



SoAR
FOUNDATION

Supporters of
Agricultural Research

www.supportagresearch.org
1235 S. Clark Street, Suite 510
Arlington, VA 22202

2017

ANNUAL REPORT

The SoAR Foundation has established itself as a leading organization advocating for more and better public agricultural research since opening its doors in 2014. Together with its partners, SoAR has positioned USDA's Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) for growth in a period of budget scarcity. In 2017, SoAR initiated and led important scientific, policy, and communications initiatives to broaden knowledge and develop collaborative alliances in support of publicly funded agricultural research.

+SCIENCE

EXPLORING NEW FRONTIERS: *BREAKTHROUGHS 2030*

SoAR spearheaded the development of *Breakthroughs 2030*, a study by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine to identify the greatest scientific opportunities in food and agricultural research throughout the next two decades. *Breakthroughs 2030* will provide a compelling justification for additional public investment and inform the efforts of policymakers and researchers. The report is set for release in early summer 2018.

SoAR Foundation Board

John McDonnell (Chair)
Dr. William Danforth
(Founder)
Rose Barbuto
Dr. Roger Beachy
Dr. Ellen Bergfeld
Dr. Vicki Chandler
Neil Dierks
Zippy Duvall
Dr. Robert Easter
Dr. Ronnie Green
Dr. Alan Leshner
Chris Novak
Erik Olson
Dr. Phillip Sharp
Carol Tucker-Foreman
Richard Wilkins

SoAR Science Advisory Committee

Dr. Vicki Chandler (Chair)
Dr. Arthur Bienenstock
Dr. Robert Cousins
Dr. Michael Lairmore
Dr. Charles Rice
Dr. Barbara Schaal
Dr. Patrick Stover

+POLICY

BUILDING FROM COMMON GROUND: POLICY PROCESS

Because deliberations on the next Farm Bill began in 2017, SoAR spearheaded a professionally facilitated policy process which brought together a cross-section of the agricultural community. The result of this collaboration with 20 other stakeholders was a series of ten consensus research policy recommendations endorsed by 66 organizations in letters sent to Congress in October 2017.

SEIZING A RARE OPPORTUNITY: ALLOCATION LETTER

In December 2017, SoAR and its partners gathered 72 signatories for a letter to Congress outlining the importance of agriculture to the US economy and requesting that additional funding be provided for agriculture in the event that the discretionary budget caps increased. This effort placed SoAR in a position of leadership for all of agriculture when a budget deal was struck by Congress in February 2018.

+ COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH

SoAR believes in the power of “storytelling” and that communicating effectively about the possibilities and implications of food and agricultural science is critical to securing additional public research funding.

AMPLIFYING RE-SEARCHERS’ VOICES: *Agricultural Research Exhibition*

In April 2017, SoAR and a few partners convened scientists from 25 different universities and institutions at the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center. Five congressmen, a senator, and over 175 people participated in this exhibition. The event provided a venue for the researchers and legislators to discuss the value of specific federally-funded projects and to educate other stakeholders. The 2018 Agricultural Research Exhibition will be held June 6th in Washington D.C.

TELLING COMPELLING STORIES: *Retaking The Field*

SoAR, in collaboration with over 20 universities, continued its *Retaking the Field* series. “Strengthening the Science of Farm and Food Production” (vol. 2) and “Empowering Agricultural Sciences for Health” (vol. 3) were published, respectively, in March and November 2017. For each launch, SoAR convened Senate and House briefings in which AFRI-funded researchers described how their work is vital to our country. Washington Post, Bloomberg, USA TODAY and other major media have covered this series.

COLLABORATING ABOUT VALUE: *FedByScience*

In conjunction with its Advisory Committee of senior university leaders, SoAR developed a new collective communications initiative entitled *FedByScience*. Its purpose is to raise the visibility of messages about the value of public investment in food and agricultural research. Its specific focus is on educating and inspiring legislators in order to secure additional research funding in the next Farm Bill. *FedByScience* will disseminate scientific stories to Congress and their staffs, as well as the broader community.

+ FINANCIAL

Since its formation in December 2014, the SoAR Foundation has raised approximately \$5,810,000 in resources and has spent approximately \$4,400,000. In 2017, SoAR spent approximately \$1,970,000. At the end of year, it had assets of \$825,000 plus pledges of \$840,000. Major funders in 2017 include Dr. William Danforth, St. Louis Community Foundation, Betty and Gordon Moore Foundation, Foundation for Food and Agricultural Research, Cargill Corp., as well as individuals, family foundations, 14 universities and 16 partners. SoAR’s finances were audited by Burdette, Smith & Bish, LLC.

For the full report, please contact Tod Desmond at todesmond@supportagresearch.org

2017 RESOURCES



2017 EXPENDITURES



THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS

SoAR is grateful to all of our generous donors who make our work possible.