



December 11, 2020

RE: Support for Increased Investments in Food and Agricultural Science

Dear President-Elect Biden and Vice President-Elect Harris:

The National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research (NCFAR) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, consensus-based, customer-led coalition that brings food, agriculture, nutrition, conservation, and natural resource stakeholders together with the food and agriculture research community and the Cooperative Extension System. We serve as a forum and a unified voice in support of sustaining and increasing public investment at the federal level in food and agricultural science¹ as a top national priority. NCFAR's support encompasses the four agencies that are part of the United States Department of Agriculture Research, Education, and Economic (USDA REE) Mission Area, including extramural programs in the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), and intramural programs in the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), Economic Research Service (ERS), and National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). Please consider NCFAR as your partner in successful implementation of the incoming Biden-Harris Administration priorities.

We assert that the recovery of the United States economy post-COVID-19 cannot be successful without key investments in agricultural, food, and nutrition research, education, economics, and Extension at the USDA. These investments are crucial to the continuation of the cutting-edge basic science research and applied research that keeps America competitive on an international stage. Investment in USDA REE can address the challenging issues that you have laid out in your priorities, including adapting to climate change, recovering from the pandemic, improving racial equity, and promoting economic recovery. NCFAR welcomes the opportunity to work with you to strengthen America's food and agricultural sector, rural communities, and the national economy through advancements in food and agricultural research, education, economics, and Extension.

NCFAR recommends that the Biden-Harris Administration:

- ***Ensure that agricultural and food research is represented in the priorities of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) by:***
 - o Appointing agricultural, food, nutrition, and resource scientists to the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology.
 - o Asking the OSTP's National Science and Technology Council (NSTC) to use its Subcommittee on Food and Agriculture to develop a robust plan for basic and applied research, Extension, and statistics to support mitigation of and adaptation to climate change in support of the Paris Agreement.
- ***Invest in agricultural research infrastructure to:***
 - o Enable public universities to train an inclusive and diverse agricultural workforce and retain global agricultural, food, and nutrition science leaders.
 - o Continue maintenance and investment in extramural ARS facilities.
- ***Rebuild the human capacity of the Economic Research Service and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture.***

- These important REE agencies were moved from Washington, DC to Kansas City, Missouri, in 2019, with both agencies losing more than 75 percent of their staff in doing so. Support for NIFA and ERS should be a priority for the incoming Administration in order to achieve these much-needed breakthroughs, as both remain significantly understaffed.
- ***Foster an enhanced understanding of the economic and environmental benefits of a robust domestic bioeconomy***
 - Promote research that fosters an enhanced understanding of the economic and environmental benefits of a robust domestic bioeconomy based on renewable plant-based materials and elevate understanding among policy makers of its importance to rural America and the overall economy.
- ***Urge Congress to increase the 302(b) allocation for Agriculture so that the REE Mission Area can grow in real dollars overall.***

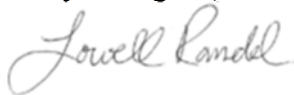
We close with concern about our nation’s global agricultural science competitiveness and the health and well-being of the people of this nation. Federal funding for food and agricultural research, education, economics, and Extension has been flat for more than 20 years. In fact, in constant dollars, current public investment in agricultural research is below 1980s levels, while investments by our competitors have been growing rapidly.ⁱⁱ Food and agricultural research—both capacity and competitive investments—have a remarkable return on investment for society, resulting in \$20–\$60 for every \$1 spent depending on the nature of the applied research.^{iii,iv} This means that if we do not increase our investments in these areas, within decades other countries will outpace us and we risk losing a significant portion of our GDP.

Increased federal investments in the USDA REE Mission Area *will lead to* advances and breakthroughs in the bioeconomy, climate change, agricultural production, food and nutrition security, and chronic disease prevention—all areas that are vital to the incoming Biden-Harris Administration priorities. Investing in agriculture will improve animal, plant, soil, and human health, leading to healthier Americans and a healthier environment. Investments in REE agencies will grow the economy, resulting in a more globally competitive America. We wish you all the best in the transition and in the upcoming Presidential term. NCFAR and our members are your resource moving forward. We would welcome the opportunity to make these recommendations to you and your team in a virtual meeting. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Andy LaVigne (American Seed Trade Association), President



Lowell Randel (American Society of Animal Science), Vice President



Dr. Barb Glenn (National Association of State Departments of Agriculture), Treasurer

CC: Biden-Harris Transition Team

ⁱ The term “food and agricultural sciences” means basic, applied, and developmental research, extension, and teaching activities in food and fiber, agricultural, renewable energy and natural resources, forestry, and physical and social sciences, including activities relating to the following: (A) Animal health, production, and well-being. (B) Plant health and production. (C) Animal and plant germ plasm collection and preservation. (D) Aquaculture. (E) Food safety. (F) Soil, water, and related resource conservation and improvement. (G) Forestry, horticulture, and range management. (H) Nutritional sciences and promotion. (I) Farm enhancement, including financial management, input efficiency, and profitability. (J) Home economics. (K) Rural human ecology. (L) Youth development and agricultural education, including 4–H clubs. (M) Expansion of domestic and international markets for agricultural commodities and products, including agricultural trade barrier identification and analysis. (N) Information management and technology transfer related to agriculture. (O) Biotechnology related to agriculture. (P) The processing, distributing, marketing, and utilization of food and agricultural products.

ⁱⁱ Mohamedshah F, Havlik S, and Velissariou M. (2020, January.) [Food Research Call to Action on Funding and Priorities](#). IFT.

ⁱⁱⁱ OECD Food and Agricultural Reviews Innovation (2016). [Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability in the United States](#). OECD Publishing. ISBN: 9264264124, 9789264264120.

^{iv} Heisey PW and Fuglie KO (2018, May). [Agricultural Research Investment and Policy Reform in High-Income Countries](#), ERR-249, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service.



NATIONAL COALITION FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

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Enhancing Federal Investment in Food & Agricultural Research, Education, Economics, and Extension

National Coalition for Food and Agriculture Research (NCFAR) Program Support

NCFAR urges the Administration to invest in agricultural research programs, both inter-, extramural, and intramural programs. Members of NCFAR find common ground in the recognition that enhanced federal funding for food and agricultural research, education, economics, and extension (food & ag REE&E) is vital to the future of the food and agricultural system and the nation. NCFAR's mission encompasses funding support for ALL food & ag REE&E. Below are specific intramural and extramural REE&E programs at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that NCFAR member organizations support:

Agricultural Research Service (ARS)

- **Long Term Agroecosystem Research (LTAR)**

Economics Research Service (ERS)

National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)

National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)

- **Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI)**
- **Evans-Allen** (1890s land-grant universities and Tuskegee University Agricultural Research)
- **Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)**
- **Extension Services at the 1890s land-grant universities**
- **Hatch Act** (State Agricultural Experiment Stations)
- **Integrated Pest Management (IPM)**
- **McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry**
- **Minor Crop Pest Management (IR4)**
- **Organic Transitions Program (ORG)**
- **Smith-Lever** (Cooperative Extension Systems)
- **Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI)**
- **Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE)**
- **Tribal College (also known as the 1994 land-grant institutions) Extension**
- **Tribal College Research Program**
- **Tribal College Education Equity Grants Program**
- **Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP)**
- **Veterinary Services Grant Program (VSG)**

For more information, go to <http://www.ncfar.org>.

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