

June 15, 2022

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman
House Committee on Appropriations
H-307 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Sanford Bishop Jr.
Chairman
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration and Related
Agencies
2362-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Andy Harris
Acting Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration and
Related
Agencies
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro, Chairman Bishop, Ranking Member Granger and Acting Ranking Member Harris:

We are writing to express our continued support for robust funding for agricultural and climate research programs at the USDA. As the committee works to draft and mark up the fiscal year 2023 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies appropriations bill and consider funding levels and targeted investments to address long-term challenges in agriculture such as climate change adaptation and mitigation, we respectfully request you prioritize funding for the USDA Agricultural Research Service's (ARS) Long-Term Agroecosystem Research Program (LTAR).

As organizations that strongly support the ARS LTAR network, we support the FY23 budget request funding levels for LTAR and respectfully request that you include an increase of at least \$7.5M in FY23 which would specifically address outstanding under-funded partner sites and the need to broaden geographic representation of the 19-site network to the west coast.

This \$7.5M request includes

- Funding for partially-funded sites in Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, and Ohio (\$2.5 million)
- Creation of three new LTAR sites in California (\$2 million) and Nevada (\$1 million)
- Funding for centralized data access and curation (\$1 million)
- Funding for stakeholder engagement and network coordination (\$1 million)

As you may know, the LTAR research sites are highly productive, cost-effective efforts to address some of the most critical research for our country's agricultural security - the sustainable intensification of U.S. agriculture. Researchers in the network work with agricultural groups across the country to help solve the grand challenges of agriculture today, including climate change, water quality and availability, soil health, rural prosperity, and farm productivity and profitability.

There is great power and significant new potential for using network science to address critical agricultural questions facing society. Currently there are 19 LTAR sites across the U.S; however, only 14 are fully funded and currently there are major gaps in the U.S. regions studied, in particular in the far west. To operate successfully as a network, it is critical that all sites be fully funded and that all major regions of U.S. agriculture are represented.

Support for the FY '23 ARS LTAR budget request levels, which would include a plus up of at least \$7.5M, is a modest investment to maintain and improve a productive research program that produces salient, credible, and practical information for stakeholders. This additional funding would leverage the many efforts at ARS and university partner sites and would provide the USDA with necessary climate change and other data to successfully support agricultural stakeholders.

We greatly appreciate your past efforts and ongoing support for agricultural research and the stakeholder community, and we strongly urge the committee to include a robust funding level for the USDA ARS Long-Term Agroecosystem Research Program in Fiscal Year 2023.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Artisan Grain Collaborative
Bayer R&D Services, LLC
Delta Council
E&J Gallo Winery
Environmental Defense fund
Eureka County Dept. of Natural Resources
Indigo Ag, Inc.
J Lohr Vineyards and Wines
Lake Erie Foundation
Luxonis
Microsoft Research
Michigan Agriculture Advancement
Michigan Association of Conservation Districts
Michigan Bean Commission
Michigan Corn
Michigan Craft Beverage Council
Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
Michigan Farm Bureau
Michigan Soybean Committee
Michigan State University AgBioResearch
Michigan Wheat Program
National Barley Improvement Committee
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
Nutrien Ag Solutions, Inc.
Nevada Agricultural Experiment Station
Nevada Cattlemen's Association
Nevada Farm Bureau

Organic Farming Research Foundation
Pheasants Forever
Resource Concepts, Inc.
Society for Range Management
Soil Health Institute
The Nature Conservancy
Terra Nova Ranch