

[COMMITTEE PRINT]

NOTICE: This is a draft for use of the Committee and its staff only, in preparation for markup.

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116TH CONGRESS } <i>1st Session</i>	SENATE	{ REPORT 116-000
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AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG
ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIA-
TIONS BILL, 2020

SEPTEMBER 00, 2019—Ordered to be printed

Mr. HOEVEN, from the Committee on Appropriations,
submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany S. 0000]

The Committee on Appropriations reports the bill (S. 0000) mak-
ing appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and
Drug Administration, and Related Agencies programs for the fiscal
year ending September 30, 2020, and for other purposes, reports fa-
vorably thereon and recommends that the bill do pass.

New obligatory authority

Total of bill as reported to the Senate
Amount of 2019 appropriations
Amount of 2020 budget estimate
Bill as recommended to Senate compared to—
2019 appropriations
2020 budget estimate

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BREAKDOWN BY TITLE

The amounts of obligational authority for each of the seven titles are shown in the following table. A detailed tabulation, showing comparisons, appears at the end of this report. Recommendations for individual appropriation items, projects and activities are carried in this report under the appropriate item headings.

(In thousands of dollars)

	Fiscal year 2019 enacted	Committee recommendation
Title I: Agricultural programs	7,407,928	7,869,197
Title II: Farm Production and Conservation programs	33,569,899	37,309,500
Title III: Rural economic and community development programs	3,011,730	3,016,791
Title IV: Domestic food programs	103,180,329	99,271,795
Title V: Foreign assistance and related programs	1,937,983	2,156,348
Title VI: Related agencies and Food and Drug Administration	3,080,466	3,160,466
Title VII: General provisions	3,496	— 693,573
Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster		
Total, new budget (obligational) authority	152,191,831	152,090,452

OVERVIEW AND SUMMARY OF THE BILL

The Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies appropriations bill provides funding for a wide array of Federal programs, mostly in the U.S. Department of Agriculture [USDA]. These programs include agricultural research, education, and extension activities; natural resources conservation programs; farm income and support programs; marketing and inspection activities; domestic food assistance programs; rural housing, economic and community development, and telecommunication and electrification assistance; and various export and international activities of the USDA.

The bill also provides funding for the Food and Drug Administration [FDA] and allows the use of collected fees for administrative expenses of the Farm Credit Administration [FCA].

The discretionary programs and activities of USDA and FDA that are supported by this bill include high priority responsibilities entrusted to the Federal Government and its partners to protect human health and safety, contribute to economic recovery, and achieve policy objectives strongly supported by the American people. The ability to provide for these measures is made difficult by growing pressure on available levels of discretionary spending as a consequence of the overall public debate on Federal spending, revenues, and size of the Federal debt.

Too often, the USDA programs funded by this bill are confused with farm subsidies and other mandatory spending more properly associated with multi-year farm bills. In contrast, this bill provides annual funding for programs familiar to all Americans such as protecting food safety through the Food Safety and Inspection Service and the Food and Drug Administration, which also plays a vital role in maintaining the safety of the Nation's blood supply and availability of safe and effective medical products and other components of our health system. This bill also provides funding to fight against the introduction and spread of noxious or infectious and often invasive pests and diseases that threaten our plant and animal health environments, as well as funding for many other missions of dire importance to the American people.

In the context of overall pressures on spending and the competing priorities that the Committee faces, this bill as reported provides the proper amount of emphasis on agricultural, rural development, and other programs and activities funded by the bill. It is consistent with the Subcommittee's allocation for fiscal year 2020.

All accounts in the bill have been closely examined to ensure that an appropriate level of funding is provided to carry out the programs of USDA, FDA, and FCA. Details on each of the accounts, the funding level, and the Committee's justifications for the funding levels are included in the report.

REPORTS TO CONGRESS

The Committee has, throughout this report, requested agencies to provide studies and reports on various issues. The Committee utilizes these reports to evaluate program performance and make decisions on future appropriations. The Committee directs that all

studies and reports be provided to the Committee as electronic documents in an agreed upon format within 120 days after the date of enactment, unless an alternative submission schedule is specifically stated in the report request.

TITLE I
 AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS
 PROCESSING, RESEARCH, AND MARKETING
 OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
 (INCLUDING TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

Appropriations, 2019	\$46,603,000
Budget estimate, 2020	41,373,000
Committee recommendation	46,782,000

The Secretary of Agriculture, assisted by the Deputy Secretary, Under Secretaries and Assistant Secretaries, Chief Information Officer, Chief Financial Officer, and members of their immediate staffs, directs and coordinates the work of the Department. This includes developing policy, maintaining relationships with agricultural organizations and others in the development of farm programs, and maintaining liaison with the Executive Office of the President and Members of Congress on all matters pertaining to agricultural policy.

The general authority of the Secretary to supervise and control the work of the Department is contained in the Organic Act (Public Law 101-624). The delegation of regulatory functions to Department employees and authorization of appropriations to carry out these functions is contained in 7 U.S.C. 450c-450g.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$46,782,000 for the Office of the Secretary. The Committee recommendation includes the following accounts under the Office of the Secretary: Office of the Secretary; Office of Tribal Relations; Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Coordination; Office of Advocacy and Outreach; Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration; Departmental Administration; Office of Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations; and Office of Communications. The following table reflects the amount provided by the Committee for each office and activity:

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

[In thousands of dollars]

	Fiscal year 2019 enacted	Fiscal year 2020 budget request	Committee recommendation
Office of the Secretary	5,051	4,850	6,030
Office of Homeland Security	1,496	1,448	1,496
Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement	4,711	1,672	4,711
Office of Assistant Secretary for Administration	875	875	875
Departmental Administration	22,301	21,376	22,301
Office of Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations	3,869	3,091	3,869
Office of Communications	7,500	7,261	7,500
Total	46,603	41,373	46,782

Barriers to Trade.—The Committee is aware of trade barriers related to herbicide tolerances and recognizes the need for research into contamination sources. The Committee encourages the Secretary to provide competitive grants to study this further.

Century Farms.—The Committee supports recent authorization of the Century Farms Program in the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Public Law 115–334) to recognize farms that have been in operation for 100 years and encourages the Department to move quickly to establish this program.

Commodity Credit Corporation [CCC] Obligations and Commitments.—The Secretary is directed to notify the Committees on Appropriations of the House and Senate in writing 15 days prior to the obligation or commitment of any emergency funds from the CCC.

Farming Opportunities and Training Outreach Program.—The Committee appreciates the advancements made in the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Public Law 115–334) combining the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program [BFRDP] and the Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers program under an umbrella program called the Farming Opportunities Training and Outreach Program, which provides permanent baseline funding for the program. Creating and expanding new farming opportunities and supporting farmer training and technical assistance is critical to the future of American agriculture and our food system. The Committee is aware that despite these farm bill advances, annual funding for BFRDP is actually lower than it was under the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–79). The Committee maintains its strong interest in supporting beginning farmer training and exploring ways to restore and increase program funding.

Grain Shipment Delays.—The Committee is aware of emergency lock repairs on the Columbia River, lock maintenance on the Illinois River, and record-breaking flooding that is causing significant delays for barge traffic on our Nation's rivers and inland waterway system. The Committee notes that such delays can have considerable economic impacts on farmers, local ports, rural communities, grain exports, the timber industry, gasoline prices, and consumers. The Secretary is directed to fully utilize all available authorities to support farmers and the agricultural industry through this challenging situation.

Land Grants and Acequias.—The Committee recognizes that Section 2304(e) of Public Law 115–334 now allows acequias and land-grant mercedes to apply directly to the Environmental Quality Incentives Program [EQIP], which provides Federal funding and technical assistance to farmers throughout the nation. The Committee appreciates that there are hundreds of acequias and dozens of land grants in New Mexico that can now gain direct access to this important conservation program. The Committee encourages USDA to implement its final interim guidance in a manner that provides funding for these important conservation programs, including for water conservation and irrigation efficiency, so these traditional communities can perform work on their communal lands, range lands, general infrastructure, and irrigation infrastructure.

Livestock Crossing.—The Committee is concerned with the ongoing problem of the crossing of livestock from Mexico into the U.S. without proper inspection, which creates risk of disease and loss of forage for U.S. ranchers in the Southwest border region. The Committee directs the agency, in consultation with other Federal and State agencies, to develop a plan of action to better prevent and reduce unauthorized international crossing of livestock on the Southwest border.

Local Agriculture Market Program.—The Committee appreciates the advancements made in the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Public Law 115–334) combining the Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program [FMLFPP] and the Value-Added Producer Grant program under an umbrella program called the Local Agriculture Market Program, which provides permanent baseline funding for the program. Creating and expanding new markets is critical to the future of American agriculture and our food system. The Committee is aware that despite the establishment of permanent baseline funding, annual funding for FMLFPP is actually lower than it was under the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–79). The Committee maintains its strong interest in supporting local and regional market development and exploring ways to restore and increase program funding.

Multi-Agency Transparency.—The Committee expresses support for increasing transparency within all agencies of USDA. The agencies are encouraged to disclose costs associated with analyses required by the National Environmental Policy Act.

Outreach to Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers.—The Committee supports the efforts of the Office of Advocacy and Outreach to increase the accessibility of USDA programs to underserved constituents and notes that \$15,000,000 in mandatory funds is available to assist socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers and ranchers in owning and operating farms and ranches to meet the growing need for financial, production, management, and other assistance to those communities and address workforce shortages. Additionally, the Committee recommendation includes \$3,000,000 in discretionary funding for these activities.

Resource Conservation and Development Councils.—Since 1964, the Resource Conservation and Development [RC&D] Councils have worked at the grassroots level with local leaders to plan, develop, and carry out programs for land and water conservation and management. The Committee encourages the Secretary to consider the maximum practical use of RC&D Councils, where such RC&D Councils meet agency performance requirements, in the delivery of USDA programs and services.

Salton Sea.—The Committee is deeply concerned by the current and future health, environmental, agricultural, and natural resource impacts at the Salton Sea. The Committee notes that the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Public Law 115–334) made important changes to conservation programs to assist States like California in addressing regional natural resource priorities, such as the Salton Sea. The Committee directs the Department to implement these amended conservation provisions as soon as possible and urges the Department to work with the State of California,

local partners, and other Federal agencies to address the growing problems facing the Salton Sea.

Staff Vacancies.—The Committee is concerned with the number of staff vacancies within USDA. The Committee continues to provide funding increases for many agencies at USDA, yet staffing levels continue to decline. This creates delays in the processing of applications and the release of important funding throughout the Department. The Committee expects the Secretary to staff agencies at the appropriated levels, not the budget request level. The Committee also expects a report, no later than 180 days after enactment, that details staffing levels for all research agencies; the Farm Service Agency; all marketing agencies; Rural Development; Food and Nutrition Service; and the Foreign Agricultural Service. The report shall include vacancies that have remained unfilled for more than six months, plans to fill those vacancies, and the percentage and number of vacancy announcements that were posted for current internal employees only and for less than two weeks. The report shall also include for each agency the number of full-time equivalent [FTE] staff utilized and the number of vacancies not filled for fiscal years 2015 through 2019.

State Rural Development Councils.—The Committee recognizes the successful work of State Rural Development Councils [SRDCs] and their role in advancing rural America and promoting strength and prosperity across the country and urges the Secretary to provide resources to help improve and expand the impact of SRDCs.

Urban Agriculture.—The Committee is aware of a steady increase in urban agriculture initiatives taking place in metropolitan areas across the country. The Committee strongly supports such initiatives and recognizes that successful, robust urban farms can positively impact urban communities and residents in a variety of ways by providing education, entrepreneurial opportunities, and job training; addressing shortages of fresh fruits and vegetables; increasing health and wellness of pregnant women and young children; and reducing obesity rates, recidivism, and urban blight. The Committee commends the Department's efforts to foster such initiatives and encourages the Secretary to increase support and outreach for urban agriculture, including grants, loans, and technical assistance for these innovative urban horticulture projects.

Wheat Grading.—The Committee is concerned about unfair wheat grading practices that negatively affect American wheat growers that export to Canada. Current Canadian wheat grading law and the varietal registration system automatically downgrades American wheat to the lowest quality designation regardless of the type or quality of the wheat. In the United States, however, our grading system provides a fair examination for wheat imported from Canada, regardless of the seed variety. This discrepancy needs to be addressed to ensure our wheat growers are being treated fairly.

EXECUTIVE OPERATIONS

Executive operations were established as a result of the reorganization of the Department to provide a support team for USDA policy officials and selected department-wide services. Activities under the executive operations include the Office of the Chief Econ-

omist, the National Appeals Division, and the Office of Budget and Program Analysis.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ECONOMIST

Appropriations, 2019	\$21,286,000
Budget estimate, 2020	18,513,000
Committee recommendation	24,286,000

The Office of the Chief Economist advises the Secretary of Agriculture on the economic implications of Department policies and programs. The Office serves as the single focal point for the Nation's economic intelligence and analysis, risk assessment, and cost-benefit analysis related to domestic and international food and agriculture issues, provides policy direction for renewable energy development, conducts analyses of climate change impacts on agriculture and forestry, and is responsible for coordination and review of all commodity and aggregate agricultural and food-related data used to develop outlook and situation material within the Department.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$24,286,000 for the Office of the Chief Economist.

Policy Research.—The Committee recommendation includes \$8,000,000 for policy research under 7 U.S.C. 3155 for entities with existing institutional capacity to conduct complex economic and policy analysis and a lengthy and well-documented record of conducting policy analysis for the benefit of USDA, the Congressional Budget Office, or the Congress. To maximize resources, the Committee expects the Department to focus efforts on entities that have developed models, databases, and staff necessary to conduct in-depth analysis of impacts of agriculture or rural development policy proposals on rural communities, farmers, agribusiness, taxpayers, and consumers.

OFFICE OF HEARINGS AND APPEALS

Appropriations, 2019	\$15,222,000
Budget estimate, 2020	13,474,000
Committee recommendation	15,222,000

The Office of Hearings and Appeals conducts administrative hearings and reviews of adverse program decisions made by the Rural Development mission area, the Farm Service Agency [FSA], the Risk Management Agency [RMA], and the Natural Resources Conservation Service [NRCS].

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$15,222,000 for the Office of Hearings and Appeals.

OFFICE OF BUDGET AND PROGRAM ANALYSIS

Appropriations, 2019	\$9,525,000
Budget estimate, 2020	8,199,000
Committee recommendation	9,525,000

The Office of Budget and Program Analysis provides direction and administration of the Department's budgetary functions including development, presentation, and execution of the budget; reviewing program and legislative proposals for program, budget, and related implications; analyzing program and resource issues and alternatives, and preparing summaries of pertinent data to aid the Secretary and departmental policy officials and agency program managers in the decisionmaking process; and providing departmentwide coordination for and participation in the presentation of budget-related matters to the Committees of the Congress, the media, and interested public. The Office also provides departmentwide coordination of the preparation and processing of regulations and legislative programs and reports.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$9,525,000 for the Office of Budget and Program Analysis.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

Appropriations, 2019	\$55,630,000
Budget estimate, 2020	101,400,000
Committee recommendation	101,400,000

The Office of the Chief Information Officer was established in the Clinger-Cohen Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-106), which required the establishment of a Chief Information Officer for major Federal agencies. This Office provides policy guidance, leadership, coordination, and direction to the Department's information management and information technology [IT] investment activities in support of USDA program delivery, and is the lead office in USDA e-gov efforts. The Office provides long-range planning guidance, implements measures to ensure that technology investments are economical and effective, coordinates interagency information resources management projects, and implements standards to promote information exchange and technical interoperability. In addition, the Office of the Chief Information Officer is responsible for certain activities financed under the Department's Working Capital Fund (7 U.S.C. 2235). The Office also provides telecommunication and automated data processing [ADP] services to USDA agencies through the National Information Technology Center with locations in Fort Collins, Colorado; Kansas City, Missouri; and Washington, DC. Direct ADP operational services are also provided to the Office of the Secretary, the Office of the General Counsel, the Office of Communications, the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, and Departmental Management.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$101,400,000 for the Office of the Chief Information Officer. This includes an increase of \$10,950,000 for enhanced cybersecurity activities.

Software Licenses.—The Committee encourages the Department's Chief Information Officer to perform periodic automated inventories of software licenses in use across the Department. The Department should compare those usage numbers to its purchased li-

censes and seek to increase efficiency wherever it identifies discrepancies. The Department is to consider using this information to obtain department-wide acquisitions as opposed to component-specific purchases of licenses.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Appropriations, 2019	\$6,028,000
Budget estimate, 2020	13,500,000
Committee recommendation	13,500,000

The Office of the Chief Financial Officer is responsible for the dual roles of Chief Financial Management Policy Officer and Chief Financial Management Advisor to the Secretary and mission area heads. The Office provides leadership for all financial management, accounting, travel, Federal assistance, and strategic planning performance measurement activities within the Department. The Office is also responsible for the management and operation of the National Finance Center and the Departmental Working Capital Fund.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$13,500,000 for the Office of the Chief Financial Officer.

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

Appropriations, 2019	\$901,000
Budget estimate, 2020	800,000
Committee recommendation	901,000

The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights provides oversight of civil rights and related functions. This includes coordination of the administration of civil rights laws and regulations for employees of USDA and participants in programs of the Department and ensuring compliance with civil rights laws.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$901,000 for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights.

OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS

Appropriations, 2019	\$24,206,000
Budget estimate, 2020	21,228,000
Committee recommendation	24,206,000

The Office of Civil Rights provides overall leadership responsibility for all department-wide civil rights activities. These activities include employment opportunity as well as program nondiscrimination policy development, analysis, coordination, and compliance. The Office is responsible for providing leadership in facilitating the fair and equitable treatment of USDA employees and for monitoring program activities to ensure that all USDA programs are delivered in a nondiscriminatory manner. The Office's outreach functions provide leadership, coordination, facilitation, and expertise to internal and external partners to ensure equal and timely access to USDA programs for all constituents, with emphasis on the un-

derserved, through information sharing, technical assistance, and training.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$24,206,000 for the Office of Civil Rights.

AGRICULTURE BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES

(INCLUDING TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

Appropriations, 2019	\$59,967,000
Budget estimate, 2020	331,114,000
Committee recommendation	331,114,000

Department headquarters presently operates in a two-building, Government-owned complex in downtown Washington, DC; the George Washington Carver Center in Beltsville, Maryland; and in leased buildings in the metropolitan Washington, DC, area. Under an arrangement with the General Services Administration, USDA operates, maintains, and repairs these facilities, in lieu of rental payments. For the last several years the Department has implemented a strategic space plan to locate staff more efficiently, renovate its buildings, and eliminate safety hazards, particularly in the Agriculture South Building.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$331,114,000 for Agriculture Buildings and Facilities.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS MANAGEMENT

(INCLUDING TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

Appropriations, 2019	\$3,503,000
Budget estimate, 2020	3,290,000
Committee recommendation	3,503,000

Under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (Public Law 96-510) and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (Public Law 94-580), the Department has the responsibility to meet the same standards regarding the storage and disposition of hazardous materials as private businesses. The Department is required to contain, cleanup, monitor, and inspect for hazardous materials in areas under the Department's jurisdiction.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$3,503,000 for Hazardous Materials Management.

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Appropriations, 2019	\$98,208,000
Budget estimate, 2020	98,208,000
Committee recommendation	98,208,000

The Office of Inspector General [OIG] was established on October 12, 1978, by the Inspector General Act of 1978 (Public Law 95-

452). This act expanded and provided specific authorities for the activities of OIG which had previously been carried out under the general authorities of the Secretary.

The Office is administered by an inspector general who reports directly to the Secretary. Functions and responsibilities of this Office include direction and control of audit and investigative activities within the Department, formulation of audit and investigative policies and procedures regarding Department programs and operations, and analysis and coordination of program-related audit and investigation activities performed by other Department agencies.

The activities of this Office are designed to assure compliance with existing laws, policies, regulations, and programs of the Department's agencies, and to provide appropriate officials with the means for prompt corrective action where deviations have occurred. The scope of audit and investigative activities is large and includes administrative, program, and criminal matters. These activities are coordinated, when appropriate, with various audit and investigative agencies of the executive and legislative branches of the Government.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$98,208,000 for the Office of Inspector General. The recommendation also includes funding for OIG to address violations of section 26 of the Animal Welfare Act (Public Law 89-544) and to coordinate with State and local law enforcement personnel in this effort.

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL

Appropriations, 2019	\$45,146,000
Budget estimate, 2020	41,242,000
Committee recommendation	45,146,000

The Office of the General Counsel provides all legal advice, counsel, and services to the Secretary and to all agencies, offices, and corporations of the Department. The Office represents the Department in administrative proceedings; nonlitigation debt collection proceedings; State water rights adjudications; proceedings before the Environmental Protection Agency, Interstate Commerce Commission, Federal Maritime Administration, and International Trade Commission; and, in conjunction with the Department of Justice, in judicial proceedings and litigation.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$45,146,000 for the Office of the General Counsel.

OFFICE OF ETHICS

Appropriations, 2019	\$4,136,000
Budget estimate, 2020	2,752,000
Committee recommendation	4,136,000

The Office of Ethics is the centralized and consolidated office implementing USDA's ethics program throughout the Department. The Office provides ethics services to all employees at the Department concerning advice, training, and guidance about compliance

with conflict of interest and impartiality rules. This includes complying with the requirements of the Stop Trading on Congressional Knowledge Act (Public Law 112–105) and the Office of Government Ethics regulatory requirements (5 CFR parts 2634 through 2641).

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$4,136,000 for the Office of Ethics.

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND ECONOMICS

Appropriations, 2019	\$800,000
Budget estimate, 2020	800,000
Committee recommendation	800,000

The Office of the Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics provides direction and coordination in carrying out the laws enacted by the Congress for food and agricultural research, education, extension, and economic and statistical information. The Office has oversight and management responsibilities for the Agricultural Research Service [ARS]; National Institute of Food and Agriculture [NIFA]; Economic Research Service [ERS]; and National Agricultural Statistics Service [NASS].

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$800,000 for the Office of the Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics.

Hemp.—The Committee is aware of statements made by the Department acknowledging the eligibility of researchers participating in hemp pilot programs, as defined by Section 7606 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–79) to compete for Federal funds awarded by the Department. The Committee directs the Department to work with and inform stakeholders of this eligibility and to support hemp research, as authorized by Section 7606 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–79) and Subtitle G of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946.

Honeybee and Pollinator Research.—The Committee recognizes the important role of both native and managed pollinators within the U.S. agriculture sector and notes that the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Public Law 115–334) called for enhanced coordination of honeybee and pollinator research. The Committee is aware that honeybees and pollinators continue to face mounting challenges, including disease and habitat loss, and the Committee believes that research and education are key to maintaining a healthy honeybee and pollinator population. The Committee directs the Secretary to prioritize research and work on pollinator health and to continue to gather data on an annual basis with respect to the losses of such colonies, rising input costs, and pollinators' overall economic value to the food economy.

U.S. Dairy Education and Training.—The Committee encourages NIFA to work cooperatively with State-run universities in the southwest with experience in bringing together students and young dairy professionals from multiple States in summer programs de-

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signed to provide practical dairy teaching, with the goal of facilitating research into workforce safety and antimicrobial stewardship.

ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE

Appropriations, 2019	\$86,757,000
Budget estimate, 2020	60,500,000
Committee recommendation	86,757,000

The Economic Research Service [ERS] provides economic and other social science research and analysis for public and private decisions on agriculture, food, the environment, and rural America. The information that ERS produces is available to the general public and helps the executive and legislative branches develop, administer, and evaluate agricultural and rural policies and programs.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$86,757,000 for the Economic Research Service.

Agricultural Commodity Trade.—The Committee recognizes the economic importance of international trade for U.S. agricultural commodities and believes that producers and markets would benefit from having access to additional data on the country of destination or origin of those commodities. Therefore, the Committee directs ERS to report on a quarterly basis the top five agricultural commodity exports and imports by State and to identify the country of destination or origin of those commodities.

Feed Costs.—The Committee maintains funding provided in fiscal year 2019 for ERS to expand its current feed cost components surveys nationally.

Organic Data Analysis.—The organic industry has grown at a tremendous rate over the past several years, and accurate data for the production, pricing, and marketing of organic products is essential. Therefore, the Committee encourages ERS to continue and expand the efforts relating to organic data analysis.

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

Appropriations, 2019	\$174,517,000
Budget estimate, 2020	163,000,000
Committee recommendation	175,294,000

The National Agricultural Statistics Service [NASS] administers the Department's program of collecting and publishing current National, State, and county agricultural statistics. These statistics provide accurate and timely projections of current agricultural production and measures of the economic and environmental welfare of the agricultural sector which are essential for making effective policy, production, and marketing decisions. NASS also furnishes statistical services to other USDA and Federal agencies in support of their missions, and provides consulting, technical assistance, and training to developing countries.

NASS is also responsible for administration of the Census of Agriculture, which is taken every five years and provides comprehensive data on the agricultural economy, including the following: data on the number of farms, land use, production expenses, farm product values, value of land and buildings, farm size and characteristics of farm operators, market value of agricultural production sold, acreage of major crops, inventory of livestock and poultry, and farm irrigation practices.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$175,294,000 for the National Agricultural Statistics Service, of which \$45,300,000 is for the Census of Agriculture.

The Committee does not accept any proposed eliminations or reductions of ongoing activities, including Acreage, Crop Production and Grain Stocks; the Bee and Honey Program; the Chemical Use Data Series; the Floriculture Crops Report; and Fruit and Vegetable Reports. The funding provided will allow NASS to resume or begin compilation of these reports at the frequency levels assumed in fiscal year 2019, and NASS is directed to resume all of these reports immediately upon enactment of this act.

Barley Estimates.—The Committee is encouraged that NASS has reinstated acreage and production estimates for barley in States that were previously discontinued in 2016 and 2017. The Committee expects NASS to continue providing barley acreage and production estimates for those States.

Chemical Use Data Series.—The Committee believes that the Chemical Use Data Series provides timely, valuable information on fertilizer and chemical use data on major field crops and selected specialty crops. The Committee encourages the National Agricultural Statistics Service NASS to continue funding the collection and analysis of chemical use data as well as practices such as integrated pest management. The Committee supports the NASS effort to resume collecting Fruit Chemical Use data and Vegetable Chemical Use data in alternating years and also directs the continuation of this practice to ensure equal access to Federal statistics.

Floriculture Crops Report.—The Committee recognizes the importance of the Floriculture Crops Report and recommends an increase of \$500,000 for NASS to complete the report. The Committee directs NASS to include data from Alaska in compiling the report.

Organic Data Initiative.—The Committee encourages NASS and AMS to coordinate activities related to expanding organic price reporting and organic data collection.

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

Appropriations, 2019	\$1,303,266,000
Budget estimate, 2020	1,203,491,000
Committee recommendation	1,424,966,000

The Agricultural Research Service [ARS] is responsible for conducting basic, applied, and developmental research through its major program areas of New Products/Product Quality/Value Added; Livestock/Crop Production; Food Safety; Livestock/Crop Protection; Human Nutrition; and Environmental Stewardship. The research applies to a wide range of goals; commodities; natural resources; fields of science; and geographic, climatic, and environmental conditions.

ARS is also responsible for the Abraham Lincoln National Agricultural Library which provides agricultural information and library services through traditional library functions and modern

electronic dissemination to agencies of the USDA, public and private organizations, and individuals.

As the USDA's in-house agricultural research unit, ARS has major responsibilities for conducting and leading the national agricultural research effort. It provides initiative and leadership in five areas: research on broad regional and national problems, research to support Federal action and regulatory agencies, expertise to meet national emergencies, research support for international programs, and scientific resources to the Executive Branch and Congress.

The mission of ARS research is to develop and transfer solutions to agricultural problems of high national priority and provide information access and dissemination to ensure high-quality, safe food and other agricultural products; assess the nutritional needs of Americans; sustain a competitive agricultural economy; enhance the natural resource base and the environment; and provide economic opportunities for rural citizens, communities, and society as a whole.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$1,424,966,000 for salaries and expenses of the Agricultural Research Service. The Committee does not concur with the President's budget request regarding the termination of research programs and laboratory closures. The Committee expects extramural research to be funded at no less than the fiscal year 2019 levels.

Aerial Application Research.—The Committee recognizes the importance of the ARS Aerial Application Technology Program. The program conducts innovative research making aerial applications more efficient, effective, and precise. Research for aerial application serves the public good as a vital tool for the future, as agriculture strives to meet the food, fiber, and bio-energy demands of a growing population.

Agricultural Genomics.—The Committee provides no less than the fiscal year 2019 level for agricultural genomic research to expand the knowledge of public and private sector entities and persons concerning genomes for species of importance to the food and agriculture sectors in order to maximize the return on the investment in genomics of agriculturally important species.

Agroforestry.—Agroforestry can provide on-farm financial and environmental benefits while also addressing the regional and national-scale issues of clean water, wildlife habitat, and hypoxia. Agroforesters manage trees with crops, livestock, and pasture to combine the best of both agriculture and forestry. Recognizing the importance of agroforestry to farm practices and the environment, the Committee recommendation includes no less than the fiscal year 2019 level to develop integrated strategies to manage multifunctional agricultural landscapes that combine trees with agricultural and horticultural crops, forages, and grazing livestock for optimal economic, environmental, and natural resources benefits.

Alfalfa Research.—The Committee notes that research into alfalfa seed and alfalfa forage systems holds the potential to increase yields, increase milk production, and improve genetics, and the Committee recommendation includes an increase of \$1,000,000 to

support research focused on alfalfa improvement. Research should focus on using tools to accelerate and enhance existing breeding programs focused on improving yield and quality parameters; developing innovative harvesting and utilization systems; developing new markets for co-products; and quantifying environmental benefits from alfalfa-based systems.

Alternative Technologies for Animal Waste Utilization.—The Committee provides \$1,500,000 for the National Soil Dynamics Laboratory to conduct research and development of technologies to recover phosphorus from manure, transform manure into secondary byproducts, and find alternative, environmentally safe, and economical usages of manure. The research may also explore environmentally safe methods and appropriate rates of manure application for growing crops and vegetables and the development of alternative feedstock for livestock by raising aquatic zooplanktons on manure wastewater.

Aquaculture Seedstock.—The Committee remains concerned that vital seedstock to support the development of aquaculture in Federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico will be sourced from foreign aquaculture producers. Domestic on-land recirculating aquaculture systems are highly capable of producing seedstock to support significant domestic on-land and offshore aquaculture industry growth including through broodstock acquisition and care, spawning, larval culture techniques. Therefore, the Committee encourages USDA to continue working collaboratively with U.S. aquaculture producers and research institutions that specialize in the development of aquaculture technologies and provides an additional \$1,000,000 for the development of aquaculture technology that will ensure a steady supply of warm water marine fish seedstock for economic growth of the U.S. aquaculture industry.

Atlantic Salmon Breeding Program.—The Committee directs ARS to continue its Atlantic salmon breeding and domestication work. The Committee notes that domestic salmon farms are required to only use strains of salmon that are of North American origin and that these strains need substantial breeding improvement in order to be competitive with strains currently used by foreign producers. The Committee notes that the current ARS Atlantic salmon breeding program lacks a geneticist and supports efforts by the Department to address this need.

Blueberry Breeding.—The Committee provides \$1,000,000 to fund a comprehensive national blueberry breeding research program to support research in the areas of physiology, horticulture, plant pathology, entomology, and fruit quality that complement breeding. The research will apply the latest tools in molecular breeding to blueberry improvement as well as developing cultivars suitable for machine harvesting.

