



Chairman Robert Aderholt

*Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations*

**FY 2016 Budget Hearing
USDA Research, Education, and Economics Mission Area
March 24, 2015
Opening Statement As Prepared**

Thank you for joining us for our hearing to discuss USDA's FY 16 budget request for its research agencies.

As I have mentioned before, the Subcommittee is focusing on the themes of management, targeting and promotion this year. We want to ensure that research funds are targeted to the most important programs and problems, and that through research we are promoting a productive agricultural sector and a safe food supply. We will be reviewing the request with these themes in mind.

I would like to welcome Dr. Cathy Wotecki, Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics and Chief Scientist for the U.S. Department of Agriculture to the Subcommittee.

We also have joining us today --

- Dr. Chavonda Jacobs-Young, Administrator of the Agricultural Research Service;
- Dr. Sonny Ramaswamy, Director of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture;
- Dr. Mary Bohman, Administrator of the Economic Research Service;
- Mr. Joe Reilly, Administrator of the National Agricultural Statistics Service; and
- Mr. Mike Young, Director, Office of Budget and Policy Analysis.

On behalf of the Subcommittee, I would like to thank all of you and your staffs for your work in agricultural research. You are the scientists, professionals and leaders we rely upon to answer scientific questions.

USDA is proposing a \$467 million increase over the FY 15 enacted level for its research programs. This includes significant increases of \$206 million for ARS Buildings and Facilities; \$125 million for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative; \$80 million to create two new Innovation Institutes; and \$20 million for a new competitive grant program for land-grant colleges and universities.

There are a myriad of other increases, decreases, closures, and transfers in the request. This hearing will allow the Subcommittee to thoroughly examine these and help us determine whether

USDA is effectively administering its programs and meeting the Nation's needs in agricultural research.

Given the sizeable increase proposed by the budget request, I would be remiss if I did not point out that we are operating in a very constrained funding environment. We are bound by the spending caps under existing law. Of course, we will do our best to address the highest priority needs, but any increases most likely will have to be offset against other accounts and programs in the agriculture appropriations bill.

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