CULTIVATING SCIENCE

Growing the landscape of competitive food and agricultural research

ANNUAL REPORT 2016
ABOUT THE SUPPORTERS OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH (SoAR) FOUNDATION

The SoAR Foundation leads a non-partisan coalition representing more than 6 million farming families, 100,000 scientists, hundreds of colleges and universities, consumers, veterinarians, and others. SoAR educates stakeholders about the importance of agricultural research to feed America and the world and advocates for full funding of USDA’s Agriculture Food and Research Initiative (AFRI). Increased federal investments encourage top scientists to focus on agricultural challenges, which improves public health, creates jobs, strengthens our national security, and enhances U.S. economic competitiveness.
S
ince we opened our doors less than 2 years ago, we’ve made substantial progress. 2016 was an outstanding year for SoAR. Through the hard work and dedication of our board, Science Advisory Committee (SAC), partners, and staff, we grew the coalition, spotlighted scientific progress, and built support for increased basic and competitive federal research investment.

We believe all people and families should have sufficient, nourishing, and affordable food on their tables every day. We recognize that scientists need funding for research to help farmers overcome their obstacles in the fields. We want the United States to remain a global leader in agriculture and share our advancements with developing countries, which will empower farmers and improve security globally. We’ve seen too many examples of food shortages that result in human suffering and civil unrest.

To achieve these goals, SoAR advocates for full funding of the Agriculture Food and Research Initiative (AFRI), USDA’s flagship competitive grants program. AFRI was established within the 2008 Farm Bill with an authorized budget of $700 million. As of FY 2016, Congress has appropriated less than half of this amount. AFRI is only able to award grants to a small percentage of its strongest applicants, leaving hundreds of promising research projects unfunded. Additional investments in AFRI will help feed people, improve public health, create jobs, protect the environment, and contribute to a safer world.

In collaboration with nearly 20 universities, our Retaking the Field report tell the stories of AFRI-funded scientists who are discovering revolutionary solutions to problems plaguing agriculture. We held House and Senate briefings to launch the publication where four AFRI-funded researchers described their work.

SoAR has generated media attention. The New York Times in January published an op-ed by our board members Phil Sharp and Alan Leshner. Retaking the Field generated additional coverage in nearly 30 different media outlets including a front-page story in the Washington Post.

Our SAC and staff have been working to unite a broad set of stakeholders in an unprecedented process to create a ten-year food and agricultural research strategy. “Breakthroughs 2030” will identify and address the greatest scientific opportunities and challenges in agriculture and determine the pathways for advancing the field’s frontiers. In partnership with the National Academy of Sciences this $1 million project will help guide the valuable science required to sustainably feed 2.5 billion more people by 2050.

SoAR’s partners have been vital to these efforts. Our coalition grew to include 25 partners with the addition of 7 new organizations. As a result of our collective work, AFRI has gained in political support. In February 2016, the President’s budget requested full funding of the AFRI program, effectively double its present level. Later in the year, despite a challenging fiscal climate, the House and Senate appropriations committees advanced bills that would increase AFRI funding by $25 million.

I appreciate our board members’ perspectives, commitments, and generosity. We are extraordinarily fortunate that Dr. William Danforth founded and led SoAR and that he continues to serve on the board. Each day, Bill inspires us with his dedication and passion to help feed the world. I am pleased that the Board elected John McDonnell as Chairman and Neil Dierks, Chris Novak, Erik Olson, Richard Wilkins as members.

I am grateful to our donors who believe in SoAR’s vision and honored to work with our esteemed board, SAC, partners, and universities. My sincere thanks to our colleagues at Burness, The Russell Group, our consultants, and staff.

We look forward to working together and advancing our critical mission in 2017.

Sincerely,

Thomas Grumbly
President
At a time when funding for many agricultural research programs is stagnant or facing cuts, AFRI continues to garner additional support from Congress and the White House.
POLICY PROGRESS

2016 kicked off with the announcement of a full funding request of $700 million for AFRI within the President’s FY 2017 Budget. In taking this unprecedented step, White House staff cited the January New York Times op-ed in support of AFRI from SoAR board members Alan Leshner and Phil Sharp. The move provided a powerful endorsement of AFRI’s central role within our nation’s research system.

Efforts in Congress led to legislation from the Senate and House Appropriations Committees for a $25 million AFRI increase. This comes at a time when most agricultural research programs are being cut or flat-lined. Since 2009, AFRI’s budget has grown by 74 percent, even as USDA’s discretionary budget has shrunk by 33 percent.

