



CONSORTIUM *of* SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

## **Analysis of the House FY 2020 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bills |**

June 11, 2019

The House Appropriations Committee approved its fiscal year (FY) 2020 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill on June 4. This bill contains funding for the two U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) statistical agencies, the Economic Research Service (ERS) and the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), as well as the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), which funds competitive research projects. The bill was marked up in subcommittee on May 23.

### **At a Glance...**

- **The bill contains language prohibiting the move of ERS and NIFA outside of the National Capital Region.**
- **The House bill would provide ERS with \$87.8 million**, a 1.2 percent increase from FY 2019 and a rejection of the steep cuts proposed by the Administration.
- **The bill would provide NASS with \$180.8 million**, an increase of \$6.3 million and \$17.8 million above the Administration's request.
- **The House mark would provide NIFA with a total of \$1.614 million in discretionary funds**, a \$142.8 million increase for the agency compared to FY 2019 and \$222.4 million above the Administration's request.

The next step for the bill is consideration by the full House. However, as [previously reported](#), Congress must first act to raise discretionary spending caps if the increases included in the Ag and other appropriations bills are to be realized in FY 2020. Budget negotiations between the White House and Congressional leaders continue, making it too early to speculate how or when the FY 2020 appropriations process will be resolved. Until a budget deal is struck, the House will continue to make as much progress as it can on the FY 2020 spending bills before summer recess begins in August. The Senate Appropriations Committee has not yet started considering its appropriations bills, but it is expected to begin in the coming weeks.

Summarized below are the House Appropriations Committee's proposals for the Economic Research Service, National Agricultural Statistics Service, and National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

The bill, Committee's full report, and webcast of the markups can be found [here](#).

Check COSSA's [funding updates](#) page for analysis of other FY 2020 appropriations bills important to social and behavioral science and the President's FY 2020 budget request.

## Economic Research Service

The House bill would allocate **\$87.8 million to the Economic Research Service (ERS)**, a \$1 million increase from FY 2019. The committee report states that it “does not concur with the [Administration’s] request to significantly reduce ERS’ research activities.” The President’s budget proposal would have cut ERS’s overall budget by 30 percent and its budget for its core research programs by nearly half.

The bill includes a provision that prohibits any expenditures from being used to “relocate the Economic Research Service outside the National Capital Region,” which the Administration has been pursuing over the objections of stakeholders and Congressional leaders. The committee report includes additional language sharply criticizing the Administration’s handling of its plans to move ERS and NIFA outside of the Washington, DC area:

*“ERS/NIFA relocation.—On August 8, 2018, the Secretary sent the Committees a letter notifying them that he was planning to move the Economic Research Service (ERS), and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture outside of the greater Washington, D.C., area. Seven days later, without waiting the statutorily-required 30 days after notification, in violation of the reprogramming rules in P.L. 116–6, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2019, the Secretary published a Federal Register notice that the Department was seeking expressions of interest from parties interested in housing the two agencies. At no point in this process, however, has USDA solicited public comment on this proposal. Since then, it has moved forward, despite the clearly expressed opposition of many members of the House and Senate. It failed to comply with the direction of the conferees on the 2019 Act to submit all cost benefits for the move and a detailed analysis of any research benefits of a relocation. It has flatly refused numerous requests from this Committee and other members of Congress to provide the initial cost benefit analysis that preceded the decision to go ahead with the proposal. These agencies’ mission is to achieve the best science through research that advances U.S. agriculture and our understanding of the agricultural economy. The Committee believes that the Department’s proposal puts that mission at risk and the Committee has therefore included bill language to prevent it.”*

The Committee report also specifies that the \$1 million in additional funds should be used to study potential cost savings of more efficiently processing animal waste.

## National Agricultural Statistics Service

The bill would provide the **National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) with \$180.8 million**, an increase of \$6.3 million and \$17.8 million above the Administration’s request. The Census of Agriculture would receive flat funding of \$45.3 million under the bill, so the increase would go to NASS’s Agricultural Estimates. The committee “does not accept any proposed eliminations or reductions of ongoing activities” as proposed in the President’s budget request. Report language directs NASS to make plans to collect data on urban agriculture, such as community gardens, rooftop farms, greenhouses, and indoor farms, as part of the next Census of Agriculture in 2022.

## National Institute of Food and Agriculture

The House mark would provide the **National Institute of Food and Agriculture with a total of \$1.6 million in discretionary funds**. This number is \$20 million higher than originally included in the House bill; the [Manager’s amendment](#) passed during the full committee markup added \$15 million to the Agricultural and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) and \$5 million to NIFA’s Extension activities. The House mark is a

\$142.8 million increase for the agency compared to FY 2019 and \$222.4 million above the Administration’s request.

As with ERS, the House bill contains language prohibiting the use of funds to relocate the agency outside the Washington, DC region, and the language in the committee report quoted above further reprimands the Administration for its handling of its plans to move NIFA.

Hatch Act State Agricultural Experiment Stations would receive an increase of \$6 million under the bill, continuing a trajectory started in FY 2019 of slow growth after many years of flat funding. The Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI), NIFA’s competitive research grant program, would receive \$460 million, a \$45 million increase from FY 2019, but still short of the Administration’s requested \$500 million.

|   | FY 2019<br>Enacted | FY 2020<br>Request | FY 2020<br>House | House vs.<br>FY 2019 | House vs.<br>Request |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Economic Research Service</b>                  | <b>86.8</b>        | <b>60.5</b>        | <b>87.8</b>      | <b>1.2%</b>          | <b>45.1%</b>         |
| <b>National Agricultural Statistics Service</b>   | <b>174.5</b>       | <b>163.0</b>       | <b>180.8</b>     | <b>3.6%</b>          | <b>10.9%</b>         |
| Census of Agriculture                             | 45.3               | 45.3               | 45.3             | 0.0%                 | 0.0%                 |
| <b>National Institute of Food and Agriculture</b> | <b>1471.3</b>      | <b>1391.7</b>      | <b>1614.1</b>    | <b>9.7%</b>          | <b>16.0%</b>         |
| Hatch Act   | 259.0              | 243.2              | 265.0            | 2.3%                 | 8.9%                 |
| Agriculture and Food Research Initiative          | 415.0              | 500.0              | 460.0            | 10.8%                | -8.0%                |

*NOTE: Figures above reflect the amount passed by the full Committee. The final [Manager’s amendment](#) increased funding levels for NIFA and AFRI above the levels specified in the Committee’s report.*

#####