

March 3, 2020

The Honorable Sanford Bishop
Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture
House Committee on Appropriations
2632-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Hoeven
Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture
Senate Committee on Appropriations
338 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeff Fortenberry
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture
House Committee on Appropriations
1514 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture
Senate Committee on Appropriations
313 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairmen Bishop and Hoeven and Ranking Members Fortenberry and Merkley:

As your committees consider Appropriations for the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies for Fiscal Year 2021, we respectfully request funding the Agriculture Advanced Research and Development Authority (AgARDA), authorized in the 2018 Farm Bill.

The world has witnessed a dramatic increase in existential threats to agriculture – from infectious disease outbreaks to changing climates to labor challenges. Many of these challenges can be addressed through targeted, novel, early stage innovative agricultural research.

Modeled after the successes of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) and the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA), the 2018 Farm Bill authorized AgARDA to foster research and development that would help to protect the US agriculture and food supply from threats, such as those posed by highly pathogenic African Swine Fever that has decimated one quarter of the global population of pigs or the severe labor shortages experienced by specialty crop growers that are straining their harvest capabilities.

AgARDA will leverage successful public-private partnerships to improve efficiency and accelerate research and development in pursuit of overcoming long-term and high-risk agricultural and food related research and development challenges.

With the specialized statutory hiring authorities and alternative contracting vehicles, combined with the strategic planning, and coordination and consultation, AgARDA allows significant achievements to occur more rapidly than in a conventional setting.

We urge you to fund the Agriculture Advanced Research and Development Authority pilot project at the authorized level of \$50 million. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

American Dairy Coalition
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Feed Industry Association
American Seed Trade Association
American Society for Microbiology
American Society of Agronomy
American Society of Plant Biologists
American Veterinary Medical Association
Association of American Universities
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges
California Fresh Fruit Association
Colorado State University
Crop Science Society of America
Edge, Dairy Farmer Cooperative
Entomological Society of America
Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association
Florida Tomato Exchange
Iowa State University
Kansas State University
Michigan State University, AgBioResearch
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Cattlemen's Beef Association
National Farmers Union
National Milk Producers Federation
National Pork Producers Council
National Turkey Federation
North American Meat Institute
Rocky Mountain Farmers Union
Rural & Agriculture Council of America
Society for Range Management
Soil Science Society of America
U.S. Cattlemen's Association
Western Growers Association

cc:

Honorable Richard Shelby
Honorable Patrick Leahy
Honorable Nita Lowey
Honorable Kay Granger