



Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 5, 2005

The Honorable Henry Bonilla, Chairman
The Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA, and Related Agencies Committee on Appropriations
2362 Rayburn
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Bonilla and Ranking Member DeLauro:

The challenges of putting together the annual agriculture appropriations bill are always great and we know these challenges will be more pronounced this year. Nonetheless, we are writing to urge you to remain steadfast in your support for research, extension, and education at America's land-grant and related universities.

We are particularly concerned about the ill-conceived proposal advanced in the President's budget request for FY 2006 to eliminate three formula fund programs within the USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES).

We are referring to the Hatch, McIntire-Stennis, and Animal Health and Disease programs. These three programs support base funds for land-grant institutions in every state, D.C., and the territories; ensure the financial stability of state agricultural experiment station from year-to-year; and maintain the national agriculture research infrastructure necessary to respond to emergency situations.

A recent study by Iowa State University and Yale University economists found that between 1970 and 2000, federally funded investment for agriculture research in state agricultural experiment stations at land grant universities contributed significantly to increased agricultural productivity, producing an annual 50% return on every dollar invested.

Therefore, we urge the Subcommittee to fund these programs at not less than their FY 2005 enacted levels. We also urge the Subcommittee to give priority attention to the other needs articulated by representatives of the land-grant system. America has a world class land-grant university system, with an integrated mission of research, education, and extension that helps ensure that we have one of the safest, highest quality, most affordable food supplies in the world. We look forward to working with the Subcommittee to ensure that we have funding in place to ensure that these programs continue to support the important work of American agriculture.

Sincerely,


Chip Pickering


Collin Peterson

Bob E. Kildee

Rick Boucher

Elton E. Tunnings

Tom Hengill

Tim Holden

John H. Hoff

Dulce Foley

Kit Ruff

Jerry Moran

Norm Dickie

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