

June 15, 2017

The Honorable John Hoeven
Chairman
Agriculture Subcommittee
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
Ranking Member
Agriculture Subcommittee
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Hoeven and Ranking Member Merkley,

I write to request that the Subcommittee include language supporting competitive grants for zoonotic disease research under the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) Animal Health and Disease Research Initiative.

Federal and state animal health officials recognize that the eradication of zoonotic livestock diseases is a significant national animal health priority. Zoonotic diseases are unique in that infections move between species and affect both domestic livestock and human populations. These diseases are endemic in wildlife which is why it is difficult to predict when and where new infections will occur. Current monitoring and treatment methods for fighting zoonotic infections in livestock are limited and additional resources are needed so researchers can complete efforts to develop improved surveillance methods and vaccine systems.

The Agricultural Act of 2014 recognized this need by making the development of improved surveillance and vaccine systems a priority research area under the Competitive, Special, and Facilities Research Grant Act.

We ask the Subcommittee to consider report language which fulfills the objectives of the Agricultural Act of 2014 by making competitive grants under the Animal Health and Disease Research Initiative available to researchers for the study of zoonotic livestock diseases.

Competitive grants under NIFA are available to all federal, state and institutional researchers and would help those with expertise in zoonotic diseases focus on helping our animal health officials identify and eradicate these infections in our domestic livestock herds. There is also a great deal of interest in providing matching state, private and institutional funds to help facilitate these competitive research grants.

I appreciate your willingness to consider this request, for additional information you may contact Shawna Newsome in my office at 202-224-1935.

Respectfully Submitted,



Michael B. Enzi
U.S. Senator

(1) Enclosure: Recommended Report Language

AGENCY: National Institute of Food and Agriculture

PROGRAM: Agriculture and Food Research Initiative – Animal Health

Zoonotic Livestock Disease Research

Suggested Report Language

Federal and state animal health officials have made eradicating livestock disease with significant reservoirs a national animal health priority. This need is reflected in the Agriculture Act of 2014 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 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.