Cattle Fever Ticks.—Cattle fever ticks pose a significant health threat to U.S. cattle and other species across the entire southern region of the U.S. The Committee provides \$1,000,000 for research to address the spread of cattle fever ticks.

Center for Pollinator Health.—The Committee is aware that bees play a crucial role in U.S. agriculture as pollinators and that continued colony loss poses a serious threat to future food production. While the Committee commends the Department for the steps it

has taken to better understand this problem and how to best address it, the Committee is concerned that the maximum benefits of multiagency efforts have yet to be achieved. The Committee provides an additional \$2,000,000 for the Center for Pollinator Health in order to provide a central Federal voice on pollinator health. The Committee encourages ARS to collaborate with Federal and land-grant university partners to examine the impact of pesticides, varroa mites, and other potential contributors to bee colony declines.

Ceratocystis Disease.—The Committee directs ARS to continue its study of *Ceratocystis* in the United States and implement actions and recommendations for response and management pursuant to Senate Report 115–131.

Chronic Wasting Disease.—The Committee recognizes the importance of a live test for cervids potentially affected with chronic wasting disease and provides an additional \$1,000,000 for research dedicated to the development of such test and research on pathways of transmission.

Citrus Greening Disease Research.—The Committee commends ARS on its research efforts on citrus greening disease and encourages the agency to continue working to develop methods to reduce transmission, enhance immunity in citrus trees, and work with industry, universities, growers, and other partners to develop effective control mechanisms. The Committee also encourages ARS to coordinate its efforts with the HuanglongbiAng Multi-Agency Coordination [HLB–MAC] group.

Cotton Blue Disease.—The Committee is aware that emerging Cotton Blue Disease identified in Southeastern States could have a devastating impact on the cotton industry if it continues to spread. The Committee provides \$5,000,000 and directs ARS to coordinate with APHIS, academic partners, and industry to develop a multi-State sentinel program with the purpose of conducting research to establish biomarkers for the disease and determine if there are viable extension management strategies pertaining to aphid control and general cotton management.

Cotton Ginning.—The Committee recognizes the importance of pollution abatement, improving fiber quality, ginning efficiency, cotton seed and other byproducts, and provides an additional \$500,000 to expand research in cotton ginning and innovation by existing laboratories.

Cover Crops Research and Outreach.—The Committee recognizes the importance of developing profitable and practicable cover crop options for use in dairy, grain, and vegetable production systems, including for use in no-till organic systems and as forages. Therefore, the Committee recommendation includes an additional \$750,000 to support research with the purposes of improving measures of soil health and resiliency; varietal development; optimizing dairy forage species combinations; timing and strategies for cover crop seeding and termination; forage integration into organic dairy systems, and mitigation of environmental and extreme rainfall impacts on water quality and soil security for diverse cover crop systems.

Cranberry Research.—The Committee recognizes the need for advancements in water conservation, pest control, disease reduction,

and fruit quality improvements in cranberry production. The Committee recommendation includes an increase of \$1,000,000 for the improvement of cranberry yields, pest management, disease management, and water resource management by developing fields devoted to cranberry research and collection and storage of samples for analysis in appropriate existing laboratory facilities.

East Coast Shellfish Breeding.—The Committee recognizes the dangers of parasites, bacterial and viral diseases to shellfish farmers and the importance of selective breeding to combat these infections. The Committee provides \$1,200,000 for shellfish breeding research focused on the East Coast.

Emerging Cereal Rust Diseases.—The Committee is aware that emerging cereal rust diseases are a threat to domestic and world food supplies. Therefore, the Department should continue to dedicate funding to speed efforts to combat cereal rust disease, including development of Ug99-resistant wheat varieties.

Feed Enhancement.—The Committee recognizes the potential benefits of using Bromoform [CHBR3], currently produced by *Asparagopsis taxiformis* (red seaweed), as a cattle feed enhancement to reduce pollution. The Committee includes no less than the fiscal year 2019 level for the Livestock Nutrient Management Research Unit [LNMRU] to examine the applicability and potential benefits of Bromoform, whether produced by *Asparagopsis taxiformis* or an alternative method, as a cattle feed enhancement.

Floriculture and Nursery Research.—The Committee recognizes the economic importance of the floriculture and nursery sector of agriculture and the industry's need for continued innovation. The Committee provides no less than the fiscal year 2019 funding level for ARS to support academic and Federal researchers to pursue efforts in crop protection, breeding, mechanization, and other areas through USDA's Floriculture and Nursery Research Initiative.

Food Systems.—The Committee recommendation includes an additional \$2,000,000 for ARS to support a Food Systems Center at a land-grant institution that addresses how local, regional, and global food systems can provide nutritious and culturally appropriate food, regardless of individual life circumstances.

Foodborne Pathogens.—*Salmonella* continues to cause serious disease in food animals and, via transmission through contaminated food products to people, remains the number one bacterial foodborne pathogen in humans. The Committee provides no less than the fiscal year 2019 level to develop non-antibiotic interventions to inhibit environmental movement of *Salmonella* between food animal species and to reduce the pathogen load in food animals themselves, using *Salmonella*-targeted viruses called bacteriophages, as well as prebiotic and probiotic supplements.

Forest Products.—The Committee recognizes the important role of the forests products sector to the U.S. economy. The need to create new and improved value-added products and renewable energy from our Nation's wood supply is critical to the sustainability of the national economy. The Committee recommendation includes no less than the fiscal year 2019 level to support research on wood product quality improvement and improvement in forest products evaluation standards and valuation techniques. ARS shall conduct this research in consultation with the Forest Products Laboratory.

Fruit Fly and Exotic Pest Control.—The Committee recommendation includes an additional \$1,000,000 to implement recommendations issued pursuant to Senate Report 115–131 to provide additional support and capacity to prevent the spread of fruit flies and other exotic pests to the U.S. mainland from the tropical Pacific.

Genetic Oat Research.—The Committee recognizes the potential genetic oat research has to improve disease resistance (especially rusts and viruses), genetics, increase yields, and develop crop rotation systems that include oats, which will enhance the value of oats and provide benefits to producers and consumers. The Committee includes an increase of \$2,500,000 to expand existing research focused on oat improvement.

Genomes to Fields.—The Committee recommendation includes no less than the fiscal year 2019 level to support the Germplasm Enhancement of Maize [GEM] project to complement the existing USDA maize germplasm programs and support the emerging large-scale public sector effort to investigate the interaction of maize genome variation and environments, known as the Genomes to Fields project.

Healthy Soils Initiative.—The Committee provides \$1,000,000 to support the study of enhanced food nutritional quality through Healthy Soil—Healthy Food—Healthy People Initiatives.

Hemp Germplasm.—The Committee recognizes the increasing demand for hemp for a variety of uses and its growing importance as a crop for U.S. farmers. When the Nation's hemp germplasm was destroyed in the 1980s, researchers lost access to publicly available germplasm for plant breeding purposes. The Committee directs ARS to establish and maintain a hemp germplasm repository at the Plant Genetics Research Unit and provides no less than the fiscal year 2019 level for this purpose.

Hemp Production Systems.—The Committee recognizes the emerging market potential for U.S. hemp and hemp-based products for a variety of uses. The Committee directs ARS to conduct regionally-driven research, development, and stakeholder engagement to improve agronomic and agro-economic understanding of effectively integrating hemp into existing agricultural cropping, processing, and marketing systems. The Committee provides \$2,500,000 for this purpose. Research, engagement, and technology transfer shall be conducted in strict accordance with all applicable Federal and State authorities and regulations.

High Performance Computing Support.—The Committee provides an additional \$3,000,000 to support high performance computing capability to address scientific needs and directs ARS to collaborate with appropriate partners with the technical capacity and scientific synergy to provide cost-effective high performance computing support.

Hops Research.—The Committee recommends no less than the fiscal year 2019 level to support hops research.

Human Nutrition Research.—Maintenance of health throughout the lifespan along with prevention of obesity and chronic diseases via food-based recommendations are the major emphases of human nutrition research. This research supports USDA's strategic goals of nutrition monitoring; the scientific basis for dietary recommendations; prevention of obesity and related diseases; and life

stage nutrition and metabolism, in order to better define the role of nutrition in pregnancy and growth of children and for healthier aging. The Committee includes an increase of \$1,000,000 to expand research regarding life stage nutrition and metabolism; and the growth, health promotion, disease prevention, diet, and immune function of the developing child, especially the rural child. The Committee also provides an increase of \$1,000,000 to address gaps in current ARS research at the critical intersection between agriculture and human nutrition and health.

Impact of Harmful Algal Bloom [HAB] on Aquaculture.—The Committee provides \$1,200,000 for the support of cooperative projects working on the toxicology of HABs including the algal species involved, the factors mediating toxin production or release, better detection methods, development of methods to predict release of toxins, and new biological or chemical approaches to manage harmful algal blooms in a cost-effective manner.

Livestock Genetic Research.—The Committee is aware of the promise that genetic engineering holds for addressing livestock animal diseases, welfare, and production. However, the inability to consistently produce genetically engineered “founder animals” in significant numbers represents the major bottle-neck for many promising animal biotechnologies. While the National Institutes of Health [NIH] have invested in such facilities for human biomedical research activities that produced needed mice, rats, and pigs, the USDA has not supported similar scale efforts. As such, the Committee provides \$2,000,000 to partner with a major university where genetic engineering expertise is already available and to contract for such services for swine models and encourages the USDA to leverage existing investments in this area made by the NIH.

Macadamia Tree Health Initiative.—The Macadamia Tree Health Initiative was authorized for the purpose of developing and disseminating science-based tools and treatments to combat the macadamia felted coccid. The Committee provides \$1,000,000 for this purpose.

National Agricultural Library.—The Committee strongly encourages ARS to maintain its focus on agriculture-related legal issues within the National Agricultural Library. The Committee notes that as the agriculture sector faces increasing financial stress, there is a necessity that agriculture-related legal issues be addressed on an increasingly frequent basis. Further, agriculture-related legal issues are increasingly complex and the impact of these legal issues continues to broaden in scope. Therefore, the Committee recommendation includes an additional \$3,000,000 for the National Agricultural Library to support the Agricultural Law Information Partnership.

National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility.—The Committee provides an additional \$41,100,000 for the continued transfer of the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility [NBAF] from the Department of Homeland Security [DHS] to USDA. The Committee reminds ARS of the detailed report (due April 2019) regarding NBAF requested in the fiscal year 2019 Senate report (S. Rept. 115-259).

Nutrition Research and Aging.—The Committee recognizes the critical importance of human nutrition research and its significance for preventative healthcare and degenerative and age-related dis-

eases. More research is needed to address the needs of all Americans, with a particular focus on the elderly, the fastest growing segment of the population. Therefore, ARS is directed to prioritize human nutrition research across the lifespan.

Pacific Shellfish Genetics and Breeding.—The Committee recognizes the economic importance of shellfish aquaculture for rural and coastal communities on the Pacific coast and the need for resilient, healthy genetic stocks that can withstand the region's changing ocean and coastal conditions as well as new disease threats. The Committee provides an increase of \$2,000,000 for a shellfish genetics and breeding program to develop genetically improved stock, promote enhanced disease resiliency, modernize production technologies, and transfer technology and improved stocks to shellfish farmers in Pacific States.

Pear Genetics and Genomics.—The Committee recognizes that research into pear genetics and genomics is needed to identify genetic sources of pest resistance and to contribute to improved, size-controlling rootstocks to enhance orchard efficiency, and to otherwise improve cultivated pear research. The Committee recommendation includes no less than the fiscal year 2019 level to support research into pear genetics and genomics.

Pollinator Recovery, Education and Research.—The Committee is aware that bees play a crucial role in U.S. agriculture as pollinators and that colony loss poses a serious threat to future food production. The Committee provides \$1,500,000 for the creation of a Pollinator Recovery, Education, and Research Center to be located within Central Appalachia that enjoys diverse deciduous forests, a number of micro-climates, and pristine environment with abundant nectar sources that would be conducive to restoring and nurturing pollinators.

Postharvest Dairy Research.—The Committee recognizes the importance of developing solutions to address agricultural postharvest inefficiencies to conserve limited resources and feed a growing population. The Committee provides no less than the fiscal year 2019 level for research to develop postharvest technologies that decrease waste and improve resource use of protein, fat, and sugar in dairy processing.

Potato Research.—The Committee provides \$1,000,000 for the development of new management strategies for potato storage that will maintain potato quality, reduce grower and processor losses, and increase profits.

Poultry Production Technology Development.—The Committee recognizes the need for advancement in poultry processing as a result of increased global competition. The Committee recommendation includes \$3,000,000 to support cooperative research focused on advancing domestic poultry production and processing through the development of a technology-driven, multidisciplinary approach that will increase innovation and discovery, particularly around animal welfare, food safety, labor and environmental protection.

Poultry Research.—The Committee recognizes the important role of the poultry sector to the U.S. economy. The Committee provides no less than the fiscal year 2019 level to expand the research capacity for poultry production and health.

Precision Agriculture.—The Committee is encouraged by the efforts of ARS to develop precision agriculture research grants. These grants increase the resilience of agricultural food systems by conducting research on data-driven sustainable farm management. The Committee encourages ARS to continue working collaboratively with research institutions to spur agricultural and technological innovation.

Precision Aquaculture.—The Committee recognizes that land-based, closed-containment aquaculture provides the capacity to raise freshwater or marine species in any locale with minimal environmental impacts. Implementing precision agriculture technologies in these systems will increase production efficiencies and profitability, ultimately increasing capacity for meeting the seafood demands of U.S. consumers through responsible and sustainable domestic aquaculture production. The Committee provides an additional \$1,000,000 to implement precision aquaculture in land-based, closed-containment aquaculture systems.

Precision Viticulture for Premium Grapes.—The Committee recognizes the rapid growth in demand for premium wine and the industry's concurrent benefits in terms of helping numerous rural communities generate new tourism and tax revenue. Relevant stakeholders have identified precision viticulture and decision support systems as the preferred path to improving grape productivity and quality. The Committee provides \$1,000,000 for a collaborative research program focused on precision viticulture for premium grapes and wine and to support existing ARS viticulture and enology research programs.

Predictive Modeling Tools.—The Committee supports efforts to develop sustainable agricultural production systems for crops through the use of forecasting tools that incorporate post-harvest soil testing and in-season monitoring of plant pathogens to combat crop diseases. The Committee provides \$7,000,000 for ARS to work with Federal and land-grant university partners in order to develop predictive modeling tools that aid farm management decisions to improve agricultural production of row crops.

Pulse Crop Quality.—The Committee recognizes the importance of ARS wheat quality laboratories in researching and advancing the quality and overall utilization of wheat and pulse crops. The Committee provides \$1,000,000 to further these efforts for pulse crops by establishing quality analysis standards, developing innovative production processes, and evaluating crop varieties for product functionality and market suitability.

Pulse Health Initiative.—The Committee supports the expansion of pulse crop research and provides an additional \$1,000,000 to enhance scientific research into the health and nutritional benefits of dry peas, lentils, chickpeas, and dry beans.

Rangeland Research.—The Committee recognizes the demonstrated potential for cooperative partnerships to address complex sagebrush steppe ecosystem challenges in the Great Basin region. The Committee recommendation includes no less than the fiscal year 2019 level for ARS to support a regional, multi-institutional cooperative partnership to advance collaborative science-based conservation research, extension, and education to address time-sen-

sitive and shared rangeland challenges affecting sustainable agricultural productivity, rural communities, and ecosystem health.

Research Assistance.—The Committee encourages ARS to provide direct, place-based assistance to 1862 Institutions in States that do not have ARS facilities to address the research priorities of such States, such as invasive plant species and insects that cause significant impacts to agriculture, aquaculture, and communities in such States and to assist in the development of specialty and horticultural crops to increase food security and expand marketing opportunities for small farmers. The Committee directs ARS to submit a report on the prospective options of such assistance.

Research Facilities.—The Committee understands the importance of ARS laboratories and the need for continued improvement. The Committee directs ARS to evaluate its capital asset requirements for necessary coordination with ongoing and emerging research opportunities. As part of this evaluation, ARS should provide opportunity for public comment in order to incorporate the priorities of all interested stakeholders, including ARS and other scientists, and users of ARS data.

Resilient Dryland Farming.—The Committee recognizes the need for advancements in dryland production practices, cropping, and equipment to increase profitability, conserve the soil, enhance soil water storage, promote soil health, and decrease reliance on herbicides. The Committee provides no less than the fiscal year 2019 level to expand research focused on resilient dryland farming. Research should focus on improving yield and quality parameters; developing cropping systems capable of tolerating drought, heat, and diseases; and quantifying economic and environmental benefits from dryland crop production systems.

Roseau Cane.—The Committee remains concerned with the invasive species scale insect pest that is destroying Roseau cane in the Mississippi River's Delta region along the Gulf of Mexico. An estimated 225,000 acres of wetlands in the Delta have been affected with the die-off, and Roseau cane is important in maintaining a healthy marsh and preventing erosion. The Committee directs ARS to continue to work with the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service [APHIS] and stakeholders to develop an integrated management program for control of the Roseau cane scale insect pest infestation.

Sclerotinia.—The Committee is aware of the economic importance of controlling sclerotinia, which affects sunflowers, soybeans, canola, edible beans, peas, and lentils and encourages ARS to continue both core research and cooperative projects of the National Sclerotinia Initiative.

Shrimp Production Research.—The Committee recognizes the importance of increasing domestic shrimp production and provides \$1,000,000 for research and commercial development of production technologies that will improve shrimp health and streamline feed management regimes.

Small Farm Orchard Production Current Research Information System [CRIS] Unit.—Development of low-cost technology and innovative production strategies for small farm fruit growers that enables profitable operations on a variety of lands, including reclaimed mines, increases overall fruit quality, reduces production

costs, and increases economic and ecological sustainability is critically needed. The Committee provides \$1,000,000 for the purpose of implementing a Small Farm Orchard Production CRIS. The Small Farm Orchard Production CRIS Unit would generate knowledge and technologies required to meet the challenges of successful small farm orchard operations located in rural and urban renewal locations.

Small Fruits.—The Committee recognizes the need to support research to promote sustainable and organic production of berry and grape crops with the goal of reducing pesticide use and improving quality and yield. The Committee provides an additional \$2,500,000 to support research to improve the ability to forecast pest and disease spread, implement precision management strategies, and to improve the overall quality of fruit.

Small Grains Genomic Initiative.—The Committee supports research on barley and wheat high throughput genomics and phenotyping and recognizes its importance in improving crop traits and developing new cultivars. The Committee recommendation includes an additional \$1,000,000 to support the Small Grains Genomic Initiative.

Smoke Exposure.—The Committee is concerned about the impacts of wildfire smoke on winegrape producers and supports research to help growers and processors establish science-based threshold levels of smoke compounds that cause smoke-tainted grapes, identify the compounds responsible for smoke taints, develop mitigation methods to reduce or eliminate smoke taint, and conduct research into compounds that can act as a barrier between the grapes and the smoke compounds. The Committee provides \$5,000,000 for this research.

Soft White Wheat Falling Numbers Test.—The Committee recognizes the emerging crisis surrounding wheat starch degradation, as detected by the Hagberg-Perten Falling Numbers [FN] Test. The quality loss was particularly devastating to Pacific Northwest soft white wheat producers in late 2016. The Committee recommendation includes no less than the fiscal year 2019 funding level to research the accuracy of the FN test and better understand environmental, storage, and genetic conditions leading to this quality loss.

Sorghum Genetic Database.—The Committee recognizes the importance of phenotyping and genotyping that allows breeders to understand which genes are responsible for improvements in pest resistance, drought tolerance, and yield. The Committee recommends no less than the fiscal year 2019 level to further facilitate the partnership between ARS and the Department of Energy on sorghum genome mapping, particularly the creation of an easily-accessed database to house the information generated from the ongoing genetic sequencing research which will facilitate further crop development efforts, especially in combating the sugarcane aphid, a new and devastating invasive pest.

Sudden Oak Death.—The European strain 1 [EU1] and the North American strain 1 [NA1] of the sudden oak death pathogen are major threats to western Douglas-fir/tanoak forests, resulting in quarantine restrictions that threaten U.S. forests and export markets for log shipments and lily bulbs. The Committee recommendation includes no less than the fiscal year 2019 level for re-

search to improve understanding of the European Strain 1 and North American Strain 1 of the sudden oak death pathogen and treatment methods to inform control and management techniques in wildlands.

Sugar Beet Research.—The Committee provides an additional \$1,000,000 for plant disease research to improve the quality of sugar beet production.

Sugarcane Variety Development.—The Committee recognizes the devastating impact wrought by invasive pests on the domestic sugarcane industry and provides an additional \$1,000,000 to support the development of new pest and disease-resistant varieties.

Sustainable Aquaculture.—The Committee notes that aquaculture is the fastest growing food production industry in the world. The Committee provides \$3,000,000 for a pilot Aquaculture Experiment Station in partnership with universities to support rapid response research on sustainable aquaculture for coldwater and warmwater production environments, with special emphasis on workforce education.

Sustainable Water Use Research.—The alluvial plain within the Lower Mississippi River Basin is one of most productive agricultural regions in the United States. The Committee remains concerned with the unsustainable use of water in the Alluvial Aquifer as a result of increasing water withdrawals and stagnant recharging. The Committee provides an additional \$1,000,000 for research to improve the recharge capabilities of the Alluvial Aquifer and to develop new conservation and irrigation techniques to reduce water usage in agriculture production.

Tree Fruit Post-Harvest Research.—The Committee recognizes that tree fruit production, including pear and cherry, is a predominant supplier for domestic and international markets. The Committee further recognizes that the tree fruit industry faces significant economic vulnerability from variations in post-harvest quality control. The Committee provides an increase of \$1,300,000 for pear and cherry tree fruit research to optimize yield and post-harvest quality, extend storage life, and promote enhanced resiliency from endemic and emerging diseases.

Tropical and Subtropical Research.—Research on Tropical and Subtropical crops is critical as the presence of and destruction by invasive pests such as fruit flies, coffee berry borer, felted macadamia nut coccid, and plant viruses and fungal diseases increasingly threaten crop security in the Pacific and Insular Areas, and the Committee encourages ARS to support this research.

UAS Precision Agriculture Applications.—The Committee provides no less than the fiscal year 2019 level to support efforts utilizing unmanned aerial systems [UAS] in crop production operations and to address the challenges associated with data capture, transfer and analysis.

U.S. Wheat and Barley Scab Initiative [USWBSI].—The Committee recognizes that fusarium head blight is a major threat to agriculture, inflicting substantial yield and quality losses throughout the U.S. The Committee supports research carried out through the USWBSI. The Committee recommendation includes an additional \$5,500,000 to conduct further research on reducing the impact of fusarium head blight on wheat and barley.

Warmwater Aquaculture.—The Committee provides no less than the fiscal year 2019 level to facilitate the advancement of technologies that improve the efficiency, profitability, and sustainability of warmwater aquaculture production.

Wheat and Sorghum Research.—The Committee recognizes the potential impact heat and drought can have on the yield and quality of wheat and sorghum and the need for new cultivars to adapt to changing climatic conditions. In addition, sorghum crops have been particularly hit hard by the invasive sugarcane aphid and new resistant cultivars are needed. The Committee provides an additional \$650,000 for research to improve the productivity and quality of wheat and sorghum during uncertain growing seasons resulting from extended droughts and increased temperatures. Within this increase, funding is included to initiate gene flow research to advance the durability and sustainability of fitness traits in sorghum.

BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES

Appropriations, 2019	\$381,200,000
Budget estimate, 2020	50,000,000
Committee recommendation	304,800,000

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$304,800,000 for Agricultural Research Service, Buildings and Facilities.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Section 7511(f)(2) of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Public Law 110–234) amends the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6971) by establishing an agency to be known as the National Institute of Food and Agriculture [NIFA]. The Secretary transferred to the Director of NIFA, effective October 1, 2009, all authorities administered by the Administrator of the Cooperative State, Research, Education and Extension Service. The mission is to work with university partners and customers to advance research, extension, and higher education in the food and agricultural sciences and related environmental and human sciences to benefit people, communities, and the Nation.

RESEARCH AND EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

Appropriations, 2019	\$927,649,000
Budget estimate, 2020	974,715,000
Committee recommendation	937,649,000

Research and Education programs administered by NIFA are USDA's principal entrée to the university system of the United States for the purpose of conducting agricultural research and education programs as authorized by the Hatch Act of 1887, as amended (7 U.S.C. 361a–361i); the McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Act of 1962, as amended (Public Law 87–788); the Competitive, Special, and Facilities Research Grant Act, as amended (Public Law 89–106); the National Agricultural, Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, as amended (Public Law 95–113); the

Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 301 note); the Agricultural Research, Extension and Education Reform Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-185), as amended; the Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-624); the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-171); and the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-246). Through these authorities, USDA participates with State and other cooperators to encourage and assist the State institutions in conducting of agricultural research and education through the State Agricultural Experiment Stations of the 50 States and the territories; by approved Schools of Forestry; the 1890 Land-Grant Institutions and Tuskegee University and West Virginia State University; 1994 Land-Grant Institutions; by Colleges of Veterinary Medicine; and other eligible institutions. The appropriated funds provide Federal support for research and education programs at these institutions.

The research and education programs participate in a nationwide system of agricultural research program planning and coordination among the State institutions, USDA, and the agricultural industry of America.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$937,649,000 for research and education activities of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

The following table summarizes the Committee's recommendations for research and education activities:

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE—RESEARCH AND EDUCATION ACTIVITIES
[Dollars in thousands]

Program/Activity	Authorization	Committee recommendation
Hatch Act	7 U.S.C. 361a-i	259,000
McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Act	16 U.S.C. 582a through a-7	36,000
Research at 1890 Institutions (Evans-Allen Program)	7 U.S.C. 3222	58,000
Payments to the 1994 Institutions	534(a)(1) of Public Law 103-382 ..	3,439
Education Grants for 1890 Institutions	7 U.S.C. 3152(b)	19,336
Education Grants for Hispanic-Serving Institutions	7 U.S.C. 3241	9,219
Education Grants for Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions	7 U.S.C. 3156	3,194
Research Grants for 1994 Institutions	536 of Public Law 103-382	3,801
Capacity Building for Non Land-Grant Colleges of Agriculture	7 U.S.C. 3319i	5,000
Resident Instruction and Distance Education Grants for Insular Areas	7 U.S.C. 3362 and 3363	2,000
Agriculture and Food Research Initiative	7 U.S.C. 450i(b)	425,000
Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment	7 U.S.C. 3151a	8,000
Veterinary Services Grant Program	7 U.S.C. 3151b	3,000
Continuing Animal Health and Disease Research Program	7 U.S.C. 3195	4,000
Supplemental and Alternative Crops	7 U.S.C. 3319d	1,000
Multicultural Scholars, Graduate Fellowship and Institutions Challenge Grants	7 U.S.C. 3152(b)	9,000
Secondary and 2-year Post-Secondary Education	7 U.S.C. 3152(j)	900
Aquaculture Centers	7 U.S.C. 3322	5,000
Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education	7 U.S.C. 5811, 5812, 5831, and 5832	37,000
Farm Business Management	7 U.S.C. 5925f	2,000
Sun Grant Program	7 U.S.C. 8114	3,000
Minor Crop Pest Management (IR-4)	7 U.S.C. 450i(c)	11,913
Alfalfa Forage and Research Program	7 U.S.C. 5925	3,000

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE—RESEARCH AND EDUCATION ACTIVITIES—
Continued
[Dollars in thousands]

Program/Activity	Authorization	Committee recommendation
Special Research Grants:		
Global Change/UV Monitoring	7 U.S.C. 450i(c)	1,405
Potato Research	7 U.S.C. 450i(c)	2,750
Aquaculture Research	7 U.S.C. 450i(c)	2,000
Total, Special Research Grants		6,155
Necessary Expenses of Research and Education Activities:		
Grants Management System		7,830
Federal Administration—Other Necessary Expenses for Research and Education Activities.		11,862
Total, Necessary Expenses		19,692
Total, Research and Education Activities		937,649

Agricultural Research Enhancement Awards.—The Committee remains determined to see that quality research and enhanced human resources development in the agricultural and related sciences be a nationwide commitment. Therefore, the Committee continues its direction that not less than 15 percent of the competitive research grant funds be used for USDA's agricultural research enhancement awards program, including USDA Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research [EPSCOR].

Agriculture and Food Research Initiative.—The Committee recommendation includes \$425,000,000 for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative [AFRI].

Section 7406 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Public Law 110–234) specifies priority areas within AFRI, including an emphasis on conventional (classical) plant and animal breeding. The Committee strongly supports providing farmers nationwide with greater access to cultivars that are locally and regionally adapted to their soils, climates, and farming systems. The Committee is concerned that insufficient progress is being made in prioritizing this effort. As such, the Committee directs the agency to make regionally adapted, publicly held cultivar development a distinct funding priority within AFRI for fiscal year 2020 and directs the agency to take steps to improve its tracking of public cultivar projects within AFRI and report its progress in meeting this goal.

Agriculture Technology.—The Committee encourages USDA to support research and development of agricultural robotics, particularly to increase yields in vertically stacked farming production.

Alfalfa and Forage Research.—The Committee notes that research into alfalfa and forage holds the potential to increase alfalfa and forage yields, increase milk production, and improve genetics. The Committee recommendation includes funding to support research into the improvement of yields, water conservation, creation of new uses, and other research areas holding the potential to advance the alfalfa seed and alfalfa forage industry.

Algae Applications in Agriculture Research.—The Committee encourages NIFA to support research on algae and algae application in agriculture.

Aquaculture Disease Research.—The Committee encourages USDA to support aquaculture disease and vaccine research, including research on coldwater aquaculture vaccines. There is currently no national facility for pathogen testing. Research into finfish vaccines and pathogens has the potential to accelerate the growth of sustainable U.S. aquaculture, reduce the trade deficit attributable to imported seafood, and reduce the pressure on overfished species.

Aquaculture Research.—The Committee recognizes the importance of the domestic aquaculture industry to the U.S. economy. The Committee recommendation includes \$2,000,000 for aquaculture research to address issues related to genetics, disease, systems, and economics.

Binational Agricultural Research and Development.—The Committee is supportive of the activities carried out under the Binational Agricultural Research and Development [BARD] Fund and recognizes that this collaboration is of mutual benefit to the United States and Israel. BARD research projects have contributed significantly to both the U.S. and Israeli economies. The Committee is aware that NIFA signed a new Memorandum of Understanding with BARD in December 2018, which establishes the framework under which the participants will cooperate to promote collaboration among U.S. and Israeli scientists and engineers. The Committee encourages NIFA to leverage all possible funding streams to support BARD activities.

Brucellosis Research.—Federal and State animal health officials have made eradicating livestock disease with significant reservoirs a national animal health priority. This need was reflected in the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–79), which made the research and development of surveillance methods, vaccines, vaccination delivery systems, or diagnostics tests a priority research area under the Competitive, Special, and Facilities Research Grant Act (Public Law 89–106) particularly for bovine brucellosis and bovine tuberculosis. The Committee recognizes the need for this research and encourages the agency to make competitive grants available to study improved management tools for zoonotic livestock diseases with significant wildlife reservoirs.

Cereal Crop Research.—Research on cereal crops has historically been conducted by USDA and public universities, and the Committee recognizes the importance of continuing investment in cereal crop research. The Committee strongly encourages USDA to provide funding for cereal crop research in the areas of genetic and genomic research, plant pest research, and improved production systems.

