries of the future.

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

Food Safety Outreach Program. We strongly urge you to provide \$10 million to help small and mid-size farms and small processing facilities comply with the new FSMA food safety regulations. We are pleased Congress appropriated \$5 million for FSOP for fiscal year 16. However, the major FSMA rules are final now and are in the process of being implemented; at \$10 million in fiscal year 2017, FSOP would reach roughly 16,600 farmers across the country. While still small relative to the need, this funding level addresses the magnitude of the situation, namely that without adequate training, the FSMA regulations will hurt small and mid sized producers and processors and fall far short of the goal of improving food safety—no matter how much more money gets appropriated for FSMA implementation and enforcement overall.

FARM SERVICE AGENCY

Direct Farm Ownership Loans, Direct Operating Loans, and Individual Development Accounts. Direct farm loans provide crucial capital for beginning farmers and others not adequately served by commercial credit. This is critical in light of the increasing age of farmers and the land access challenges faced by new and aspiring farmers. USDA's fiscal year 2017 budget proposes increased funding for Direct Farm Operating loans in order to meet the high demand by farmers unable to obtain commercial credit due to low commodity prices and a more constrained lending market. Without this increase, FSA will face a substantial funding shortfall and many farmers will be unable obtain the operating capital they need to make it through the growing season. Similarly, the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Individual Development Account (IDA) program, if funded, will enable limited-resource beginning farmers and ranchers to save for asset-building purchases, including equipment and breeding stock, to jump start their operations. The IDA program requires a 50 percent local match as well as financial management training as the core component of the program. We support USDA's request for program levels of \$1.5 billion for Direct Farm Ownership loans, \$1.46 billion for Direct Operating Loans, and \$1.5 million for the IDA program. We also support the USDA request for guaranteed ownership and operating loans.

New, Beginning, and Veteran Farmer and Rancher Initiatives. We support the Administration's request for \$3.9 million for a certification program to help veteran farmers prequalify for loans, FSA staff devoted to providing outreach to beginning and veteran farmers, a pilot for a new farmer mentoring network, and funding for cooperative agreements to support assistance to new farmers and to work with land-owners to help them transition their farm to the next generation. This combined package will serve as a critical tool for supporting veterans and investing in the next generation of farmers.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Conservation Technical Assistance. CTA, a subset of Conservation Operations, is the backbone of USDA's conservation programs. Through CTA, NRCS field staff work with farmers to 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. USDA's fiscal year 2017 budget request proposes to increase CTA funding by 2.5 percent from \$741.6 million to \$760.7 million. We urge you to approve this increase, which will help more producers develop site-specific plans to conserve water, prepare for extreme weather, and address natural resource concerns on their land.

RURAL BUSINESS—COOPERATIVE SERVICE

Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas. For nearly 30 years, the ATTRA program has provided practical, cutting edge information to farmers, extension agents, and others. In fiscal year 2015, ATTRA provided assistance to more than 2.2 million agricultural producers and businesses, and organized presentations, workshops, and field days in 25 locations across the U.S. attended by at least 15,000 people. For fiscal year 2017, we urge you to provide \$2.75 million, and increase of \$250,000 over the President's request and last year's funding level. This increase will support the expansion of ATTRA's Armed to Farm program that trains returning military veterans to farm. The small increase will enable ATTRA to expand its work to meet the needs of aspiring veteran farmers. To date, veterans from 22 states have attended these week-long trainings. A recent survey of Armed to Farm participants found that 80 percent have continued to farm, have started farming, or are in the process of starting a farm.

Value-Added Producer Grants. VAPG offers competitive grants to farmers and ranchers developing farm- and food-related businesses that boost farm income and create jobs in rural America. These grants may be used to fund business and marketing plans and feasibility studies or to acquire working capital to operate a value-added business venture or alliance. Despite its proven success as a driver of rural economic development, the President has not requested a funding increase for VAPG since fiscal year 2014. We request \$15 million in discretionary funding and no changes in mandatory program spending, to bring the program up to its 2014 funding levels.

Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program. RMAP provides business training and microloans to owner-operated businesses with up to ten employees. It targets very small business development, the leading job creator in rural communities, and is the only Federal program that finances the capitalization of revolving microloan funds for rural areas. We support USDA's fiscal year 2017 budget request for \$2.9 million for microlending and \$2 million for grants to support microbusiness training and technical assistance, as well as no changes in mandatory program spending.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

A suite of distinct but interrelated farm bill programs, including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), work together to give farmers the tools they need to protect and rebuild soil, provide clean water, and enhance wildlife habitat. Congress should not re-open the 2014 Farm Bill through the appropriations process. That bill cut \$6 billion from conservation programs, including over \$2 billion from the CSP. The fiscal year 2015 CRomnibus cut an additional 23 percent from CSP and 16 percent from EQIP, forcing USDA to turn away 75 percent of the eligible producers who applied. Additional cuts to mandatory spending for conservation will mean that the number of farmers denied access to the programs will grow even larger; and less participation in voluntary conservation programs means more pollution and more regulation, as well as less productive and profitable farmlands. 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 USDA's ability to protect market transparency has no rightful place in the appropriations bill or any other legislation.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF OREGON WATER RESOURCES CONGRESS

The Oregon Water Resources Congress (OWRC) strongly supports the fiscal year 2017 budget for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) programs. It is crucial that the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) has adequate resources and we request a minimum of \$200 million to leverage partnerships and tackle the complex natural resources conservation issues facing the nation. Furthermore, we are strongly supportive of coordinated Federal agency watershed planning and request funding for the Small Watershed Rehabilitation Program, a minimum of \$250 million.

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.

RCPP BENEFITS & NEEDS

OWRC strongly supports the RCPP, and while we are encouraged by the request for \$100 million in fiscal year 17 in the President's budget, an increase of \$7 million from 2016 enacted levels, additional funding is still needed. The RCPP is a critical tool for districts and other agricultural water suppliers in developing and implementing water and energy conservation projects in Oregon. In the past, the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) has been highly successful in developing cooperative approaches on a basin-wide scale, and historically, the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI) partnerships allowed Federal, State and Local interests to address Endangered Species Act (ESA) and Clean Water Act (CWA) issues in watershed basins and sub basins.

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. For example, in February 2016, USDA announced that they received 265 applications requesting nearly \$900 million dollars, which was four times the amount of available funding. They were able to only fund 84 projects.

OWRC would like to thank the Administration for not cutting funding to Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), in accordance with the 2014 Farm Bill. As demonstrated by the huge demand for RCPP funding, programs like EQIP need to remain in light of the need for investment in conservation projects. While we applaud the continued existence of EQIP, \$1.65 billion is not enough to keep the program effective. It is essential the EQIP have at least \$2 billion in appropriations funding if Congress would like to see widespread results. Furthermore, with the numerous new and potential listings under ESA and increased water regulations under the CWA, there is a dire need for additional funding to support conservation efforts nationwide.

