September 26, 2011

The AFRI Coalition, comprised of organizations representing research institutions, scientific societies, and other agricultural stakeholders, writes to thank you for your commitment to continued investment in 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 is grateful that the Senate Appropriations Committee has prioritized $266 million for AFRI in fiscal year 2012 given the difficult economic environment and the many competing priorities with which you are faced. We understand that AFRI may still be subject to detrimental losses as the House-passed bill includes a harmful $35.5 million cut. The Coalition is urging the House to recede to the Senate’s funding level and we ask that you continue to support AFRI.

The Coalition exhorts lawmakers to make sustainable increases in funding for AFRI as the U.S. economy recovers. For every $1 invested in publicly funded agricultural research, $20 in economic activity is generated. 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.

Again, thank you for your stalwart support of AFRI. The Coalition recognizes that lawmakers have many difficult decisions to make, especially in this austere budget environment. 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