Childhood Obesity.—The Committee encourages USDA to support innovative efforts to address the unique challenges faced in addressing obesity among children and youth in urban, minority low-income populations and remote areas among native and underserved populations through a combination of family education, community health promotion, and clinical studies.

Citrus Disease Research Program.—The Emergency Citrus Disease Research and Extension Program is intended to discover and

develop tools for early detection, control, and eradication of diseases and pests that threaten domestic citrus production and processing and is provided \$25,000,000 per year in mandatory funding through the Emergency Citrus Disease Research and Extension Trust Fund as authorized in the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-334). The Committee believes research projects funded under this authority should be prioritized based on the critical threat of citrus greening and encourages NIFA, to the maximum extent practicable, to follow the recommendations of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Advisory Board's citrus disease subcommittee and to collaborate with the HLB-MAC group.

Community College Centers of Excellence in Agribusiness Workforce Training.—The Committee encourages NIFA to designate Community College Centers of Excellence in Agribusiness Workforce Training, to include a limited number of two-year community and technical colleges with a demonstrated capability to provide training and education for Agribusiness. The Centers of Excellence will seek to develop model programs in Agribusiness and promote economic development.

Community Food Projects.—The Committee is concerned that large grocer recruitment remains a problem for many communities, particularly those experiencing higher rates of abandoned or vacant homes, and encourages the Department to explore innovative approaches to address access to nutritional food options in urban food deserts. The Committee encourages NIFA to explore the development of community-wide urban agriculture projects that assist in eliminating vacant properties while providing the communities with much-needed fresh produce.

Countering Seafood Fraud.—The Committee remains concerned about countering economic fraud and improving food safety of the U.S. food supply. The Committee is concerned that adequate technology is not yet available to provide for appropriate sampling of the food supply. The Committee believes NIFA should conduct research to develop technologies that will provide rapid, portable, and facile screening of fish species at port sites, wholesale, and retail centers.

Diversification in Agriculture.—The Committee recognizes the rapid evolution of U.S. agriculture, including the diversification of practices, markets, and technologies as farms transition to one generation from another, and encourages NIFA to prioritize investments that deliver hands-on technical education in diversified agriculture and food systems and support technical colleges seeking to establish beginning farmer programs serving diversified agriculture, and aid in supporting farm viability.

Dual Use/Dual Benefit.—The Dual Purpose with Dual Benefit: Research in Biomedicine and Agriculture Using Agriculturally Important Domestic Species is an interagency partnership grants program funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHD] and USDA. The Committee strongly urges continuation of this partnership because it sponsors use of farm animals as dual purpose models to better understand developmental origins of disease, fat regulation and obesity, stem cell biology, assisted reproductive technologies, and infectious disease,

which directly benefits both agriculture and biomedicine. This program also strengthens ties between human medicine, veterinary medicine, and animal sciences, which is key to success of the One Health Initiative.

Food Safety.—The Committee recommends that NIFA prioritize research on funding for new food safety technologies relating to the Nation’s meat supply that helps researchers, producers, and manufacturers.

Food Safety and Defense Technology.—The Committee is concerned that insufficient progress is being made in the development of detection technology in the food safety sector. The ability to rapidly, accurately, and cost effectively detect pathogens or contaminants throughout the food supply chain is critical to protecting the United States from food-borne illnesses and malicious acts. As such, the Committee encourages NIFA to increase research of novel biodetection technologies and the implementation of mobile biodetection platforms in real-world conditions. The Department should consider technologies currently in use or under development in other fields, such as medicine or homeland security, to determine whether the technology can meet the needs in either high volume food production or mobile food defense monitoring.

Foodborne Illness Prevention.—The Committee understands the significant threats to public health and to the economic viability of communities impacted by foodborne illness and believes that coordinated and targeted resources are needed to understand the risks and to develop effective strategies for control. The Committee continues to encourage NIFA, in coordination with the FDA, to establish a Center of Excellence for Foodborne Illness to coordinate a research program to reduce the risk of *Listeria monocytogenes*.

Genomes to Phenomes.—The Committee is supportive of the multi-university crop research initiative known as Genomes to Phenomes and encourages NIFA to support the development of tools and datasets that can be used across multiple crop species to improve the output and efficiency of agriculture.

Lowbush Blueberries.—The Committee directs NIFA to work with research institutions to develop and refine predictive models and monitoring technologies for native and invasive pests for incorporation into integrated pest management programs for naturally seeded, native berry crops to increase the margin of food safety and product quality.

Multi-Trophic Aquaculture Research.—Nearly half the seafood consumed across the world is the result of aquaculture, and the aquaculture industry is a critical and growing part of the U.S. economy. However, less than one percent of worldwide production comes from U.S. producers. The Committee is concerned that inefficient production technologies hinder the ability of the domestic aquaculture industry to compete on a global scale. The Committee supports development and demonstration of an integrated aquaculture system that would contain at one site a highly competitive and sustainable system having a low environmental footprint and be primarily self-contained. The Committee supports the development of a “Beta” model that would focus on developing, building, operating, demonstrating, and teaching around this intensified, in-

tegrated, bio-secure production technology for feed, fish-plant, and energy products.

Oak Mites.—The Committee directs NIFA to study the recent infestation of oak mites and focus on suppression and eradication possibilities.

Organic Research.—USDA's National Organic Standards Board [NOSB] has identified key organic research priorities, many of which would help to address challenges that have limited the growth in organic production in this country. The Committee encourages NIFA to give strong consideration to the NOSB organic research priorities when crafting the fiscal year 2020 Request for Applications [RFA] for AFRI and the Organic Transition Program. Given the growing demand for organic products, the Committee also encourages USDA to increase the number of organic research projects funded under AFRI and Specialty Crop Research Initiative [SCRI].

Protein Functionality.—The Committee encourages USDA to support research projects that characterize protein from crop plants such as chickpeas, sorghum, lentils, fava beans, lupin, rice, oats, mushrooms, and water lentils to assess their suitability for use in food products. The Committee is particularly interested in research projects involving plants that can be easily cultivated in the U.S. and that are sustainably grown and produced, such as water usage or fertilizer and pesticide requirements.

Public Plant and Animal Breeding.—The Committee is concerned about the decline in public plant and animal breeding programs at our Nation's land-grant institutions over the last 25 years and encourages LGUs to take steps to foster the next generation of public plant and animal breeders by placing a higher priority on the development of publicly available, regionally adapted cultivars and breeds. For all regions of our Nation to optimize their productive capacity in an environmentally sustainable manner, it is critical that the farmers of the region have access to the most up-to-date cultivars and breeds to meet ever-changing conditions.

Regional Research Priorities.—The Committee encourages NIFA to consider providing funding within AFRI to assist with State and regional research priorities, with USDA oversight and review.

Risk Management Education.—The Committee supports the recent expansion of the Risk Management Education Program to include educating farmers and providing technical assistance on a wide range of farm viability and risk management activities. The Committee notes the increase in mandatory funding provided by the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Public Law 115–334) for this program, and, in light of that increase, encourages NIFA to raise the maximum grant size in order to accommodate a wider range of project types and scopes. The Committee also urges NIFA to develop a process to support regional, multi-regional, and national projects, which would require a separate larger maximum grant size.

Seafood.—The Committee encourages USDA, in partnership with universities with established domestic shrimp farming programs, to support the development of a domestic industry that will help ensure the safety and quality of the Nation's seafood supply, promote environmentally sustainable aquaculture, create new opportunities

for U.S. agriculture, and forge new markets for U.S. grain and oil-seed products and technology services.

Small Fruits Research.—The Committee encourages USDA to support research to promote sustainable production of berry and grape crops with the goal of reducing pesticide use and improving quality and yield. Additionally, the Committee encourages USDA to support research to improve the ability to forecast pest and disease spread and implement precision management strategies.

Specialty Crop Research Initiative.—The Committee emphasizes the important role of the Specialty Crop Research Initiative in addressing the critical needs of the specialty crop industry through research and extension activities. The Committee encourages NIFA to prioritize proposals for and enhance its overall commitment to identifying and addressing threats to pollinators from pests and diseases and the ability of farmers to extend their growing season through the use of winter growing techniques, including but not limited to high tunnel vegetable production.

Supplemental and Alternative Crops.—The Committee recognizes the importance of nationally coordinated, regionally managed canola research and extension programs. The Committee encourages the Secretary to continue to seek input from stakeholders and to give priority consideration to proposals in the peer review process that address research needs in production areas with the greatest potential to expand, as well as those where canola production is established and needs to be maintained.

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education [SARE].—The Committee is strongly supportive of the SARE program and directs USDA to ensure that research, education and extension activities carried out within SARE remain intact.

The Committee believes that it is important for NIFA to evaluate the performance of each of its regional SARE Host Institutions on a regular basis; however, the Committee is concerned that the recent change in practice for NIFA to broadly solicit competitive Host Institution proposals at least every five years may interfere with the ability of the regional Host to retain qualified staff, and to establish a stable operating base, hindering rather than enhancing SARE program delivery. Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall report to the Committees on Appropriations on whether frequent open competitions for SARE Host Institutions optimizes the delivery of the SARE program, as compared to previous performance reviews and competitive solicitations that were performed every ten years.

Unmanned Aerial Systems in Agriculture.—The Committee encourages USDA to support regional institutes focused on the development of UAS and fostering new innovations in agriculture and cybersecurity. UAS is a tool to obtain data in a wide variety of application areas including energy, agriculture, power infrastructure, and transportation, all critical to rural States. The Committee encourages NIFA to support the research, development, and expansion of the use of UAS and high performance computing.

Veterinary Corps.—Veterinarians fulfilling the terms of a contract under USDA's Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program, authorized by the National Veterinary Medical Services Act, shall be members of the National Veterinary Medical Services

Corps and members who have fulfilled the terms of their contract shall be alumni of the Corps.

NATIVE AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS ENDOWMENT FUND

Appropriations, 2019	\$11,880,000
Budget estimate, 2020	11,857,000
Committee recommendation	11,880,000

The Native American Institutions Endowment Fund authorized by Public Law 103-382, the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act, provides an endowment for the 1994 land-grant institutions (34 tribally controlled colleges). This program will enhance educational opportunity for Native Americans by building educational capacity at these institutions in the areas of student recruitment and retention, curricula development, faculty preparation, instruction delivery systems, and scientific instrumentation for teaching. Income funds are also available for facility renovation, repair, construction, and maintenance. On the termination of each fiscal year, the Secretary shall withdraw the income from the endowment fund for the fiscal year, and after making adjustments for the cost of administering the endowment fund, distribute the adjusted income as follows: 60 percent of the adjusted income from these funds shall be distributed among the 1994 land-grant institutions on a pro rata basis, the proportionate share being based on the Indian student count; and 40 percent of the adjusted income shall be distributed in equal shares to the 1994 land-grant institutions.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$11,880,000 for the Native American Institutions Endowment Fund.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Appropriations, 2019	\$505,692,000
Budget estimate, 2020	415,274,000
Committee recommendation	509,082,000

Cooperative extension work was established by the Smith-Lever Act of May 8, 1914, as amended (Public Law 63-95). USDA is authorized to provide, through the land-grant colleges, cooperative extension work that consists of the development of practical applications of research knowledge and the giving of instruction and practical demonstrations of existing or improved practices or technologies in agriculture and related subjects, and to encourage the application of such information by demonstrations, publications, through 4-H clubs, and other means to persons not in attendance or resident at the colleges.

To fulfill the requirements of the Smith-Lever Act, State and county extension offices in each State, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Northern Marianas, and Micronesia conduct educational programs to improve American agriculture and strengthen the Nation's families and communities.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$509,082,000 for extension activities of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

The following table summarizes the Committee's recommendations for extension activities:

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE—EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

[Dollars in thousands]

Program/Activity	Authorization	Committee recommendation
Smith-Lever Act, Section 3(b) and (c) and Cooperative Extension ...	7 U.S.C. 343(b) and (c) and 208(c) of Public Law 93–471.	315,000
Extension Services at 1890 Institutions	7 U.S.C. 3221	48,620
Extension Services at 1994 Institutions	7 U.S.C. 343(b)(3)	6,446
Facility Improvements at 1890 Institutions	7 U.S.C. 3222b	19,730
Renewable Resources Extension Act.	16 U.S.C. 1671 et seq.	4,060
Rural Health and Safety Education Programs	7 U.S.C. 2662(i)	4,000
Food and Animal Residue Avoidance Database Program	7 U.S.C. 7642	2,500
Women and Minorities in STEM Fields	7 U.S.C. 5925	400
Food Safety Outreach Program	7 U.S.C. 7625	8,000
Food and Agriculture Service Learning	7 U.S.C. 7633	1,000
Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network	7 U.S.C. 5936	3,000
Smith-Lever Act, Section 3(d):		
Food and Nutrition Education	7 U.S.C. 343(d)	70,000
Farm Safety and Youth Farm Safety Education Programs	7 U.S.C. 343(d)	5,000
New Technologies for Agricultural Extension	7 U.S.C. 343(d)	1,550
Children, Youth, and Families at Risk	7 U.S.C. 343(d)	8,395
Federally Recognized Tribes Extension Program	7 U.S.C. 343(d)	3,039
Total, Section 3(d)		87,984
Necessary Expenses of Research and Education Activities:		
Agriculture in the K–12 Classroom		552
Federal Administration—Other Necessary Expenses for Research and Education Activities.		7,790
Total, Necessary Expenses		8,342
Total, Extension Activities		509,082

Farmer Stress.—The Committee remains concerned that farmers and individuals who work in agriculture face highly stressful working conditions, which can contribute to serious behavioral health concerns, especially during downturns in the farm economy. The Committee notes that Section 7412 of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Public Law 115–334) reauthorized the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network to provide competitive grants to Indian tribes, State Departments of Agriculture, State cooperative extension services, and nonprofit organizations to carry out programs to address farmer stress and suicide.

Food and Nutrition Education.—The Committee recognizes the importance of the Expanded Food Nutrition Education Program [EFNEP] and directs the Secretary to establish a pilot program to provide for an evaluation of improved food resource management and diet quality in populations not now served, including the elderly, households living below 185 percent of the poverty level, and low-income households with children of any age. The Secretary shall consider land grant universities with expertise in food system research.

Minority Outreach.—The Committee is concerned that extension service resources do not reach minority, socially disadvantaged, and tribal communities in proportion to their participation in the agricultural sector. All institutions that receive extension activity funding should seek to ensure that an equitable percentage of their overall extension work reaches minority, socially disadvantaged, and tribal communities. The Committee directs NIFA to evaluate distribution of extension resources to these three populations and report to the Committee no later than 90 days after enactment of this act.

Rural Opioid Addiction Training.—The Committee provides \$4,000,000 for Rural Health and Safety Education Programs to combat opioid abuse in rural communities. The Committee is especially interested in utilizing innovative and collaborative methods to educate nurses and allied health professionals in opioid abuse and prevention. The Committee recommendation includes not less than \$1,000,000 for competitive external grants for eligible institutions to support the utilization of telehealth, telemedicine, distance learning, and virtual and augmented reality experiences for opioid education and training in minority rural communities.

INTEGRATED ACTIVITIES

Appropriations, 2019	\$38,000,000
Budget estimate, 2020	1,697,000
Committee recommendation	38,000,000

Section 406, as amended, of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (Public Law 105–85) authorizes an integrated research, education, and extension competitive grants program.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$38,000,000 for integrated activities of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

The following table summarizes the Committee's recommendations for integrated activities:

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE—INTEGRATED ACTIVITIES

[Dollars in thousands]

Program/Activity	Authorization	Committee recommendation
Methyl Bromide Transition Program	7 U.S.C. 7626	2,000
Organic Transition Program	7 U.S.C. 7626	6,000
Regional Rural Development Centers	7 U.S.C. 450i(c)	2,000
Food and Agriculture Defense Initiative	7 U.S.C. 3351	8,000
Crop Protection/Pest Management	7 U.S.C. 343(d)	20,000
Total, Integrated Activities		38,000

Food and Agriculture Defense Initiative.—The Committee supports the important work being done through the publicly funded diagnostic laboratory network and encourages NIFA to prioritize funding to strengthen animal health diagnostic laboratories, taking into consideration the following: the degree to which the capacity for surveillance, monitoring, response, and capacity is enhanced;

the concentration of human and animal populations that are directly at risk; trade, tourism, and cultural considerations; geography, ecology, and climate; evidence of active collaboration with, and support of, the State animal health officials; those States with highest risk for the introduction of foreign and emerging pests and diseases; and evidence of stakeholder support and engagement.

Potato Research.—To minimize the application of pesticides and to maximize the yield and quality of harvested potatoes, the Committee directs the Secretary to support pest management programs in potato growing States. Such programs help scientists track potential pest outbreaks and provide growers and industry professionals with current information on specific and timely treatments. Additionally, the programs help identify serious diseases, such as late blight disease, in their early stages, allowing for preventive measures to be put into place quickly to avoid crop losses.

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR MARKETING AND
REGULATORY PROGRAMS

Appropriations, 2019	\$901,000
Budget estimate, 2020	800,000
Committee recommendation	901,000

The Office of the Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs provides direction and coordination in carrying out laws with respect to the Department's marketing, grading, and standardization activities related to grain; competitive marketing practices of livestock, marketing orders, and various programs; veterinary services; and plant protection and quarantine. The Office has oversight and management responsibilities for the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service; Agricultural Marketing Service; and Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$901,000 for the Office of the Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs.

ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

Appropriations, 2019	\$1,011,136,000
Budget estimate, 2020	981,893,000
Committee recommendation	1,027,916,000

The Secretary of Agriculture established the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service [APHIS] on April 2, 1972, under the authority of reorganization plan No. 2 of 1953, and other authorities. The major objectives of APHIS are to protect the animal and plant resources of the Nation from diseases and pests. These objectives are carried out under the major areas of activity, as follows:

Safeguarding and Emergency Preparedness/Response.—The agency monitors plant and animal health worldwide, and sets import policies to prevent the introduction of foreign plant and animal pests and diseases. Domestically, the agency works cooperatively to conduct plant and animal health monitoring programs, pursue eradication, or limit the spread of the threat. The agency also conducts diagnostic laboratory activities that support disease prevention, detection, control, and eradication programs. In addition, the agency protects agriculture from detrimental animal predators, and through its regulatory structure helps advance genetic research while protecting against the release of harmful organisms.

Safe Trade and International Technical Assistance.—The agency helps resolve technical trade issues to ensure the smooth and safe movement of agricultural commodities into and out of the United States. The agency negotiates animal and plant health certification requirements and assists U.S. exporters meet foreign regulatory demands. In addition, the agency assists developing countries in improving their safeguarding systems, to protect the United States from emerging plant and animal pests and diseases.

Animal Care.—The agency conducts regulatory activities that ensure the humane care and treatment of animals and horses as the

Animal Welfare Act (Public Law 89–544) and Horse Protection Acts (Public Law 91–540) require. These activities include inspection of certain establishments that handle animals intended for research, exhibition, and as pets, and monitoring certain horse shows.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$1,027,916,000 for salaries and expenses of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

The following table reflects the Committee's specific recommendations for the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service:

ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE

[In thousands of dollars]

	Fiscal year 2019 enacted	Fiscal year 2020 budget request	Committee recommendation
Safeguarding and International Technical Assistance:			
Animal Health Technical Services	37,857	44,857	37,857
Aquatic Animal Health	2,253	2,253	2,253
Avian Health	62,840	62,840	62,840
Cattle Health	96,500	96,500	96,500
Equine, Cervid and Small Ruminant Health	20,800	16,500	26,000
National Veterinary Stockpile	5,725	5,725	5,725
Swine Health	24,800	19,753	24,800
Veterinary Biologics	16,417	16,417	17,417
Veterinary Diagnostics	50,140	49,230	57,340
Zoonotic Disease Management	16,523	15,744	16,523
Subtotal, Animal Health	333,855	329,819	347,255
Agricultural Quarantine Inspection (Appropriated)	32,330	31,330	32,330
Cotton Pests	11,520	7,000	11,520
Field Crop & Rangeland Ecosystems Pests	11,826	7,809	13,826
Pest Detection	27,446	27,446	27,446
Plant Protection Methods Development	20,686	20,686	20,686
Specialty Crop Pests	186,013	176,843	186,013
Tree & Wood Pests	60,000	56,000	60,000
Subtotal, Plant Health	349,821	327,114	351,821
Wildlife Damage Management	108,376	108,376	109,756
Wildlife Services Methods Development	18,856	18,856	18,856
Subtotal, Wildlife Services	127,232	127,232	128,612
Animal & Plant Health Regulatory Enforcement	16,224	16,224	16,224
Biotechnology Regulatory Services	18,875	18,875	18,875
Subtotal, Regulatory Services	35,099	35,099	35,099
Contingency Fund	470	470	470
Emergency Preparedness & Response	40,966	40,966	40,966
Subtotal, Emergency Management	41,436	41,436	41,436
Subtotal, Safeguarding and Emergency Preparedness/Response	887,443	860,700	904,223
Safe Trade and International Technical Assistance:			
Agriculture Import/Export	15,599	15,599	15,599
Overseas Technical & Trade Operations	24,115	22,115	24,115

ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE—Continued
[In thousands of dollars]

	Fiscal year 2019 enacted	Fiscal year 2020 budget request	Committee recommendation
Subtotal, Safe Trade	39,714	37,714	39,714
Animal Welfare:			
Animal Welfare	31,310	30,810	31,310
Horse Protection	705	705	705
Subtotal, Animal Welfare	32,015	31,515	32,015
Agency Management:			
APHIS Information Technology Infrastructure	4,251	4,251	4,251
Physical/Operational Security	5,146	5,146	5,146
Rent and DHS security payments	42,567	42,567	42,567
Subtotal, Agency Management	51,964	51,964	51,964
Total, Direct Appropriation	1,011,136	981,893	1,027,916

Agricultural Quarantine Inspection.—The Committee recognizes that prevention of infestations of pests and diseases is much more cost effective than subsequent control or eradication. This is an important Federal responsibility and the Committee provides \$32,330,000 for the agricultural quarantine inspections [AQI] function, including pre-departure and interline inspections.

On July 17, 2017, USDA announced a request for comments and information on regulations that are in need of reform. The Committee has previously expressed its concern that the restructured commercial aircraft fees for the APHIS Agriculture Quarantine Inspection [AQI] program may not be equitable to small aircraft. The Committee directs the Secretary to specifically consider any comments submitted on the impact of the AQI fee structure on small aircraft as part of its regulatory review process and to provide the Committee with detailed rationale for its decision if regulatory relief is not granted in this area.

The Committee notes that assessing AQI treatment monitoring fees on a per-enclosure basis imposes disproportionate impacts on industry and user groups at certain key ports of entry, including ports along the southeast United States. USDA is encouraged to continue evaluating alternative and equitable funding mechanisms in consultation with relevant stakeholder groups.

Avian Influenza.—The Committee recognizes the extreme economic hardship posed to gamebird and egg farmers when flocks are determined to be infected by high and low pathogenic avian influenza and acknowledges the severe limitations on controlled marketing available to producers of live game birds, as well as the income loss from egg production. The Committee encourages APHIS to provide full indemnity coverage for gamebird and egg operations and cease attempts to limit coverage.

Bee Pests.—The Committee remains concerned with declining bee populations and the tragic implications for pollination of U.S. agriculture. The Committee directs the agency to continue priority work with other Federal and State agencies and the public to man-

age, suppress, and eradicate varroa mites, small hive beetles, and other pests and diseases contributing to colony collapse disorder.

Cattle Fever Ticks.—The Committee appreciates the commitment by APHIS, including recent additional funding, to respond to the most recent outbreak of cattle fever ticks. The Committee encourages the agency to maintain this focus and provide adequate funding for all activities under the Cattle Fever Tick Eradication Program [CFTEP]; heighten efforts to coordinate the response with the Department of Interior on national wildlife refuges; and provide sufficient funding for research and scientific tools to be developed that concentrate on the following: new systematic cattle fever tick treatment products with longer treatment intervals for cattle; new cattle fever tick treatment products for wildlife, especially nilgai antelope; and new or improved cattle fever tick preventative therapies, such as vaccines, for both cattle and wildlife hosts. To prevent movement of livestock and game animals outside of quarantined or high-risk premises, the Committee encourages APHIS to use available funds for a cost-share program for the construction and repair of livestock or game fencing on private lands.

Ceratomyxosis Disease.—The Department is directed to continue its reporting on Ceratomyxosis Disease in the United States.

Chronic Wasting Disease [CWD].—The Committee provides no less than \$9,000,000 for cervid health activities. Within the funds provided, APHIS should give consideration to indemnity payments if warranted. The Committee is also concerned about the growing threat of chronic wasting disease and its impact on free-ranging deer populations. Of the amount provided for cervid health activities, \$5,000,000 is provided for APHIS to allocate funds directly to State departments of wildlife and State departments of agriculture to further develop and implement chronic wasting disease surveillance, testing, management, and response activities. In allocating these funds, APHIS shall give priority to States that have experienced a recent incident of CWD, have a CWD monitoring and surveillance program, and have a diagnostic laboratory system certified for CWD testing.

Citrus Health Response Program [CHRP].—CHRP is a national effort to maintain a viable citrus industry within the United States, maintain producers' continued access to export markets, and safeguard citrus producing States against a variety of invasive pests and diseases. These funds are designed to partner with State departments of agriculture and industry groups to address the challenges of citrus pests and diseases. In addition to the funds provided in this account, the Committee encourages APHIS to utilize the funds available in the Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention Programs account to the greatest extent possible in an attempt to sustain the economic viability of the citrus industry.

Cogongrass Management and Control.—The Committee remains concerned about the rapid spread of cogongrass and its impact on forest productivity, wildlife habitat, and private landowners. The Committee provides \$3,000,000 for APHIS to partner with State departments of agriculture and forestry commissions in States considered to be the epicenter of infestations, to assist with the control

and treatment of cogongrass in order to slow the advancing front of this invasive plant-pest species.

Huanglongbing Emergency Response.—The Committee maintains the increased funding levels for Huanglongbing Emergency Response within the Specialty Crop Pests line item included in fiscal year 2019. The Committee encourages APHIS to allocate sufficient resources in order to continue vital management, control, and associated activities to address citrus greening. The disease, for which there is no cure, has caused a reduction in citrus production by over 60 percent since 2007 in Florida alone. All citrus producing counties in Texas are under quarantine, and California has detected the disease in some backyard trees in the Los Angeles basin. The spread of this disease has called the domestic citrus industry's future into question, costing thousands of jobs and millions in lost revenue and increased production costs per acre. In addition, the agency is encouraged to support priorities and strategies identified by the Huanglongbing Multi-Agency Coordination [HLB-MAC] Group which will benefit the citrus industry. The agency should appropriately allocate resources based on critical need and maximum effect to the citrus industry. The Committee maintains the fiscal year 2019 funding level for citrus health to support priorities and strategies identified by the HLB-MAC group. The MAC is focused on short-term solutions to help the citrus industry, and the cooperative nature of Federal, State, and industry representatives in this group is expected to result in the development of tools and techniques to address this devastating disease. Helping growers explore new possible solutions, the MAC has been an effective resource. The agency should appropriately allocate resources based on critical need and maximum impact to the citrus industry. These citrus health activities directly protect citrus production on approximately 765,000 acres in the United States worth more than \$11,000,000,000 in total.

Huanglongbing Multi-Agency Coordination [HLB-MAC] Group.—The Committee recognizes the significant economic impact of this disease on the citrus industry, which is especially acute in Florida and a growing concern in both Texas and California. The Committee also understands that growers are requesting the right to try treatments that have begun to show success in early stages of testing. The Committee encourages the HLB-MAC group to explore and identify new methods to expedite the delivery of promising treatments directly to growers. Finally, the Committee expects any funds which are redirected from existing HLB-MAC projects be repurposed to other priority HLB-MAC projects that are showing promising results to ensure these critical funds remain committed to help facilitate the design and implementation of the rapid delivery pathway to growers.

Invasive Tree Pests.—The Committee recognizes that the forests products industry and family forest owners are under increasing threat from a growing number of invasive forest pests. It is essential that APHIS carry out a comprehensive program to counter the spread of invasive species and work towards complete eradication of the Asian long-horned beetle. The Secretary is directed to report to the Committee regarding the steps being taken to eradicate the Asian long-horned beetle and spotted lanternfly and to minimize

the spread of other pests such as the polyphagous and Kuroshio shot hole borers. As the emerald ash borer continues to spread, APHIS shall continue to assist States that have recent detections of emerald ash borer where assistance will enable States to fully monitor the insect and to inform and manage public and private land owner issues.

National Bio and Agro-Defense Human Capital Development.—The Committee notes that significant resources have been invested in NBAF and is concerned about projected staffing shortages of qualified veterinary diagnosticians and scientists for the NBAF, which is slated for full operation in 2022. The Committee provides \$3,000,000 to APHIS to ensure necessary steps are taken to develop a qualified workforce that are subject matter experts in foreign, emerging, and zoonotic diseases and capable of developing, validating, and conducting needed diagnostics, performing epidemiologic studies, and completing bioinformatics analyses. The Committee encourages APHIS to establish cooperative agreements with academic research institutions, particularly non-land grant Hispanic-Serving Institutions, to support the next generation of the NBAF workforce.

National Clean Plant Network-Berries.—The Committee notes the importance of the National Clean Plant Network [NCPN] and its goal to ensure that specialty crop producers have access to plant material that is free of pests and diseases. The Committee encourages the Department to assess the additional needs of the NCPN-Berries to establish an additional full-service center that provides both diagnostic and therapy services.

Non-lethal Strategies.—The Committee is aware that Wildlife Services has worked with landowners to deploy non-lethal strategies—e.g., fladry, electric fencing, and livestock guardian dogs—to reduce predator depredation on livestock. The bill provides an increase of \$1,380,000 for Wildlife Services to hire personnel exclusively to promote and implement non-lethal livestock-predator conflict deterrence techniques in interested States and to assist in providing training in these techniques to agricultural producers, landowners, and other agency personnel in collaboration with the National Wildlife Research Center.

Regional Biosecurity Plan for Micronesia and Hawaii.—The Secretary is directed to submit a report to this Committee on USDA activities to implement the Regional Biosecurity Plan for Micronesia and Hawaii [RBP]. The report shall include an update on agencies' activities to date to implement the RBP and agencies' planned activities for further implementation.

Roseau Cane.—The Committee remains concerned with the invasive species scale insect pest that is destroying Roseau cane in the Mississippi River's Delta region along the Gulf of Mexico. An estimated 225,000 acres of wetlands in the Delta have been affected with the die-off, and Roseau cane is important in maintaining a healthy marsh and preventing erosion. The Committee directs APHIS to work with ARS and stakeholders and provides an additional \$1,000,000 to develop an integrated management program for control of the Roseau cane scale insect pest infestation.

Sudden Oak Death.—The European strain 1 [EU1] and the North American strain 1 [NA1] of the sudden oak death pathogen

are major threats to western Douglas-fir/tanoak forests, resulting in quarantine restrictions that threaten U.S. forests and export markets for log shipments and lily bulbs. The Committee recommendation includes no less than the fiscal year 2019 funding level to improve understanding of the European Strain 1 and North American Strain 1 of the sudden oak death pathogen and treatment methods to inform control and management techniques in wildlands.

West Nile Virus.—The Committee remains concerned with the threats to human and animal health posed by West Nile virus and recognizes that a critical strategy for addressing these threats is necessary to prevent the infection and transmission by known vectors, including farm-raised alligators. The Committee encourages APHIS to further investigate West Nile virus and other infectious diseases affecting farm raised alligators and develop treatments and methods to prevent infection and transmission.