While we recognize that the Administration has increased funding for some NRCS programs, the need for additional financial assistance still far outweighs the proposed 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 and allow farmers to pool together and leverage the dollars invested in the off-farm project with the addition of EQIP on-farm projects. The effects of drought and climate change combined with ESA and CWA regulation has created a daunting set of circumstances for irrigated agriculture in the West. RCPP and EQIP have become an essential lifeline for farmers to adapt to climate change. It is critical to increase funding for new eligible RCPP projects that benefit the environment and economy and alleviate some of the negative effects of drought and climate change.

EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL AWEP PROJECTS IN OREGON

Oregon has had several successful AWEP projects over the past several years, including three from our member districts (described below). Additionally, 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 these could be developed and implemented in Oregon if more funding is made available.

- 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

SMALL WATERSHED REHABILITATION PROGRAM AND WATERSHED PLANNING NEEDS

OWRC also strongly supports the Small Watershed Rehabilitation Program. Two of our members, Sutherlin Water Control District (SWCD) and Middle Fork Irrigation District (MFID) have dams that were built under PL-566. SWCD and MFID have received funds to begin the long and expensive process of updating their 50 year old dams to today's standards for safety, however; both districts will need continued funding from the Small Watershed Rehabilitation Program to fully update their infrastructure.

SWCD has two dams built under PL-566 and while they were built to seismic standards 50 years ago, they do not meet today's standards for earthquakes. SWCD's dams serve as multi-purpose storage for the community; providing flood control, irrigation water, municipal water and recreation. Additionally, it is important to note that even a small earthquake has the potential to severely damage the dams and cause intensive flooding and damage in the surrounding area. To date, SWCD has been authorized to receive funding for planning, design and construction of one of their dams and planning and design on the other. However, SWCD will still need considerable funding dollars to complete construction on the second dam.

MFID is responsible for the management and maintenance of Clear Branch Dam, a PL-566 dam within the Hood River watershed, which provides a clean, dependable water supply and distribution system for the irrigation of pears, apples, cherries and other crops. Rehabilitation of the dam is needed to protect the public from flooding, for access to a clean and dependable water supply, and to maintain agricultural productivity. Additionally Laurance Lake, which is formed by Clear Branch Dam, and its tributaries, are the primary spawning and rearing habitat for Hood River Basin Bull Trout, a threatened species under ESA. Rehabilitation of Clear Branch Dam will improve fish passage connectivity for Bull Trout and improve water temperature for spawning, rearing and migration.

Once planning and design studies are complete, both MFID and SWCD will know what the costs will be to make the necessary improvements to their dams, which is currently estimated at over \$10 million for both SWCD dams and \$9.8 million for MFID. In light of the high costs to fix just 3 of the PL-566 dams, a minimum of \$250 million is needed to address and repair high priority dams like the ones here in Oregon.

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 robust Federal participation if the agricultural community is to be able to continue its efforts to address Oregon's water supply needs through 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 on the proposed fiscal year 17 budget for the USDA's NRCS Programs.

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

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ORGANIC FARMING RESEARCH FOUNDATION

I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) to detail our fiscal year 2017 funding requests for USDA programs of importance to the organic farming sector.

USDA/NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (NIFA) ORGANIC TRANSITIONS PROGRAM REQUEST: \$5 MILLION

The Organic Transition Program, is a critical research grant program that helps farmers address some of the challenges of organic production and marketing. The demand for research on organic agriculture is outpacing the available funds in this program. According to NIFA, only 38 percent of the applicants to this program receive funding. USDA's National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) has identified a number of organic research priorities that cannot be funded due to a lack of resources. An increase in the Organic Transition Program would allow the NOSB to address some of the research issues that limit the growth of the organic industry. And given the innovative nature of organic agriculture, many of these research projects benefit all farmers, not just those in the organic sector. The Organic Transition Program was funded at \$5 million in fiscal year 2010, and about \$4 million for fiscal years 2011 through 2015. We are seeking \$5 million to restore the program to its fiscal year 2010 level to in order to address the current low funding rate for this program.

USDA/AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE (AMS) NATIONAL ORGANIC PROGRAM REQUEST: \$15 MILLION

The National Organic Program is the regulatory program housed within the USDA Agriculture Marketing Service responsible for developing national standards

for certified agricultural organic products. These standards assure consumers that products within the USDA organic seal meet consistent, uniform standards. The NOP is vital for meeting the growing consumer demand for organic products. Recognizing continued growth of the industry, we ask for \$15 million, the full amount authorized in the 2014 Farm Bill. This amount reflects the strong growth of the sector. The industry current returns over \$200 for every \$1 spent on the NOP so an increased investment would garner a strong return for the Federal government. Moreover, this would give NOP the resources it needs to fully enforce the organic regulations globally, to continue to develop international equivalence arrangements to expand the market for American organic products worldwide; and to develop organic standards for emerging sectors.

USDA/NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (NIFA)—AGRICULTURE AND FOOD RESEARCH INITIATIVE- PUBLIC CULTIVAR AND BREED DEVELOPMENT—REPORT LANGUAGE

Section 7406 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 specifies priority areas with the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative [AFRI], including an emphasis on conventional (classical) plant and animal breeding. The Committee strongly concurs with the intent of this section, and notes the importance of having publicly available cultivars and breeds that are specifically bred to be adapted to the soils, climates, and farming systems of farmers of all regions. The Committee reiterates the request made in the fiscal year 2016 Senate report, and strongly urges NIFA to make public cultivar and breed development an increased priority for funding within the AFRI program and to create a separate priority area for this important work. The Committee further requests a report from the agency as to its plans for implementing this important requirement.

USDA/NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (NIFA)—AGRICULTURE AND FOOD RESEARCH INITIATIVE- ORGANIC RESEARCH

As in recent years, the Committee continues to prioritize funding for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI), as the flagship competitive grants research program for agriculture. However, in doing so, it is critical that the agency take actions to ensure that AFRI meets the needs of the full spectrum of the U.S. food and agriculture sector. The Committee notes that only about 0.1 percent of AFRI funding was used for research to address challenges of the U.S. organic sector during the period of fiscal years 2010–2014. As the organic sector struggles to boost domestic production in order to respond to the growing consumer demand for organic products, funding for organic research is critical, and the AFRI program should be part of that solution. The Committee urges the agency to execute a plan to incorporate organic research needs into the AFRI program more fully, and requests a report on the progress toward that goal.

