



AMERICAN STATISTICAL ASSOCIATION  
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April 2, 2018

The Honorable John Hoeven  
Chairman  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture,  
Rural Development, Food and Drug  
Administration, and Related Agencies  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeff Merkley  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture,  
Rural Development, Food and Drug  
Administration, and Related Agencies  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Hoeven and Ranking Member Merkley,

As President of the American Statistical Association with its 19,000 members, I write to thank you for your strong support for the Economic Research Service (ERS) and the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) in the FY18 omnibus funding bill. As you know, these agencies—as the two federal statistical agencies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture—are critical to a fair and free market for agricultural products and to informing agricultural and food policy decisions in the public and private sector.

The level for NASS is especially critical, with FY18 being the peak year of the quinquennial census of agriculture. The final FY18 level you committee provided allows NASS to execute the census while maintaining its agricultural estimates programs. For ERS, we especially appreciate the rejection of the Administration's proposed 12% cut for FY18. The ERS budget, accounting for the \$7.7 million adjustment to its budget in FY15, is funded below its FY09-FY11 levels, resulting in an approximately 18% cut in its purchasing power. In light of these challenges, your rejection of a funding cut is particularly helpful.

With sincere gratitude,

Lisa LaVange, Ph.D.