Wildlife Damage Management.—APHIS is responsible for providing Federal leadership in managing problems caused by wildlife. The Committee provides \$109,756,000 for wildlife damage control to maintain priority initiatives, including preventing the transport of invasive snakes and other harmful species. No less than the fiscal year 2019 level should be available for the agency to reduce blackbird depredation in the Northern Great Plains.

The Committee maintains support for assistance to catfish producers to help mitigate wildlife depredation, particularly as it pertains to fish-eating and disease-carrying birds. The Committee provides no less than the fiscal year 2019 level for damage management efforts and the development of methods to assist producers in combatting the persistent threat and economic hardship caused by cormorants, pelicans, and other birds.

The Committee recognizes the importance of the National Feral Swine Damage Management Program in reducing adverse ecological and economic impacts caused by feral swine. The Committee provides no less than the fiscal year 2019 level in support of APHIS efforts to decrease these invasive pests' damage and risk to agriculture, natural resources, and property.

The Committee provides \$28,000,000 for the National Rabies Management Program to fortify existing barriers and advance prevention and eradication efforts.

Given the shared and complementary goals of Wildlife Damage Management and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to sustainably integrate wildlife into natural habitats while protecting livestock, the Secretary is directed to coordinate with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on innovative strategies to provide predator management and reduce predator-livestock conflict. The Secretary is further directed to report to this Committee on how the two agencies can work together to improve wildlife management.

Wildlife Services Education and Training.—The Committee is aware of the wide range of hazardous procedures and materials utilized by APHIS personnel in the conduct of daily duties. In addition, a recent comprehensive study noted the critical need to provide standardized safety training, certification, and database management for tracking to ensure the safest working environment possible. As such, the Committee provides \$2,000,000 within Wild-

life Damage Management to maintain a National Training Academy focused on those areas of greatest concern such as pyrotechnics, firearms, hazardous materials, immobilization and euthanasia drugs, pesticides, animal care and handling, land vehicles, watercraft, and zoonotic diseases.

BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES

Appropriations, 2019	\$3,175,000
Budget estimate, 2020	2,709,000
Committee recommendation	3,175,000

The APHIS appropriation for “Buildings and Facilities” funds major nonrecurring construction projects in support of specific program activities and recurring construction, alterations, preventive maintenance, and repairs of existing APHIS facilities.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommendation includes an appropriation of \$3,175,000 for buildings and facilities of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. This funding is necessary to allow APHIS to maintain existing facilities and perform critically needed repairs to and replacements of building components, such as heating, ventilation and air-conditioning on a prioritized basis at APHIS facilities. The Committee notes that due to the environmentally sensitive nature of many APHIS facilities, closure of a facility could result if APHIS is unable to complete the required repairs.

AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE

MARKETING SERVICES

Appropriations, 2019	\$159,095,000
Budget estimate, 2020	115,143,000
Committee recommendation	181,549,000

The Agricultural Marketing Service [AMS] was established by the Secretary of Agriculture on April 2, 1972. AMS carries out programs authorized by more than 50 different statutory authorities, the primary ones being the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. 1621–1627, 1635–1638); the U.S. Cotton Standards Act (7 U.S.C. 51–65); the Cotton Statistics and Estimates Act (7 U.S.C. 471–476); the Tobacco Inspection Act (7 U.S.C. 511–511q); the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act (7 U.S.C. 499a–499t); the Egg Products Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 1031–1056); and section 32 of the Act of 1935 (Public Law 74–320, 7 U.S.C. 612c).

Programs administered by this agency include the market news services, standardization, grading, classing, shell egg surveillance services, transportation services, wholesale farmers and alternative market development, grant payments to States for marketing activities, the Federal administration of marketing agreements and orders, commodity purchases, Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act, the Plant Variety Protection Act (Public Law 71–325), and market protection and promotion activities.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$181,549,000 for Marketing Services of the Agricultural Marketing Service.

The Committee provides an additional \$2,000,000 for the Acer Access and Development Program. The Secretary shall use the increase for competitive grants for the promotion of research and education.

Hemp.—The Committee provides \$16,500,000 for implementation of the hemp provisions of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Public Law 115–334). The Committee is concerned that the regulations and guidance required to fully implement the hemp provisions included in the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Public Law 115–334) may not be completed in time to give States and farmers sufficient time to plan for the 2020 crop year, which would further delay the commercial production and interstate commerce of hemp in the United States. Therefore, the Committee directs the Secretary to implement the new Hemp Production Program promptly to allow for a clear regulatory framework and approval of State plans ahead of the 2020 crop year. The Committee further directs the Secretary to fully coordinate and communicate among USDA agencies and with other Federal agencies to support the commercial production and interstate commerce of industrial hemp.

Mango Referendum.—The Committee is aware that, because of a controversial referendum, AMS recently announced that frozen mangoes would be added as a covered commodity in its fresh mango national research and promotion program. The Committee is further aware of significant concerns regarding the process by which AMS conducted the referendum regarding the inclusion of frozen mangoes, including minimal consultation with the frozen mango industry and ballot distribution, which gave disproportionate representation to the fresh mango industry. Therefore, the Committee directs AMS to halt the implementation of the assessments on the frozen mango industry.

National Organic Program.—The Committee provides \$15,094,000 for the National Organic Program [NOP], an increase of \$1,000,000. A healthy market for organic products requires a clear product distinction backed by a trusted, verified, and enforced label. The Committee recognizes that the NOP, which enforces the organic regulations and ensures they evolve to keep pace with consumer expectations, is essential. In light of recent reports of inadequate enforcement of organic standards, the Committee directs USDA to provide all resources needed for the NOP to deliver the strongest possible oversight before allowing the USDA organic seal to be granted to domestic and international operations and products.

Native American Foods and Tourism.—The Committee recognizes that enhanced Native American tourism creates important job opportunities in Native American communities while showcasing their heritage, food, traditions, history, and continuing vitality. The Committee encourages USDA to support the Native American Tourism and Improving Visitor Experience Act (Public Law 114–221) by prioritizing projects that market, promote, or expand Native American foods, markets, and enterprises.

Organic Certification for Wild Seafood.—The Committee is aware of interest in developing organic production, handling, and labeling standards for wild caught seafood as provided for in Section 6506 of the Organic Foods Production Act (7 U.S.C. 6506(c)). The Committee urges USDA to initiate dialogue with interested parties, including the wild caught seafood industry and the organic community, to determine the feasibility and framework for establishing such standards.

Organic Dairy.—The Committee is disappointed by continued reports of inconsistencies in the enforcement and interpretation of regulations that apply to organic dairy farms. The Committee directs the NOP to resolve these issues and eliminate any inconsistencies in applying and enforcing regulations relating to the transition of livestock to organic dairy production and dry matter intake during the grazing season for organic dairy cattle. The Secretary must ensure that organic inspectors, certification file review staff, and NOP Organic Certification staff have documented training and experience in livestock nutrition and grazing on organic dairies with more than 1,000 milking cows if they are certifying operations of that size, and also that separate dry matter intake calculations are made for each category of dairy cow and not averaged among milking and dry cows, and that inspections are conducted during the grazing season.

Organic Data Initiative.—The Committee supports continued coordination with NASS for activities related to expanding organic price reporting and organic data collection.

LIMITATION ON ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

Limitation, 2019	\$61,227,000
Budget limitation, 2020	60,982,000
Committee recommendation	61,227,000

The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 (Public Law 97–35) initiated a system of user fees for the cost of grading and classing cotton, and tobacco. These activities, authorized under the U.S. Cotton Standards Act (7 U.S.C. 51 et seq.), the Tobacco Inspection Act (7 U.S.C. 511 et seq.), and other provisions of law are designed to facilitate commerce and protect participants in the industry.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends a limitation of \$61,227,000 on administrative expenses of the Agricultural Marketing Service.

FUNDS FOR STRENGTHENING MARKETS, INCOME, AND SUPPLY (SECTION 32)

(INCLUDING TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

Appropriations, 2019	\$20,705,000
Budget estimate, 2020	20,705,000
Committee recommendation	20,705,000

Under section 32 of the Act of August 24, 1935, (Public Law 74–320), an amount equal to 30 percent of customs receipts collected during each preceding calendar year and unused balances are available for encouraging the domestic consumption and export-

tation of agricultural commodities. An amount equal to 30 percent of receipts collected on fishery products is transferred to the Department of Commerce. Additional transfers to the child nutrition programs of the Food and Nutrition Service have been provided in recent appropriations Acts.

The following table reflects the status of this fund for fiscal years 2019–2020:

ESTIMATED TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE AND BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD—
FISCAL YEARS 2019–2020
[In thousands of dollars]

	Fiscal year 2019 enacted	Fiscal year 2020 budget request	Committee recommendation
Appropriation (30% of Customs Receipts)	10,624,198	15,123,425	15,123,425
Less Transfers:			
Food and Nutrition Service	– 9,092,218	– 13,561,425	– 13,561,425
Commerce Department	– 157,980	– 158,000	– 158,000
Total, Transfers	– 9,250,198	– 13,719,425	– 13,719,425
Budget Authority, Farm Bill	1,374,000	1,404,000	1,404,000
Appropriations Temporarily Reduced—Sequestration	– 74,400	– 72,216	– 72,216
Budget Authority, Appropriations Act	1,299,600	1,331,784	1,331,784
Less Obligations:			
Child Nutrition Programs (Entitlement Commodities)	485,000	485,000	485,000
State Option Contract	5,000	5,000	5,000
Removal of Defective Commodities	2,500	2,500	2,500
Disaster Relief	5,000	5,000	5,000
Additional Fruits, Vegetables, and Nuts Purchases	206,000	206,000	206,000
Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program	174,000	180,000	180,000
Estimated Future Needs	365,542	391,726	391,726
Total, Commodity Procurement	1,243,042	1,275,226	1,275,226
Administrative Funds:			
Commodity Purchase Support	35,853	35,853	35,853
Marketing Agreements and Orders	20,705	20,705	20,705
Total, Administrative Funds	56,558	56,558	56,558
Total Obligations	1,299,600	1,331,784	1,331,784

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends a transfer from section 32 funds of \$20,705,000 for the formulation and administration of marketing agreements and orders.

Section 32 Authorities.—Under the authority described in clause 3 of 7 U.S.C. 612c, the Secretary is able to direct funds from the section 32 account to increase the purchasing power of producers. This practice has been used on various occasions to provide direct assistance to producers when market forces or natural conditions adversely affect the financial condition of farmers and ranchers. The Committee notes the importance of the ability of the Secretary to utilize this authority, but believes that communication between the Department and the Congress should be improved when this practice is used. Therefore, the Committee directs the Secretary to provide notification to the Appropriations Committee in advance of

any public announcement or release of section 32 funds under the specific authorities cited above.

PAYMENTS TO STATES AND POSSESSIONS

Appropriations, 2019	\$1,235,000
Budget estimate, 2020	1,109,000
Committee recommendation	1,235,000

The Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program [FSMIP] is authorized by section 204(b) of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 and is also funded from appropriations. Matching grants are awarded on a competitive basis to State marketing agencies to identify and test market alternative farm commodities, determine methods of providing more reliable market information, and develop better commodity grading standards. This program has made possible many types of projects, such as electronic marketing and agricultural product diversification. Current projects are focused on the improvement of marketing efficiency and effectiveness, and seeking new outlets for existing farm produced commodities. The legislation grants USDA authority to establish cooperative agreements with State departments of agriculture or similar State agencies to improve the efficiency of the agricultural marketing chain. The States perform the work or contract it to others, and must contribute at least one-half of the cost of the projects.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$1,235,000 for Payments to States and Possessions for Federal-State marketing projects and activities.

LIMITATION ON INSPECTION AND WEIGHING SERVICES EXPENSES

Limitation, 2019	\$55,000,000
Budget limitation, 2020	80,000,000
Committee recommendation	55,000,000

The agency provides an official grain inspection and weighing system under the U.S. Grain Standards Act [USGSA], and official inspection of rice and grain-related products under the Agricultural Marketing Act [AMA] of 1946. The USGSA was amended in 1981 to require the collection of user fees to fund the costs associated with the operation, supervision, and administration of Federal grain inspection and weighing activities.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends a limitation of \$55,000,000 on inspection and weighing services expenses.

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR FOOD SAFETY

Appropriations, 2019	\$800,000
Budget estimate, 2020	800,000
Committee recommendation	800,000

The Office of the Under Secretary for Food Safety provides direction and coordination in carrying out the laws enacted by the Congress with respect to the Department's inspection of meat, poultry,

and processed egg products. The Office has oversight and management responsibilities for the Food Safety and Inspection Service.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$800,000 for the Office of the Under Secretary for Food Safety.

FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE

Appropriations, 2019	\$1,049,344,000
Budget estimate, 2020	1,045,320,000
Committee recommendation	1,054,344,000

The major objectives of the Food Safety and Inspection Service are to assure that meat and poultry products are wholesome, unadulterated, and properly labeled and packaged, as required by the Federal Meat Inspection Act (Public Law 59-242) and the Poultry Products Inspection Act (Public Law 85-172), as amended; and to provide continuous in-plant inspection to egg processing plants under the Egg Products Inspection Act.

The Food Safety and Inspection Service was established on June 17, 1981, by Secretary's Memorandum No. 1000-1, issued pursuant to Reorganization Plan No. 2 of 1953.

The inspection program of the Food Safety and Inspection Service provides in-plant inspection of all domestic plants preparing meat, poultry, or egg products for sale or distribution; reviews foreign inspection systems and establishments that prepare meat or poultry products for export to the United States; and provides technical and financial assistance to States which maintain meat and poultry inspection programs.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$1,054,344,000 for the Food Safety and Inspection Service [FSIS].

Humane Slaughter.—The Committee directs FSIS to continue to provide annual reports to the Committee on the implementation of objective scoring methods undertaken by FSIS to enforce the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act (Public Law 85-765).

The Committee also directs FSIS to ensure that personnel hired with funding previously provided specifically for Humane Methods of Slaughter Act (Public Law 85-765) enforcement focus their attention on overseeing compliance with humane handling rules for live animals as they arrive and are offloaded and handled in pens, chutes, and stunning areas and that all inspectors receive robust training.

Public Health Veterinarians.—The Committee remains concerned about persistently high levels of public health veterinary [PHV] vacancies within FSIS and directs the agency to provide a report detailing overall PHV workforce needs, including positions that may be chronically hard to fill; the recruitment and retention programs implemented to-date, including a status of the funding spent on these initiatives and an estimate of when funding will be exhausted; additional actions taken to resolve the chronic and perpetual workforce issues; and a discussion of the agency's efforts to address these workforce issues in the long-term.

The following table represents the Committee's specific recommendations for the Food Safety and Inspection Service as compared to the fiscal year 2019 and budget request levels:

FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE SALARIES AND EXPENSES

(In thousands of dollars)

	Fiscal year 2019 enacted	Fiscal year 2020 budget request	Committee recommendation
Food safety inspection:			
Federal	936,324	927,300	936,324
State	61,682	66,682	66,682
International	16,758	16,758	16,758
PHDCIS	34,580	34,580	34,580
Total	1,049,344	1,045,320	1,054,344

TITLE II

FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR FARM PRODUCTION AND
CONSERVATION

Appropriations, 2019	\$901,000
Budget estimate, 2020	875,000
Committee recommendation	901,000

The Office of the Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation provides direction and coordination in carrying out the laws enacted by the Congress with respect to the Department's commodity programs, farm loans, disaster assistance, crop insurance, natural resources conservation and environment programs, and certain energy programs. The Office has oversight and management responsibilities for the Farm Service Agency (including the Commodity Credit Corporation), Risk Management Agency, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$901,000 for the Office of the Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation.

Emergency Response.—The Committee directs USDA to produce a report outlining the average and longest length of time it takes USDA to provide reimbursement under the following emergency assistance programs: crop insurance; Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program [NAP]; Livestock Indemnity Program [LIP]; Livestock Forage Disaster Program [LFP]; Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program [ELAP]; Tree Assistance Program [TAP]; Emergency Conservation Program; and Emergency Forest Restoration Program [EFRP]. USDA is also directed to include in the report any barriers to implementing a more efficient reimbursement process and recommendations to the Committee on potential improvements.

FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION BUSINESS CENTER

Appropriations, 2019	\$216,350,000
Budget estimate, 2020	206,530,000
Committee recommendation	206,530,000

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$206,530,000 for the Farm Production and Conservation Business Center.

Business Center Report.—The Farm and Production Conservation [FPAC] Business Center was created by the Secretary in 2018 with the goal of consolidating administrative functions within the newly created FPAC mission area, with assurances given that this would lead to reduced inefficiencies and increased customer service. However, the Committee is aware of reports of prolonged delays in filling critical vacancies, which has led to delays in the deployment of important conservation and commodity programs. The Committee is also concerned by reports of additional functions and critical NRCS State staff positions being moved to the FPAC Business

Center. Within 60 days of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall report to the Committee on what efficiencies have been gained, by which metrics the Business Center is being measured, how the Business Center will accelerate hiring going forward, and any existing plans for additional reorganizations of staff into the Business Center.

FARM SERVICE AGENCY

The Farm Service Agency [FSA] was established October 13, 1994, pursuant to the Federal Crop Insurance Reform and Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (Public Law 103-354). The FSA administers a variety of activities, such as the commodity price support and production adjustment programs financed by the Commodity Credit Corporation; the Conservation Reserve Program [CRP]; the Emergency Conservation Program; the Commodity Operation Programs including the warehouse examination function; farm ownership, farm operating, emergency disaster, and other loan programs; and the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program [NAP], which provides crop loss protection for growers of many crops for which crop insurance is not available. In addition, FSA currently provides certain administrative support services to the Foreign Agricultural Service [FAS] and to the Risk Management Agency [RMA].

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

(INCLUDING TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

[In thousands of dollars]

	Appropriations	Transfers from program accounts	Total, FSA, salaries and expenses
Appropriations, 2019	1,081,655	293,522	1,375,177
Budget estimate, 2020	1,012,008	294,567	1,306,575
Committee recommendation	1,127,837	294,574	1,422,411

The account Salaries and Expenses, Farm Service Agency, funds the administrative expenses of program administration and other functions assigned to FSA. The funds consist of appropriations and transfers from the CCC export credit guarantees, Food for Peace loans, and Agricultural Credit Insurance Fund program accounts, and miscellaneous advances from other sources. All administrative funds used by FSA are consolidated into one account. The consolidation provides clarity and better management and control of funds and facilitates accounting, fiscal, and budgetary work by eliminating the necessity for making individual allocations and allotments and maintaining and recording obligations and expenditures under numerous separate accounts.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$1,422,269,000 for salaries and expenses of the Farm Service Agency, including a direct appropriation of \$1,127,837,000. The Committee supports the mission of FSA and the important services that they provide across the country; therefore, the Committee does not accept the full de-

crease for information technology as proposed in the budget. The Committee accepts the proposed information technology savings and provides a net increase of \$11,182,000 for IT improvements. The Committee recommendation also includes an increase of \$35,000,000 for implementation of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Public Law 115–334).

Acreage Crop Reporting Streamlining Initiative.—The Committee recognizes the importance of reducing administrative burdens on farmers, increasing data integrity and accuracy, and eliminating redundant reporting and is pleased with the initial progress that has been made by FSA and RMA in implementing the Acreage Crop Reporting Streamlining Initiative. However, the Committee is aware that the success of the initiative is dependent on technology and quality information. Therefore, the Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation is directed to prioritize this initiative to ensure there is a seamless transfer of producers' information across the agencies within the FPAC mission area.

Continuous Conservation Reserve Program.—The Secretary is strongly encouraged, within the total acreage made available for enrollment in the conservation reserve program and without reducing the periodic availability of general signup, to enroll, to the maximum extent practicable, acreage for activities included in the State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement practice or other similar administratively established wetland and habitat practices that benefit priority fish and wildlife species identified in State, regional, and national conservation initiatives with a priority for initiatives that provide large blocks of cover ideal for wildlife nesting.

ELAP Farm-Raised Fish Assistance.—The Committee recognizes that economic losses due to disease and avian predation continue to threaten the viability of the U.S. aquaculture industry. Current regulations for the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program [ELAP] administered by FSA do not provide adequate protections against the primary risks faced by farm-raised fish producers. The Committee notes that the statutory authority provided under 7 U.S.C. 9081(d) directs the Secretary to provide emergency assistance for producers of farm-raised fish to aid in the reduction of losses due to disease, or other conditions as determined by the Secretary, yet the FSA regulations under 7 CFR part 1416.102 specify that only bait or game fish, not farm-raised fish intended for human consumption, are eligible for ELAP death losses. To ensure adequate supplemental disaster assistance for farm-raised fish producers, the Committee directs the Secretary, through the Acting Administrator for Farm Programs, to modify its regulations to provide that producers of farm-raised fish are eligible for death losses under ELAP and that bird predation and disease be deemed eligible loss conditions. The Committee recognizes the challenges associated with quantifying actual mortality losses associated with bird predation and disease, and therefore encourages FSA to explore alternative payment calculation methods for farm-raised death losses, such as, but not limited to, whole-farm actual revenue losses compared to historic five-year average revenue and compensation based on cost incurred to deter predatory avian species.

Information Technology.—The Committee remains dedicated to ensuring FSA has reliable and functioning IT systems because it is critical that farmers and ranchers have access to the tools they need to succeed. The Committee has invested significant taxpayer dollars to modernize outdated systems and continues to provide resources above the budget request. The Committee continues statutory language that allows funds for IT to be obligated only after the Secretary meets certain reporting requirements. The Committee has reviewed the third-party IT analysis and expects the agency to follow the recommendations where applicable.

Livestock Indemnity Payments.—The Committee is aware of the livestock losses that have occurred due to recent severe weather events in the Rocky Mountains, the Plains, the Mississippi Valley, and the Great Lakes regions. Therefore, the Committee encourages the Department to prioritize the regulatory updates authorized by Section 1501(b) of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Public Law 115–334) to ensure that Livestock Indemnity Program assistance is provided to producers as soon as possible.

National Agriculture Imagery Program.—The Committee recommends that funding shall be allocated to purchase imagery products to meet programmatic requirements.

Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance.—The Committee is concerned that the Department is failing to provide adequate risk protection through the Non-insured Crop Assistance Program for farmers producing hay forage with legume grass mixes. These crops often suffer quality losses resulting in adverse economic impacts, yet these farms have no meaningful source of risk protection. The Committee encourages the Secretary to establish within the Non-insured Crop Assistance Program an additional Forage Category to reflect the relative feed value, and the potential for quality loss, of legume grass mix forage.

Panther Depredation.—The Committee is aware that livestock producers in Florida have suffered from panther depredation. To support the ongoing conservation and recovery of endangered Florida panthers while minimizing conflicts with ranchers, the Committee encourages FSA to work with ranchers to tailor the Livestock Indemnity Program [LIP] to address unique circumstances currently preventing producers from receiving compensation for losses stemming from Florida panther depredation events.

STATE MEDIATION GRANTS

Appropriations, 2019	\$3,904,000
Budget estimate, 2020	3,067,000
Committee recommendation	5,545,000

This program is authorized under title V of the Agricultural Credit Act of 1987 (Public Law 100–233). Originally designed to address agricultural credit disputes, the program was expanded by the Federal Crop Insurance Reform and Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (Public Law 103–354) to include other agricultural issues such as wetland determinations, conservation compliance, rural water loan programs, grazing on National Forest System lands, and pesticides. Grants are made to States whose mediation programs have been certified by the FSA. Grants will be

solely for operation and administration of the State's agricultural mediation program.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$5,545,000 for State Mediation Grants.

GRASSROOTS SOURCE WATER PROTECTION PROGRAM

Appropriations, 2019	6,500,000
Budget estimate, 2020	
Committee recommendation	6,500,000

This program is intended to assist in the protection of ground-water through State rural water associations.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$6,500,000 for Grassroots Source Water Protection.

DAIRY INDEMNITY PROGRAM

(INCLUDING TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

Appropriations, 2019	\$500,000
Budget estimate, 2020	500,000
Committee recommendation	500,000

Under the program, the Department makes indemnification payments to dairy farmers and manufacturers of dairy products who, through no fault of their own, suffer income losses because they are directed to remove their milk from commercial markets due to contamination of their products by registered pesticides. The program also authorizes indemnity payments to dairy farmers for losses resulting from the removal of cows or dairy products from the market due to nuclear radiation or fallout.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of such sums as may be necessary, estimated in fiscal year 2020 to be \$500,000, for indemnity payments to dairy farmers.

PFAS Contamination.—The Committee is aware that a small number of dairy farms are unable to sell their milk as a result of contamination from a family of synthetic chemicals, known as perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances, collectively known as "PFAS" chemicals. The Committee notes that USDA's own research has shown that PFAS residues remain detectable in contaminated livestock even after an extended withdrawal period, which could result in potential human exposure. Therefore, the Secretary is directed to utilize the Dairy Indemnity Payment Program to purchase and remove PFAS contaminated cows from the market, rather than paying for prolonged monthly production indemnities. The Secretary should utilize the established, applicable Livestock Indemnity Program average fair market value price to compensate for PFAS contaminated cows at affected dairies.

AGRICULTURAL CREDIT INSURANCE FUND PROGRAM ACCOUNT
(INCLUDING TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

The Agricultural Credit Insurance Fund Program Account is used to provide direct and guaranteed farm ownership, farm operating, conservation, Indian highly fractioned land, and emergency loans to individuals, as well as the following types of loans to associations: irrigation and drainage, grazing, Indian tribe land acquisition, and boll weevil eradication.

FSA is also authorized to provide financial assistance to borrowers by guaranteeing loans made by private lenders having a contract of guarantee from FSA as approved by the Secretary of Agriculture and to establish Beginning Farmer and Rancher Individual Development grant accounts.

The following programs are financed through this fund:

Boll Weevil Eradication Loans.—Made to assist foundations in financing the operations of the boll weevil eradication programs provided to farmers.

Credit Sales of Acquired Property.—Property is sold out of inventory and is made available to an eligible buyer by providing FSA loans.

Emergency Loans.—Made to producers to aid recovery from production and physical losses due to drought, flooding, other natural disasters, or quarantine. The loans may be used to: restore or replace essential property; pay all or part of production costs associated with the disaster year; pay essential family living expenses; reorganize the farming operation; and refinance certain debts.

Farm Operating Loans.—Provide short-to-intermediate term production or chattel credit to farmers who cannot obtain credit elsewhere, to improve their farm and home operations, and to develop or maintain a reasonable standard of living. The term of the loan varies from one to seven years.

Farm Ownership Loans.—Made to borrowers who cannot obtain credit elsewhere to restructure their debts, improve or purchase farms, refinance nonfarm enterprises which supplement but do not supplant farm income, or make additions to farms. Loans are made for 40 years or less.

Indian Tribe Land Acquisition Loans.—Made to any Indian tribe recognized by the Secretary of the Interior or tribal corporation established pursuant to the Indian Reorganization Act (Public Law 93-638) which does not have adequate uncommitted funds to acquire lands or interest in lands within the tribe's reservation or Alaskan Indian community, as determined by the Secretary of the Interior, for use of the tribe or the corporation or the members thereof.

Indian Highly Fractionated Land Loans.—Made to Indian tribal members to purchase highly fractionated lands, as authorized by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-234).

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends a total loan level of \$8,037,801,000 for programs within the Agricultural Credit Insurance Fund Program Account.

Loan Programs.—The Committee continues to support FSA loan programs that ensure farmers and ranchers have access to credit to maintain and improve their operations. The Committee is aware of the heightened operating loan activity in fiscal year 2019 and notes the statutory authority allowing program level increases that do not require additional budget authority. The Committee will continue to monitor program demand in the coming months and directs FSA to provide timely estimates for future needs.

The following table reflects the program levels for farm credit programs administered by the Farm Service Agency recommended by the Committee, as compared to the fiscal year 2019 and the budget request levels:

AGRICULTURAL CREDIT PROGRAMS—LOAN LEVELS

[In thousands of dollars]

	Fiscal year 2019 enacted	Fiscal year 2020 budget request	Committee recommendation
Farm Ownership:			
Direct	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,500,000
Guaranteed	2,750,000	2,750,000	2,750,000
Farm Operating:			
Direct	1,530,000	1,550,133	1,550,133
Guaranteed unsubsidized	1,960,000	1,614,953	1,960,000
Emergency Loans	37,668	29,181	37,668
Indian Tribe Land Acquisition	20,000	20,000	20,000
Conservation Loans:			
Guaranteed	150,000	150,000	150,000
Indian Highly Fractionated Land Loans	10,000	.....	10,000
Boll Weevil Eradication	30,000	60,000	60,000
Total, Loan Authorizations	7,987,668	7,674,267	8,037,801

The Federal Credit Reform Act of 1990 established the program account. Appropriations to this account are used to cover the lifetime subsidy costs associated with the direct loans obligated and loan guarantees committed, as well as for administrative expenses.

The following table reflects the cost of programs under credit reform:

[In thousands of dollars]

	Fiscal year 2019 enacted	Fiscal year 2020 budget request	Committee recommendation
Farm Operating:			
Direct	59,670	58,440	58,440
Guaranteed unsubsidized	21,168	17,280	20,972
Emergency Loans	1,567	1,567	2,023
Indian Highly Fractionated Land Loans	2,134	.....	2,745
Boll Weevil Eradication .....	.....	60	60
Total, Loan Subsidies	84,539	77,347	84,240
ACIF Expenses:			
Salaries and Expenses	290,917	294,114	294,114
Administrative Expenses	10,070	9,567	9,567
Transfer to FPAC Business Center	16,081	16,081	16,081
Total, ACIF Expenses	317,068	319,762	319,762

RISK MANAGEMENT AGENCY

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

Appropriations, 2019	\$58,361,000
Budget estimate, 2020	56,045,000
Committee recommendation	58,361,000

The Risk Management Agency performs administrative functions relative to the Federal Crop Insurance program that is authorized by the Federal Crop Insurance Act (7 U.S.C. 1508), as amended by the Agricultural Risk Protection Act of 2000 [ARPA] (Public Law 106–224), and the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–79).

ARPA authorized significant changes in the crop insurance program. This act provides higher government subsidies for producer premiums to make coverage more affordable; expands research and development for new insurance products and under-served areas through contracts with the private sector; and tightens compliance. Functional areas of risk management are: research and development; insurance services; and compliance, whose functions include policy formulation and procedures and regulations development.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$58,361,000 for Risk Management Agency, Salaries and Expenses.

The Committee recognizes that there are many research priorities that competitive funding may be used to address, including the feasibility of insurance programs to cover business interruption due to integrator bankruptcy and catastrophic loss in the poultry industry. The Committee encourages RMA to support research into these priorities.

Pasture, Rangeland, and Forage Pilot Program.—While the Committee supports efforts to ensure that crop insurance programs are actuarially sound and reflect the value of the commodities, the Committee is concerned by recent adjustments to the Pasture, Rangeland, and Forage Pilot Program that have resulted in significant fluctuations to the county base values. The Secretary is directed to ensure that future adjustments to the county base value be phased in or made gradually in order to avoid the dramatic changes that some producers have experienced in recent years. The Committee expects the Secretary to provide policyholders adequate notification of any such changes well in advance of the sales closing date.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

The Natural Resources Conservation Service [NRCS] was established pursuant to the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (Public Law 103–354). The NRCS works with conservation districts, watershed groups, and Federal and State agencies to bring about physical adjustments in land use that will conserve soil and water resources, provide for agricultural production on a sustained basis, and reduce flood damage and sedimentation.

