

Organizational Sign-on Letter: Support Sustainable Nutrition Science Research in FY 23 Appropriations

DEADLINE TO SIGN ON: FRIDAY, APRIL 8 COB

April XX, 2022

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin, Chair
Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Hoeven, Ranking Member
Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Sanford Bishop, Chair
Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Andy Harris, Acting Ranking Member
Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Baldwin, Ranking Member Hoeven, Chairman Bishop, and Ranking Member Harris:

Thank you for your leadership of the House and Senate Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittees in the 117th Congress, and for your work on Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 appropriations.

As Congress begins a new appropriations process for FY 2023, the undersigned organizations write to express enthusiastic support for expanded federal research and education for sustainable nutrition science (SNS). This important scientific field—at the intersection of farming and food production, climate and the environment, and nutrition, with a focus on equitable health outcomes—applies systems thinking to simultaneously address the most pressing threats to agriculture, public health, and national security.



More than a dozen federal reports issued over the last 10 years have recommended advancing SNS to meet the challenges of the 21st century and beyond, [1] yet the continued absence of dedicated federal funding has left many key research questions unanswered. A recent Union of Concerned Scientists analysis estimated that just \$15.7 million was awarded to SNS projects each year between FY 2016 and FY 2019, amounting to less than 25 cents out of every thousand dollars in federal research funding. [2] By comparison, poor diets generate an estimated \$50 billion each year [3] in U.S. healthcare costs, and the National Bureau of Economic Research has estimated that climate change could cost our country as much as 10.5 percent of its total gross domestic product by the year 2100. [4]

The 2021 Annual Threat Assessment of the US Intelligence Community named the COVID-19 pandemic and other diseases, as well as climate change and environmental degradation, as two of the leading transnational issues threatening national security. [5] The economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, along with extreme weather and conflict, have driven global food insecurity to its highest point in more than a decade, increasing the risk of both poor health and political instability. [6] Meanwhile, climate impacts such as extreme heat, floods, and droughts and the degradation of natural resources such as soil and water will continue to affect food production systems and drive disparities in populations experiencing environmental injustices. [7]

In recent years, leading agricultural scientists have shown increasing interest in SNS and systems research as a whole, as demonstrated by several recent announcements of AFRI grant awards. [8] Although these investments represent progress toward addressing national policy priorities such as climate resilience, nutrition security, racial equity, and rural development, dedicated funding must be provided on a scale commensurate with the urgency and magnitude of the interrelated crises at hand.

We urge you to include the following report language in the FY 23 Agriculture Appropriations bill, to require that the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) prioritize SNS research funding within the Agriculture Food and Research Initiative (AFRI):

The committee recognizes the importance of sustainable nutrition science research and education at the intersection of agriculture and food production, climate and the environment, and nutrition, and encourages the prioritization of this area of research within the AFRI program in Fiscal Year 2023. The committee also encourages a focus on health equity and distribution of awards to minority-serving institutions, as well as those engaging in collaborative partnerships and community-based participatory research.

AFRI's program design is uniquely suited to address the interrelated challenges of climate change, environmental degradation, nutrition insecurity, and health inequities through transdisciplinary research, which allows researchers across disciplines and sectors to identify synergistic solutions to complex issues. The program has a demonstrated history of advancing high-impact research in this area.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics



American Indian Mothers Inc
Appetite For Change
Fair Food Network
Fertile Ground
Health Care Without Harm
Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future
Michael Fields Agricultural Institute
New Entry Sustainable Farming Project
Nourish Colorado
The Common Market
The Gerald J. and Dorothy R. Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University
WANDA: Women Advancing Nutrition Dietetics and Agriculture
Union of Concerned Scientists

- [1] <https://www.ucsusa.org/resources/from-silos-to-systems#read-online-content>
- [2] <https://www.ucsusa.org/resources/from-silos-to-systems#read-online-content>
- [3] <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/hsph-in-the-news/poor-diets-health-care-costs/>
- [4] <https://www.nber.org/papers/w26167>
- [5] <https://www.dni.gov/files/ODNI/documents/assessments/ATA-2021-Unclassified-Report.pdf>
- [6] <https://www.dni.gov/files/ODNI/documents/assessments/ATA-2021-Unclassified-Report.pdf>
- [7] <https://naacp.org/know-issues/environmental-climate-justice>
- [8] <https://nifa.usda.gov/about-nifa/press-releases/usda-announces-more-146m-investment-sustainable-agricultural-research>

 rdaeger@gmail.com (not shared) [Switch account](#)



* Required

Untitled Title

Organization name (as it should be listed on letter) *

Your answer



Contact name *

Your answer

Email *

Your answer

City and State *

Your answer

State or National Organization *

State

National

I certify that I am authorized to sign for my organization *

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