USDA/SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE RESEARCH AND EDUCATION (SARE) REQUEST: \$30 MILLION

The SARE program is another valuable research program with a focus on environmentally sound practices and systems, with organic production research as one of the beneficiaries. Consistent with the increased demand for organic research, as well as the challenges presented by a changing climate, we are requesting \$30 million for the SARE Program to assist farmers as they try to improve and adjust their growing practices.

USDA/RURAL BUSINESS COOPERATIVE SERVICE—APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER FOR RURAL AREAS (ATTRA)REQUEST: \$2.75 MILLION

ATTRA, a national sustainable agriculture information service, is an important source of information and technical assistance for farmers, ranchers, Extension agents, and educators on sustainable agriculture.

USDA/CONSERVATION TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REQUEST: \$760.7 MILLION

Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA), a subset of Conservation Operations, is the backbone of USDA's conservation programs. Through CTA, NRCS field staff work with farmers to 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. The President's fiscal year 2017 budget request proposes to increase CTA funding by 2.5 percent from \$741.6 million to \$760.7 million. We urge you to approve this increase, which will help more producers develop site-spe-

cific plans to conserve water, prepare for extreme weather, and address natural resource concerns on their land.

[This statement was submitted by Jane E. Shey Policy Associate, Organic Farming Research Foundation.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ORGANIC TRADE ASSOCIATION

Chairman Moran, Ranking Member Merkley, and Members of the Subcommittee, I am Laura Batcha, Executive Director and CEO of the Organic Trade Association (OTA).¹ The organic sector continues to be one of the fastest-growing sectors of American agriculture, a vibrant market that has grown to \$39 billion in sales, at double digit growth rates in recent years. The industry is comprised of over 19,500 American organic businesses, and creates jobs at four times the rate of the economy as a whole.

Despite the growth in production, demand outpaces supply. Organic food sales make up nearly 5 percent of total food sales, while organic acreage is less than 1 percent of total U.S. cropland, and consumer demand continues to grow. Over 80 percent of U.S. families, spanning racial and economic lines, buy organic. Organic is a mainstream market, and a production system with independent marketplace dynamics. When viewed as a distinct class, organic ranks fourth in food/feed crop production at farm-gate values. This parallel stream of commerce and production is a bright spot in the American marketplace of innovation and entrepreneurship.

The 2014 Farm Bill offered an enhanced array of resources to help the organic sector continue to grow, innovate, create new markets and jobs, provide certified operations new tools to succeed, and ensure consumers access to safe and nutritious food supply. To facilitate this, we respectfully request the following funding levels: USDA (AMS) National Organic Program—\$15 million; USDA (NIFA) Organic Transition Research Program—\$5 million; USDA (AMS) Organic Data Initiative—\$309,000; and USDA (NASS) Organic Data Initiative—\$250,000. We also request report language urging USDA to ensure organic operations have full access to a variety of programs at the Department.

NATIONAL ORGANIC PROGRAM (NOP)

OTA requests \$15 million for NOP, which enforces the organic regulations and ensures they evolve to keep pace with consumer expectations. Recognizing the strong growth of the industry, we ask for the full amount authorized in the 2014 Farm Bill. These resources would allow NOP to fully enforce the organic regulations globally, develop international equivalence arrangements to expand the market for American organic products, and develop organic standards for emerging sectors. Moreover, increased NOP funding is a strong investment, as there is a return on investment of \$200 for every dollar spent on NOP.

NATIONAL ORGANIC CERTIFICATION COST-SHARE PROGRAM (NOCCSP)

The NOCCSP assists producers and handlers in obtaining certification, but is not currently being implemented using all congressionally-granted authority. Report language directing USDA to act to the full extent of its authority would support both the Department-wide desire to utilize all available programs to support transition, and State organic programs, which are critical to enforcement. We request the following language: “Congress directs the USDA to act to the full extent of its authority in administering the NOCCSP to producers and handlers of agricultural products obtaining certification under the national organic production program. This includes reimbursing State organic program fees as well as certification costs associated with transition to organic production and handling. In particular, USDA should revise their NOCCSP Terms and Conditions document in accordance with the letter and intent of the law.”

¹The Organic Trade Association (OTA) is the membership-based business association for organic agriculture and products in North America. OTA is the leading voice for the organic trade in the United States, representing over 8,500 organic businesses across 50 states. Its members include growers, shippers, processors, certifiers, farmers’ associations, distributors, importers, exporters, consultants, retailers and others. OTA’s Board of Directors is democratically elected by its members. OTA’s mission is to promote and protect ORGANIC with a unifying voice that serves and engages its diverse members from farm to marketplace.

ORGANIC TRANSITION RESEARCH PROGRAM (ORG)

OTA requests that ORG, which supports research, extension and higher education programs for organic producers, be funded at \$5 million. ORG consistently receives many more funding requests than it can accommodate, and while organic sales have grown to nearly 5 percent of retail agriculture sales, research funding provided to organic agriculture has never exceeded 2 percent.

ORGANIC DATA INITIATIVE (ODI)

ODI has been successful in providing valuable information to Congress, government agencies, and the organic industry. We ask for a modest amount \$309,000 in discretionary funding for AMS (to continue and expand collections of organic pricing information) and \$250,000 for NASS (to continue to collect and disseminate data regarding organic agriculture).

ADDITIONAL REQUESTS FOR REPORT LANGUAGE

Farm to School: “The Farm to School program seeks to build healthy communities by strengthening schools’ supply chain and educational linkages to fresh fruits, vegetables and other commodities; however, increased access to organic foods in schools has not been fully realized. Organic operations are well-positioned to create opportunities for students to directly engage in agricultural STEM opportunities and create lasting healthy eating habits, additional goals of the law. The Committee understands the need for improved access to and interaction with certified organic operations and directs USDA to improve participation by certified organic operations in an effort to reduce hunger and improve access to local healthy food.”

Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program: “The Committee recognizes that to meet increasing consumer demand for organic products, domestic producers must either shift to organic production or enter organic production. Beginning farmers and ranchers selecting organic production should be given the tools they need. USDA should prioritize the needs of beginning farmers and ranchers opting for organic production and support programs and services that address their specific needs.”

Environmental Quality Incentives Program: “The Committee recognizes that the Organic Initiative is not intended to be the only way for organic producers to access EQIP funding. USDA is encouraged to track usage of all EQIP funds by certified organic producers, in order to determine how to best meet their needs.”

Regional Conservation Partnership Program: “RCPP allows for conservation projects which leverage public and private funding. Organic farmers implement a wide variety of creative methods to improve the environment. The Committee urges that 5 percent of the RCPP budget be allocated to projects focused on organic production and its conservation benefits. In particular, NRCS funds may be used to provide technical assistance to “explore opportunities to diversify agricultural operations and develop and apply sustainable agricultural systems,” which is particularly relevant to certified organic farmers and those seeking to transition to organic. USDA should ensure that no barriers exist to certified organic and transitioning farmers receiving 5 percent of RCPP funds.”