CONSERVATION OPERATIONS

Appropriations, 2019	\$819,492,000
Budget estimate, 2020	755,000,000
Committee recommendation	835,228,000

Conservation operations are authorized by Public Law 74–46 (16 U.S.C. 590a–590f). Activities include:

Conservation Technical Assistance provides assistance to district cooperators and other land users in the planning and application of conservation treatments to control erosion and improve the quantity and quality of soil resources, improve and conserve water, enhance fish and wildlife habitat, conserve energy, improve woodland, pasture and range conditions, and reduce upstream flooding; all to protect and enhance the natural resource base.

Resource appraisal and program development ensures that programs administered by the Secretary for the conservation of soil, water, and related resources shall respond to the Nation's long-term needs.

Plant Materials Centers assemble, test, and encourage increased use of plant species which show promise for use in the treatment of conservation problem areas.

Snow Survey and Water Forecasting provides estimates of annual water availability from high mountain snow packs and relates to summer stream flow in the Western States and Alaska. Information is used by agriculture, industry, and cities in estimating future water supplies.

Soil Surveys inventory the Nation's basic soil resources and determine land capabilities and conservation treatment needs. Soil survey publications include interpretations useful to cooperators, other Federal agencies, State, and local organizations.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$835,228,000 for Conservation Operations. The Committee recommendation includes \$741,360,000 for Conservation Technical Assistance, \$74,987,000 for Soil Surveys, \$9,400,000 for Snow Survey and Water Forecasting, and \$9,481,000 for Plant Materials Centers. The Committee provides an increase of \$9,834,000 for the Farmer.gov Customer Experience Portal program.

Acre-for-Acre Wetlands Mitigation.—The Secretary is encouraged to use mitigation with the conversion of a natural wetland and equivalent wetlands functions at a ratio not to exceed a ratio of 1-to-1 acreage.

Critical Conservation Areas.—The Committee directs NRCS to maintain the status of the Mississippi River Basin [MRB] and the Ohio River Basin [ORB] as Critical Conservation Areas under the Regional Conservation Partnership Program [RCPP] and to include MRB and ORB States as priority areas for Critical Conservation Area funding under RCPP. The Committee encourages NRCS to leverage all possible resources to identify nutrient loss and reduce runoff to achieve the goals of the 2015 Gulf Hypoxia Action Plan.

Drought Resilience.—The Committee is particularly concerned about the severe and prolonged drought in the West and applauds the passage of the Colorado River Basin Drought Contingency

Plans. The Committee appreciates NRCS's efforts to increase efficiencies in current water use and expects NRCS to utilize all available opportunities to assist producers, irrigators, and irrigation districts in implementing area-wide plans to address drought resiliency and mitigation in a way that maintains strong rural and agriculture communities and protects our natural resources. In providing this assistance, the Committee further expects the NRCS to prioritize support for implementation of Drought Contingency Plans, agreements, or programs that would conserve surface or ground water, improve drought resiliency, and address current and anticipated conservation needs and severe drought-related resource concerns.

Innovative Water Conservation.—The Committee recognizes the devastating impacts wrought by severe and prolonged drought across many regions of the country. The Committee notes that the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Public Law 115–334) made several updates to address water conservation and drought mitigation, including eligibility changes for water conservation and irrigation efficiency practices. NRCS is encouraged to work with eligible entities, including but not limited to producers, States, irrigation districts, and acequias, to help them implement critical innovative drought resiliency and mitigation efforts, which maintain strong rural and agriculture communities while protecting natural resources.

Program Duplication.—The Committee directs NRCS to provide a report within 90 days of enactment of this Act on actions it will take to eliminate program duplication as identified in IG reports.

Soil Health.—The Committee recognizes that improving soil health on agricultural lands is key to achieving both meaningful conservation and economic benefits for producers. The Committee notes that the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Public Law 115–334) provided \$25,000,000 in mandatory funding to carry out new on-farm conservation innovation trials to test new or innovative conservation approaches and directed the Secretary to carry out a soil health demonstration trial to provide incentives to producers to implement practices that improve soil health and increase carbon levels in the soil. The Committee encourages the Secretary to implement the soil health demonstration trial and establish protocols for measuring and testing carbon levels to evaluate gains in soil health.

Technical Assistance.—The Committee directs NRCS to maintain a record of total technical assistance dollars for the past three years and annually in the future and provide the data to the Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture and the Committee on Agriculture Nutrition and Forestry. This report should differentiate mandatory and discretionary allocations.

WATERSHED AND FLOOD PREVENTION OPERATIONS

Appropriations, 2019	\$150,000,000
Budget estimate, 2020	
Committee recommendation	175,000,000

The Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act (Public Law 566, 83d Cong.) (16 U.S.C. 1000–1005, 1007–1009) provides for co-operation between the Federal Government and the States and

their political subdivisions in a program to prevent erosion, flood-water, and sediment damages in the watersheds or rivers and streams and to further the conservation, development, utilization, and disposal of water and the conservation and proper utilization of land in authorized watersheds.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$175,000,000 for the Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations Program.

The Committee recognizes the critical challenges facing rural water resource management and protection and supports needed investments in watershed operations. These Federal-State-local partnerships are uniquely positioned to identify critical watershed protection and flood prevention needs in rural communities and implement projects that deliver multiple streams of benefits for homes, businesses, transportation infrastructure, and natural resources. In selecting projects for funding, the Committee expects the agency to balance the needs of addressing the project backlog, remediation of existing structures, and new projects.

WATERSHED REHABILITATION PROGRAM

Appropriations, 2019	\$10,000,000
Budget estimate, 2020	
Committee recommendation	

The Watershed Rehabilitation Program account provides for technical and financial assistance to carry out rehabilitation of structural measures, in accordance with section 14 of the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act, approved August 4, 1954 (16 U.S.C. 1012, U.S.C. 1001, et seq.), as amended by section 313 of Public Law 106-472, November 9, 2000, and by section 2803 of Public Law 110-246.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee does not recommend an appropriation for the Watershed Rehabilitation Program.

CORPORATIONS

FEDERAL CROP INSURANCE CORPORATION FUND

Appropriations, 2019	\$15,410,629,000
Budget estimate, 2020	8,936,000,000
Committee recommendation	8,936,000,000

The Federal Crop Insurance Act, as amended by the Federal Crop Insurance Reform Act of 1994 (Public Law 103-354), authorizes the payment of expenses which may include indemnity payments, loss adjustment, delivery expenses, program-related research and development, startup costs for implementing this legislation such as studies, pilot projects, data processing improvements, public outreach, and related tasks and functions.

All program costs, except for Federal salaries and expenses, are mandatory expenditures subject to appropriation.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of such sums as may be necessary, estimated to be \$8,936,000,000 in fiscal year 2020 for the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation Fund.

COMMODITY CREDIT CORPORATION FUND

The Commodity Credit Corporation [CCC] is a wholly owned Government corporation created in 1933 to stabilize, support, and protect farm income and prices; to help maintain balanced and adequate supplies of agricultural commodities, including products, foods, feeds, and fibers; and to help in the orderly distribution of these commodities. CCC was originally incorporated under a Delaware charter and was reincorporated June 30, 1948, as a Federal corporation within USDA by the Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act, approved June 29, 1948 (Public Law 80-806).

The Commodity Credit Corporation engages in buying, selling, lending, and other activities with respect to agricultural commodities, their products, food, feed, and fibers. Its purposes include stabilizing, supporting, and protecting farm income and prices; maintaining the balance and adequate supplies of selected commodities; and facilitating the orderly distribution of such commodities. In addition, the Corporation makes available materials and facilities required in connection with the storage and distribution of such commodities. The Corporation also disburses funds for sharing of costs with producers for the establishment of approved conservation practices on environmentally sensitive land and subsequent rental payments for such land for the duration of Conservation Reserve Program contracts.

Corporation activities are primarily governed by the following statutes: the Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act (Public Law 80-806), as amended; the Agricultural Act of 1949 (Public Law 81-439), as amended (1949 Act); the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938 (Public Law 75-430), as amended (the 1938 Act); the Food Security Act of 1985 (Public Law 99-198), as amended (1985 Act); the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-246); the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-79); and the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-334).

Management of the Corporation is vested in a board of directors, subject to the general supervision and direction of the Secretary of Agriculture, who is an ex officio director and chairman of the board. The board consists of seven members, in addition to the Secretary, who are appointed by the President of the United States with the advice and consent of the Senate. Officers of the Corporation are designated according to their positions in USDA.

The activities of the Corporation are carried out mainly by the personnel and through the facilities of the Farm Service Agency and FSA State and county committees. The Foreign Agricultural Service, the General Sales Manager, other agencies and offices of the Department, and commercial agents are also used to carry out certain aspects of the Corporation's activities.

Under Public Law 87-155 (15 U.S.C. 713a-11, 713a-12), annual appropriations are authorized for each fiscal year, commencing with fiscal year 1961. These appropriations are to reimburse the Corporation for net realized losses.

REIMBURSEMENT FOR NET REALIZED LOSSES

(INCLUDING TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

Appropriations, 2019	\$15,410,000,000
Budget estimate, 2020	25,553,096,000
Committee recommendation	25,553,096,000

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of such sums as may be necessary, estimated in fiscal year 2020 to be \$25,553,096,000, for the payment to reimburse the Commodity Credit Corporation for net realized losses.

CRP Wetland Restoration and Wildlife Enhancement.—The Committee notes that agricultural commodity crops, if left unharvested, may help reduce degradation of wetlands and improve sediment trapping, surface and ground water supply, erosion control, and wildlife habitat while providing winter food for waterfowl and other wildlife. The Committee directs the Commodity Credit Corporation, within 60 days of enactment, to amend its program policies and guidelines for CRP conservation practices CP23 and CP23A, to provide that current and future participants are permitted to plant—but not harvest—agricultural commodity crops as wildlife food plots on up to ten percent of the enrolled land to enhance waterfowl and upland bird food and habitat.

HAZARDOUS WASTE MANAGEMENT

(LIMITATION ON EXPENSES)

Limitation, 2019	\$5,000,000
Budget estimate, 2020	5,000,000
Committee recommendation	5,000,000

The Commodity Credit Corporation's [CCC] hazardous waste management program is intended to ensure compliance with the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (Public Law 96-510) and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (Public Law 94-580). The CCC funds operations and maintenance costs as well as site investigation and cleanup ex-

penses. Investigative and cleanup costs associated with the management of CCC hazardous waste are also paid from USDA's hazardous waste management appropriation.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends a limitation of \$5,000,000 for the Commodity Credit Corporation's hazardous waste management program.

TITLE III

RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

The Federal Crop Insurance Reform and Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (Public Law 103–354) abolished the Farmers Home Administration, Rural Development Administration, and Rural Electrification Administration and replaced those agencies with the Rural Housing and Community Development Service, (currently, the Rural Housing Service), Rural Business and Cooperative Development Service (currently, the Rural Business—Cooperative Service), and Rural Utilities Service and placed them under the oversight of the Under Secretary for Rural Economic and Community Development, (currently, Rural Development). These agencies deliver a variety of programs through a network of State and field offices.

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Appropriations, 2019	
Budget estimate, 2020	
Committee recommendation	\$800,000

The Office of the Under Secretary for Rural Development provides direction and coordination in carrying out laws with respect to the Department's rural economic and community development activities. The Office has oversight and management responsibilities for the Rural Housing Service, Rural Business—Cooperative Service, and the Rural Utilities Service.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$800,000 for the Office of the Under Secretary for Rural Development.

Bioenergy Program for Advanced Biofuels.—The Committee is concerned with the interim rule proposed by the Department under the Bioenergy Program for Advanced Biofuels program (section 9005 of (Public Law 113–79), which is intended to promote the development of different qualifying advanced fuel categories. The Committee is concerned that the allocation formula for distribution of section 9005 funds among the qualified fuel categories is inequitable, disproportionate, and inconsistent with the purpose and intent of the section 9005 program. The Committee urges the Department to administer the section 9005 program in a way that is fuel and technology-neutral. Consistent with these objectives, the Committee directs USDA to propose amendments to the interim rule to ensure that any final rule to implement section 9005 provides for a more equitable and proportional allocation of funding among the qualified advanced biofuels and the energy pathways they represent.

RISE Grants.—The Committee recommendation includes \$5,000,000 in funding for the newly-authorized RISE grants enacted as part of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Public Law 115–334). These grants have the potential to help struggling communities by funding jobs accelerators in low-income rural areas. The Committee recommends funding be prioritized for enti-

ties leveraging next generation gigabit broadband service to promote entrepreneurship and entities based in geographical areas with established agriculture and technology sectors which are focused on the development of precision and autonomous agriculture technologies as a way to strengthen rural economies and create jobs.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT
SALARIES AND EXPENSES
 (INCLUDING TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

[In thousands of dollars]

	Fiscal year 2019 enacted	Fiscal year 2020 budget request	Committee recommendation
Appropriation	236,835	192,343	242,005
Transfer from:			
Rural Housing Insurance Fund Loan Program Account	412,254	244,249	412,254
Rural Electrification and Telecommunications Program Account	33,270	38,027	33,270
Rural Development Loan Program Account	4,468		4,468
Community Facilities Program Account		147,591	
Business and Industry Loan Program		7,035	
Water and Waste Disposal Program Account		18,149	
Total, Rural Development salaries and expenses	686,827	647,394	691,997

These funds are used to administer the loan and grant programs of the Rural Utilities Service, the Rural Housing Service, and the Rural Business—Cooperative Service, including reviewing applications, making and collecting loans and providing technical assistance and guidance to borrowers; and to assist in extending other Federal programs to people in rural areas.

Under credit reform, administrative costs associated with loan programs are appropriated to the program accounts. Appropriations to the salaries and expenses account will be for costs associated with grant programs.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends \$691,997,000 for salaries and expenses of Rural Development.

RURAL HOUSING SERVICE

The Rural Housing Service [RHS] was established under the Federal Crop Insurance Reform and Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (Public Law 103-354).

RURAL HOUSING INSURANCE FUND PROGRAM ACCOUNT

(INCLUDING TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

Appropriations, 2019 (budget authority)	\$510,317,000
Budget estimate, 2020 (budget authority)	244,249,000
Committee recommendation (budget authority)	538,783,000

This fund was established in 1965 (Public Law 89-117) pursuant to section 517 of title V of the Housing Act of 1949 (Public Law 87-171). This fund may be used to insure or guarantee rural housing

loans for single-family homes, rental and cooperative housing, farm labor housing, and rural housing sites. Rural housing loans are made to construct, improve, alter, repair, or replace dwellings and essential farm service buildings that are modest in size, design, and cost. Rental housing insured loans are made to individuals, corporations, associations, trusts, or partnerships to provide low-cost rental housing and related facilities in rural areas. These loans are repayable in terms up to 30 years.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$538,783,000 for the Rural Housing Insurance Fund Program Account [RHIF].

The Federal Credit Reform Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-508) established the RHIF program account. Appropriations to this account will be used to cover the lifetime subsidy costs associated with the direct loans obligated and loan guarantees committed in 2020, as well as for administrative expenses. The following table presents the loan subsidy levels as compared to the 2019 levels and the 2020 budget request:

RURAL HOUSING INSURANCE FUND PROGRAM ACCOUNT

[In thousands of dollars]

	Fiscal year 2019 enacted	Fiscal year 2020 budget request	Committee recommendation
Loan Levels:			
Single-Family Housing (sec. 502):			
Direct	1,000,000	.....	1,000,000
Guaranteed	24,000,000	24,000,000	24,000,000
Housing repair (sec. 504)	28,000	.....	28,000
Direct rental housing (sec. 515)	40,000	.....	40,000
Guaranteed rental housing (sec. 538)	230,000	250,000	230,000
Site development loans (sec. 524)	5,000	.....	5,000
Credit sales of acquired property	10,000	10,000	10,000
Self help land development loans (sec. 523)	5,000	.....	5,000
Farm labor housing loans (sec. 514)	27,500	.....	27,500
Total, loan levels	25,345,500	24,260,000	25,345,500
Loan Subsidies and Grants:			
Single-Family Housing (sec. 502):			
Direct	67,700	.....	90,000
Housing repair (sec. 504)	3,419	.....	4,679
Direct rental housing (sec. 515)	9,484	.....	12,144
Site development (sec. 524)	176	.....	546
Self help land development (sec. 523)	431	.....	577
Farm labor housing loans (sec. 514)	6,853	.....	8,583
Farm labor housing grants (sec. 516)	10,000	.....	10,000
Total, loan subsidies and grants	98,063	.....	126,529
Administrative expenses	412,254	244,249	412,254
Total, loan subsidies and administrative expenses	510,317	244,249	538,783

Housing Preservation.—The Secretary is directed to develop a bi-annual comprehensive multi-family housing preservation plan describing how the Department intends to preserve all viable Section 514 and 515 properties in the portfolio. This report shall also include a comprehensive description of the decision-making process,

including any incentives offered, relating to any Section 514 or 515 property that exited the Rural Development portfolio during the preceding 24 months.

RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Appropriations, 2019	\$1,331,400,000
Budget estimate, 2020	* 1,407,000,000
Committee recommendation	1,375,000,000

*The budget estimate includes \$32,000,000 for housing vouchers.

Rental assistance is authorized under section 521(a)(2) of the Housing Act of 1949 (Public Law 87-171). The objective of the program is to reduce rents paid by low-income families living in Rural Housing Service financed rental projects and farm labor housing projects. Under this program, low-income tenants will contribute the higher of: (1) 30 percent of monthly adjusted income; (2) ten percent of monthly income; or (3) designated housing payments from a welfare agency.

Payments from the fund are made to the project owner for the difference between the tenant's payment and the approved rental rate established for the unit.

The program is administered in tandem with the Rural Housing Service section 515 rural rental housing program and the farm labor loan and grant programs. Priority is given to existing projects for units occupied by rent over-burdened low-income families and projects experiencing financial difficulties beyond the control of the owner.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$1,375,000,000 for the Rental Assistance Program.

Housing vouchers are addressed in the Multi-Family Housing Revitalization Program Account.

Rental Assistance Priority.—The Secretary is encouraged to prioritize multi-family housing properties acquired by means of a section 515 loan within the current fiscal year when determining current rental assistance needs.

MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING REVITALIZATION PROGRAM ACCOUNT

Appropriations, 2019	\$51,500,000
Budget estimate, 2020	
Committee recommendation	56,500,000

The Rural Housing Voucher Program was authorized under the Housing Act of 1949 (Public Law 81-171) to assist very low income families and individuals who reside in rental housing in rural areas. Housing vouchers may be provided to residents of rental housing projects financed by section 515 loans that have been pre-paid after September 30, 2005. Voucher amounts reflect the difference between comparable market rents and tenant-paid rent prior to loan prepayment. Vouchers allow tenants to remain in existing projects or move to other rental housing.

The Multi-family Housing Revitalization Program includes funding for housing vouchers and a demonstration program for the preservation and revitalization of affordable multi-family housing projects. Rural Development's multi-family housing portfolio faces

dual pressures for loan prepayments and repair/rehabilitation stemming from inadequate reserves resulting in deferred property maintenance.

Provisions of affordable rental housing can be accomplished more economically by revitalizing existing housing stock rather than funding new construction. The Multi-family Housing Revitalization Program includes revitalization tools for maintenance of existing units and vouchers to protect tenants in those projects that prepay. Flexibility is provided to allow Rural Development to utilize funding to meet the most urgent local needs for tenant protection and project revitalization.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$56,500,000 for the Multi-family Housing Revitalization Program, including \$32,000,000 for vouchers and \$24,500,000 for a housing preservation demonstration program.

Multi-Family Housing Preservation.—The Committee directs the Secretary to provide a report within 120 days of enactment of this Act to estimate the cost of providing rural housing vouchers to all low income households currently receiving USDA rental assistance and residing in a property financed with a Section 515 loan that are set to mature in the subsequent fiscal year and subsequent ten fiscal years. In addition, the Secretary is directed to provide quarterly reports to the Committee on transfers between vouchers and the housing preservation demonstration program within the Multi-Family Housing Revitalization Program Account.

MUTUAL AND SELF-HELP HOUSING GRANTS

Appropriations, 2019	\$30,000,000
Budget estimate, 2020	
Committee recommendation	30,000,000

The Mutual and Self-Help Housing Grants Program is authorized by title V of the Housing Act of 1949 (Public Law 81-171). Grants are made to local organizations to promote the development of mutual or self-help programs under which groups of usually six to ten families build their own homes by mutually exchanging labor. Funds may be used to pay the cost of construction supervisors who work with families in the construction of their homes and for administrative expenses of the organizations providing the self-help assistance.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$30,000,000 for Mutual and Self-Help Housing Grants.

RURAL HOUSING ASSISTANCE GRANTS

Appropriations, 2019	\$45,000,000
Budget estimate, 2020	
Committee recommendation	45,000,000

The Rural Housing Assistance Grants Program consolidates funding for rural housing grant programs. This consolidation of

housing grant funding provides greater flexibility to tailor financial assistance to applicant needs.

Very Low-Income Housing Repair Grants.—The Very Low-Income Housing Repair Grants Program is authorized under section 504 of title V of the Housing Act of 1949 (Public Law 81–171). The rural housing repair grant program is carried out by making grants to very low-income families to make necessary repairs to their homes in order to make such dwellings safe and sanitary, and remove hazards to the health of the occupants, their families, or the community.

These grants may be made to cover the cost of improvements or additions, such as repairing roofs, providing toilet facilities, providing a convenient and sanitary water supply, supplying screens, repairing or providing structural supports or making similar repairs, additions, or improvements, including all preliminary and installation costs in obtaining central water and sewer service. A grant can be made in combination with a section 504 very low-income housing repair loan.

No assistance can be extended to any one individual in the form of a loan, grant, or combined loans and grants in excess of \$7,500, and grant assistance is limited to persons or families headed by persons who are 62 years of age or older.

Supervisory and Technical Assistance Grants.—Supervisory and technical assistance grants are made to public and private non-profit organizations for packaging loan applications for housing assistance under sections 502, 504, 514/516, 515, and 533 of the Housing Act of 1949 (Public Law 81–171). The assistance is directed to very low-income families in underserved areas where at least 20 percent of the population is below the poverty level and at least 10 percent or more of the population resides in substandard housing. In fiscal year 1994, a Homebuyer Education Program was implemented under this authority. This program provides low-income individuals and families education and counseling on obtaining and/or maintaining occupancy of adequate housing and supervised credit assistance to become successful homeowners.

Compensation for Construction Defects.—Compensation for construction defects provides funds for grants to eligible section 502 borrowers to correct structural defects or to pay claims of owners arising from such defects on a newly constructed dwelling purchased with RHS financial assistance. Claims are not paid until provisions under the builder's warranty have been fully pursued. Requests for compensation for construction defects must be made by the owner of the property within 18 months after the date financial assistance was granted.

Rural Housing Preservation Grants.—Rural housing preservation grants (section 533) of the Housing and Urban-Rural Recovery Act of 1983 (Public Law 98–181) authorizes the Rural Housing Service to administer a program of home repair directed at low- and very low-income people.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$45,000,000 for the Rural Housing Assistance Grants Program.

The following table compares the grant program levels recommended by the Committee to the fiscal year 2019 levels and the budget request:

RURAL HOUSING ASSISTANCE GRANTS

[In thousands of dollars]

	Fiscal year 2019 enacted	Fiscal year 2020 budget request	Committee recommendation
Very low-income housing repair grants	30,000	.....	30,000
Housing preservation grants	15,000	.....	15,000
Total	45,000	.....	45,000

The Committee recommends that the Rural Housing Service prioritize funding for communities with unique weather patterns in need of replacing antiquated heating systems with more efficient technologies.

RURAL COMMUNITY FACILITIES PROGRAM ACCOUNT

(INCLUDING TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

Appropriations, 2019	\$50,063,000
Budget estimate, 2020	207,591,000
Committee recommendation	45,778,000

Community facility loans were created by the Rural Development Act of 1972 (Public Law 92-419) to finance a variety of rural community facilities. Loans are made to organizations, including certain Indian tribes and corporations not operated for profit and public and quasi-public agencies, to construct, enlarge, extend, or otherwise improve community facilities providing essential services to rural residents. Such facilities include those providing or supporting overall community development, such as fire and rescue services, healthcare, transportation, traffic control, and community, social, cultural, and recreational benefits. Loans are made for facilities which primarily serve rural residents of open country and rural towns and villages of not more than 20,000 people. Healthcare, fire and rescue facilities, and educational facilities are the priorities of the program and receive the majority of available funds.

The Community Facility Grant Program authorized in the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-127), is used in conjunction with the existing direct and guaranteed loan programs for the development of community facilities, such as hospitals, fire stations, and community centers. Grants are targeted to the lowest income communities. Communities that have lower population and income levels receive a higher cost-share contribution through these grants, to a maximum contribution of 75 percent of the cost of developing the facility.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$45,778,000 for the Rural Community Facilities Program Account.

The following table provides the Committee's recommendations, as compared to the fiscal year 2019 and budget request levels:

RURAL COMMUNITY FACILITIES PROGRAM ACCOUNT

[In thousands of dollars]

	Fiscal year 2019 enacted	Fiscal year 2020 budget request	Committee recommendation
Loan levels:			
Community facilities direct loans	2,800,000	2,500,000	2,800,000
Community facilities guaranteed loans	148,287	500,000	500,000
Total loan levels	2,948,287	3,000,000	3,300,000
Budget authority:			
Community facilities guaranteed loans	4,285		
Community facilities grants	30,000	50,000	30,000
Economic initiative grants	5,778		5,778
Rural community development initiative	6,000		6,000
Tribal college grants	4,000	10,000	4,000
Rural Community Facilities Loan Program Account Transfer		147,591	
Total budget authority	50,063	207,591	45,778

Community Facilities Program.—The Committee directs the Secretary to report: the credit quality of loans identified by North American Industry Classification System code; the impact loans for each facility type have on the Community Facilities loan subsidy rate; a list and description of all measures USDA tracks to evaluate the effect of projects funded through Community Facilities programs on local communities and for how long these measures are tracked; a description and documentation of the process by which the Department prioritizes proposals for Direct and Guaranteed Loan and Grant applications; and the number of Community Facilities projects under which funding is being used to fulfill obligations to bondholders, rather than to support construction, renovation, capital improvement, or equipment purchasing.

Rural Freight Infrastructure.—The Committee notes that Community Facility programs have supported efforts to sustain and grow the export of U.S. agricultural products. Therefore, the Committee encourages the Secretary to use existing authorities to support projects and applicants that invest in freight infrastructure necessary to get U.S. agricultural products to market, including efforts to leverage funding with other sources for inland ports and waterways.

RURAL BUSINESS—COOPERATIVE SERVICE

The Rural Business—Cooperative Service [RBS] was established by the Federal Crop Insurance Reform and Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (Public Law 103–354), dated October 13, 1994. Its programs were previously administered by the Rural Development Administration, the Rural Electrification Administration, and the Agricultural Cooperative Service.

RURAL BUSINESS PROGRAM ACCOUNT

(INCLUDING TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

Appropriations, 2019	\$65,040,000
Budget estimate, 2020	27,535,000
Committee recommendation	65,475,000

The Rural Business and Industry Loan Program was created by the Rural Development Act of 1972 (Public Law 92–419), and finances a variety of rural industrial development loans. Loans are made for rural industrialization and rural community facilities under Rural Development Act amendments to the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1932 et seq.) authorities. Business and industrial loans are made to public, private, or cooperative organizations organized for profit, to certain Indian tribes, or to individuals for the purpose of improving, developing or financing business, industry, and employment or improving the economic and environmental climate in rural areas. Such purposes include financing business and industrial acquisition, construction, enlargement, repair or modernization; financing the purchase and development of land, easements, rights-of-way, buildings, payment of startup costs; and supplying working capital.

Rural business development grants were authorized by the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–79) and can be made to governmental and nonprofit entities, and Indian tribes. Up to 10 percent of appropriated funds may be used to: identify and analyze business opportunities; identify, train, and provide technical assistance to existing or prospective rural entrepreneurs and managers; assist in the establishment of new rural businesses and the maintenance of existing businesses; conduct economic development planning, coordination and leadership development; and establish centers for training, technology, and trade. The balance of appropriated funding may be used for projects that support the development of business enterprises that finance or facilitate the development of small and emerging private business enterprise; the establishment, expansion, and operation of rural distance learning networks; the development of rural learning programs; and the provision of technical assistance and training to rural communities for the purpose of improving passenger transportation.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$65,475,000 for the Rural Business Program Account.

The following table provides the Committee's recommendations, as compared to the fiscal year 2019 and budget request levels:

RURAL BUSINESS PROGRAM ACCOUNT

[In thousands of dollars]

	Fiscal year 2019 enacted	Fiscal year 2020 budget request	Committee recommendation
Loan levels:			
Business and industry guaranteed loans loan levels	950,000	1,000,000	950,000
Budget authority:			
Business and industry guaranteed loans	22,040	20,500	19,475
Rural business development grants	35,000	.....	37,000
DRA, NBRC, and ARC	8,000	.....	9,000
Business and Industry Loan Program Transfer .....	.....	7,035	.....
Total budget authority	65,040	27,535	65,475

Regional Food Hubs.—The Committee encourages USDA to partner with States and other interested partners to build and refurbish

bish food hub and food distribution centers that serve rural farmers but are located in urban areas.

Rural Business Development Grants.—The Committee recognizes the dynamic nature of our rural coastal economies that are often economically diminished by the loss of natural resource-related jobs and have been the first to feel the negative effects of a changing climate. As these rural communities continue to have agriculture-related economic opportunity such as value-added seafood processing as well as new opportunities, the Committee encourages the use of Rural Business Development Grants in rural coastal communities to support innovation and job growth within all sectors, particularly in the case of public-private partnerships and cross-jurisdictional efforts. In addition, the Secretary is directed to give priority to National Scenic Areas that were devastated by wildfires and are in need of economic development assistance.

Rural Business Program Account.—The Committee recommends \$500,000 for transportation technical assistance.

The Committee directs that of the \$4,000,000 recommended for grants to benefit Federally Recognized Native American Tribes, \$250,000 shall be used to implement an American Indian and Alaska Native passenger transportation development and assistance initiative.

INTERMEDIARY RELENDING PROGRAM FUND ACCOUNT

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

[In thousands of dollars]

	Fiscal year 2019 enacted	Fiscal year 2020 budget request	Committee recommendation
Estimated loan level	18,889	.....	18,889
Direct loan subsidy	4,157	.....	5,219
Administrative expenses	4,468	.....	4,468
Total, loan subsidies and administrative expenses	8,625	.....	9,687

The rural development intermediary relending loan program was originally authorized by the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 (Public Law 88-452). The making of rural development loans by USDA was reauthorized by the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-79).

Loans are made to intermediary borrowers (small investment groups) who in turn will reloan the funds to rural businesses, community development corporations, private nonprofit organizations, public agencies, et cetera, for the purpose of improving business, industry, community facilities, and employment opportunities and diversification of the economy in rural areas.

The Federal Credit Reform Act of 1990 (Public Law 74-605) established the program account. Appropriations to this account will be used to cover the lifetime subsidy costs associated with the direct loans obligated in 2020, as well as for administrative expenses.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$9,687,000 for the Intermediary Relending Program Fund.

RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LOANS PROGRAM ACCOUNT

(In thousands of dollars)

	Estimated loan level
Fiscal year 2019 level	50,000
Fiscal year 2020 request	
Committee recommendation	50,000

The Rural Economic Development Loans program was established by the Reconciliation Act of December 1987 (Public Law 100-203), which amended the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (Act of May 20, 1936), by establishing a new section 313. This section of the Rural Electrification Act (7 U.S.C. 901) established a cushion of credit payment program and created the rural economic development subaccount. The Administrator of RUS is authorized under the Act to utilize funds in this program to provide zero interest loans to electric and telecommunications borrowers for the purpose of promoting rural economic development and job creation projects, including funding for feasibility studies, startup costs, and other reasonable expenses for the purpose of fostering rural economic development.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommends a loan program level of \$50,000,000, to be funded from earnings on the Cushion of Credit and fees on guaranteed underwriting loans made pursuant to section 313A of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936.

RURAL COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

Appropriations, 2019	\$29,100,000
Budget estimate, 2020	
Committee recommendation	15,600,000

Rural cooperative development grants are authorized under section 310B(e) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (Public Law 113-79), as amended. Grants are made to fund the establishment and operation of centers for rural cooperative development with their primary purpose of improving economic conditions in rural areas. Grants may be made to nonprofit institutions or institutions of higher education. Grants may be used to pay up to 75 percent of the cost of the project and associated administrative costs. The applicant must contribute at least 25 percent from non-Federal sources, except 1994 institutions, which only need to provide 5 percent. Grants are competitive and are awarded based on specific selection criteria.

Cooperative research agreements are authorized by 7 U.S.C. 2204b. The funds are used for cooperative research agreements, primarily with colleges and universities, on critical operational, organizational, and structural issues facing cooperatives.

Cooperative agreements are authorized under 7 U.S.C. 2201 to any qualified State departments of agriculture, university, and other State entity to conduct research that will strengthen and enhance the operations of agricultural marketing cooperatives in rural areas.

The Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas [ATTRA] program was first authorized by the Food Security Act of 1985 (Public Law 99–198). The program provides information and technical assistance to agricultural producers to adopt sustainable agricultural practices that are environmentally friendly and lower production costs.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$15,600,000 for Rural Cooperative Development Grants.

Of the funds recommended, \$2,800,000 is for the Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas program.

The Committee has included language in the bill that not more than \$3,000,000 shall be made available to cooperatives or associations of cooperatives whose primary focus is to provide assistance to small, minority producers.

Agriculture Innovation Centers.—The Committee recommends \$3,000,000 for Agriculture Innovation Center funding, as authorized in Sec. 6402 of Public Law 107–171, available as grants to States authorized to host, and that have previously hosted, a USDA Agriculture Innovation Center and where the State continues to demonstrate support and provide non-Federal grant funding to producers developing, producing, and marketing value-added agricultural and food products.

Rural Cooperative Development Grants.—The Committee recognizes the important role that cooperatives play in the Nation’s rural economy and the continued need to fund established and successful development centers throughout the country.

Value-Added.—The Committee recognizes the important role of value-added products within the U.S. agricultural sector and notes that the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Public Law 115–334) provides \$17,500,000 in mandatory funding annually. The Committee directs that Value-Added Agricultural Product Market Development Grants be prioritized to support the production of value-added agricultural products, including organic hazelnuts, with significant potential to expand production and processing in the United States.

RURAL ENERGY FOR AMERICA PROGRAM

Appropriations, 2019	\$334,500
Budget estimate, 2020	
Committee recommendation	706,000

The Rural Energy for America Program is authorized under section 9007 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Public Law 107–171). This program may fund energy audits, direct loans, loan guarantees, and grants to farmers, ranchers, and small rural businesses for the purchase of renewable energy systems and for energy efficiency improvements.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$706,000 for the Rural Energy for America Program.

The following table provides the Committee's recommendation as compared to the fiscal year 2019 and budget request levels:

RURAL ENERGY FOR AMERICA PROGRAM

	Fiscal year 2019 enacted	Fiscal year 2020 budget request	Committee recommendation
Estimated loan level	\$7,500,000	.....	\$20,000,000
Guaranteed loan subsidy	334,500	.....	706,000

Biogas System Development.—The Secretary is encouraged, in coordination with other Federal agencies, to support biogas system development with financial and technical assistance through existing energy programs and to prioritize the collection and analysis of related environmental, technical, and economic performance data.

Energy Efficiency Coordination.—The Committee directs increased coordination and cooperation among USDA agencies and offices to better utilize the energy efficiency and renewable energy programs available through the Rural Energy for America program. Additionally, no later than 120 days after enactment of this act, USDA is directed to submit a report to the Committee detailing how the agencies make information about its energy programs accessible to rural communities and how funds are being leveraged for energy efficiency investments in rural areas.

Energy Storage Technologies.—The Secretary is directed to clarify that energy storage technologies are eligible for Rural Energy for America program funding.

RURAL UTILITIES SERVICE

The Rural Utilities Service [RUS] was established under the Federal Crop Insurance Reform and Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (Public Law 103–354), October 13, 1994. RUS administers the electric and telephone programs of the former Rural Electrification Administration and the water and waste programs of the former Rural Development Administration.

RURAL WATER AND WASTE DISPOSAL PROGRAM ACCOUNT

(INCLUDING TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

Appropriations, 2019	\$548,690,000
Budget estimate, 2020	545,779,000
Committee recommendation	484,980,000

The water and waste disposal program is authorized by sections 306, 306A, 309A, 306C, 306D, 306E, and 310B of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (Public Law 87–128). This program makes loans for water and waste development costs. Development loans are made to associations, including corporations operating on a nonprofit basis, municipalities, and similar organizations, generally designated as public or quasi-public agencies, that propose projects for the development, storage, treatment, purification, and distribution of domestic water or the collection, treatment, or disposal of waste in rural areas. Such grants may not exceed 75 percent of the development cost of the projects and can supplement other funds borrowed or furnished by applicants to pay development costs.

The solid waste grant program is authorized under section 310B(b) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (Public Law 87-128). Grants are made to public bodies and private nonprofit organizations to provide technical assistance to local and regional governments for the purpose of reducing or eliminating pollution of water resources and for improving the planning and management of solid waste disposal facilities.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$484,980,000 for the Rural Water and Waste Disposal Program Account.

The Committee recommends \$68,000,000 for water and waste disposal systems grants for Native Americans, including Native Alaskans, and the Colonias. The Committee recognizes the special needs and problems for delivery of basic services to these populations and encourages the Secretary to distribute these funds in line with the fiscal year 2014 distribution, to the degree practicable. In addition, the Committee makes up to \$19,570,000 available for the circuit rider program.

The Committee is concerned about raw sewage discharge in some rural communities in the Mid-South, particularly historically impoverished communities that have had difficulty utilizing Rural Development programs. The Committee is aware of the unique challenges faced by these communities and directs the Department to develop a pilot program to coordinate with a regional university to solve untreated raw sewage issues with innovative technologies and strategic management and regulatory models. The pilot should address rural wastewater management including: county needs assessments, testing wastewater options, defining funding mechanisms for remediation and developing regulatory guidance.

The following table provides the Committee's recommendations, as compared to the fiscal year 2019 and budget request levels:

RURAL WATER AND WASTE DISPOSAL PROGRAM ACCOUNT

[In thousands of dollars]

	Fiscal year 2019 enacted	Fiscal year 2020 budget request	Committee recommendation
Loan levels:			
Water and waste disposal direct loans	1,400,000	1,200,000	1,400,000
Water and waste disposal guaranteed loans	50,000	.....	50,000
Total loan levels	1,450,000	1,200,000	1,450,000
Budget authority:			
Water and waste disposal direct loans .....	.....	54,720	63,840
Water and waste disposal guaranteed loans	190	.....	70
Water and waste disposal grants	400,000	324,917	272,000
Solid waste management grants	4,000	4,000	4,000
Water well systems grants	1,500	993	1,500
Colonias, AK and Native American grants	68,000	68,000	68,000
Water and waste water revolving funds	1,000	1,000	1,000
High energy cost grants	10,000	.....	10,000
Circuit rider	19,000	19,000	19,570
Emergency community water assistance grants	15,000	15,000	15,000
Technical assistance grants	30,000	40,000	30,000
Water and Waste Disposal Program Account Transfer .....	.....	18,149	.....

RURAL WATER AND WASTE DISPOSAL PROGRAM ACCOUNT—Continued

[In thousands of dollars]

	Fiscal year 2019 enacted	Fiscal year 2020 budget request	Committee recommendation
Total, budget authority	548,690	545,779	484,980

Colonias.—The Committee recognizes the special needs and problems for delivery of basic services to these populations and urges the agency to coordinate with State and local authorities, as well as contiguous local utilities located outside of the unserved or underserved service area, to help provide sustainable, essential water and/or waste water services to these unserved or underserved areas.

Water and Waste Grants.—Section 761 of the bill includes an additional \$128,000,000 transfer for Water and Waste grants, bringing the total for fiscal year 2020 to \$400,000,000.

RURAL ELECTRIFICATION AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS LOANS PROGRAM ACCOUNT

(INCLUDING TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

The Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (Public Law 74–605) provides the statutory authority for the electric and telecommunications programs.

The Federal Credit Reform Act of 1990 (Public Law 101–508) established the program account. An appropriation to this account will be used to cover the lifetime subsidy costs associated with the direct loans obligated and loan guarantees committed in fiscal year 2020, as well as for administrative expenses.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The following table reflects the Committee's recommendation for the Rural Electrification and Telecommunications Loans Program Account, the loan subsidy and administrative expenses, as compared to the fiscal year 2019 and budget request levels:

RURAL ELECTRIFICATION AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS LOANS PROGRAM ACCOUNT

[In thousands of dollars]

	Fiscal year 2019 enacted	Fiscal year 2020 budget request	Committee recommendation
Loan authorizations:			
Electric:			
Direct FFB	5,500,000	5,500,000	5,500,000
Guaranteed underwriting	750,000	.....	750,000
Telecommunications:			
Direct, Treasury Rate	345,000	175,727	345,000
Direct, FFB	345,000	514,273	345,000
Total loan authorization	6,940,000	6,190,000	6,940,000
Total budget authority	34,995	39,960	37,065

Energy Efficiency and Conservation Loan Program Oversight.—The Committee is concerned that the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Loan Program does not yet have performance measures

in place, as highlighted by a 2016 Inspector General report. The Committee directs USDA to institute such measures prior to awarding any additional funding through the program, or no later than 180 days from enactment of this act.

DISTANCE LEARNING, TELEMEDICINE, AND BROADBAND PROGRAM
[In thousands of dollars]

	Fiscal year 2019 enacted	Fiscal year 2020 budget request	Committee recommendation
Loan and grant levels:			
Distance learning and Telemedicine Program:			
Grants	34,000	43,600	34,000
Broadband program:			
Treasury rate loans	29,851	(*)	29,851
Treasury rate loans budget authority	5,830	(*)	5,340
Grants	30,000	30,000	30,000
Total DLT and Broadband Program level	93,851	(*)	93,851
Total DLT and Broadband Budget authority	69,830	273,600	69,340

* \$200 million in budget authority is requested to continue the broadband loan and grant pilot program created in Sec. 779 of Public Law 115–141.

The Distance Learning, Telemedicine, and Broadband Program is authorized by the Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990 (Public Law 101–624), as amended by the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (Public Law 104–127). This program provides incentives to improve the quality of phone services, to provide access to advanced telecommunications services and computer networks, and to improve rural opportunities.

This program provides the facilities and equipment to link rural education and medical facilities with more urban centers and other facilities, providing rural residents access to better healthcare through technology and increasing educational opportunities for rural students. These funds are available for loans and grants.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$69,340,000 for the Distance Learning, Telemedicine, and Broadband Program. Funds recommended for the RUS broadband program are intended to promote broadband availability in those areas where there is not otherwise a business case for private investment in a broadband network. The Committee encourages RUS to focus expenditures on projects that bring broadband service to currently unserved households.

The Committee recommendation includes \$3,000,000 to address critical healthcare needs, as authorized by section 379G of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (Public Law 115–334).

Broadband Grants.—Of the funds recommended, \$30,000,000 in grants shall be made available to support broadband transmission for rural areas.

High-Cost Universal Service Fund [USF] Recipients with Minimum 25/3 Mbps Buildout Obligations.—The Committee directs that funding for the Rural eConnectivity Pilot Program (ReConnect) for service areas where High-Cost USF recipients (including

but not limited to CAF II, A-CAM, and CAF-BLS recipients) have buildout obligations of 25/3 Mbps or greater for fixed terrestrial broadband can only be requested by the entity that is receiving such USF support, and project sponsors that receive USF support in those areas may only apply for funds that serve those areas from the 100 percent Loan funding category under the ReConnect Program. For purposes of clarification, this limitation on eligibility shall only apply to those areas (e.g., study areas or census blocks) for which the USF recipient is subject to a buildout obligation of 25/3 Mbps or greater for fixed terrestrial broadband.

Mountainous Terrain.—The Committee is concerned that States with challenging mountainous terrain face higher costs and other implementation problems when it comes to broadband deployment. The Committee recognizes the importance of both the ReConnect and Community Connect programs and their ability to bring much-needed high speed broadband to remote rural communities. The Committee urges the Secretary to prioritize awarding funding to areas with mountainous terrain.

ReConnect Status.—The ReConnect broadband loan and grant pilot program was established in the fiscal year 2018 Appropriations Act (Public Law 115–141) to expand broadband service to rural areas without sufficient access to broadband. To date, \$1,550,000,000 has been appropriated to this pilot program.

The Committee appreciates that the ReConnect Program was recently launched and began accepting applications this year for rural communities to build modern broadband infrastructure. However, in order to ensure the program reaches the underserved and unserved communities it is intended to serve, the Committee directs the Secretary to complete a review of the ReConnect Program within 6 months of announcing its first ReConnect award. The review should include a list of the grant and loan recipients and amounts awarded. It should also include an assessment of the scoring criteria, including the median score for all applicants, the criteria of areas where applicants were least likely to receive full points, such as State broadband plans and residential only applications, and suggestions for modifications to the scoring criteria. The review should consider challenges of accurate broadband speed maps self-reported by Internet service providers (FCC Form 477 data), including alternatives to relying on the Federal Communications Commission [FCC] maps. The review should also detail the Department's efforts to support the deployment of last-mile broadband infrastructure and should address how additional ISPs can apply for ReConnect funds in the 190,595 locations where only one satellite broadband company has received CAFII funding.

In addition, in order to ensure these investments are maximized, the Committee reminds the Department to avoid efforts that could duplicate existing networks built by private investment or those built leveraging and utilizing other Federal programs, and in this regard to coordinate the activities of the Department with the National Telecommunications Information Administration [NTIA] and the FCC to ensure wherever possible that any funding provided to support deployment of last-mile broadband infrastructure is targeted to areas that are currently unserved. Further, the Committee encourages the agency to prioritize projects financed through pub-

lic-private partnerships and projects where Federal funding will not exceed 50 percent of the project's total cost.

Furthermore, the Committee is mindful of the unique challenges of serving Alaska, which warrant special consideration when providing funding for rural broadband. For example, the nature of remote Alaskan villages defies traditional notions of "rural" that are more common to the lower 48 States. Therefore, the Committee urges the Rural Utilities Service, in implementing the next round of the ReConnect program, to examine these barriers to full participation by all types of Alaskan providers and consider ways that unserved parts of Alaska could receive the substantial benefits of this program.

Rural in Character.—The Committee is concerned that the current weighting scale for the ReConnect program disadvantages rural households and communities that aren't necessarily located on farms. In addition, the Committee is concerned that providing preference to 100mbps symmetrical service also unfairly disadvantages these communities by limiting the deployment of other technologies capable of providing service to these areas. Further, the Committee is concerned that the current program does not effectively recognize the unique challenges and opportunities that different technologies, including satellite, provide to delivering broadband in noncontiguous states or mountainous terrain.

RUS Grants and Loans for Open Access Infrastructure Projects.—The Committee is aware that public entities have invested in open access fiber infrastructure that is facilitating the delivery of high-speed broadband services by licensed telecommunications providers, including the model pioneered by public port authorities. The Committee understands that while particular open access fiber projects may be eligible for RUS grants and loans, more generally, significant barriers exist to government backing for these types of open access investments. The Committee believes RUS programs should support financially-feasible open access infrastructure projects that meet program goals. The Committee urges RUS to ensure the agency's criteria and application processes provide for fair consideration of open access projects by accounting for the unique structures and opportunities such projects present in advancing broadband deployment in unserved and underserved communities.

TITLE IV

DOMESTIC FOOD PROGRAMS

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR FOOD, NUTRITION, AND CONSUMER SERVICES

Appropriations, 2019	\$800,000
Budget estimate, 2020	800,000
Committee recommendation	800,000

The Office of the Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services provides direction and coordination in carrying out the laws enacted by the Congress with respect to the Department's nutrition assistance activities. The Office has oversight and management responsibilities for the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS).

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$800,000 for the Office of the Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services.

Evaluating Food Options and Standards in Retail Settings.—The Committee understands that States implement and verify product nutrition standards for eligibility for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program [SNAP] and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children [WIC] through contracted in-store visits and reviews of food products and labeling. The Committee is concerned that such process may be inefficient and potentially limits the eligibility of healthier food options, including organic, non-processed, and ethnic choices. The Committee directs the Government Accountability Office to review the current process used by States and how such process may restrict the eligibility of nutritious food options and to evaluate and report on available technologies which may streamline the process and improve the product label and standards analysis for a wider variety of healthy food options within SNAP and WIC.

Food Security in Frontier Communities.—The Committee appreciates the intent of FNS to focus on implementing locally-designed initiatives to increase food security in frontier communities within its area of responsibility. Helping these communities adapt to changing growing conditions and subsistence food availability and to develop the capacity to grow more food locally will improve their tenuous food security and provide opportunities for economic development in extremely low-income regions. The Committee therefore strongly encourages FNS to continue to work closely with relevant stakeholders in States with frontier communities to support activities and policies that will result in increased food security. The Committee directs FNS to collaborate with AMS in implementing Micro-Grants for Food Security.

Nutrition Program Efficiency.—The Committee encourages the Secretary to focus process and technology improvement grants within FNS to expand public-private partnerships to increase food security in a cost-efficient and accountable manner.

Unsweetened Naturally Flavored Water.—The Committee notes that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have found that U.S. adolescents who drink less water tend to drink less milk, eat fewer fruits and vegetables, drink more sugar-sweetened beverages, eat more fast food, and get less physical activity. Since school nutrition standards were last updated in 2012, numerous naturally flavored water options now exist that are free of any sweeteners as well as artificial colors and flavors. Therefore, the Committee directs USDA to review its standards with regard to water and revise them, if appropriate, or allow schools to request waivers from the current water standards.

FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE

The Food and Nutrition Service represents an organizational effort to eliminate hunger and malnutrition in this country. Nutrition assistance programs provide access to a nutritionally adequate diet for families and persons with low incomes and encourage better eating patterns among the Nation's children. These programs include:

Child Nutrition Programs.—The National School Lunch and School Breakfast, Summer Food Service, and Child and Adult Care Food programs provide funding to the States, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and Guam for use in serving nutritious lunches and breakfasts to children attending schools of high school grades and under, to children of preschool age in child care centers, and to children in other institutions in order to improve the health and well-being of the Nation's children and broaden the markets for agricultural food commodities. Through the Special Milk Program, assistance is provided to the States for making reimbursement payments to eligible schools and child care institutions which institute or expand milk service in order to increase the consumption of fluid milk by children. Funds for this program are provided by direct appropriation and transfer from section 32.

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children [WIC].—This program safeguards the health of pregnant, postpartum, and breast-feeding women, and infants and children up to age 5 who are at nutritional risk because of inadequate nutrition and income by providing supplemental foods. The delivery of supplemental foods may be done through health clinics, vouchers redeemable at retail food stores, or other approved methods which a cooperating State health agency may select. Funds for this program are provided by direct appropriation.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.—This program seeks to improve nutritional standards of needy persons and families. Assistance is provided to eligible households to enable them to obtain a better diet by increasing their food purchasing capability, usually by furnishing benefits in the form of electronic access to funds. The program also includes Nutrition Assistance to Puerto Rico.

The program also includes the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, which provides nutritious agricultural commodities to low-income persons living on or near Indian reservations who choose not to participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

Commodity Assistance Program [CAP].—This program provides funding for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program [CSFP], the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, Disaster Assistance, Pacific Island Assistance, and administrative expenses for TEFAP.

CSFP provides supplemental foods to low-income elderly persons age 60 and over.

TEFAP provides commodities and grant funds to State agencies to assist in the cost of storage and distribution of donated commodities.

Nutritious agricultural commodities are provided to residents of the Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands. Cash assistance is provided to distributing agencies to assist them in meeting administrative expenses incurred. It also provides funding for use in non-presidentially declared disasters and for FNS's administrative costs in connection with relief for all disasters. Funds for this program are provided by direct appropriation.

Nutrition Programs Administration.—Most salaries and Federal operating expenses of FNS are funded from this account. Also included is the Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion [CNPP], which oversees improvements in and revisions to the food guidance systems and serves as the focal point for advancing and coordinating nutrition promotion and education policy to improve the health of all Americans.

CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS (INCLUDING TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

Appropriations, 2019	\$23,140,781,000
Budget estimate, 2020	23,943,216,000
Committee recommendation	23,602,569,000

The Child Nutrition Programs, authorized by the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (Public Law 79-396) and the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-642), provide Federal assistance to State agencies in the form of cash and commodities for use in preparing and serving nutritious meals to children while they are attending school, residing in service institutions, or participating in other organized activities away from home. The purpose of these programs is to help maintain the health and proper physical development of America's children. Milk is provided to children either free or at a low cost, depending on their family income level. FNS provides cash subsidies to States for administering the programs and directly administers the program in the States which choose not to do so. Grants are also made for nutritional training and surveys and for State administrative expenses. Under current law, most of these payments are made on the basis of reimbursement rates established by law and applied to lunches and breakfasts actually served by the States. The reimbursement rates are adjusted annually to reflect changes in the Consumer Price Index for food away from home.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends \$23,602,569,000 for the Child Nutrition Programs.

Crediting System.—The Committee recognizes that the current crediting system used by FNS in administering the School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program has not been updated to keep pace with products in the marketplace. Specifically, Greek yogurt receives the same protein crediting as other products with less protein. The Committee directs the Secretary to update the system of crediting high-protein yogurt to accurately reflect scientifically demonstrated higher protein content in strained yogurt.

Farm to School Program.—Successful implementation of Farm to School programs requires broad-based knowledge of best practices regarding coordination among farmers, processors, distributors, students, teachers, dietary and food preparation staff, and USDA professionals. Since the scope of some Farm to School projects have expanded in recent years, the Secretary may allow maximum grant amounts to increase to \$250,000. Of the grant funds provided, the Committee directs the Secretary to use at least \$150,000 to coordinate with established entities, such as regional Farm to School institutes, for the creation and dissemination of information on farm to school program development and to provide practitioner education and training, and ongoing school year coaching and technical assistance.

Pulse Crops.—The Committee recognizes the nutritional value of pulse crops for children and encourages FNS to support school food authorities in sourcing and serving pulse crops.

School Breakfast Commodities.—Of the \$485,000,000 appropriated for Child Nutrition Programs Entitlement Commodities under Section 714 of this Act, \$20,000,000 shall be proportionally offered to States based on the number of breakfasts served in the preceding school year.

Summer EBT.—The Committee understands that Summer EBT has been proven to lower food insecurity among children during the summer months when school is not in session. The Committee is displeased that the Secretary changed the methodology for funding this program in fiscal year 2019. Therefore, the Committee directs the Secretary to fund this program in fiscal year 2020 in the same manner, including the same States and tribal organizations, as it was funded in fiscal year 2018.

Summer Food Service Program.—The Committee recognizes that in many rural and frontier areas of the country where homes are widely scattered, children and youth are unable to access congregate feeding sites that participate in the Summer Food Service Program and that existing mobile food delivery efforts are not able to meet the need. The Committee supports FNS allowing State Agencies to enable Summer Food Service Program service institutions that serve such areas where eligible children and youth have barriers to access or limited access to a congregate feeding site to use their customary reimbursement payments to develop and implement innovative methods to deliver or otherwise make available foods to eligible children and youth by non-congregate means or in non-congregate settings. In addition, the Committee requests USDA submit a report within 1 year of enactment describing how many Summer Food Service Program grantees, in which States, put in place innovative methods of food delivery by non-congregate

means and in non-congregate settings, what innovative methods were used, and how many additional youth were served as a result.

The Committee's recommendation provides for the following annual rates for the child nutrition programs.

TOTAL OBLIGATIONAL AUTHORITY
[In thousands of dollars]

Child nutrition programs	Committee recommendation
School Lunch Program	12,507,478
School Breakfast Program	4,831,384
Child and Adult Care Food Program	3,835,706
Summer Food Service Program	526,385
Special Milk Program	7,064
State Administrative Expenses	314,922
Commodity Procurement	1,419,968
Team Nutrition/HUSSC/CMS	12,475
Food Safety Education	2,929
Coordinated Review	10,000
Computer Support	12,124
Training and Technical Assistance	33,935
CNP Studies and Evaluation	14,999
Farm to School Team	3,997
Payment Accuracy	11,203
School Meal Equipment Grants	30,000
Summer EBT Demonstration	28,000

The Committee expects FNS to utilize the National Food Service Management Institute to carry out the food safety education program.

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION PROGRAM FOR WOMEN, INFANTS,
AND CHILDREN [WIC]

Appropriations, 2019	\$6,075,000,000
Budget estimate, 2020	5,750,000,000
Committee recommendation	6,000,000,000

The WIC program is authorized by section 17 of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966. Its purpose is to safeguard the health of pregnant, breast-feeding and postpartum women, and infants and children up to age 5 who are at nutritional risk because of inadequate nutrition and inadequate income.

The WIC program food packages are designed to provide foods which studies have demonstrated are lacking in the diets of the WIC program target population. The authorized supplemental foods are iron-fortified breakfast cereal, fruit or vegetable juice which contains vitamin C, dry beans, peas, and peanut butter.

There are three general types of delivery systems for WIC foods: (1) retail purchase in which participants obtain supplemental foods through retail stores; (2) home delivery systems in which food is delivered to the participant's home; and (3) direct distribution systems in which participants pick up food from a distribution outlet. The food is free of charge to all participants.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$6,000,000,000 for the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children [WIC].

The Committee recommendation fully funds estimated WIC participation in fiscal year 2020. The Committee recommendation includes \$80,000,000 for breastfeeding support initiatives and \$14,000,000 for infrastructure.

WIC Food Package.—The Committee appreciates the work of the National Academies of Science to review and make recommendations for updating the WIC food packages to reflect current science and cultural factors. The Committee notes, however, that while all revised packages now allow some fish, the amounts remain low compared to the recommendations of authoritative agencies such as the World Health Organization and in some cases, sporadic. The Committee strongly encourages the Department to prioritize the health and cultural benefits of fish consumption as regulations are revised to implement the NAS recommendations and to increase the amount of healthful fish above the amounts recommended by the NAS. The Committee also strongly encourages the Department to allow States to prioritize fish over legumes and peanut butter to respond to the cultural preferences of WIC participants in States like Alaska.

WIC Information Transparency.—In an effort to promote competition and ensure transparency within the WIC bid process, the Committee directs FNS to make all information pertaining to State rebate bid solicitations available on a public website within 1 week of the announcements. In addition, FNS shall continue posting to a publicly accessible website any policy document related to the WIC program, including, but not limited to: instructions, memoranda, guidance, and response feedback within 1 week of its release to WIC State administrators.

SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Appropriations, 2019	\$73,476,921,000
Budget estimate, 2020	69,069,910,000
Committee recommendation	69,163,287,000

SNAP attempts to alleviate hunger and malnutrition among low-income persons by increasing their food purchasing power. Eligible households receive SNAP benefits with which they can purchase food through regular retail stores.

Other programs funded through SNAP include Nutrition Assistance to Puerto Rico and American Samoa, the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, the Emergency Food Assistance Program, and the Community Food Projects program.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program is currently in operation in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Virgin Islands, and Guam. Participating households receive food benefits, the value of which is determined by household size and income. The cost of the benefits is paid by the Federal Government. As required by law, FNS annually revises household benefit allotments to reflect changes in the cost of the thrifty food plan.

Administrative Costs.—All direct and indirect administrative costs incurred for certification of households, issuance of benefits, quality control, outreach, and fair hearing efforts are shared by the Federal Government and the States on a 50–50 basis.

State Antifraud Activities.—Under the provisions of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (Public Law 110–246), States are eligible to

be reimbursed for 50 percent of the costs of their fraud investigations and prosecutions.

States are required to implement an employment and training program for the purpose of assisting members of households participating in SNAP in gaining skills, training, or experience that will increase their ability to obtain regular employment. USDA has implemented a grant program to States to assist them in providing employment and training services.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends \$69,163,287,000 for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Of the amount recommended, \$3,000,000,000 is made available as a contingency reserve.

Within the funds provided, the Committee directs FNS to initiate implementation of practices around electronic data matching for income verification.

Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations [FDPIR] Food Package.—The Committee commends the Department for convening the FDPIR Food Package Review Work Group, which includes tribal representatives and staff from FNS, to increase the amount and variety of traditional foods included in FDPIR food packages and to increase the amount of foods purchased from American Indian and Alaska Native producers and businesses. The Committee directs the Department to provide a report detailing its plans to include a greater variety of traditional foods as regular components of FDPIR food baskets; its plans to identify additional Native American and Alaska Native producers of traditional foods, including wild salmon, caribou, reindeer, elk, and other foods; and its plans to purchase additional traditional foods from a greater number of indigenous producers and businesses.

Improving Accuracy in SNAP.—The Committee acknowledges the importance of accuracy in the applicant certification process for SNAP, as indicated by the enactment of related provisions in the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Public Law 115–334). In implementing these new provisions, the Committee encourages the Secretary to pursue the most cost-effective and transparent means of providing State agencies access to accurate commercial data.

SNAP Data Matching.—The Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Public Law 115–334) amended Section 11 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (Public Law 110–246) by requiring the Secretary to establish an interstate data matching system to prevent multiple issuances of SNAP benefits to an individual by more than one State agency simultaneously. In implementing the data matching system, the Committee encourages the Department to engage partners that have extensive experience working with State social service programs. The Committee encourages USDA to establish an interagency working group with the Department of Health and Human Services to explore expanding the scope of the data matching program to prevent duplication and improve program integrity across all of the means-tested programs that assist low-income families.

SNAP Eligibility for College Students.—The Committee is deeply concerned by the findings of the December 2018 GAO report titled

“Food Insecurity—Better Information Could Help Eligible College Students Access Federal Food Assistance Benefits” in which GAO found that students may be unaware or misinformed about their potential eligibility for SNAP. GAO found that FNS has not provided clear explanation to students on SNAP eligibility requirements, easily accessible to students and college officials and, as result, students experiencing food insecurity may remain unaware that they could be eligible for SNAP. Therefore, the Committee directs the Secretary to provide a report, within 90 days of enactment of this act, on its current outreach efforts to colleges and their students on potential eligibility. Further, the Department should coordinate with the Department of Education to improve outreach to eligible college students and report on its efforts within 180 days after enactment of this act.

SNAP Fraud.—A January 2017 OIG report entitled “Detecting Potential SNAP Trafficking Using Data Analysis” found that FNS lacked methods to reconcile data discrepancies across their administration systems and that retailers were providing benefits to individuals using fraudulent credentials. The Committee directs FNS to provide an update on the implementation of controls to address these problems, as well as data demonstrating whether the controls have reduced error rates.

