

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 2, 2005

The Honorable Robert F. Bennett
Chairman
Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee
188 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Herb Kohl
Ranking Member
Agriculture Appropriations
Subcommittee
188 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Bennett and Ranking Member Kohl:

The challenges of putting together the annual agriculture appropriations bill are always great and we know these challenges will be even more pronounced this year. Nonetheless, we are writing to urge you to remain steadfast in your support for research, extension, and education at America's land-grant and related universities.

We are particularly concerned about the proposal in the President's budget request for FY 2006 to reduce funding for two formula fund programs by 50 percent within the USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES); the Hatch and McIntire-Stennis programs. A third, the Animal Health and Disease program, would be eliminated entirely. These three important programs support base funds for land-grant institutions in every state, D.C., and the territories and are vital to ensuring the financial stability of state agricultural experiment stations from year-to-year. The programs also maintain the national agriculture research infrastructure necessary to respond to emergency situations.

A recent study by Iowa State University and Yale University economists found that between 1970 and 2000, federally funded investment for agriculture research in state agricultural experiment stations at land grant universities contributed significantly to increased agricultural productivity, producing an annual 50 percent return on every dollar invested.

Accordingly, we urge the Subcommittee to fund these programs at not less than their FY 2005 enacted levels, and also urge the Subcommittee to give priority attention to the other needs articulated by representatives of the land-grant system. America has a world class land-grant university system, with an integrated mission of research, education, and extension that helps ensure that we have one of the safest, highest quality, most affordable food supplies in the world. We look forward to working with the Subcommittee to ensure that we have funding in place so that these programs continue to support the important work of American agriculture.

Sincerely,



OLYMPIA J. SNOWE
United States Senator



BLANCHE L. LINCOLN
United States Senator

Spely Chellis

Nos Coloma

Craig Thomas

Mike Delwin

Susan Collins

Tom F. King

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(CSABES FY06, 5/2/05, Pg 2)

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