

June 5, 2019

Dear Members of Congress,

As Congress negotiates a new budget deal the Farm to Fork Initiative, which brings together advocates who share an interest in a better food system, strongly urges you to prioritize the food and agriculture challenges we face related to agricultural research, farm credit, nutrition, clean water, food safety, and economic development. The non-defense discretionary (NDD) spending caps must be raised substantially to provide for these pressing needs while also accommodating new needs such as funding for the decennial census. In addition to raising NDD caps, we also urge you to scale back mandatory sequestration, which has hurt the food system by cutting support for the farm safety net and voluntary farm conservation programs, as well as programs for beginning farmers, local food systems, specialty crops, renewable energy, and organic research.

Farmers continue to struggle against the continued downturn in the farm economy and especially now, farm, nutrition, food safety, rural development, and agricultural research programs should be the last place to find budgetary savings. It is imperative that Congress increase the budget caps and make needed investments in food and agriculture so that we can continue to build a healthy, safe, and affordable food system that we can be proud of.

Take agricultural research as but one example. Today, we face national challenges in food production, farming opportunity, food safety, natural resources, nutrition, and community economic development. Solutions to these critical challenges require more food and agricultural research funding, yet funding has been more or less flat for decades. Thankfully, the 2018 Farm Bill and FY 2019 appropriations bill made a crucial down payment toward returning the U.S. back to preeminence in public agricultural research. With that fresh start, the goal could be achieved within five years, but only if the threat of discretionary and mandatory sequestration is removed and Congress sets and pursues a funding goal in line with the pressing national and global challenges.

From farm to fork, our food system should be something we are proud of. Americans deserve a food system that is healthy, safe, and affordable. Congress should reach a new budget deal that allows NDD spending, including food and agricultural spending, to grow, while scaling back if not eliminating mandatory sequestration for farm, food, and conservation programs.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

The Farm to Fork Initiative

The Farm to Fork Initiative brings together sustainability, hunger, health, equity, and nutrition advocates to enable and empower a collaborative effort to protect gains in federal Good Food policies. We work in collaboration with partners across the good food movement, some of which are listed below:



FOOD POLICY
ACTION

FRAC
Food Research & Action Center



Union of
Concerned
Scientists