State SNAP Implementation.—The Committee is concerned about implementation of the SNAP program in certain States where States are failing to meet the required deadlines for processing applications. USDA is encouraged to work closely with States to remedy program deficiency and be aggressive in combating any falsification of SNAP implementation data.

COMMODITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Appropriations, 2019	\$322,139,000
Budget estimate, 2020	55,471,000
Committee recommendation	344,248,000

The Commodity Assistance Program includes funding for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program and funding to pay expenses associated with the storage and distribution of commodities through The Emergency Food Assistance Program.

The Commodity Supplemental Food Program [CSFP].—Authorized by section 4(a) of the Agricultural and Consumer Protection Act of 1973 (7 U.S.C. 612c note), as amended in 1981 by Public Law 97–98 and in 2014 by Public Law 113–79, this program provides supplemental food to low-income senior citizens and in some cases low-income infants and children up to age six, low-income pregnant and postpartum women. The Agricultural Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–79) discontinued the admission of new pregnant and postpartum women and children into the program. Those already in the program can continue to receive assistance until they are no longer eligible.

The foods for CSFP are provided by USDA for distribution through State agencies. The authorized commodities include: iron-fortified infant formula, rice cereal, cheese, canned juice, evaporated milk and/or nonfat dry milk, canned vegetables or fruits, canned meat or poultry, egg mix, dehydrated potatoes, farina, and

peanut butter and dry beans. Elderly participants may receive all commodities except iron-fortified infant formula and rice cereal.

The Emergency Food Assistance Program [TEFAP].—Authorized by the Emergency Food Assistance Act of 1983 (7 U.S.C. 7501 et seq.), as amended, the program provides nutrition assistance to low-income people through prepared meals served on site and through the distribution of commodities to low-income households for home consumption. The commodities are provided by USDA to State agencies for distribution through State-established networks. State agencies make the commodities available to local organizations, such as soup kitchens, food pantries, food banks, and community action agencies, for their use in providing nutrition assistance to those in need.

Funds are administered by FNS through grants to State agencies which operate commodity distribution programs. Allocation of the funds to States is based on a formula which considers the States' unemployment rate and the number of persons with income below the poverty level.

Farmers' Market Nutrition Program.—The Farmers' Market Nutrition Program [FMNP] provides WIC or WIC-eligible participants with coupons to purchase fresh, nutritious, unprepared foods, such as fruits and vegetables, from farmers' markets. This benefits both participants and local farmers by increasing the awareness and use of farmers' markets by low-income households.

Pacific Island and Disaster Assistance.—This program provides funding for assistance to the nuclear-affected islands in the form of commodities and administrative funds. It also provides funding for use in non-presidentially declared disasters and for FNS's administrative costs in connection with relief for all disasters.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$344,248,000 for the Commodity Assistance Program. The Committee continues to encourage the Department to distribute Commodity Assistance Program funds equitably among the States, based on an assessment of the needs and priorities of each State and the State's preference to receive commodity allocations through each of the programs funded under this account.

Commodity Supplemental Food Program.—The Committee recommends \$245,000,000 for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program. This amount fully funds participation in fiscal year 2020.

Farmers' Market Nutrition Program.—The Committee is aware that the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program provides fresh fruits and vegetables to low-income mothers and children, benefiting not only WIC participants, but local farmers as well. Therefore, the Committee recommends \$18,548,000 for the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program and directs the Secretary to obligate these funds within 45 days.

The Emergency Food Assistance Program.—The Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-334) provides \$322,250,000 for TEFAP commodities to be purchased with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program funds. The Committee recommendation includes \$79,630,000 for TEFAP transportation, storage, and program integrity. In addition, the Committee recommendation grants

the Secretary authority to transfer up to an additional 10 percent from TEFAP commodities for this purpose and urges the Secretary to use this authority.

The Committee encourages the Secretary to identify opportunities for increasing the supply of TEFAP commodities in the coming fiscal year through bonus and specialty crop purchases. The Department shall make available to the States domestically produced catfish fillets for distribution to local agencies.

NUTRITION PROGRAMS ADMINISTRATION

Appropriations, 2019	\$164,688,000
Budget estimate, 2020	152,041,000
Committee recommendation	160,891,000

The Nutrition Programs Administration appropriation provides for most of the Federal operating expenses of the Food and Nutrition Service, which includes the Child Nutrition Programs; Special Milk Program; WIC; SNAP; Nutrition Assistance for Puerto Rico; the Commodity Assistance Program, including the Commodity Supplemental Food Program and the Emergency Food Assistance Program; and Farmers' Market Nutrition Program and Pacific Island and Disaster Assistance.

The major objective of Nutrition Programs Administration is to efficiently and effectively carry out the nutrition assistance programs mandated by law. This is to be accomplished by the following: (1) giving clear and consistent guidance and supervision to State agencies and other cooperators; (2) assisting the States and other cooperators by providing program, managerial, financial, and other advice and expertise; (3) measuring, reviewing, and analyzing the progress being made toward achieving program objectives; and (4) carrying out regular staff support functions.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$160,891,000 for Nutrition Programs Administration.

National Accuracy Clearinghouse.—The Committee recognizes the importance of implementing the National Accuracy Clearinghouse on a nationwide basis to prevent multiple issuances of supplemental nutrition program benefits to an individual by more than one State simultaneously. The Committee provides \$5,000,000 for the nationwide implementation of the National Accuracy Clearinghouse, as described in Section 4011 of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Public Law 115–334).

TITLE V

FOREIGN ASSISTANCE AND RELATED PROGRAMS

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND FOREIGN
AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS

Appropriations, 2019	\$875,000
Budget estimate, 2020	875,000
Committee recommendation	875,000

The Office of the Under Secretary for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs provides direction and coordination in carrying out the laws enacted by the Congress with respect to the Department's international affairs (except for foreign economic development). The Office has oversight and management responsibilities for the Foreign Agricultural Service.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriations of \$875,000 for the Office of the Under Secretary for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs.

Food Chain Systems.—The Committee is aware that the lack of comprehensive cold food chain systems is one of the main causes of food loss and results in a significant percentage of food spoilage from farm-to-market. Preventing food loss and implementing a robust cold food chain results in substantial benefits such as increased nutrition, a safer food supply, greater economic opportunity, and increased resilience. In order to maximize the benefit investment in the agricultural productivity of the developing world, the Committee encourages the Department to give strong consideration to the use of cold chain technologies and include the development of appropriate cooling technologies in programs, policies, and strategic plans aimed at hunger prevention and food security in developing agricultural markets.

OFFICE OF CODEX ALIMENTARIUS

Appropriations, 2019	\$3,976,000
Budget estimate, 2020	4,775,000
Committee recommendation	4,775,000

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$4,775,000 for the Office of Codex Alimentarius. Funding was previously provided through the Food Safety and Inspection Service.

FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL SERVICE

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

(INCLUDING TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

(In thousands of dollars)

	Appropriations	Transfers from loan accounts	Total
Appropriations, 2019	213,890	6,382	220,272
Budget estimate, 2020	192,824	6,063	198,887

(In thousands of dollars)

	Appropriations	Transfers from loan accounts	Total
Committee recommendation	217,920	6,063	223,983

The Foreign Agricultural Service [FAS] was established March 10, 1953, by Secretary's Memorandum No. 1320, supplement 1. Public Law 83-690, approved August 28, 1954, transferred the agricultural attachés from the Department of State to the Foreign Agricultural Service.

The mission of FAS overseas is to represent U.S. agricultural interests, to promote export of domestic farm products, improve world trade conditions, and report on agricultural production and trade in foreign countries. FAS staff are stationed at 98 offices around the world where they provide expertise in agricultural economics and marketing, as well as provide attaché services.

FAS carries out several export assistance programs to counter the adverse effects of unfair trade practices by competitors on U.S. agricultural trade. The Market Access Program [MAP] conducts both generic and brand-identified promotional programs in conjunction with nonprofit agricultural associations and private firms financed through reimbursable CCC payments.

The General Sales Manager was established pursuant to section 5(f) of the charter of the Commodity Credit Corporation and 15 U.S.C. 714-714p. The funds allocated to the General Sales Manager are used for conducting the following programs: (1) CCC Export Credit Guarantee Program (GSM-102), including facilities financing guarantees; (2) Food for Peace; (3) section 416b Overseas Donations Program; (4) Market Access Program; and (5) programs authorized by the Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act including barter, export sales of most CCC-owned commodities, export payments, and other programs as assigned to encourage and enhance the export of U.S. agricultural commodities.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends \$223,983,000 for the Foreign Agricultural Service, including a direct appropriation of \$217,920,000.

The Committee recommendation includes \$900,000 for Capital Security Cost Sharing; \$1,600,000 for International Cooperative Administrative Support Services; and \$1,530,000 for pay costs for Locally Engaged Staff.

Borlaug Fellows Program.—The Committee recommendation includes \$3,500,000 for the Borlaug International Agricultural Science and Technology Fellows Program. This program provides training for international scientists and policymakers from selected developing countries. The fellows work closely with U.S. specialists in their fields of expertise and apply that knowledge in their home countries. The Committee recognizes the importance of this program in helping developing countries strengthen their agricultural practices and food security.

Cochran Fellowship Program.—The Committee recommendation includes \$6,500,000 for the Cochran Fellowship Program. The Committee encourages the Secretary to continue to provide additional

support for the program through the Commodity Credit Corporation Emerging Markets Program.

FOOD FOR PEACE TITLE I DIRECT CREDIT AND FOOD FOR PROGRESS
PROGRAM ACCOUNT

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

Appropriations, 2019	\$142,000
Budget estimate, 2020	135,000
Committee recommendation	142,000

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$142,000 for administrative expenses to continue servicing existing Food for Peace title I agreements.

FOOD FOR PEACE TITLE II GRANTS

Appropriations, 2019	\$1,500,000,000
Budget estimate, 2020	
Committee recommendation	1,716,000,000

Commodities Supplied in Connection With Dispositions Abroad (Title II) (7 U.S.C. 1721-1726).—Commodities are supplied without cost through foreign governments to combat malnutrition and to meet famine and other emergency requirements. Commodities are also supplied for nonemergencies through public and private agencies, including intergovernmental organizations. The CCC pays ocean freight on shipments under this title and may also pay overland transportation costs to a landlocked country, as well as internal distribution costs in emergency situations. The funds appropriated for title II are made available to private voluntary organizations and cooperatives to assist these organizations in meeting administrative and related costs.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$1,716,000,000 for Food for Peace title II grants.

McGOVERN-DOLE INTERNATIONAL FOOD FOR EDUCATION AND CHILD
NUTRITION PROGRAM GRANTS

Appropriations, 2019	\$210,255,000
Budget estimate, 2020	
Committee recommendation	210,255,000

The McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program helps support education, child development, and food security for some of the world's poorest children. The program provides for donations of U.S. agricultural products, as well as financial and technical assistance, for school feeding and maternal and child nutrition projects in low-income, food-deficit countries that are committed to universal education. Commodities made available for donation through agreements with private voluntary organizations, cooperatives, intergovernmental organizations, and foreign governments may be donated for direct feeding or for local

sale to generate proceeds to support school feeding and nutrition projects.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$210,255,000 for the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program.

Local and Regional Procurement.—The Committee provides an appropriation of \$15,000,000 for efforts to build long-term agriculture sustainability and establish a local investment in school feeding programs. With direct U.S. commodity contributions, projects supported by the McGovern-Dole Food for Education Program have significantly improved the attendance, nourishment, and learning capacity of school-aged children in low-income countries throughout the impoverished world. New funding authorities would enable school feeding programs to proactively transition from direct commodity assistance to locally sourced agriculture products. The Committee directs the Secretary to conduct the Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement Project Program in accordance with the priorities of the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program.

COMMODITY CREDIT CORPORATION EXPORT (LOANS)

CREDIT GUARANTEE PROGRAM ACCOUNT

(INCLUDING TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

(In thousands of dollars)

	Guaranteed loan levels	Administrative expenses
Appropriations, 2019	6,382	2,463
Budget estimate, 2020	6,063	318
Committee recommendation	6,063	318

In 1980, the CCC instituted the Export Credit Guarantee Program (GSM-102) under its charter authority. With this program, CCC guarantees, for a fee, payments due U.S. exporters under deferred payment sales contracts (up to 36 months) for defaults due to commercial as well as noncommercial risks. The risk to CCC extends from the date of export to the end of the deferred payment period covered in the export sales contract and covers only that portion of the payments agreed to in the assurance agreement. Operation of this program is based on criteria which will assure that it is used only where it is determined that it will develop new market opportunities and maintain and expand existing world markets for U.S. agricultural commodities. The program encourages U.S. financial institutions to provide financing to those areas where the institutions would be unwilling to provide financing in the absence of the CCC guarantees. CCC also provides facilities financing guarantees.

The Federal Credit Reform Act of 1990 establishes the program account. The subsidy costs of the CCC export guarantee programs are exempt from the requirement of advance appropriations of budget authority according to section 504(c)(2) of the Federal Cred-

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it Reform Act of 1990, Public Law 101–508. Appropriations to this account will be used for administrative expenses.

TITLE VI
RELATED AGENCY AND FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION

The Food and Drug Administration [FDA] is a scientific regulatory agency whose mission is to promote and protect the public health and safety of Americans. FDA's work is a blend of science and law. The Food and Drug Administration Amendments Act of 2007 [FDAAA] (Public Law 110-85) reaffirmed the responsibilities of the FDA: to ensure safe and effective products reach the market in a timely way, and to monitor products for continued safety while they are in use. In addition, FDA is entrusted with two critical functions in the Nation's war on terrorism: preventing willful contamination of all regulated products, including food, and improving the availability of medications to prevent or treat injuries caused by biological, chemical, radiological, or nuclear agents.

The FDA Foods program has the primary responsibility for assuring that the food supply, quality of foods, food ingredients, and dietary supplements are safe, sanitary, nutritious, wholesome, and honestly labeled, and that cosmetic products are safe and properly labeled. The variety and complexity of the food supply has grown dramatically while new and more complex safety issues, such as emerging microbial pathogens, natural toxins, and technological innovations in production and processing, have developed. This program plays a major role in keeping the U.S. food supply among the safest in the world.

In January 2011, the Food Safety Modernization Act (Public Law 111-353) was signed into law. This law enables FDA to better protect public health by strengthening the food safety system. It enables FDA to focus more on preventing food safety and feed problems rather than relying primarily on reacting to problems after they occur. The law also provides FDA with new enforcement authorities designed to achieve higher rates of compliance with prevention- and risk-based food and feed safety standards and to better respond to and contain problems when they do occur. The law also gives FDA important new tools to hold imported food and feed to the same standards as domestic food and feed and directs FDA to build an integrated national food safety system in partnership with State and local authorities.

The FDA Drugs programs are comprised of four separate areas, Human Drugs, Animal Drugs, Medical Devices and Biologics. FDA is responsible for the lifecycle of products, including premarket review and postmarket surveillance of human and animal drugs, medical devices, and biological products to ensure their safety and effectiveness. For Human Drugs this includes assuring that all drug products used for the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of disease are safe and effective. Additional procedures include reviewing and evaluating investigational new drug applications; evaluation of market applications for new and generic drugs, labeling and composition of prescription and over-the-counter drugs; moni-

toring the quality and safety of products manufactured in, or imported into, the United States; and, regulating the advertising and promotion of prescription drugs. The Animal Drugs and Feeds program ensures only safe and effective veterinary drugs, intended for the treatment and/or prevention of diseases in animals and the improved production of food-producing animals, are approved for marketing.

The FDA Biologics program assures that blood and blood products, blood test kits, vaccines, and therapeutics are pure, potent, safe, effective, and properly labeled. The program inspects blood banks and blood processors; licenses and inspects firms collecting human source plasma; evaluates and licenses biologics manufacturing firms and products; lot releases licensed products; and monitors adverse events associated with vaccine immunization, blood products, and other biologics.

The FDA Devices and Radiological program ensures the safety and effectiveness of medical devices and eliminates unnecessary human exposure to manmade radiation from medical, occupational, and consumer products. In addition, the program enforces quality standards under the Mammography Quality Standards Act (Public Law 108–365). Medical devices include thousands of products from thermometers and contact lenses to heart pacemakers, hearing aids, and MRIs. Radiological products include items such as microwave ovens and video display terminals.

FDA's National Center for Toxicological Research in Jefferson, Arkansas, serves as a specialized resource, conducting peer-review scientific research that provides the basis for FDA to make sound science-based regulatory decisions through its premarket review and postmarket surveillance. The research is designed to define and understand the biological mechanisms of action underlying the toxicity of products and lead to developing methods to improve assessment of human exposure, susceptibility, and risk of those products regulated by FDA.

In 2009, Congress granted FDA new authority to regulate the manufacture, distribution, and marketing of tobacco products. FDA exercises this responsibility by protecting the public health from the health effects of tobacco, setting scientific standards and standards for tobacco product review, conducting compliance activities to enforce its authority over tobacco, and conducting public education and outreach about the health effects of tobacco products.

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

[In thousands of dollars]

	Appropriation	User fees	Total
Appropriations, 2019	3,068,678	2,516,287	5,584,965
Budget estimate, 2020	3,239,524	2,594,418	5,833,942
Committee recommendation	3,148,678	2,612,764	5,761,442

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$3,148,678,000 for FDA salaries and expenses. The Committee also recommends \$2,612,764,000 in definite user fees, including: \$1,074,714,000 in Prescription Drug user fee collections; \$220,142,000 in Medical De-

vice user fee collections; and \$30,611,000,000 in Animal Drug user fee collections; \$20,151,000 in Animal Generic Drug user fee collections; \$712,000,000 in Tobacco Product user fee collections; \$513,223,000 in Generic Drug User Fee Act user fee collections; and \$41,923,000 in Biosimilar user fee collections. The Committee also recommends \$60,676,000 in permanent, indefinite user fees, including: \$5,515,000 in Voluntary Qualified Importer Program collections; \$1,492,000 in food and feed recall collections; \$6,673,000 in food reinspection collections; \$21,351,000 in Mammography Quality Standards fee collections; \$10,534,000 in color certification collections; \$7,997,000 in Pediatric Disease Priority Review Voucher collections; \$742,000 in third-party auditor collections; \$1,676,000 in outsourcing facility collections; and \$4,696,000 in export and certification fees, as assumed in the President's budget. The Committee recommendation includes bill language which prohibits FDA from developing, establishing, or operating any program of user fees authorized by 31 U.S.C. 9701. The Committee recommendation does not include proposed user fees for food facility registration and inspection, food import, food contact substance notification, cosmetics, and international courier imports. None of these user fee proposals have been authorized by Congress. The Committee will continue to monitor any action by the appropriate authorizing Committees regarding these proposed user fees.

The Committee expects the FDA to continue all projects, activities, laboratories, and programs as included in fiscal year 2019 unless otherwise specified. The Committee does not support \$3,500,000 of the proposed reductions; however, it does accept a \$3,000,000 reduction for consumer education and outreach regarding agricultural biotechnology.

The Committee recommendation includes a net increase of \$80,000,000 for medical product and food safety activities requested in the budget. Included in this funding is \$8,000,000 for opioid prevention activities; \$7,000,000 for Medical Countermeasures Initiatives; \$10,000,000 for Integrated Pathogen Reduction of the Blood Supply; \$6,000,000 for Compounding; \$4,000,000 for New Medical Device Enterprise; \$4,000,000 for Medical Device/Cyber Review; \$2,000,000 for MedTech Manufacturing; \$1,000,000 for Lab Science; \$7,000,000 for Advancing FSMA; \$8,000,000 for Food Outbreaks; \$5,000,000 for Animal Feed Ingredient Review; \$1,000,000 for Seafood Inspections; \$3,000,000 for Dietary Supplements; \$2,000,000 Cannabidiol [CBD] activities; and \$15,000,000 for infrastructure improvements.

In fiscal year 2019, the FDA received significant increases for medical product safety activities, including funding for the following initiatives: Promote Domestic Manufacturing, New Platform for Drug Development, Modernizing Generic Drug Development and Review, and Investment and Innovation for Rare Diseases. The Committee supports these activities and directs the FDA to report back on how these increases have been utilized and recommendations on future needs.

The following table reflects the Committee's recommendations, as compared to the fiscal year 2019 and budget request levels:

FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION SALARIES AND EXPENSES

[In thousands of dollars]

	Fiscal year 2019 enacted	Fiscal year 2020 budget request	Committee recommendation
Centers and related field activities:			
Foods	1,059,980	1,084,636	1,081,356
Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN)	327,962	334,712	335,966
Field Activities	732,018	749,924	745,390
Human Drugs	662,907	713,895	678,295
Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (CDER)	524,738	551,084	517,040
Field Activities	138,169	162,811	161,255
Biologics	240,138	262,138	252,138
Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research (CBER)	198,132	220,132	210,132
Field Activities	42,006	42,006	42,006
Animal Drugs	178,934	192,314	194,094
Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM)	113,419	121,199	125,324
Field Activities	65,515	71,115	68,770
Medical and radiological devices	386,743	423,893	393,893
Center for Devices and Radiological Health	301,738	338,888	308,888
Field Activities	85,005	85,005	85,005
National Center for Toxicological Research	66,712	66,512	66,712
Other Activities	188,069	180,195	181,995
Rent and related activities	114,987	144,371	129,322
Rental Payments to GSA	170,208	171,570	170,873
Total, FDA salaries and expenses, new budget authority	3,068,678	3,239,524	3,148,678

Autoantibody Qualification.—The appearance of certain islet autoantibodies in the serum of individuals increases the chance of developing type 1 diabetes at some point in the future. Therefore, the Committee encourages the FDA to work with the Type 1 diabetes community on the assessment of potential diabetes biomarkers related to islet autoimmunity, which might help inform the design of clinical studies.

Botanical Dietary Supplements.—The Committee encourages FDA to continue to invest in the science base for regulatory decisions on botanical dietary supplements. Expanding outreach and broadening safety evaluations of botanical supplements will help further that work. Studies of the interactions between botanical supplements and prescription drugs would help further patient safety and help inform the FDA's scientific review of botanical dietary supplements.

Cancer Immunotherapy Clinical Trials.—The Committee commends the FDA for its recent efforts to accelerate the review and approval of immune-oncology therapies that safely and meaningfully improve the lives of patients with cancer. With thousands of immuno-oncology clinical trials currently underway or in development, understanding how to make comparisons across studies and identify the highest priority treatments is becoming increasingly important, especially when evaluating early clinical data. The Committee understands that early endpoints commonly used to evaluate standard cancer treatments may not always be appropriate for predicting overall survival outcomes from cancer immunotherapy treatments. Therefore, the Committee urges the FDA to work with the research community and the pharmaceutical industry to develop surrogate endpoints for cancer immunotherapy treatments that can be standardized and recognized by the entire drug development community as avenues toward regulatory approval.

Cannabidiol (CBD).—As previously noted, the Committee provides the FDA with \$2,000,000 for research, policy evaluation, market surveillance, issuance of an enforcement discretion policy, and appropriate regulatory activities with respect to products under the jurisdiction of the FDA which contain CBD and meet the definition of hemp, as set forth in section 297A of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. 1639o). Within 90 days of enactment of this act, the FDA shall provide the Committee with a report regarding the agency's progress toward obtaining and analyzing data to help determine a policy of enforcement discretion and the process in which CBD meeting the definition of hemp will be evaluated for use in products. Within 120 days of enactment of this act, the FDA shall issue a policy of enforcement discretion with regard to certain products containing CBD meeting the definition of hemp as defined by section 297A of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1964 (7 U.S.C. 1639). Such enforcement discretion shall be in effect until the FDA establishes a process for stakeholders to notify the FDA for use of CBD in products that include safety studies for intended use per product and makes a determination about such product. The FDA is encouraged to consider existing and ongoing medical research related to CBD that is being undertaken pursuant to an Investigation New Drug [IND] application in the development of a regulatory pathway for CBD in products under the jurisdiction of the FDA and to ensure that any future regulatory activity does not discourage the development of new drugs.

Canned Tuna.—The Committee is concerned that the FDA has not revised the standard of identity for canned tuna to adopt the drained weight fill of container standard, despite requests in the 1994 “Citizens Petition to Amend Canned Tuna Standard of Identity, 21 CFR 161.190,” Docket No. 94P-0286, H. Rept. 113-116”, “Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, 2014,” and an updated 2015 “Citizen Petition from Bumble Bee Foods, LLC, et al.” Docket No. FDA-2016-P-0147. According to the Congressional Research Service, the United States is the only country that uses the pressed cake weight fill of container standard that requires outdated 1950s technology. The Codex Alimentarius Commission, the Association of Official Analytical Chemists, and all other countries use the drained weight fill of container. The FDA is directed to provide an update on the status of its review of the citizen petitions related to the standard of identity for canned tuna within 90 days. Until a determination on updating the standard of identity for canned tuna is made, the FDA shall, to the extent consistent with applicable regulations, continue to approve in a timely manner temporary marketing permits that adopt the drained weight method consistent with international standards and to approve in a timely manner updates to product labeling under existing temporary marketing permits.

Centers for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition Centers of Excellence.—The Committee is aware of the important contribution of the FDA Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition's Centers of Excellence [COEs] program in supporting critical basic research as well as facilitating the implementation of the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act [FSMA]. The Committee encourages the agency

to continue to fully utilize the COEs to accomplish these goals, and instructs that it enhance its level of support for FDA FSMA activities.

Clinical Trials.—The Committee acknowledges the responsibilities of FDA to protect public health and advance medical innovation and encourages FDA to continue its efforts to improve the effectiveness of the clinical trial process. The Committee is encouraged by the development of novel digital technologies to facilitate the use of virtual clinical trials that would make it easier for patients to participate in trials regardless of where they live. Through telemedicine, connected sensors, patient engagement applications, and direct data capture tools, virtual trials are conducted geographically near the patient. Direct contact with the patient is still maintained remotely, but reducing or eliminating on-site visits has the potential to increase patient convenience and lower study costs. The Committee recommends that the FDA develop the necessary framework to advance the use of virtual trials while still maintaining quality data necessary for FDA approval. The FDA shall report to the Committee on their activities to advance digital technologies and the impact on patient access to clinical trials.

Corneal Crosslinking.—The Committee applauds FDA for placing unapproved drugs intended for corneal crosslinking on the agency's Red List in November 2018. The Committee is aware that medical devices for the treatment of keratoconus are still being sold to U.S. physicians by multiple manufacturers for use in human patients without an Investigational Device Exemption [IDE] and Premarket Approval [PMA]. The Committee is concerned that, while there is an FDA-approved treatment available, as many as 25 percent of all patients receiving corneal crosslinking procedures are put at risk by these non-approved devices. The Committee encourages the FDA to investigate the manufacturers of these non-FDA approved devices, with specific regard to their marketing practices and medical claims, and to take action to prohibit the utilization of non-FDA approved devices for corneal crosslinking procedures.

Deemed Biological Products.—The Committee is concerned that the FDA's interpretation of the Biologics Price Competition and Innovation Act [BPCIA] related to the transition of biological products to the biologic product regulatory review pathway will result in delayed access to lower-cost biosimilar products, including insulin. Further, the Committee is concerned that the FDA's interpretation and guidance related to this transition will create a scenario where sponsors of applications for biological products submitted as a new drug application under section 505 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (Public Law 75-717) that have not received final approval before March 23, 2020 would have to resubmit the application as a biological license application under the biologic product review pathway created under the BPCIA. This could have significant public health consequences and delay access to lower-cost biosimilar products, such as insulin, for millions of Americans. To address these concerns and ensure patients' access to lower-cost biosimilar drugs, such as insulin, the Committee directs the FDA to undertake the following measures: (1) ensure final review of all such pending applications for biological products to be deemed a licensed biological product pursuant to the BPCIA are

completed prior to March 23, 2020; (2) provide that applications submitted under section 505 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, but did not receive a complete review prior to March 23, 2020, receive priority review under section 351 of the Public Health Service Act (Public Law 78–410) and are allowed to rely on FDA’s prior review and any data submitted under the new drug application submitted pursuant to section 505 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (Public Law 75–717); and (3) provide flexibility in deeming follow-on insulin products to be biological products or biosimilar biologic products after March 23, 2020.

Dietary Supplements.—As previously noted, the Committee provides an additional \$3,000,000 for the Office of Dietary Supplements programs. The Committee applauds the FDA’s inspection of and enforcement actions against manufacturers of dietary supplement products that are adulterated or misbranded but recognizes that more resources are needed to oversee products that are contaminated, either intentionally or unintentionally, with unsafe ingredients. The Committee has been pleased with ongoing inter-agency collaborations and urges the FDA to continue working with the Department of Justice to remove illegal dietary supplements from the market. The Committee directs these increased resources toward enforcement of DSHEA, including inspection and enforcement activities. The FDA shall report to the Committee explaining how the agency carries out risk-based enforcement of dietary supplement product manufacturers and the resources it uses for these activities.

Electrical Stimulation Devices.—The Committee remains concerned about the FDA’s delay in promulgating Federal regulations prohibiting the use of electrical stimulation devices against persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. The Committee encourages the FDA to expeditiously issue the final rule and provide to the Senate Appropriations Committee an update on the rule within 45 days of enactment of this act.

Food Contact Notification User Fees.—The Committee recommendation does not include proposed user fees.

Food Mislabeling.—The Committee is concerned about the proliferation of products marketed and labeled with names that include the names of dairy products that do not contain milk or ingredients derived from milk and the lack of clear labeling of these products. The Committee directs the agency to implement an updated approach and report to the Committee on steps taken to enforce against dairy imitation products marketed using dairy names.

Food Safety Block Chain Testbed.—The Committee supports FDA sponsorship of a food safety block chain testbed, in a partnership with food safety elements of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC] and USDA, to enable voluntary sharing of information from existing commercial food safety block chain systems with regulatory agencies. The Committee notes that multiple food retailers and distributors have adopted private block chain-based systems to more effectively manage their supply chains. These types of systems could significantly streamline and reduce the cost of coordination between supply chain participants and regulators, as well as accelerate food safety trace back investigations. The

Committee directs the FDA to report on the progress of this effort within 180 days of enactment of this act.

Food Safety Mission.—The Committee is concerned that the FDA is implementing a one-size-fits-all regulatory framework for our diverse food production systems. FSMA emphasized the need for risk-based, flexible, and science-based regulations to fit varying business models and food production practices. The main focus of the FDA should be to prevent and, if necessary, communicate and mitigate, the roughly 48 million foodborne illnesses each year, not limit consumer choices. The FDA must report to the Committee metrics by which it measures any reductions in foodborne illnesses that have been found since FSMA was signed into law and how the FDA takes into account additional awareness of foodborne illnesses through new technology, such as whole genome sequencing. The Committee directs the FDA to report to the Committee all activities and resources for the Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition that are not spent on implementing food safety programs and on preventing foodborne illnesses.

Foreign High Risk Inspections.—The Committee has provided robust funding for this initiative over the last several years and directs the FDA to provide an update on these efforts, including estimated efficiencies and concerns, and plans to continue or expand this effort in the future.

FSMA Clarification for Small Farms.—The Committee directs the FDA to continue working with small farms to clarify requirements for FSMA compliance, including information on the qualified exemptions available to small and very small farms and the actions required to achieve compliance under these exemptions. The Committee also urges the FDA to communicate, including through appropriate guidance, offer technical assistance, and provide other resources to assist small farms with compliance.

FSMA Cooperative Agreements.—The Committee is aware that some States that have entered into cooperative agreements under the State Produce Implementation Cooperative Agreement Program to provide education, outreach, and technical assistance have or are considering changing the State agency responsible for implementing these agreements. The FDA is directed to work with any State that designates a new implementing agency to ensure it can continue to receive funding under existing cooperative agreements without delay or loss of funding.

