Science Societies

Societies join broad coalition raising concerns to Congress over USDA restructuring

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Learn more.

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“The REE mission area—comprising the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), the Economic Research Service (ERS), and the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)—is the backbone of American agricultural innovation,” the letter states. “For farmers and ranchers, federal food and agricultural research translates directly into better seeds, more effective pest management, lower input costs, and the agronomic knowledge that keeps American producers competitive in global markets.

“This research is not an academic exercise; it is the practical science that helps corn growers in Iowa increase yields per acre, enables cattle ranchers in Texas to manage drought conditions, and equips fruit growers in California to combat invasive pests.”

The letter points to three areas of concern and the consequences they've had on American agriculture: (i) staff losses across the REE mission area and the expertise lost with them; (ii) REE reorganization and proposed ARS lab closures; and (iii) delayed distribution of congressionally appropriated research funds. It then urges Congress to do the following:

- Require USDA to provide a comprehensive public accounting of all REE workforce reductions since January 2025, including agency, scientific discipline, years of federal service, and current vacancy status, along with a concrete plan and timeline for workforce rebuilding, specifically in the proposed new location;

- Hold hearings on the proposed closure or consolidation of ARS facilities and programs, and require full cost–benefit analyses before any closure decisions are finalized;

- Conduct oversight hearings on the operational status of NIFA grant distribution and require USDA to release all appropriated intramural, capacity, and competitive grant funds without further delay, with a full public accounting of any delays; and

- Direct USDA to engage cooperatively and transparently with the research community to resolve ambiguities in USDA directives and to ensure that compliance standards are clear, consistent, and workable for grantees.

Read the letter

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