CONCLUSION

Organic agriculture creates economic opportunities for farmers and rural communities, while improving and conserving the environment and giving consumers additional choice in the market. Meeting these 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 & CEO.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF OXFAM AMERICA

On behalf of Oxfam America, Greater Minnesota Worker Center, Nebraska Applesseed Center for Law in the Public Interest, Northwest Arkansas Workers’ Justice Center, Southern Poverty Law Center, and Western North Carolina Worker Center.

The following comments are submitted on behalf of a coalition of organizations working to improve the conditions of workers in poultry processing. We remain con-

cerned by recent comments made by members of Congress, about the need to increase poultry processing plant evisceration line speeds, currently regulated by the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service.

In August 2014, USDA finalized a new rule on Modernization of Poultry Slaughter Inspection after a full public comment period and significant input from occupational health experts and workers. The new rule explicitly removed the originally proposed line speed increase and kept line speeds for plants choosing to adopt the modernized inspection regime at 140 birds per a minute, the same rate that had preceded the rulemaking. USDA kept in place this line speed despite a draft rule that would have increased line speed to 175 birds per a minute after reviewing evidence on the threat to worker health and safety by increased speeds.

A new report by Oxfam America, “Lives on the Line: The Human Cost of Cheap Chicken, and recent worker survey by the Northwest Arkansas Workers’ Justice Center echoed nearly every study about labor in the poultry industry: current line speed presents a constant threat to workers’ health and safety. It is fast, relentless, and dangerous.¹ Any additional increase in line speeds will only add to those threats.

The high speed exacerbates dangers to workers from repetitive motions, sharp tools, and chemicals; heightens risks to consumers as workers cut corners while handling food; and increases liability for the companies as risks grow. Poultry workers already suffer occupational illnesses at six times the national average; carpal tunnel syndrome at seven times the average; and amputations at three times the average. Line speed directly impacts these numbers. In a survey of 302 workers in Alabama, the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) found that “78 percent of workers surveyed said that the line speed makes them feel less safe, makes their work more painful and causes more injuries.”²

We urge the members of this Committee to reject any attempts to use the Appropriations process to legislate an increase in the maximum allowable line speed in poultry processing plants, as such an increase will only further exacerbate the well-documented risk of permanently crippling injuries to poultry workers and undermine USDA’s recent rulemaking on this very issue.

Workers commonly say that they are treated like “perpetual motion machines”, doing the same motions an estimated 20,000 times per shift, unable to pause or slow down for even a few seconds.³ Workers report averaging between 35 and 45 birds per minute (BPM), meaning they process a chicken every two seconds. The higher the line speed the faster each worker must operate. More motions mean a greater likelihood of developing musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). The constant pace means workers rarely can step back, change position, or stretch. These risks are exacerbated by cold and humid plant conditions. Dozens of medical studies have documented the elevated rate of painful and crippling MSDs in the workforce.⁴ They are

¹Oxfam America, “Lives on the Line: Human Cost of Cheap Chicken”, October 26, 2015, <http://www.oxfamamerica.org/explore/research-publications/lives-on-the-line/>.

²Fritzsche, Unsafe at These Speeds.

³Hall, Alexander, and Ordoñez, “The Cruellest Cuts,” Charlotte Observer, September 30, 2008, <http://www.charlotteobserver.com/news/special-reports/cruellest-cuts/article9012839.html>.

⁴See, for example, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) report conducted by Kristin Musolin et al., Musculoskeletal Disorders and Traumatic Injuries Among Employees at a Poultry Processing Plant, Health Hazard Evaluation 2012–0125, April 2013; Schulz et al., “Upper Body Musculoskeletal Symptoms of Latino Poultry Processing Workers and a Comparison Group of Latino Manual Workers,” *American Journal of Industrial Medicine* 56, no. 2 (July 2012); van Rijn et al., “Associations Between Work-Related Factors and Specific Disorders of the Shoulder—A Systematic Review of the Literature,” *Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment & Health* 36, no. 3 (2010); GAO, Workplace Safety and Health: Safety in the Meat and Poultry Industry; Punnett and Wegman, “Work-Related Musculoskeletal Disorders: The Epidemiological Evidence and the Debate,” *Journal of Electromyography and Kinesiology* 14, no. 14 (2004); National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, Musculoskeletal Disorders and the Workplace: Low Back and Upper Extremities (2001); Latko et al., “Cross-Sectional Study of the Relationship Between Repetitive Work and the Prevalence of Upper Limb Musculoskeletal Disorders,” *American Journal of Industrial Medicine* 36, no. 2 (1999); Frost et al., “Occurrence of Carpal Tunnel Syndrome Among Slaughterhouse Workers,” *Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment & Health* 24, no. 4 (1998): 285; Werner et al., “Median Mononeuropathy Among Active Workers: Are There Differences Between Symptomatic and Asymptomatic Workers?” *American Journal of Industrial Medicine* 33, no. 4 (1998): 374; Chiang et al., “Prevalence of Shoulder and Upper-Limb Disorders Among Workers in the Fish-Processing Industry,” *Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment & Health* 19, no. 2 (1993); Hagberg, Morgenstern, and Kelsch, “Impact of Occupations and Job Tasks on the Prevalence of Carpal Tunnel Syndrome,” *Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment & Health* 18, no. 6 (1992); Chiang et al., “The Occurrence of Carpal Tunnel Syndrome in Frozen Food Factory Employees,” *Kaohsiung Journal*

also at risk of cuts, lacerations, and amputations that increase as speed accelerates. The constant repetitive motions cause pain in hands, fingers, arms, shoulders, backs, as well as swelling, numbness, and loss of grip. These injuries affect the ability to work, do chores, and even lift children.

The Government Accountability Office documented how fast line speeds prevents workers from taking precautions like sharpening knives: “The faster the pace at which the production line moves, the less able workers may be to perform tasks needed for safety.”⁵

Two-thirds (66 percent) of the poultry workers interviewed by Southern Poverty Law Center in 2013 described suffering from hand or wrist pain, swelling, numbness or an inability to close their hands. This rate was even higher among workers doing the jobs most affected by line speed reaching as high as 86 percent for workers cutting chicken wings.

OSHA studied musculoskeletal disorder risk factors for years and found that employers could protect workers from musculoskeletal issues “by reducing the speed at which the employer performs the tasks.” Still employer-mandated processing quotas and rapid line speeds mean that workers often have to rush and strain themselves to keep up. Workers who reported an injury due to line speed also reported higher mean and median piece/pound processing rates per minute, in some cases almost double the rates reported by workers who did not experience injury due to line speed. Women also reported higher rates of line speed related injury than men.

