Dear Chairman Rogers, Chairman Kingston, Ranking Member Dicks and Ranking Member Farr:

The AFRI Coalition, comprised of organizations representing research institutions, scientific societies, and other agricultural stakeholders, writes to urge the House to recede to the Senate Appropriations Committee-passed funding level of $265.9 million for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) in fiscal year 2012. AFRI is the nation’s premier competitive agricultural research grants program administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA).

The Coalition recognizes that lawmakers face many difficult decisions and competing priorities in this austere budget environment. At the same time, we believe that continued investments in agricultural research will help spur the U.S. economy.

The Coalition exhorts lawmakers to make sustainable increases in funding for AFRI as the U.S. economy recovers. Investments in agricultural research funded through AFRI bolster work performed by USDA’s Agricultural Research Service, land grant universities and colleges, other academic institutions, and the private sector, thus magnifying the impact. For every $1 invested in publicly funded agricultural research, $20 in economic activity is generated.

As the Congress examines fiscal year 2012 spending priorities, we look forward to working with you in support of AFRI. If you would like to learn more about AFRI or specific funding in each state, please contact us at sciencepolicy@sciencesocieties.org.

Sincerely,
American Dairy Science Association
American Society for Horticultural Science
American Society for Microbiology
American Society for Nutrition
American Society of Agronomy
American Society of Animal Science
American Phytopathological Society
American Veterinary Medical Association
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities