

October 26, 2021

The Honorable David Scott
Chairman
House Agriculture Committee
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Glenn "GT" Thompson
Ranking Member
House Agriculture Committee
1010 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Scott and Ranking Member Thompson,

On behalf of our nation's food and agricultural stakeholder community, we write to extend our appreciation for holding today's hearing on "Agricultural Biotechnology: 21st Century Advancements and Applications." Biotechnology is an increasingly vital technology for the future productivity and sustainability of agriculture. As we work to posture these tools for greater future use, we welcome the Committee exploring important facets of the technology, including its underlying science, applications, and relevant policy matters. Moreover, we stand ready to assist the Committee in advancing policy improvements that will help these promising innovations address the challenges facing agriculture and our society.

As mentioned, we believe this technology already has and will continue to play an important role in addressing many challenges facing our society. Historically, plant breeding has helped growers reduce their input needs and protect crops from devastating pests. In the last few decades, biotechnology has helped growers of certain crops, such as corn, soy, cotton, and sugar beets, even further, by facilitating adoption of vital conservation practices. Looking ahead, advancement in breeding innovation, such as genome editing, can play an even greater role in addressing countless issues in a broader variety of products, like specialty crops, cover crops, and livestock. We are already seeing important research and developments taking shape that can reduce food waste and put longer-lasting fresh produce in the hands of consumers; decrease livestock susceptibility to diseases, reducing producer losses and the need for antibiotics; and further cut greenhouse gas emissions and other environmental impacts of agricultural production.

However, we would note that science and innovation are moving swiftly. To realize these important applications and their benefits, we must have federal policies that are risk and science-based and will permit the meaningful adoption of these products by producers, supply chains, and consumers. For several years, the federal government has been involved in regulatory modernization efforts that will better facilitate the future use of these tools. We look forward to supporting continued work on these issues with the Committee and other policymakers to improve our regulatory landscape in a way that will allow these important innovations to come to fruition.

Again, we thank you for your attention to these vitally important tools and stand ready to assist the Committee in efforts to ensure we can maximize the benefits these innovations can offer producers, consumers, and our society.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Retailers Association
American Association of Veterinary Medical College
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Seed Trade Association
American Soybean Association

American Sugarbeet Growers Association
Biological Products Industry Alliance
Biotechnology Innovation Organization
Crop Science Society of America
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Cattlemen's Beef Association
National Corn Growers Association
National Cotton Council
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Milk Producers Federation
National Pork Producers Council
National Potato Council
National Sorghum Producers
National Turkey Federation
Society of American Florists
U.S. Canola Association
USA Rice