Over half (54 percent) of workers surveyed answered yes to the question, “Have you ever been forced to do things because of time pressure or line speed that might harm the health and safety of the consumer?”

Poultry workers from across the country have felt the consequences of excessive line speed:

- One worker in reported that the speed inched up as the hours went by: “As soon as the first shift leaves, around six o’clock, that’s when it speeds up and starts to get hard. You can’t stand the pain on your shoulders, your hands, because of that repetitive movement.”
- “There are so many problems happen as the lines go so fast,” one worker said. “There might be 20-plus chickens that we cut [in] one minute. The line is going so fast that sometimes we accidentally cut our hands.”
- Another worker offered, “Sometimes I get headache because the line is fast. I would almost pass out sometimes [because] the line is fast.”
- “These jobs were very repetitive,” said a worker, who cut chicken wings and breasts. “My hands swelled up and were extremely painful. When I was in so much pain that I had to stop, I asked for breaks, but the company told me I had to keep working. Because of the pressure to work fast, I can’t use my arms, wrists and hands the way I could before I worked in the poultry plant.”
- Current worker: “The majority of people who work there harm their fingers and their hands due to the line speed. Everyone knows this1A. . .It’s too much chicken. . .Too fast.”

We recommend the members of this Committee reject any attempts to use the Appropriations process to legislate an increase the maximum allowable line speed in poultry processing plants, as such an increase will only further exacerbate the well documented risk of permanently crippling injuries to poultry workers and undermine USDA’s recent rulemaking.

[This statement was submitted by Jeffrey Buchanan, Senior Domestic Policy Advisor, Oxfam America.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF PICKLE PACKERS INTERNATIONAL, INC.

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 facilities. 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.

of Medical Sciences 6, no. 2 (1990). Silverstein et al., “Occupational Factors and Carpal Tunnel Syndrome,” *American Journal of Industrial Medicine* 11, no. 3 (1987).

⁵GAO, *Workplace Safety and Health: Safety in the Meat and Poultry Industry*.

Additional Budget Requests for fiscal year 2017

Funding needs for USDA/ARS laboratories are as follows:

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 sequencing 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 producing reduced sodium, healthier products.
- New technology and systems for rapid inspection, sorting and grading of pickling vegetable products in the field and at the processing facility.

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.

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 correlation’s 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 to-

ward 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 over 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 completed.

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, yield and 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; fermentation technology (purging) used to prevent the formation of air pockets within fermented pickles; and a fermentation technology that eliminates the use of sodium chloride for commercial cucumber brining operations. 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 provided technical expertise and the scientific data currently used to support required process filings, and have helped establish a scientific basis for acidified food

regulations. Further research is needed to evaluate safe and efficient processing conditions for environmentally friendly low salt and calcium salt vegetable fermentation technologies. Additional funding is needed for this and other 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. Research efforts to further develop these technologies will reduce water use and significantly improve energy efficiency with new, scientifically validated thermal processing technologies.

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 reduced sodium, fermented vegetable products. Reducing environmental impact and production costs for the manufacture of healthier vegetable products is essential to the sustainability of the U.S. industry.

Third, the market for fermented vegetable products is rapidly growing in the U.S. These products are attractive to consumers seeking “natural” or “traditional” foods. Novel fermented foods are being imported, manufactured and sold by small business (farmer’s markets) and large companies. For many of these fermented foods, little is known about the safe fermentation conditions, appropriate storage times and temperatures and shelf life. While these fermented foods may contain healthful probiotic bacteria and offer new flavors and expanded markets for vegetable grown in the US, the potential microbial hazards are undefined. Little data is available in the scientific literature to define safe fermentation practices. Research is needed to help both producers and regulatory agencies define safe fermentation practices to meet food safety modernization act standards for novel imported and locally manufactured fermented vegetable products.

SPECIALTY CROPS

The USDA/ARS conducts research on the development and application of innovative engineering technologies for rapid, nondestructive measurement and grading of fruits and pickling vegetables to ensure and enhance product quality and marketability, reduce food loss, and achieve labor cost savings. The research program is well 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 new generation of sensing technologies, which are much more effective and efficient than the current inspection systems, for quality evaluation and grading of pickling vegetables and fruits at the processing facility and in the field.

Sensor and automation is critical to ensuring and enhancing food quality and safety, reducing product loss and production cost, and improving traceability. Modern automated food quality inspection systems have been in use for some time, but they have not been able to fully meet the increasing demands for food quality, safety and traceability from the consumer and by the governmental regulatory agencies. The ARS engineering research program will provide new, cutting-edge food quality inspection technology for pickling vegetable and specialty crop growers and processors, helping them deliver best quality, consistent products to the consumer at affordable prices. Expansion of the ARS research in food quality sensing and automation would enable addressing key technical challenges in the development of new generation food quality inspection technology and allow fast transfer and dissemination of the developed technologies to the U.S. specialty crop industries. This would help the U.S. specialty crop industries maintain competitive advantages in the global marketplace.

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.

Increasing current funding levels for this program will 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 improved, 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, midwestern, as well as western states in recent years. Increasing funding to allow hiring a new plant pathologist will facilitate the conduct of key research to address this critical situation.

FUNDING NEEDS FOR THE FUTURE

It remains critical that USDA/ARS 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.

It is important to note that fiscal year 2015 Enacted/fiscal year 2016 Estimated funding for USDA/ARS laboratories totaled \$11,247,000. However, fiscal year 2015 Enacted/fiscal year 2016 Estimated funding for all cucurbits equaled just \$3,916,000 with only \$2,112,000 directed toward cucumber and pickled vegetable research. For fiscal year 2017, 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 increase funding to support plant pathology research to address cucumber diseases, especially the disease caused by a new strain of the downy mildew pathogen responsible for recent extensive damage to cucumber and other cucurbit productions in the eastern states. A pathologist is especially needed to characterize pathogen strains and to develop new management approaches, as well as resistant cucumber varieties, to combat the disease. Ultimately, a new plant pathologist position will accomplish research that results in more effective protection of cucumbers from disease without the use of conventional pesticides.

	Amount
Fiscal year.	
2015 Enacted	\$598,000
2016 Estimate	598,000
2017 (Proposed budget)	To be determined
2017 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 to fully fund the scientists and support staff, including graduate students and post-doctorates, for carrying out the research and acquiring necessary equipment.

