



AmericanHort®

**IMPACT**  
**WASHINGTON**

## ISSUE: HORTICULTURAL RESEARCH AND INNOVATION .....

### **BACKGROUND**

The horticulture industry does not receive, nor does it seek, government subsidies. Government nonetheless is an important partner in terms of sustaining “critical infrastructure” that helps the industry to succeed. This includes strategic investments in research, and plant pest prevention and mitigation. Nursery and greenhouse crops represent 15 percent of the value of U.S. crop agriculture, but less than one percent of total USDA research dollars go toward our industry. We are supporting four critical USDA programs that are part of our industry’s “critical infrastructure.”

### **FLORICULTURE AND NURSERY RESEARCH INITIATIVE (FNRI)**

This program is a unique partnership involving USDA’s Agricultural Research Service (ARS), universities, and industry (AmericanHort and SAF). It is often held up as a model for other industries. FNRI is vital to our industry efforts to overcome pest and diseases challenges, enhance the efficiency of our production practices, develop and promote sustainable growing practices, and advance the economic, environmental, and human health benefits of our industry’s products and services.

FNRI is currently funded at \$4.6 million annually, which represents a decline due to recessions and inflationary pressures. The House agricultural appropriations bill for Fiscal 2018 proposes to increase this amount by \$500,000. We support the House’s increase.

### **SPECIALTY CROP RESEARCH INITIATIVE (SCRI)**

This Farm Bill-funded program, administered by USDA’s National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) has become a vital research funding vehicle for significant multi-year and location, interdisciplinary projects. An “intelligent spray technology” project first funded by FNRI and later SCRI resulted in innovation that enables 50 to 70% reduction in pesticide use and minimizes spray drift. Labor-saving automation and mechanization are urgent research and development needs. The Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance, which includes AmericanHort, seeks \$25 million more for SCRI annually in the next Farm Bill.

### **PLANT PEST AND DISEASE MANAGEMENT AND DISASTER PREVENTION (SECTION 10007)**

This Farm Bill-funded program, administered by the Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service, strengthens the nation’s infrastructure for pest detection and surveillance, identification, and threat mitigation, while working to safeguard the nursery production system. Funding should be continued at the current \$75 million annually, and increased modestly to \$82.5 million by 2022 in a new farm bill.

### **SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT (SCBG) PROGRAM**

This farm bill program provides block grants to states on a formula basis to fund research,

development, and marketing proposals. States primarily administer the proposal process; a small portion of total funding is reserved for multi-state coordinated projects. We support continued funding of this useful program.

## **MESSAGE POINTS:**

- Research and innovation are fundamental to the success and future growth of the horticulture industry. The industry invests in research and innovation through our foundations, such as the Horticultural Research Institute. Federal partnerships are key as well, and are justified by the industry's economic and jobs contributions as well as the economic, environmental, and human health benefits provided by managed landscapes and "green infrastructure."
- We seek your support for enhancing the Floriculture and Nursery Research Initiative, a unique partnership involving USDA's Agricultural Research Service, land grant universities, and the horticulture industry. FNRI is part of the USDA-ARS base budget. The House Appropriations Committee has proposed increasing FNRI by \$500,000. We support this increase.
- We also urge your support for three Farm Bill-funded programs that drive innovation in horticulture and other specialty crop industries:
  - Specialty Crop Research Initiative, SCRI. (Request an increase of \$25 million annually in this program).
  - Section 10007 - Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention Program which includes the National Clean Plant Network. (Request continued funding at \$75 million in 2019 – 2021, and modest increase to \$82.5 million in 2022 and thereafter).
  - Specialty Crop Block Grant program (request continued funding).