FEDERAL AGENCY WORKSHOP

The Riley Memorial Foundation and SoAR convened a federal workshop in April 2016. Participants included senior leaders from the agencies engaged in food and ag research such as the USDA, National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health, U.S. Geological Survey, Department of Energy, U.S. Agency for International Development, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency, Department of Defense, and the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. Based on the workshop, a report was published entitled “Elevating Food, Agricultural and Natural Resources Research as a National Priority: Raising the Profile of Federal Research.”
In collaboration with our University partners, SoAR released “Retaking the Field: The Case for a Surge in Agricultural Research” in June 2016. The report celebrates the advances and explores the potential of agriculture and food sciences. A second volume is set for release in March 2017.
In 2016, SoAR elected John McDonnell as the new Chairman and welcomed four new board members (noted with *)

JOHN MCDONNELL, Chairman, Retired Chairman of the Board, McDonnell Douglas Corporation

DR. ROGER BEACHY, Professor, Department of Biology, Washington University in St. Louis

DR. VICKI CHANDLER, Dean, College of Natural Sciences, Minerva Schools at KGI

DR. WILLIAM DANFORTH, Founder, SoAR and Chancellor Emeritus, Washington University in St. Louis

NEIL DIERKS, Chief Executive Officer, National Pork Producers Council*

DR. ROBERT EASTER, President Emeritus, University of Illinois

TOM HAYES, Corporate Vice President, Operations, Cargill

DR. ALAN LESHNER, Chief Executive Officer Emeritus, American Association for the Advancement of Science

CHRIS NOVAK, Chief Executive Officer, National Corn Growers Association*

ERIK OLSON, Senior Strategic Director for Food & Agriculture, Natural Resources Defense Council*

DR. PHILLIP SHARP, Institute Professor, Koch Institute for Integrative Cancer Research, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

CAROL TUCKER-FOREMAN, Distinguished Fellow, Food Policy Institute, Consumer Federation of America

RICHARD WILKINS, Past President, American Soybean Association* Board Member Emeritus

DR. DONALD KENNEDY, Board Member Emeritus, SoAR and President Emeritus, Stanford University
FUELED BY A PLANNING GRANT FROM THE GORDON AND BETTY MOORE FOUNDATION

SoAR’s Science Advisory Committee and staff worked under a planning grant from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation to create a process for uniting a broad set of stakeholders in producing a ten-year research strategy. Entitled “Breakthroughs 2030,” the process is designed to identify and address the greatest opportunities and challenges within food and agricultural research and determine the scientific pathways for realizing the field’s frontiers.

Through broad participation, Breakthroughs 2030 will gather groundbreaking ideas, lay the foundation for greater interdisciplinary collaboration, and provide a compelling scientific vision for policymakers in time to influence the upcoming Farm Bill. Breakthroughs 2030 is set for launch in early 2017 with the prestigious National Academy of Sciences partnering in its implementation.
The SAC includes a diverse group of world-class scientists who provide SoAR with critical guidance and key insights on how to strengthen agricultural research, raise its profile within the broader science community, and enhance collaboration among various government science agencies.

**MEMBERS INCLUDE**

**DR. VICKI CHANDLER,** Chair of SAC and Dean, College of Natural Sciences, Minerva Schools at KGI

**DR. ARTHUR BIENENSTOCK,** Professor Emeritus of Photon Science, Stanford University

**DR. ROBERT COUSINS,** Eminent Scholar and Boston Family Professor of Nutrition, University of Florida

**DR. MICHAEL LAIRMORE,** Dean and Distinguished Professor, School of Veterinary Medicine, University of California, Davis

**DR. ELLIOTT MEYEROWITZ,** George W. Beadle Professor of Biology; Investigator, Howard Hughes Medical Institute, California Institute of Technology

**DR. CHARLES RICE,** University Distinguished Professor of Soil Microbiology, Kansas State University

**DR. BARBARA SCHAAL,** Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and the Mary-Dell Chilton Distinguished Professor, Department of Biology, Washington University in St. Louis

**DR. PATRICK STOVER,** Professor and Director of the Division of Nutritional Sciences, Cornell University
MEDIA

SoAR’s press coverage in national and regional outlets raised the visibility of competitive agricultural research. The New York Times published an op-ed in January 2016 by our board members Dr. Phil Sharp and Dr. Alan Leshner entitled: “We Need a New Green Revolution”.