	Amount
Fiscal year.	
2015 Enacted	\$595,000
2016 Estimate	595,000
2017 (Proposed budget)	To be determined
2017 Additional Request (Post-doctoral and Pre-doctoral Research Associate, new equipment & support).	500,000

APPLIED CROP GENOMICS

Emerging diseases, such as downy mildew, southern root knot nematode, and angular leaf spot of cucumber, threaten production of the crop in all production areas. Yield and quality traits found in diverse cucumber germplasm must be bred into U.S. crop cultivars. We request an additional \$500,000 to fully fund the scientists and support staff, including graduate students and post-doctorates for identifying, researching and applying genomic tools to develop new sources of genetic resistance to emerging diseases, improve yield and quality.

	Amount
Fiscal year.	
2015 Enacted	\$458,000
2016 Estimate	458,000
2017 (Proposed budget)	To be determined
2017 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 \$500,000 in the current base funding level would be needed to fund the research engineer position.

	Amount
Fiscal year.	
2015 Enacted	\$145,000
2016 Estimate	145,000
2017 (Proposed budget)	To be determined
2017 Additional Request (Research Engineer & support)	500,000

[This statement was submitted by Brian Bursiek, Executive Vice President, Pickle Packers International, Inc.]

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

The Society for Women’s Health Research (SWHR®) urges the Committee to prioritize and provide an increase to the fiscal year 2017 budget authority (BA) appropriations (non-user fees) for the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) of \$2.85 billion, an increase of \$120 million over fiscal year 2016. Our request is based on FDA’s current workload, planned programs, and emerging public health priorities. Additionally, SWHR supports an allocation of \$10 million for the FDA Office of Women’s Health (OWH) for fiscal year 2017.

For over 25 years, SWHR has been widely considered a thought-leader in promoting research on biological differences in disease and we are dedicated to transforming women’s health through science, advocacy, and education.

Our organization has long advocated that drug and device scientific advancements should demonstrate adequate subpopulation testing prior to approval by FDA. The Agency has made great improvements in improving the completeness and quality of demographic subgroup data collection, reporting and analysis of subgroup data collection, identifying barriers to subgroup enrollment in clinical trials, employing strategies to encourage greater participation, and making demographic subgroup data more available to the public. However, in order for greater improvement, Congress must invest in FDA’s core functions. SWHR is committed to the belief that the FDA, as regulator of products representing approximately 20 percent of American consumer spending, should receive priority funding as its responsibilities are critical to the health and well-being of all Americans.

The FDA has broad jurisdiction and is responsible for:

- Protecting public health by assuring the safety, efficacy and security of human and veterinary drugs, biological products, medical devices, our nation’s food supply, cosmetics, and products that emit radiation.

- Advancing public health by helping to speed innovations that make medicines more effective, safer, and more affordable and providing accurate, science-based information needed by patients and consumers to safely use medicines and foods to maintain and improve their health.
- Regulating the manufacturing, marketing and distribution of tobacco products to protect public health and to reduce tobacco use by minors.
- Ensuring the security of the food supply and by fostering development of medical products to respond to deliberate and naturally emerging public health threats.

Each year, Congress adds ever increasing responsibilities to the Agency (most recently food safety, sunscreen labeling, drug safety, and compounding) but fails to provide appropriate funds to meet those demands reasonably, thereby straining the FDA's abilities and forcing it to choose among competing public health priorities. This is a dangerous precedent which poorly serves the health and safety of the American people. Many of the mandated programs that Congress has tasked the Agency with are not covered by user fees, leaving FDA in need of a larger budget authority appropriation in order to fulfill its duty. SWHR believes that sustained investment in 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 scientific transformation and medical product advancement.

SWHR is a strong supporter of stakeholder engagement with the Agency, and are active in the user fee agreement process for prescription and generic drugs, as well as medical devices and biologics. Such opportunities allow for FDA to discuss process improvements that will speed the approval of safe and effective medical products for patients and consumers. The increased emphasis on patient-focused drug development, risk/benefit analysis, and innovative clinical trial design will only further efforts to bring lifesaving treatments to market.

However, Congressionally-allocated funds are desperately needed to support FDA post-market surveillance activities, improve technical assistance to industry to reduce review times, and enhance its communications with patients and consumers. Post-market surveillance is critical to ensure that drugs and devices, when available to a wider patient population, are truly safe and effective for all populations. The American public cannot, and should not, rely on industry to conduct the bulk of these activities. The 21st Century Cures Act, recently passed by the House, and its companion Senate Innovation's effort, focus on the need to bring medical products to the market more quickly. A large part of that process is improving clinical trials to be faster and less expensive. The biopharmaceutical and biopharmaceutical services industries, along with the FDA and other key stakeholders, have made great strides in improving the clinical trial process; however, clinical trials will never be able to give us the information that is obtained once the drug or device is approved and used in the population. This makes it more critical that FDA has a strong and robust post marketing surveillance program. While the MedWatch and similar programs do exist, they will need additional resources to ensure FDA staff and others as appropriate can quickly respond to reduce morbidity and mortality related to potential safety issues.

Additional FDA funding will also support improved technical assistance for its industry partners by supporting staff resources to develop, review, and approve guidance. Timely release of guidance documents is critical to ensure industry partners can develop processes and submit applications with the most pertinent information for review. Such releases would also allow for increased opportunities for innovation by promptly responding to a changing drug/device development environment.

Finally, additional funding would allow FDA to enhance its communications with the public. Such funding could support building a consumer-friendly FDA interface; making it much easier for patients and consumers to navigate. Funding could also be used to continue the patient-focused drug development meetings and other workshops and listening sessions, allowing FDA to connect directly with the American public it serves.

ACTION PLAN TO ENHANCE THE COLLECTION AND AVAILABILITY OF DEMOGRAPHIC SUBGROUP DATA

FDA, working with industry, must ensure that clinical trials examine differences in subpopulations ensuring appropriate representation to achieve statistical significance and analysis. In 2014, FDA released its "Action Plan to Enhance the Collection and Availability of Demographic Subgroup Data" (Action Plan), as directed by section 907 of the Food and Drug Administration Safety and Innovation Act of 2012 (FDASIA). The Action Plan, largely developed and implemented by the OWH and the Office of Minority Health, provided an outline of long and short term actions

and implementation strategies the FDA is undertaking to examine sex, race, ethnicity and age-based differences through medical research, to allow subgroup-specific data to be more widely available for use in medical practice, and to improve the participation of women, minorities and the elderly in research trials.

SWHR hopes that FDA will continue to work towards the goals outlined in that plan which will be beneficial for patients, consumers, and the healthcare community at large. The Agency has worked with stakeholders to ensure that the subgroup data is appropriately analyzed, reported and presented by FDA and sponsors in a meaningful way to patients and the medical community. However, many components of the Action Plan remain, for example, it is critical that the Agency update its 2005 Guidance for Industry on the Collection of Race/Ethnicity Data in Clinical Trials.

