

**MONDAY MORNING GROUP OF WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY  
ANNUAL ADVOCACY TRIP – WASHINGTON, DC  
APRIL 9 – 11, 2024**

**FARM BILL REAUTHORIZATION**

**ISSUE:** Since its enactment in 2018, the Farm Bill has provided strong support for America’s farmers, ranchers, and forest stewards through a variety of safety net, farm loan, conservation, and disaster assistance programs. Universities also greatly benefit from funding. The University of California (UC) serving as a vital partner for the State of California, continues to be the nation’s top agricultural state. For more than a century, California’s \$56 billion agricultural industry has depended on UC for the stream of new technologies and research breakthroughs needed to stay competitive and be responsible stewards of the land.

**ACTION:** Monday Morning Group respectfully requests that Congress continue to support activities through the annual appropriations process and the upcoming Farm Bill reauthorization process including the following provisions:

**TITLE IV – NUTRITION**

- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP); Eligibility for College Students; 7 USC §2036a:** UC supports the inclusion in the 2023 Farm Bill of the text of H.R. 1919, the Enhance Access to SNAP Act of 2021, or the EATS Act of 2021, which is pending in the House in the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress. Specifically, H.R. 1919 amends the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 to "treat attendance at an institution of higher education the same as work for the purpose of determining eligibility to participate" in the SNAP Program.
- **Recommendation:** The addition of the text of H.R. 1919 in the 2023 Farm Bill would help to address eligibility problems faced by college students under the current SNAP Program to ensure that college students are better able to address food insecurity challenges while attending college.

**TITLE VII – RESEARCH, EXTENSION, AND RELATED MATTERS**

- **For FY 2025 Support USDA NIFA’s Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI): \$500M**
  - For fiscal year 2022-2023, UC ANR had 159 AFRI projects with over \$116.5 million in total awards to find cutting-edge solutions to high-priority issues affecting California’s rural and urban communities.
- **Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI): waive matching funds requirement**
  - UC supports full funding for SCRI. UC supports the inclusion of language in the appropriations process which allows the Secretary of Agriculture to waive the matching funds requirement for SCRI, thus allowing for critical research to occur to address diseases and challenges facing the specialty crop industry.
- **Support requests for \$50 million for Hispanic Serving Institutions Education Grants Program, \$45 million for the National Animal Health Lab Network, robust funding for the Crop Protection/Pest Management (CP/PM) Program, \$25 million for the Minor Crop Pest Management (IR-4) Program, \$4.5 million for the Veterinary Services Grant Program and \$2.5 million for the Food Animal Residue Avoidance Databank.**
- **Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI); §7305 of the 2018 Farm Bill:** SCRI is important to California’s agricultural research enterprise as California grows over 400 agricultural commodities and produces over 50 percent of the nation’s supply of fruits, nuts, and vegetables. Since SCRI’s inception in 2008, UC entities have received over \$94 million in funding.
  - **Recommendations:** Reauthorize SCRI and increase or maintain the mandatory funding at \$80 million per FY. Also, eliminate the matching funds requirement for programs such as the Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI) which were imposed under the 2018 Farm Bill. Specifically, Section 7614 Matching Funds Requirement reinstated the pre-2014 Farm Bill matching requirements for land- grant universities applying for NIFA grants.

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▪ **Research Facilities: \$500 million**

Research drives the agricultural sector –delivering innovative technologies, growing the agricultural marketplace, and supporting job creation and boosting the economy. However, many research buildings and facilities are aging and in need of replacement or significant improvements. In fact, 70% of the research facilities at U.S. public colleges of agriculture are at the end of their useful life. Bringing our facilities up to modern standards would provide capacity for precision agriculture, remote sensing, growing space for CRISPR-based research, and would ensure that cutting-edge research can continue to be conducted to meet the agricultural and natural resources needs of California and the nation.

For FY 2025:

- Hatch (Research and Education support for UC Agricultural Experiment Stations): \$300M
  - Smith-Lever (Cooperative Extension/4-H): \$420M
  - McIntire-Stennis (Forestry Research and Education): \$46M
- These programs provide critical “people power” and research talent to enable California to connect local issues with the power of UC research. In 2022, 3,820 research and extension projects were conducted and there were 468,000 direct contacts/educational exchanges. Currently, there are 516 Agriculture Experiment Station faculty, 167 Cooperative Extension (CE) Advisors, and 110 CE Specialists working on research and extension projects.

IMPACT: Fostering the next generation of scientists

- In FY 2022/23, over 57,690 California youth benefited from high-quality 4-H programming efforts which was supported by over 6,415 trained adult volunteers who devoted 660,930 hours of services valued at over \$24.6 million.
- UC ANR is in the second year of a Bay Area chapter of “4-H Water Wizards,” a science-based program that connects students of color with diverse scientists to imagine career possibilities in STEM fields. A highly anticipated field trip to Elkus Ranch Environmental Education Center provides unique hands-on learning opportunities on agriculture, natural habitats, and environmental stewardship.

**BACKGROUND:** On November 16, 2023, President Biden signed into law H.R. 6363, the Further Continuing Appropriations and Other Extensions Act 2024, which extended the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, more commonly known as the 2018 Farm Bill. This extension allows authorized programs to continue only through September 30, 2024.