March 19, 2013

The Honorable John Boehner
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
The Honorable Hal Rogers
The Honorable Nita Lowey
The Honorable Robert Aderholt
The Honorable Sam Farr
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Members:

As the House continues to consider the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act of 2013 (H.R. 933), the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) Coalition, comprised of organizations representing research institutions, scientific societies, and other agricultural stakeholders, writes to urge that you support funding for AFRI at $298 million for the remainder of fiscal year 2013. This is the level now set in H.R. 933, and passed by the full Senate.

AFRI is the nation’s premier competitive agricultural research grants program administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA), and has been authorized at up to $700 million per year. Since its inception, AFRI has consistently received more research proposals of merit than it has been able to fund. For example, in FY 2010, 609 grants, rated highly innovative, were not funded because the AFRI budget totaled $262 million. As a result, 609 proposals that could have held the answers to increased crop yield, clean energy or drought mitigation went unfunded.

The AFRI Coalition recognizes that lawmakers face many difficult decisions and competing priorities in this difficult budgetary environment. Nevertheless, investments in research lead to innovation and economic development. A recent study found that for every $1 invested in publicly funded agricultural research, $20 in economic activity is generated¹. Therefore the AFRI Coalition urges lawmakers to make sustainable increases in funding for AFRI which will contribute to U.S. economic recovery.

Sincerely,

AFRI Coalition