



Ecological Society of America

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Testimony for the Record

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To the Senate Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration,
and Related Agencies

Regarding the Agricultural Research Service FY 2021 Budget

March 31, 2020

The Ecological Society of America (ESA) is the world's largest society of professional ecologists representing over 9,000 members across the country. We write to urge of support strong investments in agricultural research, science, and technology within the Department of Agriculture (USDA) for Fiscal Year 2021. We thank you for your support in (FY) 2020 and we are very encouraged that Congress rejected the Administration's proposal to cut ARS research programs eliminate 20 ARS laboratories and facilities. We also appreciate your support of the Long-Term Agroecosystem Research network and your direction that the agency fill vacant positions. **We respectfully request robust funding of \$1.789 billion for the Agricultural Research Service (ARS).**

The ARS is USDA's chief scientific in-house research agency with a mission to conduct research, develop solutions to agricultural problems of the highest national priority, and provide information to the public. As part of USDA's Research, Education, and Economics (REE) mission area, ARS supports research across four national program areas: nutrition, food safety and quality; animal production and protection; crop production and protection; and, natural resources and sustainable agricultural systems. As a result of the multidisciplinary research conducted by ARS, America's agricultural sector is better able to address pests and diseases, drought and water availability, agricultural byproducts, food safety, and agricultural sustainability. The ARS is a critical agency whose investments in agricultural research contribute to healthier animals, plants, farms, soil, and people,

ARS laboratories serve not only as regional engines for research innovation, but they also are a vibrant network of national facilities that advance knowledge and expand capability. The increased investment of other nations such as China and India in agricultural research productivity could supplant American producers and companies, doing great harm to the American economy. It is of the utmost importance to ensure robust funding for ARS to guarantee that American agricultural innovation continues to remain at the helm of the global research community.

In addition to countless research contributions, across the country ARS research projects provide more than 8,000 jobs, directly contributing to local economies. As agricultural research continues to innovate, ARS represents a critical component of the research infrastructure that enables groundbreaking discoveries that contribute to the stability and security of the American economy and agricultural industry. ARS labs and research facilities support collaboration opportunities that incorporate the broader research community, allowing ARS to directly and indirectly impact every part of the United States agricultural system.

It is vital that the ARS is funded at \$1.789 billion for FY 2021 to extend the nation's scientific knowledge in the four national programs of nutrition, animal production/protection, crop production/protection, and natural resources.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.