

December 1, 2006

Dear Agricultural Appropriations Conferees:

As you prepare for Conference consideration of the Fiscal Year 2007 Agriculture Appropriations bill next week or early next year, we the undersigned organizations urge you to support funding of no less than \$190 million for the National Research Initiative (NRI), as contained in both the House and the Senate Committee-passed bills. We also urge you to include the 30 percent designation for integrated grants under the same terms and conditions as under the Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems (IFAFS), as proposed by the President and endorsed by the Senate Committee.

While our organizations agree that this level of funding for NRI and IFAFS is woefully insufficient for the major national agricultural research, education, and extension competitive grant programs, we nonetheless recognize this may be the best you are able to do this year. We are very concerned, however, with the absence of the 30 percent designation in the House bill. It is critical that integrated, outcome-oriented projects continue to be funded across the full range of IFAFS priorities. We therefore urge you to accept the President's proposal by adopting the Senate provision in drafting the conference bill.

This is a critical moment for the research funding as we head toward consideration of the next farm bill. Both the NRI and IFAFS have proven themselves to be effective programs and it is our hope Congress will reauthorize and improve these programs in the 2007 Farm Bill and significantly expand funding for them in that bill and in future appropriations bills.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

Agriculture & Land-Based Training
Association (ALBA)

American Dairy Science Association

American Institute of Biological Sciences

American Society for Horticultural Science

American Society of Agronomy

American Society of Plant Biologists

Center for Rural Affairs

Crop Science Society of America

Ecological Society of America

Federation of Animal Science Societies

Institute of Food Technologists

Kansas Rural Center

Land Stewardship Project

Michael Fields Agricultural Institute

Michigan Food and Farming Systems

National Catholic Rural Life Conference

National Council for Science and the
Environment

Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association

Organic Farming Research Foundation

Poultry Science Association

Society of Nematologists

Soil Science Society of America

Sustainable Agriculture Coalition

Union of Concerned Scientists

The Washington Sustainable Food and
Farming Network