

## Washington Update – FANR Newsletter

*Lewis-Burke Associates LLC – July 6, 2022*

As we head further into summer, there are several developments in agricultural policy of note. The most prominent issues in the last three months have been the advancement of the House Agriculture Appropriations Bill, the nomination and confirmation of Dr. Chavonda Jacobs-Young as the new Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics at USDA, the Farm Bill Senate Arkansas Field Hearing, and the House Agriculture Climate Hearing.

- ***House Agriculture Appropriations Bill is Advanced Through Committee***

On June 23, the House Appropriations Committee approved its version of the Fiscal Year 2023 Agricultural Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill with a vote of 31-26. This bill provides discretionary funding of \$27.2 billion dollars, a \$2.1 billion or 8 percent increase from fiscal year 2022, and this includes an additional \$131 million, or 8 percent increase in funding for NIFA over FY 2022 levels. The House plans to bring this bill to the floor for a vote the week of July 11<sup>th</sup>, but no further information has been announced. The Senate has yet to release its legislation but aims to do so later in the summer. **Complete funding tables of APLU BAA's priorities and NIFA's funding lines can be found [here](#).**

- ***Nomination of Dr. Chavonda Jacobs-Young***

We were delighted to hear of the confirmation of Dr. Chavonda Jacobs-Young as the new Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics at the USDA. Dr. Jacobs-Young has been serving in this role in an Acting capacity for the last three years, but on June 8, 2022, the United States Senate voted 95-4 to confirm her in this position. Over her career, Dr. Jacobs-Young has demonstrated monumental leadership in such roles as the Director of the Agricultural Research Service, the Acting Director of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, and the Director of the USDA Office of the Chief Scientist. Dr. Jacobs-Young has shown time and time again her commitment to science and to the land grant university system. She earned her BS, MS, and PhD degrees in Wood and Paper Science from North Carolina State University, and she has been consistently at the forefront of agricultural innovation and sustainability throughout her career.

- ***Senate Arkansas Field Hearing***

On June 17, 2022, the Senate Agriculture Committee convened in Arkansas, the home state of Senate Agriculture Committee Ranking Member John Boozman, to listen to local producers present their needs, a process that informs the reauthorization of the current Farm Bill, which expires on September 30, 2023. This hearing followed a similar event hosted in Senate Agriculture Committee Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow's home state of Michigan, which is the customary way to kick off Farm Bill discussions. Growers on the Committee's Arkansas panel cited finances as their main concern, specifically higher input costs and the trickle-down effects on commodity prices these costs represent. Crop insurance that could adapt to rapidly changing market pressures due to the pandemic was another major issue. The panel asked that the Committee consider the challenges growers have faced over the past five years to create policies for long-term stability in the future.

- ***House Agriculture Climate Hearing***

On June 15, 2022, the House Agriculture Committee held a hearing on climate research to inform the upcoming reauthorization of the Farm Bill. Topics discussed included the significant need for scientific research, education, and extension to mitigate and adapt to climate change; the lack of data infrastructure and culture of “small science” in the agricultural sciences and how both impede progress; the perspectives of minority and limited resource farmers; and the overarching importance of soil preservation and improvement. These topics represent the Democratic majority’s priorities with respect to research, and it signals their interest in investing in climate change, data infrastructure, the Agriculture Advanced Research and Development Authority (AGARDA), soil health, and minority-serving institutions. However, because the November elections fall before the current Farm Bill expires, these priorities may not be as well represented in the Farm Bill if Republicans gain the majority.