

November 9, 2015

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Chair, Senate Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski  
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jerry Moran  
Chair, Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jeff Merkley  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and  
Related Agencies  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: Support for USDA REE ERS and NASS FY16 Funding

Dear Senate Appropriations Leaders,

The undersigned groups, which include various members of the [Friends of Agricultural Statistics and Analysis](#), strongly support federal investment to advance agricultural statistics and research in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Economic Research Service (ERS) and the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) in fiscal 2016 (FY16) at levels that are at least equivalent to the agencies' fiscal year 2015 (FY15) levels. The FY15 appropriations levels are \$85.4M for ERS and \$172.4M for NASS (\$47.8M for the Census of Agriculture).

The U.S. agricultural economy relies on objective agricultural statistics and analysis to function properly and to support the success of U.S. agriculture domestically and in international trade. In previous letters this year, we've stated the consequences of reducing the appropriation for both the Economic Research Service and the National Agricultural Statistics Service. We encourage you to consider an appropriation for these agencies at levels that maintain their FY15 funding.

The information that ERS and NASS produce is essential to farms and agribusiness, government agricultural programs, and food policy. The efforts to strengthen policy-making in support of U.S. agricultural markets and expanded trade in 2015 are reinforced by maintaining these critical resources. These investments seem small, but have a great impact on millions of farm and agri-business operations throughout the supply chain. The statistics, data, and analysis provided by these agencies underpin the health and vitality of our U.S. agricultural sector.

If you have any specific questions with regard to agricultural data products related to your state, please contact [agricultural.statistics@gmail.com](mailto:agricultural.statistics@gmail.com). Thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration of this information.

Thank you for all that you do on behalf of your great state and our great nation.

Sincerely,

Agricultural & Applied Economics Association  
American Association of Mycobacterial Diseases  
American Dairy Science Association  
American Society of Agronomy  
American Society of Animal Science  
American Statistical Association  
American Sugar Alliance  
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities  
Consortium of Social Science Associations  
Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics  
Crop Science Society of America  
CropLife America  
Deere & Company  
Federation of Animal Science Societies  
Global Cold Chain Alliance  
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture  
National Coalition for Food and Agriculture Research  
National Farmers Union  
National Organic Coalition  
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition  
North American Regional Science Council  
Northeastern Agricultural and Resource Economics Association  
Poultry Science Association  
Restaurant Services, Inc.  
Soil Science Society of America  
The Fertilizer Institute