The New York Times

The Washington Post

The Washington Post printed a front page story entitled “Iowa farmers ripped out prairie; now some hope it can save them” based on research from Iowa State University featured in Retaking the Field.
“Agricultural research is the farmer’s ultimate antacid”
Vincent “Zippy” Duvall, April 18, 2016

“Purdue joins call for more agriculture funding”
Christopher Doering and Maureen Groppe, June 21, 2016

“Farm Scientists See Ripening Opportunity for Greater Federal Support”
Paul Basken, September 13, 2016

“White House to ask for big boost for farm science funding”
Natasha Gilbert, February 5, 2016

“To Protect the Food Supply, Spend More Federal Money”
Maryn McKenna, July 20, 2016
Our partners have mutual interests in increasing federal investments in agricultural research and producing the best possible food and agricultural science in order to meet some of the greatest challenges of the 21st century. By working together, we are building awareness of the value and support for increased federal agricultural research funding.

25 organizations participate in SoAR’s coalition including scientific societies, higher education associations, commodity, and consumer groups and others. Our partners represent more than 6 million farming families, 100,000 scientists, hundreds of colleges and universities, consumers, veterinarians, and others. SoAR added seven new partners in 2016 (noted with *).

- Agricultural & Applied Economics Association*
- American Association for the Advancement of Science
- American Farm Bureau Federation
- American Society for Horticultural Science
- American Society for Microbiology
- American Society for Nutrition
- American Society of Agronomy
- American Society of Plant Biologists
- American Soybean Association
- American Veterinary Medical Association
- Association of American Universities
- Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges
- Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
- Center for Foodborne Illness Research & Prevention
- Center for Strategic and International Studies / Global Food Security Project*
- Consumer Federation of America
- Crop Science Society of America
- Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology
- Global Harvest Initiative*
- National Association for the Advancement of Animal Science*
- National Cattlemen’s Beef Association*
- National Coalition for Agricultural Research*
- National Corn Growers Association*
- National Pork Producers Council
- Soil Science Society of America
THE SoAR TEAM

Our consulting partners provide SoAR with specialized expertise and collaborate on communications and congressional relations.

BURNESS
Burness is a global communications firm supporting nonprofits and the people they serve. Since 1986, they have sought to empower people with information that can be used to improve the human condition and advance social change.

THE RUSSELL GROUP
For 30 years, the Russell Group has helped clients succeed in Washington. The Russell Group team’s expertise includes child nutrition, food safety, agricultural research, animal health, and production agriculture.

CONSULTANTS
Clifford Gabriel
Judah Houser
Bethany Johns
Gail Pesyna
Carol Scheman

STAFF

Thomas Grumbly, President
Tod Desmond, Director of Administration
Arusha Evans, Executive Assistant to the President
Tim Fink, Director of Research and Policy Analysis
Ali Noor, Research Associate
Andrea Putman, Vice President
DONORS

SoAR EXPRESS DEEP GRATITUDE TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS

FOUNDATIONS

Adele M. Thomas Charitable Foundation
Greater Saint Louis Community Foundation
Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation
Povar Bachorik Family Fund
Smithfield Foundation

ASSOCIATIONS AND CORPORATIONS

Cargill
National Corn Growers Association
National Pork Producers Council
INDIVIDUALS

Roger Beachy
Alan Bennett
Arthur Bienenstock
Andy Burness
Vicki Chandler
Greg Dahlberg
William Danforth
James Desmond
Neil Dierks
Robert Easter
Thomas Grumbly
Thomas Hayes
Alan Leshner
Chris Novak
Gail Pesyna
Andrea Putman
Carol Scheman
Phillip Sharp
Andrew Taylor
Virginia Weldon
The charts below show how the SoAR Foundation was financed and how money was expended in 2016. The Foundation’s books were independently audited by Burdette, Bish and Smith of Fairfax, Virginia. The full GAAP compliant audit, as well as the 2015 and 2016 IRS Form 990 are available upon request from Mr. Timothy Desmond, SoAR’s Director of Administration.

2016 RESOURCES

Total Resources: $1,184,016

- Founder Subsidy $141,500
- Foundation Grants
- Industry $85,000
- Individuals
- Universities $29,000
- Individuals $247,905
- Individuals $680,611
2016 EXPENSES

Total Expenses: $1,184,016

- Payroll
- Contract Services
- Facilities and Equipment
- Travel and Meetings
- Operations and Insurance