As part of the Action Plan, FDA also has a critical regulatory role in human subject research. Women and minority populations have historically been underrepresented in medical research, and although women and minorities are now being enrolled in clinical trials at greater rates, much work remains to ensure that these groups are included and retained in trials at appropriate levels to provide statistically significant results. Through the Action Plan, FDA recognized the need to increase representation of these population groups in clinical trials and the need for more analyses on how medical drugs and devices in development affect women and men differently as well as racially, ethnically and by age. Women should have confidence that drugs, devices and biologics approved for patient use have been appropriately analyzed for sex differences and the finding publicly reported in a meaningful way for usage by both healthcare providers and patients.

SWHR has long sought the transparency of demographic subgroup data that FDA uses as the basis of its approval decision. This issue was a priority area of the Action Plan and in 2014, the Agency launched the "Drug Trial Snapshot" website to provide information about who participated in clinical studies for new molecular entities and original biologics. The Snapshot website also includes information on study design, results of efficacy and safety studies, and information on any differences in efficacy or safety that were apparent in subgroup populations.

The Snapshot website is a step in the right direction; however, we believe that the website could be improved to revolutionize the way Snapshots benefits patients. SWHR believes that Snapshots could be improved by contextualizing the data presented with all relevant information relating to the intersection of age, race, and sex to provide those using the website a thorough understanding of their benefits and risk as individual users of a certain drug or biologic. Additionally, the website is not easily found on FDA's webpage. FDA has signaled that they view the website as an iterative process, and are open to hearing stakeholder feedback on how to improve the site. However, these efforts require the Agency to receive sustained funding and resources and SWHR believes that Congress must commit to continued and robust investment in FDA to provide for the advancement and increased transparency of drug development.

FDA OFFICE OF WOMEN'S HEALTH

OWH has proven itself to be vital player in advancing women's health issues at the Agency; including the expansion of existing research projects and helping to foster new collaborations related to advancing the science of women's health. 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.

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. These pamphlets discuss topics such as breast cancer screening, diabetes, menopause hormone therapy, and medication use during pregnancy. In addition, OWH's 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. Among the most popular, OWH provides medication charts on select chronic diseases, listing all the treatment options available for each disease. We must maintain these vital functions that healthcare professionals and the public understand and utilize daily to make healthcare decision.

In partnership with the National Institutes of Health Office of Research on Women's Health, OWH created a website for on-line sex and gender courses to provide additional educational tools for medical practice and scientific innovation. All three

courses offer free continuing education credits for physicians, pharmacists and nurses.

Last year, OWH unveiled the Women's Health Research Roadmap (Roadmap) to build on knowledge gained from previously funded research and assist OWH in coordinating future research activities with other FDA research programs and external partners. The Roadmap outlined priority areas where new or enhanced research is needed, creates strategic direction for OWH to help maximize the impact of OWH initiatives, and ultimately promote optimal health for women. It was also designated a key FDA commitment in FDA's August 2014 Action Plan.

To fully implement the Research Roadmap and continue its important work, SWHR requests an allocation of \$10 million for the FDA Office of Women's Health (OWH) for fiscal year 2017. We believe these recommended budget allocations would enable the FDA to address resource shortages across its centers, but also implement critical improvements in infrastructure and support a substantial investment in the OWH, the office responsible for advancing the health of women through policy, science, and outreach and one of the leading voices in increasing the participation and analysis of women and other subpopulations in clinical trials.

In conclusion, we thank the Committee for its past support of the FDA and its centers. It is our hope that the Committee continue to invest in the Agency to help ensure a healthier future for all Americans. We look forward to continuing to work with you.

[This statement was submitted by Leslie S. Ritter, Vice President, Public Policy, Society for Women's Health Research.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

The Wildlife Society appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony concerning the fiscal year 2017 budgets for the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and Farm Service Agency (FSA). The Wildlife Society was founded in 1937 and is an international non-profit scientific and educational association representing nearly 10,000 professional wildlife biologists and managers. Our mission is to inspire, empower, and enable wildlife professionals to sustain wildlife populations and habitats through science-based management and conservation. We respectfully request the following programmatic funding in fiscal year 2017 to ensure that the Federal budget supports the important work of managing and conserving our nation's wildlife resources. Thank you in advance for considering the views of wildlife professionals.

ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE

Wildlife Services, a unit of APHIS, resolves human/wildlife conflicts and protects agriculture, human health and safety, personal property, and natural resources from wildlife damage and wildlife-borne diseases in the United States. The Wildlife Society recognizes wildlife damage management as an important part of modern wildlife management.

In fiscal year 2017, the President has proposed a decrease in funding for Wildlife Damage Management by approximately \$15 million. While we acknowledge this decrease partially reflects the removal of a one-time capital investment of \$5.8 million in aircraft equipment from fiscal year 2016, we are highly concerned by the additional extent of this proposed decrease and the effect it might have on the continued success of programs managed by Wildlife Services, like the National Rabies Management Program. Therefore, we encourage Congress to fund Wildlife Damage Management at or beyond the fiscal year 2015 funding levels of \$90 million for fiscal year 2017.

Before wildlife damage management programs are undertaken, careful assessment should be made of the problem, including the impact to individuals, the community, and other wildlife species. 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. The Wildlife Society recommends the continued funding of Methods Development at \$19 million in fiscal year 2017.

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; increasing societal concerns about land use; and increasing human impacts on natural resources. Authorized at \$30 million, RREA has been appropriated at roughly \$4 million per year since fiscal year 2008. To meet the growing need for sustainable outreach initiatives, The Wildlife Society recommends that Congress increase the funding for RREA to at least \$10 million for fiscal year 2017.

The McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Program is essential to the production, utilization, and protection of forestry resources, including fish and wildlife, on non-industrial, private forestlands. As the demand for forest products grows, the nation will increasingly rely on privately held forests 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 may have difficulty meeting future forest-product needs in a sustainable manner. We appreciate the \$34 million provided for McIntire-Stennis in fiscal year 2016 and urge Congress to continue this funding in fiscal year 2017.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is the primary Federal agency that works with private landowners to help them conserve, maintain, and improve their natural resources, thereby making them more resilient and valuable to society. NRCS emphasizes science-based conservation, and through a variety of voluntary, incentive-based programs, offers technical assistance and cooperative problem solving at the community level. Demand for NRCS programs and the backlog of qualified applicants has far outnumbered the agency's present capacity under current funding. With increased pressure on farmlands from biofuel development, urban sprawl, and the concurrent declines in wildlife habitat and water quality, the need for NRCS conservation programs continues to grow.

