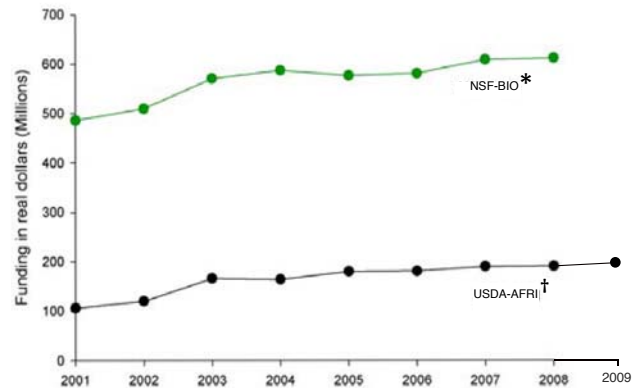


AGRICULTURAL AND BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES: INVEST IN TOMORROW – SUPPORT RESEARCH TODAY

Research: Opportunities & Benefits

An increased and balanced federal investment in all, not a few select, R&D fields is necessary to address looming challenges and fully capture the benefits of new tools and technologies.

Agricultural and biological research, funded by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the National Science Foundation (NSF), contributes to the development of sustainable and cost-effective solutions for society's greatest challenges - protecting the environment and human health, conserving biodiversity, developing wise resource use and management strategies, ensuring food safety and security, developing alternative energy, preventing infectious diseases, and forecasting and minimizing the effects of global climate change.



*2009 data not yet available
† NRI before 2009

Innovation

Federal investment in research has led to America's global leadership in agricultural and biological sciences. In turn, research has produced economic growth, leading to greater productivity, new industries, and better quality of life.

Security

Federal investment in biological and agricultural research programs and supporting infrastructure has secured the protection of people, plants, and animals, equipping the nation with the ability to prevent, detect, diagnose, and recover from an agro- or bio-terror attack.

Global Change

Our planet is undergoing unprecedented environmental change. Federally funded research is required to understand and address such challenges as climate change, invasive species, habitat loss, and emerging infectious diseases.

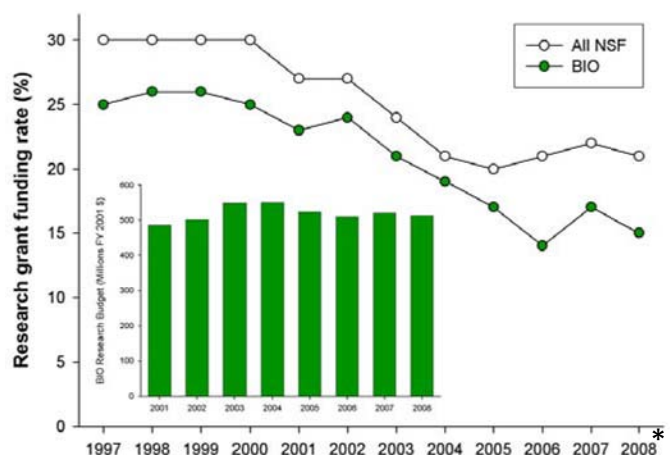
The Issue: Consistent funding for agricultural and biological research.

Research is not a short-term expense; it is an investment for the future.

Federal support for the competitive, peer-reviewed grant programs that fund this research—NSF's Biological Sciences Directorate (BIO) and USDA's Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) (successor to the NRI)—has been stagnant for many years.

BIO provides 67% of federal grant support for fundamental biological research conducted at our universities and nonprofit research centers. In 2008, the average grant award from the BIO directorate was for 2.73 years and totaled \$128,999. Yet even at this modest size, roughly 80% of applications, many highly competitive and potentially transformative, were rejected.

Funding in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 is intended to fund many of these high-quality grants. However, annual appropriations must remain consistent and growing to prevent another build-up of unfunded, high-quality grants. President Obama's \$7.015 billion budget request will enable the NSF to fund such highly competitive grant proposals in FY 2010.



*2009 data not yet available

AGRICULTURAL AND BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES: INVEST IN TOMORROW – SUPPORT RESEARCH TODAY

In 2008, only 24% of AFRI proposals were funded, leaving almost 700 (totaling \$225 million) high-quality, proposals unfunded. Although authorized at \$700 million, AFRI was funded at just \$201 million in FY 2009.

A report by the Economic Research Service found “strong and consistent evidence” that investment in agricultural research yields “high returns per dollar spent,” citing mean annual rates of return of 53%. Yet, our nation’s investment in agricultural research has been declining, threatening our ability to remain competitive.

The AFRI is the USDA’s competitive, peer-reviewed, extramural research grant program. AFRI funds research in plant health and products; animal health and products; food safety, nutrition, and health; renewable energy and environment; agricultural technology; and agriculture economics and rural communities

Strong support for the AFRI will help ensure the availability of the next generation of researchers, educators, consultants, and extension agents needed to safeguard the American agricultural enterprise and keep it competitive in the global economy.

Thank you for your help!

The benefits offered by agricultural and biological sciences can be realized only with sustained funding for key programs that support investigator-driven, peer-reviewed, competitive grant programs, such as those at NSF and USDA.

***Fund the NSF at \$7.015 billion for FY 2010, the amount requested by President Obama.** This would allow NSF to fund BIO on a trajectory more on a par with other research directorates, and would support important research on climate change, bioenergy, infectious diseases, and other critical biology-based research.

***Fund the AFRI at \$300 million in FY 2010.** This would enhance overall funding to important programs and restore purchasing power eroded by inflation. Strong federal investment into the AFRI will lead to solutions to the major challenges facing the nation, including food security, climate change, and energy independence.

We appreciate the broad, bipartisan support for scientific research that Congress has demonstrated in the past. We ask for Congress’ continued support in FY 2010.



Contact information



Biological and Ecological Sciences Coalition (BESC)

Nadine Lynn
Co-Chair, BESC
nadine@esa.org

Robert Gropp
Co-Chair, BESC
rgropp@aibs.org



The Coalition on Funding Agricultural Research Missions (CoFARM)

Karl Glasener
Co-Chair, CoFARM
kglasener@agronomy.org