

March 9, 2026

The Honorable Andy Harris
Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Hoeven
Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Sanford Bishop
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harris, Chairman Hoeven, Ranking Member Bishop, and Ranking Member Shaheen:

As your Committees prepare the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill and Report for FY2027, the undersigned research institutions, scientific societies, and agricultural stakeholders urge you to provide no less than \$1 million for the Agriculture Advanced Research and Development Authority (AGARDA).

Advanced research agencies have been effectively deployed in defense, energy, and health to tackle the biggest challenges facing these industries in novel and groundbreaking ways. Established in the 2018 Farm Bill and modeled after successful advanced research agencies like the Department of Defense's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), AGARDA will foster research, development, and technology transfer resulting in significant benefits across the U.S. food and agriculture value chain.

The challenges facing agriculture today require bold, forward-thinking solutions. High farm input costs and emerging pest and disease pressures, like New World Screwworm, continue to impact producers across the country. Agricultural research can address these challenges, improve producer profitability, and ensure everyday consumers have access to affordable food. Secretary Rollins recently announced new USDA research and development priorities, explicitly calling for innovations that increase producer profitability, create new uses for U.S. agricultural products, and protect the integrity of American agriculture from invasive pests and diseases—all goals that align with the mission outlined in AGARDA's authorizing statute.¹

Congress has appropriated less than \$4 million to AGARDA to date. While we appreciate this funding, other advanced research programs, such as DARPA, ARPA-E, and ARPA-H, received

¹<https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/news/press-releases/2025/12/30/secretary-rollins-announces-new-priorities-research-and-development-2026>

substantial initial investments and had dedicated leadership to ensure success. Individual projects under ARPA-E's ROOTS and TERRA programs ranged from \$3-10 million. A typical DARPA project can be tens of millions of dollars. AGARDA will require at least \$10 million to support an initial high-impact research effort that can produce transformative results.

Providing \$10 million in funding AGARDA will give the program the greatest chance at success. **We urge the Subcommittee to strive to provide \$10 million for AGARDA, but no less than \$1 million in FY2027.** It is critical that AGARDA has the necessary funds to appoint leadership, hire staff, and successfully leverage AGARDA to support agricultural research projects, demonstrating that this model can produce impactful results for agriculture. This funding is also needed to enable USDA to leverage AGARDA to lead coordination efforts with DARPA and other research agencies—a key priority outlined in USDA's National Farm Security Action Plan to promote innovation at the agriculture and national security nexus.²

By supporting AGARDA, Congress can unlock the potential of groundbreaking innovations that emerge from collaboration across disciplines. Continued investment in AGARDA will not only benefit domestic producers and consumers, but also ensure the resilience of our agricultural systems and keep U.S. agriculture globally competitive.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

2Blades

agInnovation North Central

AgLaunch Initiative

Agricultural & Applied Economics Association (AAEA)

American Association of Mycobacterial Diseases

American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges

American Conservation Coalition Action

American Dairy Science Association

American Feed Industry Association

American Institute of Biological Sciences

American Meat Science Association

American Phytopathological Society

American Seed Trade Association

American Society for Horticultural Science

American Society for Microbiology

²<https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/news/press-releases/2025/12/30/usda-advances-farm-security-action-plan-protect-us-farmland-and-federal-programs-foreign-adversaries>

American Society for Nutrition
American Society of Agronomy
American Society of Animal Science
American Society of Plant Biologists
American Soybean Association
American Veterinary Medical Association
Animal Health Institute
BPC Action
Breakthrough Institute
C3 Action
Central State University
ClearPath Action
Council for Agricultural Science and Technology (CAST)
Crop Science Society of America
Ecological Society of America
Edge Dairy Farmer Cooperative
Entomological Society of America
Environmental Defense Fund
Environmental Policy Innovation Center
Farm Journal Foundation
Farmers Innovation Fund
Federation of American Scientists
Friends of the US Dairy Forage Research Center
Illinois Agricultural Experiment Station
Kansas State University College of Agriculture
Maize Genetics Cooperation
Michigan State University AgBioResearch
Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals - Multistate Initiative
National Association for Plant Breeding (NAPB)
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research
National Corn Growers Association
National Cotton Council of America

North American Plant Phenotyping Network (NAPPN)

Organic Farming Research Foundation

Pet Food Institute

Soil Science Society of America

Spark Climate Solutions

Synergistic Hawaii Agriculture Council

The Good Food Institute

University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

University of Minnesota College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences (CFANS)