



2018 Farm Bill: The Need for Investments in Animal Science

Background and Need

Animal agriculture is a major economic driver for our nation. According to the USDA Economic Research Service, total cash receipts for animals and animal products was over \$212.2 billion in 2014. This represents over fifty percent of all farm cash receipts. Unfortunately, the economic contributions of the animal agriculture industry are under the constant threat of emerging animal pests and diseases that have the potential to devastate production capacity and competitiveness.

In recent years, disease outbreaks have cost billions in production losses and response costs. For example, the last avian influenza outbreak cost taxpayers \$1 billion in response, clean up, and indemnity costs and required the depopulation of nearly 50 million birds. That doesn't include lost export markets, temporary shortages, or price increases for certain poultry and their products. Researchers estimate that an uncontrolled outbreak of foot and mouth disease in the United States could have as much as a \$200 billion impact over 10 years. Without effective science-based tools to prevent and mitigate future outbreaks, animal agriculture will be vulnerable to major economic impacts.

Unfortunately, current funding by USDA to support the animal sciences is not proportionate with the economic contributions of animal agriculture. In fact, investment in the animal sciences has been stagnant for many years. This disturbing trend was highlighted by National Academy of Sciences in its report "Critical Role of Animal Science Research in Food Security and Sustainability" released in 2015. The report recognizes the historic underfunding of animal sciences and calls for increased investments.

Farm Bill Request

The current funding imbalance puts U.S. animal agriculture at a major disadvantage at a critical time when livestock and poultry producers are facing serious threats from pests and disease. To help meet these threats, NAAAS requests **\$25 million in annual mandatory funding** be included in the 2018 Farm Bill to support Sec. 1433 Continuing Animal Health and Disease Programs.

Sec. 1433 was expanded during the last Farm Bill to authorize a competitive grants mechanism to address high priority research needs. Mandatory funding for Sec. 1433 would build on the efforts from the 2014 Farm Bill by funding the competitive grants program and enabling the support of critical research to provide science-based solutions to animal pest and disease threats.