FY 2018 APPROPRIATIONS

On March 22, 2018 the House passed by a vote of 256 to 167 the Consolidated Appropriations Act for FY 2018 to provide funding through September 30, 2018, the end of the fiscal year. The Senate passed the bill later that night with a vote of 65 to 32. The President signed the Act on Friday, March 23, 2018.

The Act includes total funding for the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) for approximately $1.59 billion which is an increase of $53 million, or about 3.46%, over the FY 2017 Appropriations Act. The total funding includes $1.423 billion in discretionary funding and $0.162 billion in mandatory and endowment funding.

The bill provides funding increases for several NIFA research and extension programs. Increased funding is provided for programs, as follows:

- An increase of $25 million above 2017, for a total of $400 million, for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative;
- An increase of $1 million above 2017 for Aquaculture Centers for a total of $5 million;
- A total of $35 million for Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education, an increase of $8 million above 2017;
- A total of $3.8 million for the 1994 Research Grants, an increase of $2 million;
- Organic Transition for $5 million, an increase of $1 million above 2017;
- An increase of $2 million for Extension Services for 1994 Institutions, for a total program level of $6.4 million;
- A doubling of funding for the Food Animal Residue Avoidance Database for a total of $2.5 million;
- A total of $7 million for the Food Safety Outreach Program, an increase of $2 million above 2017; and,
- An increase of $1.5 million for funds totaling $8 million for the Veterinary Medical Services Act to provide educational loan repayments to veterinarians serving in geographical veterinarian shortage areas.

The funding includes a new extension program, Food and Ag Service Learning for $1 million, and provides $3 million for Rural Health and Safety Education Program to address the opioid abuse epidemic and to combat opioid abuse in rural communities.

Additionally, language is included that directs the Agricultural Research Service and NIFA, in cooperation with land-grant universities in impacted states, to develop and submit a plan of action to Congress that addresses the whitefly epidemic severely impacting vegetable and cotton production in the Southeast U.S., particularly in Georgia, Mississippi, and Alabama.

In addition to the continuation of the FY 2017 General Provision which provided $5
million to support farming and ranching opportunities for military veterans, the bill additionally provides a General Provision for $6 million for relocation expenses.

The Act continues the general provisions language for indirect cost not to exceed 30 percent under grant awards except for Small Business grant awards which are allowed full rate. A General Provision is included that continues language maintaining matching requirements for AFRI funds in effect before changes in the 2014 Farm Bill.

See the attached table for specific program funding amounts.

The Agriculture Appropriations Bill portion of the Report can be found here (see page 7 for NIFA information):

http://docs.house.gov/billsthisweek/20180319/DIV%20A%20AG%20SOM%20FY18%20OMNI.OCR.pdf

Bill Text can be found here (see page 15 for NIFA information):