For fiscal year 2017, the President has requested \$1.9 billion for Private Lands Conservation Operations (PLCO), including \$1.0 billion of mandatory funding and \$860 million of discretionary funding; which includes the Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) program. CTA provides discretionary funding for NRCS to support implementation of Farm Bill programs. The Wildlife Society is strongly supportive of the fiscal year 2017 budget proposal of \$761 million in funding for CTA, a slight increase from fiscal year 2016. An increase in funds will allow for further implementation of the changes that resulted from the 2014 Farm Bill. In the 2014 Farm Bill, Congress demonstrated strong support for the use of mandatory funds for Technical Assistance (TA), but these funds can only be used in association with a specific Farm Bill program. Appropriated funds for CTA are still essential for NRCS to provide efficient customer service and strong conservation results. The Wildlife Society therefore encourages Congress to provide \$860 million for discretionary TA, including \$761 million for CTA, and \$1.0 billion for mandatory TA in fiscal year 2017, per the President's request.

The Wildlife Society also recommends that all Farm Bill conservation programs be funded at levels mandated in the 2014 Farm Bill, including \$500 million for the Agriculture Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) and 1.65 billion for the Environmental Quality Initiatives Program (EQIP). Demand for these programs continues to grow, yet during a time when greater assistance is needed to address natural resource challenges and conservation goals, the NRCS can only fund a small portion of the overall demand for these popular programs.

FARM SERVICE AGENCY

The President's request would provide funding for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) at \$1.9 billion in fiscal year 2017. 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 for 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 \$1.9 billion per the President's request, or at a level that fully utilizes the program's general enrollment authority.

FISCAL YEAR 2017 APPROPRIATIONS RECOMMENDATIONS—THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

USDA Agency/Unit	Program	fiscal year 2015 Enacted	fiscal year 2016 Estimate	fiscal year 2017 POTUS	fiscal year 2017 The Wildlife Society
APHIS/Wildlife Services	Wildlife Damage Management	90M	101M	86M	90M
	Methods Development	19M	19M	19M	19M
NIFA/Formula Grants	RREA	4M	4M	4M	10M
	McIntire-Stennis Coop. Forestry	34M	34M	34M	34M
NRCS/PLCO	PLCO-Discretionary TA	846M	851M	860M	860M
	PLCO-Mandatory TA	900M	903M	1,034M	1,034M
	PLCO-Total	1,746M	1,754M	1,894M	1,894M
NRCS/Farm Bill Conservation Programs	ACEP	394M	419M	500M	500M
	EQIP	1,347M	1,329M	1,650M	1,650M
	TOTAL-Farm Bill Programs	3,184M	3,123M	3,885M	3,885M
FSA/Conservation Programs	Conservation Reserve Program	1,741M	1,841M	1,923M	1,923M

[This statement was submitted by Byron Ken Williams, PhD, Chief Executive Officer, The Wildlife Society.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF WORLD FOOD PROGRAM USA

REQUEST

World Food Program USA (WFP USA) is a non-profit organization that works to solve global hunger by raising U.S. support for the mission of the UN World Food Programme. Specifically, we request the following funding levels for three essential programs within the jurisdiction of the subcommittee:

—Title II Food for Peace—\$1.75 billion

—McGovern Dole Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program—\$209.5 million

—Local and Regional Procurement Program—\$80 million

—We also request bill language be included in the General Provisions regarding non-emergency, development activities in the Title II Food for Peace account.

To maintain strong U.S. leadership in solving hunger and to respond to critical emergency needs worldwide, WFP USA urges the subcommittee to provide the strongest possible funding for global food security programs. Our specific funding requests mirror those in the InterAction Choose to Invest fiscal year 2017 recommendations, which have been formally endorsed by a coalition of 168 U.S.-based, non-governmental and faith-based organizations.

BACKGROUND

Strong bipartisan support for a comprehensive approach to ensuring global food security has made the United States a global leader in the effort to solve hunger, catalyzing significant progress worldwide. Today there are over 200 million fewer hungry people compared to 1990 estimates. Undernourishment and child mortality have been nearly halved during this time. These trends demonstrate that the goal of zero hunger is achievable if the positive policies and programs the U.S. has put into place are sustained.

Despite this dramatic progress, there are still 795 million chronically hungry people in the world today. Undernourishment still affects 12.9 percent of developing country populations. And in 2015, 5.9 million children under five died prematurely, with nearly half of these child deaths associated with undernutrition.

In addition, there are now four ongoing crises classified at the most severe level of humanitarian emergency. These crises in Syria, Iraq, South Sudan, and Yemen are the result of internal conflicts that have caused massive population displace-

ments. In fact, there are now over 60 million displaced people worldwide, including both refugees and those internally displaced: the highest number since World War II. In response to these and other crises, the 2016 UN humanitarian consolidated appeal estimated global humanitarian needs at \$17.2 billion, which was more than double the estimated need level in 2012.

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) is the world's largest humanitarian organization, providing critical food and nutrition support to roughly 80 million of the world's hungriest people each year. WFP estimates that total global food assistance requirements for 2017 will exceed \$8 billion.

FOOD FOR PEACE

Food for Peace (FFP) provides emergency food and development assistance to millions suffering from hunger and malnutrition. For the past 60 years, Food for Peace 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 been stretched by record levels of need in 2016. Supporting FFP at \$1.75 billion would allow the U.S. to reach 45–50 million people with lifesaving food aid and maintain its global leadership.

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) is the largest U.S. food aid partner, implementing programs that account for roughly 90 percent of Food for Peace emergency food aid funding. WFP estimates \$6.5 billion will be required to fund its 2017 emergency food assistance programs. About \$1.2 billion—almost 20 percent of total WFP emergency needs—will be required just for the humanitarian crisis in Syria and the Syrian refugees in neighboring countries. Needs from both weather-related disasters and conflicts will continue to persist across Sub-Saharan Africa, and Southwest Asia.

Food for Peace provides the bulk of funding for the U.S. 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 U.S. food aid channeled through WFP helps leverage additional international assistance.

We also support the inclusion of administration-requested bill language to address section 412(e) of the Food for Peace Act, 7 U.S.C. 1736f(e). It is our view that other U.S. Agency for International Development resources which support non-emergency, development activities can be used to satisfy the statutory requirements of this section in a manner that maximizes flexibility to support both emergency and non-emergency food activities.

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.

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 2017.

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. 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 and Child Nutrition 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. While Congress funded LRP activities in fiscal year 16, more is needed to demonstrate its full potential. Continued funding of the newly authorized LRP program will strengthen the McGovern-Dole supported programs and hasten this transition to recipient country responsibility and ownership.

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