

# Agriculture & Food Research Initiative

The Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI)—USDA’s flagship competitive grants program—benefits the nation in numerous ways, providing:

- America’s farmers and foresters with the genomic data and biotechnology tools to expand food and fiber production, processing, and international trade.
- U.S. healthcare professionals with insight into the relationships between diet and health.
- Extension educators and learners with expanded knowledge about soil and water quality.
- University educators with the funding to train new generations of food, agriculture, and natural resource scientists.

Some key priorities needing immediate attention through stable and enhanced AFRI funding include:

**BIOENERGY.** The U.S. has adopted policies promoting the production of renewable fuels and other bioproducts to improve national energy security. As the use of bioproducts increases, there is a pressing need for additional funding to assess the effects on water use, soil fertility, and related environmental conditions. Additional economic analyses are also needed to better understand how food, feed, and fuel prices are interrelated.

**NUTRITION AND HEALTH.** As the U.S. struggles with the twin epidemics of obesity and diabetes, expanded research is critically needed to help understand the community and behavioral attributes of human nutrition. Such research will lead directly to more scientifically informed nutrition education and guidance programs delivered through the Cooperative Extension. And, additional research is needed to improve the nutritional value and availability of crops, fruits and vegetables, and other foodstuffs.

**AGRICULTURAL LEADERSHIP.** There is an urgent need to educate and support more young men and women—especially from diverse backgrounds and ethnic communities—to conduct agricultural research and outreach, to serve the nation as farmers, foresters, ranchers, and bioenergy producers, and to lead public and private sector organizations.



A·P·L·U PRIORITY REQUEST FOR F Y 2015	
Agriculture & Food Research Initiative.....	\$325M

**GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY.** Greater research, Extension, and education funding is urgently needed to fight plant and animal diseases that threaten public health and agricultural output and to address pressing issues in food production to improve national and global food security while helping America promote sustainable agriculture and agricultural exports.

**The Association of Public and Land-grant Universities continues to seek enhanced funding for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative. Although Congress has made modest increases to this critical program in recent years, as shown in the chart on page two, only 25% of the meritorious grant proposals submitted in FY2011 (the most recent year with available data) could be funded. Therefore, we support AFRI funding for FY2015 at \$325 million, the same level set forth in the President’s Budget Request.**

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# Agriculture & Food Research Initiative

## Appropriations Bill

Agriculture

## Agency

National Institute of Food & Agriculture

## Account

Research and Education Activities

## Program

Agriculture and Food Research Initiative

## Requested Amount

\$325,000,000

## Description

Provides peer-reviewed, competitively-awarded grants for: (1) high priority fundamental and mission-linked research of importance in the biological, environmental, physical, and social sciences relevant to agriculture, food, the environment, and rural communities; and (2) competitively awarded research, Extension, and education grants addressing key issues of national and regional importance to agriculture, forestry, and related topics.

## Authorization

7 U.S.C. 450i(b), (National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977).

## Eligible / Final Recipients

1862, 1890, and 1994 land-grant institutions; other universities; government agencies; and many other eligible recipients.

## Matching Funds

There is no matching requirement.

## President's FY 2015 Budget Request

\$325,000,000

## Five-Year Funding History

FY 2014	\$316,409,000
FY 2013	\$276,423,000
FY 2012	\$264,470,000
FY 2011	\$264,470,000
FY 2010	\$262,482,000

**A·P·L·U requests that Congress fund the Food and Agriculture Research Initiative at the National Institute of Food and Agriculture at \$325,000,000 the same level set forth in the President's FY 2015 Budget Request.**

## Benefits / Impacts

The Agriculture and Food Research Initiative is NIFA's flagship competitive grants program. It benefits the nation in numerous ways, providing:

- America's farmers and foresters with genomic data and biotechnology tools to expand food and fiber production, processing, and international trade.
- U.S. healthcare professionals with insight into the relationships between diet and health.
- Extension educators and learners with expanded knowledge about soil and water quality to help protect the environment and safeguard our food systems.
- University educators with the funding to train new generations of food, agriculture, and natural resource scientists.

AFRI funds high priority research, education, and Extension competitive grants that address key problems of national, regional, and multi-state importance in sustaining all components of agriculture, including farm efficiency and profitability, ranching, renewable energy, forestry, aquaculture, rural communities and entrepreneurship, human nutrition, food safety, biotechnology, and conventional breeding.

AFRI advances fundamental sciences as well as translational research and development in support of agriculture and coordinates opportunities to build on these discoveries. The program also supports education and Extension that delivers science-based knowledge to people, allowing them to make informed, practical decisions.

## FY 2011 AFRI Grant Applications vs. Available Funds