Human Drug Review Committee.—The Committee encourages the FDA to fully utilize its authorities under 18 U.S.C. 208(b)(3) to include no less than two members with an expertise in the indication for which the drug is meant to treat on each Advisory Committee when that Committee is reviewing a drug that has been designated as an Orphan Drug.

Import Officer Staffing Review.—The Committee recognizes the importance of ensuring that imports of agricultural products are inspected in a timely and efficient manner. The FDA plays a critical role in helping to safeguard the U.S. food supply, and agricultural import inspections are an important component of achieving the FDA's safety mission. The Committee is aware that agricultural import shipments can be delayed due to staffing challenges, including limited hours, at ports of entry. The Committee encourages the

FDA to review its existing import office hours and subsequently provide Congress an update should the agency determine that additional resources are necessary to ensure timely inspection of agricultural imports arriving at ports of entry.

Improving Import Review.—The Committee directs the FDA to report how the agency is monitoring the impact of the reorganization under Program Alignment and whether such reorganization has improved the consistency of facility inspections.

Innovative Glass Packaging.—The Committee directs the FDA to work with glass packaging suppliers and pharmaceutical manufacturers to evaluate and promote streamlined approval requirements designed to expedite the adoption and use of innovative glass packaging technologies with the capacity to improve product quality, reduce product recalls, reduce drug shortages, and protect public health. Such streamlined approval requirements should address stability testing and other relevant types of data to be submitted in support of product approval.

Intentional Adulteration.—The Committee supports the important role of food defense plans to protect the food supply from acts intended to cause wide-scale harm to public health. The Committee encourages the FDA to continue to work with industry to make Intentional Adulteration [IA] rule implementation as practical and flexible as possible, while also protecting public health through compliance with IA rule requirements.

Medical Gas.—The Committee is pleased that the FDA has convened three public meetings with stakeholders and announced in the Unified Agenda that it intended to issue a proposed rule on medical gases by April 2019. However, the Committee is concerned that the FDA originally committed to issue separate regulations for medical gases in 1978 and has missed the statutory deadlines for medical gas rulemaking in section 1112 of Food and Drug Administration Safety and Innovation Act [FDASIA] (Public Law 112–144) and section 756 of the Fiscal Year 2017 Consolidated Appropriations Act (Public Law 115–31). The Committee believes that now is the appropriate time to complete that commitment for a separate section of regulations for medical gases. Therefore, the Committee directs the FDA to issue final regulations required by the Fiscal Year 2017 Consolidated Appropriations Act no later than December 31, 2019.

Modeling and Simulation in Clinical Trials.—The Committee commends the FDA for its continued support for and use of computer enabled in silico modeling and simulation in clinical trials and for its close affiliation with academic institutional leaders in this field. Partnership in this endeavor allows the development of personalized medical interventions, optimizes the regulatory process, and bridges gaps in the current regulatory infrastructure, which may advance the availability of new generic drugs, biological products, and devices to market at a potentially reduced cost. The Committee directs the FDA to further invest in advancing these applications and deepening its academic affiliations to this end.

Nanotechnology.—The Committee recognizes the increased capabilities that the FDA has developed to study environment, health, and safety of nanomaterials within FDA's Jefferson Laboratory Campus, including the National Center for Toxicological Research

and its consolidated headquarters at White Oak, Maryland. The Committee expects the FDA to continue to support collaborative research with universities and industry on the toxicology of nanotechnology products and processes in accordance with the National Nanotechnology Initiative Environment, Health, and Safety Research Strategy as updated in October 2011.

National Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring System [NARMS].—The Committee recommendation includes \$11,300,000 for the National Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring System. The Committee directs that no less than \$500,000 shall be used to conduct one or more pilot studies to assess types and levels of antibiotic resistance in zoonotic bacteria on food products of species not currently tested by NARMS, such as imported seafood.

National Toxicology Program.—The Committee requests a report describing how the agency will make use of the integrated Consortium Linking Academic and Regulatory Insights on BPA Toxicity study results in subsequent evaluations of BPA.

Nephrotic Syndrome.—The Committee supports the FDA's efforts to find better treatments and cures for Nephrotic Syndrome and believes that the FDA should continue to work with stakeholders to ensure patients have access to and knowledge about available clinical trials. The Committee encourages the FDA to maintain support for the Kidney Health Gateway, which is becoming a central hub for information, entry to clinical trials, and expert opinion resources for patients and professionals.

Olive Oil.—The Committee is particularly concerned with the number of different standards for olive oil and directs the FDA to consult with domestic producers and importers of olive oil to develop a science-based Standard of Identity for the different grades (e.g. extra virgin, virgin, and refined) of olive oil and olive-pomace oils.

Opioid Epidemic.—The Committee is deeply concerned about the opioid abuse epidemic that has taken the lives of more than 70,000 Americans. As previously noted, the Committee recommendation includes additional funding to support ongoing efforts to address the opioid crisis, as well as support existing investments and additional lab needs for the International Mail Facilities initiative.

The Committee notes that fifty million Americans suffer from chronic pain and that living with chronic pain can be life-altering and deeply impact people on many levels. The current state of chronic pain management is often inadequate for many patients and places an economic burden on the healthcare system, costing the U.S. \$560,000,000,000 a year. Management of chronic pain often requires both non-pharmacological treatment, as well as medicines. Unfortunately, the current pharmacological options do not meet the needs of all patients, and additional treatments are needed. Therefore, the Committee directs the FDA to comply with Section 3001 of the Substance Use-Disorder Prevention that Promotes Opioid Recovery and Treatment for Patients and Communities [SUPPORT] Act, which directs the FDA to hold public meetings and issue guidance regarding the challenges and barriers of developing non-addictive medical products intended to treat pain or addiction and expects the agency to comply with this directive.

The Committee also notes that the FDA has a responsibility to seek the advice of experts on the safety and efficacy of both new opioid medications as is required under the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act. Therefore, the Committee continues its directive for FDA to refer any drug application for an opioid to an advisory committee for their recommendations prior to approval unless the FDA finds that holding such advisory committee is not in the interest of protecting and promoting public health.

The Committee also supports the FDA's efforts to transition from the conventional opioid analgesic formulations that dominate the market today to safer products, including, but not limited to, more effective abuse-deterrent opioid analgesic formulations. The Committee directs the FDA to comply with Section 3032 of the SUPPORT Act (Public Law 115–271) and explore other safety-enhancing features, like special packaging or disposal options, that could assist with deterring abuse, misuse, and diversion. The Committee also encourages the FDA to continue to monitor the effectiveness of existing Opioid Analgesic Risk Evaluation and Mitigations Strategy to determine whether further modifications are necessary.

The Committee is also aware of concerns pertaining to the use of opioid analgesics with ultra-high doses and directs the FDA to evaluate potential safety issues associated with higher dose opioid analgesics, as well as potential adverse or public health consequences associated restrictions on higher dose opioid analgesics.

Over-the-Counter Monograph.—The Committee is concerned with free-riders of the FDA Over-the-Counter [OTC] Monograph. The Committee recognizes that the OTC process disproportionately places costs and burdens on companies who proactively participate in studies requested by the FDA. This permissively allows non-contributors to gain financial rewards and marketplace advantages resulting from FDA-requested studies. The Committee appreciates the ongoing work and relationship between the FDA and external partners to finalize antiseptic OTC monographs and encourages all parties to continue their strong collaboration. The Committee urges the FDA to continue reviewing the free-rider issue and ways to provide relief to companies that conduct the requested human data studies. The Committee expects a briefing on progress made within six months of enactment of this Act.

Oversight Activities.—The Committee recommendation includes \$1,500,000 for the HHS Office of Inspector General specifically for oversight of FDA activities.

Patent Information Related to Generic Drug Approval.—The Committee directs the FDA to submit a report 180 days after enactment of this act that provides a listing of the product names, dates, and number of all brand-name drugs with patents listed in the FDA's Orange Book for which a stay of approval under section 505(c)(3)(C) or 505(j)(5)(B)(iii) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (Public Law 75–717) was triggered for an abbreviated new drug application [ANDA] containing a paragraph IV certification that was approved or tentatively approved during fiscal years 2017 and 2018, and the total number of patents listed in the Orange Book, including the date of their listing, for each such brand name drug at the time the stay of approval was triggered.

Patient Experience in Drug Reviews.—The Committee is aware that the FDA is implementing policies to promote public access to information about how patient experience information factored into the review of approved products. The Committee supports this step forward and encourages the FDA to continue refining the instrument and ways to improve its visibility and requests an update on the status of such efforts. The Committee also requests information on FDA efforts to include patient-experience information in relevant labeling and accompanying documentation to inform patient/provider decision-making and payer determinations.

Patient-Focused Drug Development.—The Committee is appreciative of the steps the FDA has taken to implement subtitle A of title III within the 21st Century Cures Act (Public Law 114–255) to better incorporate patient experience in the drug development and approval processes and requests a status report from the FDA on implementation of these provisions including any challenges or impediments being faced.

Pediatric Device Consortia Grants.—The Committee is pleased that the seven FDA-funded Pediatric Device Consortia have assisted in the development of more than 1,000 potential pediatric medical devices since its inception in 2009, as well as promoting job-growth in the healthcare sector, and as such, continues to support this critical effort. The program funds consortia to assist innovators in developing medical and surgical devices designed for the unique needs of children that often go unmet by devices currently available on the market. The Committee recommendation includes no less than the fiscal year 2019 funding level for Pediatric Device Consortia Grants.

Pediatric IBD Clinical Trial Working Group.—The Committee is concerned about the growing incidence of pediatric inflammatory bowel diseases [IBD] and the limited number of approved therapies for this population. The Committee commends the FDA for convening a workshop in November of 2018 to examine barriers to drug development for pediatric IBD, including clinical trials, and recognizes the work done so far to identify the variables that impede trial participation. To advance this work, the Committee strongly encourages the FDA to partner with stakeholders, including patient advocates, healthcare professionals, researchers, and industry, to establish a working group to develop a plan for reducing barriers to pediatric IBD clinical trial participation and drug development.

Pediatric Labeling.—The Committee is aware that labeling for OTC single-ingredient acetaminophen does not contain weight-based dosing instructions for children ages six months to two years despite the recommendations of the FDA Nonprescription Drugs Advisory Committee [NDAC] and Pediatric Advisory Committee in 2011 that data supported this information being added to the label. The Committee is concerned that the lack of dosing information for this vulnerable population may lead to dosing errors, adverse events, and inadequate treatment of fever and pain. As such, the Committee instructs the Commissioner, within 90 days of enactment of this act, to provide a plan and timetable for updating the monograph label for acetaminophen to include weight-based dosing instructions for children ages six months to two years.

Pesticide Residues in Imported Human Foods.—The Committee is concerned that imported human food continues to have significantly higher pesticide violation rates than domestically produced food. The Committee recognizes that identifying a high violation rate for an imported commodity attests to FDA's sampling design. However, such differences between domestic and import violation rates for specific food commodities produced both domestically and abroad remains concerning with respect to human health and differences in regulatory burdens that contribute to trade and market distortions. The Committee encourages the FDA to partner with State inspection services to significantly increase the volume of inspections on imported food samples. Additionally, the FDA shall treat products that exceed their threshold for the special attention list with higher priority for increased inspections. The Committee notes that, while some imported products may not meet the ten percent threshold, certain imported products in the 2016 report had disproportionately higher violation rates than domestic products, such as strawberries, which had no domestic violations but an eight percent violation rate for imported strawberries. In the future, the FDA shall add imported products with significantly higher rates of foreign violations compared to domestic violations to the list of products that warrant special attention.

Polypharmacy.—The routine usage of five or more prescription medications within the same period is becoming increasingly prevalent among older adults, elevating risk factors for drug-drug interactions and adverse events. The Committee directs the FDA to assess potential impacts of polypharmacy, which might help inform the design of clinical studies.

Promoting Domestic Manufacturing.—The Committee supports the agency's work to promote the domestic manufacturing of drug and biological products. The Committee encourages the FDA to increase its efforts to encourage the pharmaceutical industry to adopt advanced manufacturing technologies that have the potential to improve product quality. The Committee directs the FDA to brief the Committee within 180 days of its efforts to promote advanced manufacturing technologies.

Purple Book Publication.—The Committee directs the agency to allocate sufficient resources to support publication and enhancement of the "Lists of Licensed Biological Products with Reference Product Exclusivity and Biosimilarity or Interchangeability Evaluations" for the purpose of promoting the use of biosimilars, encouraging biosimilar competition, and improving transparency.

Pyrogen Testing.—The Committee is aware of currently available human biology-based tests that could be used in place of animal-based tests for assessing pyrogenicity. The Committee encourages the agency to establish processes for evaluating alternative pyrogenicity tests and report back on steps taken to increase their use and effectiveness.

Rare Cancer Therapeutic Development Program.—The FDA's Oncology Center of Excellence was formed to streamline the development of cancer therapies by creating a unified and collaborative scientific environment to advance the development and regulation of oncology products for cancer patients. However, there continues to be a significant development gap for rare cancer therapies while all

22 of the common cancers, which account for 5.5 percent of all cancer types, have multiple treatment options. Therefore, the Committee urges the FDA to focus additional resources on the Rare Cancer Therapeutic Development Program to address gaps in the system, streamline resources, accelerate the development of rare cancer therapies and advance the field of cancer research overall.

Ready-to-Eat [RTE] Foods.—The Committee is aware that the FDA is in the process of finalizing guidance regarding *Listeria monocytogenes* (Lm) in RTE foods. Reducing incidents of listeriosis is an important health goal and the Committee supports efforts to accomplish this objective. The Committee urges the FDA to complete a comprehensive quantitative risk assessment of the presence of Lm in various foods, which will help to provide a scientific basis for determining a reliable and achievable Lm action limit for frozen foods.

Regenerative Medicine Standards.—The Committee is aware of ongoing efforts between the FDA and the National Institute of Standards and Technology [NIST] to coordinate standard development activities that support innovation for regenerative medicine therapies. The Committee recognizes the potential that innovative medical treatments such as regenerative medicine therapies hold to improve the lives of those living with serious and complex medical conditions such as cancer. The Committee encourages the ongoing work of the FDA and NIST to identify, develop, and assess quality standards for components that are key to advancing regenerative medicine, including plasmids. Providing greater certainty surrounding quality standards and regulatory predictability may allow industry, regulatory authorities, and other stakeholders to decrease time to market in making such products available to the public.

Seafood Safety.—As previously noted, the Committee provides a \$1,000,000 increase for foreign seafood safety inspections, as well as additional funding under the Building and Facilities account for seafood safety improvements.

Seafood Advice.—The Committee remains concerned that pregnant women do not have Federal advice on seafood consumption based on the latest nutrition science that has been subject to inter-agency review under Executive Order 12866 and that is consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans as required under 7 U.S. Code §5341(b). Therefore, the Committee directs the FDA to implement Section 773 of Public Law 116–6 by reissuing the final “Advice About Eating Fish” (published in 82 Fed. Reg. 6571 (January 19, 2017)) in a manner that is consistent with the FDA “Quantitative Assessment of the Net Effects on Fetal Neurodevelopment from Eating Commercial Fish” (announced in 79 Fed. Reg. 33559 (June 11, 2014)).

Sesame Allergen Labeling.—The Committee recognizes the importance of sesame allergy as the ninth most prevalent food allergen, with the potential to cause severe adverse events among some Americans. The Committee is concerned that one in every three children with a sesame allergy visits the emergency room [ER] each year and that adults with a sesame allergy are more likely to visit the ER in a given year than adults with any of the top eight food allergens. The Committee is encouraged that the FDA recently requested information to inform possible regulatory action,

and encourages the FDA to make use of its authority under the Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act of 2004 (Public Law 108–282) to require labeling for sesame. The Committee urges the FDA to issue a report to Congress within six months of enactment of this act outlining a process and timeline for determining further regulatory action on sesame allergen labeling.

Shellfish Safety.—The Committee urges the FDA to complete the single laboratory validation of the liquid chromatography mass spectrometry [LC–MS]-based method for detecting brevetoxins association with neurotoxic shellfish poisoning in molluscan shellfish. The Committee further urges the Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference to adopt the FDA’s proposal for the LC–MS method for brevetoxin testing of shellfish as an Approved Method under the National Shellfish Sanitation Program.

Sunscreen Ingredients.—The Committee has expressed concern about the FDA’s lack of progress in approving new sunscreen ingredients despite passage of the Sunscreen Innovation Act [SIA] (Public Law 113–195). The FDA’s recently proposed sunscreen regulation has led to media reports that raise questions about the safety of sunscreen ingredients that have demonstrated success in preventing skin cancer around the world. The Committee is concerned that the rule may create confusion about sunscreens with a sun protection factor [SPF] over 60. The Committee urges the FDA to clarify its messaging concerning currently marketed sunscreen ingredients as an effective method to prevent skin cancer while additional testing is underway and to work with stakeholders to develop a testing regime that sufficiently balances the risks and benefits of using sunscreen ingredients to prevent skin cancer.

Thermal Packaging.—Food and pharmaceutical delivery is one of the fastest growing shipping markets, and with that come a significant increase in packaging waste. The Committee is aware of design-forward approaches that merge sustainability and functionality for entities shipping time-sensitive materials, and accordingly, directs the FDA to provide awareness on the economic and environmental benefits of sustainable thermal packaging alternatives.

Tuberculosis [TB].—The Committee directs the agency to work with the Centers for Disease Control to explore interagency mechanisms to mitigate TB drug shortages, including centralizing procurement and supply, securing resources to maintain the current, addressing the limited emergency TB drug stockpile, developing policies to allow for the importation of needed quality-assured drugs, and formalizing a patient assistance program for accessing treatments.

User Fee Goals Letters.—The Committee affirms the important role of user fees in supporting programs across the FDA and supports the negotiations between the agency and regulated industry partners to compose a goals letter establishing clear expectations for both parties regarding timelines and processes associated with implementation of the law. Historically these goals letters are added to the Congressional Record, unedited by Congress, and referenced in the law authorizing the collection of such fees. The Committee is concerned that recent user fee negotiations between the FDA and regulated industries have resulted in goals letters sub-

mitted to Congress containing policy changes that require statutory changes and presume that Congress will adopt suggested statutory changes. While the Committee encourages the agency to continue to provide suggested statutory changes in a timely manner to Congress that can help the agency meet its mission, the Committee finds that it is inappropriate for the agency and its regulated industry partners to negotiate statutory or other legal changes as part of user fee goals letters.

Vaccine Models for HIV.—The Committee supports the FDA's commitment to drug and biological product evaluation and research and encourages the agency to continue its research on HIV infection, specifically vaccine models for HIV.

Vibrio.—The Committee is aware of the public health challenge related to the naturally occurring bacteria called *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* that can accumulate in shellfish and believes that more scientific research is necessary to develop proper controls that will reduce the risk to consumers and sustain a healthy domestic shellfish industry. The Committee encourages the FDA to increase funding for research into *Vibrio* illnesses associated with the consumption of raw molluscan shellfish, improve risk assessment models, and develop improved rapid detection methods for virulent *Vibrio* strains.

White Oak.—The FDA's growing staff will require leasing additional office locations until the 2018 Federal Research Center Master Plan for the White Oak Campus expansion can be fully implemented. To determine the lowest cost technically acceptable for a prospectus lease, the FDA should consider the effect of local travel on staff productivity, adjacency to existing FDA leases, and the cost of lost productivity when evaluating the costs of lease proposals.

BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES

Appropriations, 2019	\$11,788,000
Budget estimate, 2020	11,788,000
Committee recommendation	11,788,000

FDA maintains offices and staff in 49 States and in the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, including field laboratories and specialized facilities, as well as the National Center for Toxicological Research complex. Repairs, modifications, improvements, and construction to FDA headquarters and field facilities must be made to preserve the properties, ensure employee safety, meet changing program requirements, and permit the agency to keep its laboratory methods up to date.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$11,788,000 for FDA buildings and facilities. This funding shall be used to upgrade FDA facilities and laboratories which are currently below public safety standards and incapable of performing agency requirements.

FDA INNOVATION ACCOUNT, CURES ACT

Appropriations, 2019	\$70,000,000
Budget estimate, 2020	75,000,000
Committee recommendation	75,000,000

The Committee recommends \$75,000,000 for the FDA as authorized in the 21st Century Cures Act (Public Law 114–255).

INDEPENDENT AGENCY

FARM CREDIT ADMINISTRATION

LIMITATION ON ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

Limitation, 2019	\$74,600,000
Budget estimate, 2020	76,000,000
Committee recommendation	77,000,000

The Farm Credit Administration [FCA] is the independent agency in the executive branch of the Government responsible for the examination and regulation of the banks, associations, and other institutions of the Farm Credit System.

Activities of the Farm Credit Administration include the planning and execution of examinations of Farm Credit System institutions and the preparation of examination reports. FCA also promulgates regulations, establishes standards, enforces rules and regulations, and approves certain actions of the institutions.

The administration and the institutions under its jurisdiction now operate under authorities contained in the Farm Credit Act of 1971, Public Law 92–181, effective December 10, 1971. Public Law 99–205, effective December 23, 1985, restructured FCA and gave the agency regulatory authorities and enforcement powers.

The Act provides for the farmer-owned cooperative system to make sound, adequate, and constructive credit available to farmers and ranchers and their cooperatives, rural residences, and associations and other entities upon which farming operations are dependent, and to modernize existing farm credit law to meet current and future rural credit needs.

The Agricultural Credit Act of 1987 (Public Law 100–233) authorized the formation of the Federal Agricultural Mortgage Corporation [FAMC] to operate a secondary market for agricultural and rural housing mortgages. The Farm Credit Administration, under section 8.11 of the Farm Credit Act of 1971 (Public Law 92–181), as amended, is assigned the responsibility of regulating this entity and assuring its safe and sound operation.

Expenses of the Farm Credit Administration are paid by assessments collected from the Farm Credit System institutions and by assessments to the Federal Agricultural Mortgage Corporation.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends a limitation of \$77,000,000 on administrative expenses of the Farm Credit Administration [FCA].

Hemp-based Products.—The Committee recognizes the growing interest for U.S. hemp and hemp-based products for a variety of uses and directs the Administration to work with the institutions under its jurisdiction to provide access to guaranteed loans for hemp producers and businesses.

Financing Agricultural Exports.—The Committee directs FCA to report on options for risk management practices of the Farm Credit System in order to alleviate constraints on financing agricultural exports to new and existing markets.

Public-private Partnerships.—The Committee recognizes the value of public-private partnerships in financing rural communities and facilities and also recognizes that the Farm Credit Act of 1971, as amended, provides clear authority for Farm Credit System institutions to make investments in vital rural community facilities. The Committee recognizes that FCA's current approach to approving these types of Farm Credit System investments on an individual basis does not meet the needs of rural communities. FCA is strongly encouraged to substantially change its current process to create a clear, programmatic approval process which enables timely, comprehensive, and cost effective rural community facilities financing packages by allowing and expediting Farm Credit System institutions' partnerships with community banks, other financial institutions, and USDA.

TITLE VII
GENERAL PROVISIONS

(INCLUDING RESCISSIONS AND TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

The Committee recommends the following provisions:

Section 701. This section includes language regarding passenger motor vehicles.

Section 702. This section includes language regarding the Working Capital Fund.

Section 703. This section limits the funding provided in the bill to one year, unless otherwise specified.

Section 704. This section includes language regarding indirect costs.

Section 705. This section includes language regarding Rural Development programs.

Section 706. This section includes language regarding new information technology.

Section 707. This section includes language regarding conservation programs.

Section 708. This section includes language regarding Rural Utilities Service program eligibility.

Section 709. This section includes language regarding information technology expenses.

Section 710. This section includes language regarding first-class travel.

Section 711. This section includes language regarding the Commodity Credit Corporation.

Section 712. This section includes language regarding advisory committees.

Section 713. This section includes language regarding information technology systems.

Section 714. This section includes language regarding section 32 activities.

Section 715. This section includes language regarding user fee proposals without offsets.

Section 716. This section includes language regarding the reprogramming of funds and notification requirements.

Section 717. This section includes language regarding fees for the guaranteed business and industry loan program.

Section 718. This section includes language regarding the appropriations hearing process.

Section 719. This section includes language regarding pre-packaged news.

Section 720. This section includes language regarding details and assignments of Department of Agriculture employees.

Section 721. This section includes language regarding spending plans.

Section 722. This section includes language regarding a rescission of funds.

Section 723. This section includes language regarding section 502 single family direct loans.

Section 724. This section includes language regarding loans and loan guarantees.

Section 725. This section includes language regarding credit card refunds.

Section 726. This section includes language regarding the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

Section 727. This section includes language regarding hemp.

Section 728. This section includes language regarding housing loan programs.

Section 729. This section includes language regarding disclosure of information for pharmaceuticals.

Section 730. This section includes language regarding gene editing.

Section 731. This section includes language regarding dried spent grain products.

Section 732. This section includes language a pilot program through the Rural Housing Service.

Section 733. This section includes language regarding APHIS inspections.

Section 734. This section includes language regarding partially hydrogenated oils.

Section 735. This section includes language regarding the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility.

Section 736. This section includes language regarding the Conservation Reserve Program.

Section 737. This section includes language regarding the Water Bank program.

Section 738. This section includes language regarding geographically disadvantaged farmers.

Section 739. This section includes language regarding animal welfare.

Section 740. This section includes language regarding domestic preference.

Section 741. This section includes language regarding Rural Economic Area Partnership zones.

Section 742. This section includes language regarding a pilot program through the Rural Housing Service.

Section 743. This section includes language regarding lobbying.

Section 744. This section includes language regarding potable water.

Section 745. This section includes language regarding Rural Development programs.

Section 746. This section includes language regarding Farm to School programs.

Section 747. This section includes language regarding the Healthy Food Financing Initiative.

Section 748. This section includes language regarding citrus greening.

Section 749. This section includes language regarding FDA regulation.

Section 750. This section includes language regarding a NIFA pilot program.

Section 751. This section includes language regarding school meal programs.

Section 752. This section includes language regarding AMS rule-making.

Section 753. This section includes language regarding dairy innovation centers.

Section 754. This section includes language regarding mitigation banking.

Section 755. This section includes language regarding fluid milk.

Section 756. This section includes language regarding microgrants for food security.

Section 757. This section includes language regarding FDA Buildings & Facilities.

Section 758. This section includes language regarding RISE grants.

Section 759. This section includes language regarding a rescission of funds.

Section 760. This section includes language regarding a pilot program through the Rural Utilities Service.

Section 761. This section includes language regarding Water and Waste grants.

Section 762. This section includes language regarding the Economic Research Service and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

Section 763. This section includes language regarding FDA regulation.

Section 764. This section includes language regarding the WHIP program.

PROGRAM, PROJECT, AND ACTIVITY

During fiscal year 2020, for purposes of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (Public Law 99-177) or the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Reaffirmation Act of 1987 (Public Law 100-119), the following information provides the definition of the term “program, project, and activity” for departments and agencies under the jurisdiction of the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Subcommittee. The term “program, project, and activity” shall include the most specific level of budget items identified in the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2020, and the accompanying Senate Report.

If a sequestration order is necessary, in implementing the Presidential order, departments and agencies shall apply any percentage reduction required for fiscal year 2020 pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 99-177 or Public Law 100-119 to all items specified in the explanatory notes submitted to the Committees on Appropriations of the House and Senate in support of the fiscal year 2020 budget estimates, as amended, for such departments and agencies, as modified by congressional action, and in addition:

For the Agricultural Research Service the definition shall include specific research locations as identified in the explanatory notes.

For the Natural Resources Conservation Service the definition shall include individual flood prevention projects as identified in the explanatory notes and individual operational watershed projects as summarized in the notes.

For the Farm Service Agency the definition shall include individual, regional, State, district, and county offices.

COMPLIANCE WITH PARAGRAPH 7, RULE XVI OF THE STANDING RULES OF THE SENATE

Paragraph 7 of rule XVI requires that Committee reports accompanying general appropriations bills identify each recommended amendment which proposes an item of appropriation which is not made to carry out the provisions of an existing law, a treaty stipulation, or an act or resolution previously passed by the Senate during that session.

The Committee is filing an original bill, which is not covered under this rule, but reports this information in the spirit of full disclosure.

The Committee recommends funding for the following programs or activities which currently lack authorization for fiscal year 2020:

- Broadband Telecommunications Grants
- Child Nutrition Program State Administrative Expenses
- Farmers Market Nutrition Program
- Multi-family Housing Revitalization Program
- National School Lunch Act – Information Clearinghouse
- School Meals Program – Compliance and Accountability
- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Summer Food Service Program

COMPLIANCE WITH PARAGRAPH 7(c), RULE XXVI OF THE
STANDING RULES OF THE SENATE

Pursuant to paragraph 7(c) of rule XXVI, on September 00, 2019, the Committee ordered favorably reported an original bill (S. 0000) making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2020, and for other purposes, provided, that the bill be subject to amendment and that the bill be consistent with its budget allocation, and provided that the Chairman of the Committee or his designee be authorized to offer the substance of the original bill as a Committee amendment in the nature of a substitute to the House companion measure, by a recorded vote of 00-00, a quorum being present. The vote was as follows:

COMPLIANCE WITH PARAGRAPH 12, RULE XXVI OF THE
STANDING RULES OF THE SENATE

Paragraph 12 of rule XXVI requires that Committee reports on a bill or joint resolution repealing or amending any statute or part of any statute include "(a) the text of the statute or part thereof which is proposed to be repealed; and (b) a comparative print of that part of the bill or joint resolution making the amendment and of the statute or part thereof proposed to be amended, showing by stricken-through type and italics, parallel columns, or other appropriate typographical devices the omissions and insertions which would be made by the bill or joint resolution if enacted in the form recommended by the Committee."

In compliance with this rule, changes in existing law proposed to be made by the bill are shown as follows: existing law to be omitted is enclosed in black brackets; new matter is printed in italic; and existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman.

BUDGETARY IMPACT OF BILL

PREPARED IN CONSULTATION WITH THE CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE PURSUANT TO SEC.
308(A), PUBLIC LAW 93-344, AS AMENDED

[In millions of dollars]

	Budget authority		Outlays	
	Committee allocation	Amount in bill	Committee allocation	Amount in bill
Comparison of amounts in the bill with the subcommittee allocation for 2020: Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies:				
Mandatory
Discretionary
Security
Nonsecurity
Projection of outlays associated with the recommendation:				
2020
2021
2021
2022
2023 and future years
Financial assistance to State and local governments for 2020

¹ Includes outlays from prior-year budget authority.

² Excludes outlays from prior-year budget authority.

NA: Not applicable.

NOTE.—Pursuant to section 1002(b)(3)(B) of the 21st Century Cures Act (Public Law 114-255), \$_____ million in budget authority and the resulting outlays do not count for the purposes of estimates under the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 or the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF NEW BUDGET (OBLIGATIONAL) AUTHORITY FOR FISCAL YEAR 2019 AND BUDGET ESTIMATES AND AMOUNTS RECOMMENDED IN THE BILL
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020

[In thousands of dollars]

Item	2019 appropriation	Budget estimate	Committee recommendation	Senate Committee recommendation compared with (+ or -)	
				2019 appropriation	Budget estimate
TITLE I—AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS					
Processing, Research, and Marketing					
Office of the Secretary					
Office of the Secretary
Assistant to the Secretary for Rural Development
Office of Homeland Security
Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration
Departmental Administration
Subtotal, Departmental Administration