



American Society for Nutrition  
*Excellence in Nutrition Research and Practice*

March 9, 2012

**American Society for Nutrition (ASN) Comments to the President's Council of Advisors On Science and Technology (PCAST) regarding Science, Technology, and Innovation at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)**

The American Society for Nutrition appreciates the opportunity to provide comments. ASN is a not-for-profit scientific society with over 4,400 members working in academia, clinical practice, government and industry. ASN strongly supports the President's Budget for USDA's Agriculture and Food Research Initiative, as well as a return to its fully authorized funding level of \$700 million.

Basic and applied research conducted and/or funded by USDA on the relationship between nutrition and chronic disease, nutrient composition, and nutrition monitoring is critical to improve American health. Better nutrition can reduce the cost of chronic diseases by \$71 billion and save more than 300,000 lives each year. Greater investment in agricultural research is crucial to provide a safe, nutritious, affordable, and sustainable food supply for the growing world population; to preserve the competitive position of U.S. agriculture; and to provide jobs and revenue to support the U.S. economy. Every \$1.00 invested in agricultural research yields a minimum \$10.00 return to the U.S. economy. A strong investment in USDA research also trains and educates future nutrition scientists.

Nevertheless, funding for agricultural research at USDA over the past two decades has neither kept pace with inflation, nor the growing complexity of our food supply and public health demands. This decline in our national investment in agricultural research seriously threatens our ability to sustain the vitality of agricultural research programs and in turn, threatens the future of our economy and the health of our nation.

Thank you for your continued interest in USDA research. ASN encourages PCAST to undertake future initiatives that highlight the importance of agricultural research and to consider adding an agricultural research representative to the Council.