

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 4155

To amend the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 to require the Secretary of Agriculture to recognize centers of excellence, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 26, 2025

Mr. BACON introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture

A BILL

To amend the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 to require the Secretary of Agriculture to recognize centers of excellence, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “American Agricultural
5 Security Research Act of 2025”.

6 **SEC. 2. CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE.**

7 Section 1673 of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation,
8 and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 5926) is amended—

1 (1) by striking subsections (a) through (c) and
2 inserting the following:

3 “(a) CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE.—

4 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Agri-
5 culture shall recognize at least one center of excel-
6 lence for each of the areas of focus described in
7 paragraph (2) for the purpose of carrying out re-
8 search, extension, and education programs.

9 “(2) AREAS OF FOCUS.—A center of excellence
10 recognized under this subsection may engage in re-
11 search, extension, and education programs focused
12 on the following:

13 “(A) AQUACULTURE.—Developing and ap-
14 plying aquaculture methods, including through
15 the propagation and rearing of economically
16 and ecologically valuable aquatic and marine
17 species.

18 “(B) BEGINNING FARMERS AND RANCH-
19 ERS.—Training beginning farmers and ranch-
20 ers, including training on farm and agribusiness
21 management, mentoring and technical assist-
22 ance, and access to capital.

23 “(C) BIOSECURITY AND CYBERSECU-
24 RITY.—Agricultural biosecurity and cybersecu-

1 rity efforts to defend the food supply of the
2 United States from—

3 “(i) a biosecurity or cybersecurity at-
4 tack; or

5 “(ii) other global catastrophic and ex-
6 istential threats, as defined in section 7302
7 of the Global Catastrophic Risk Manage-
8 ment Act of 2022 (6 U.S.C. 821).

9 “(D) BIOSYSTEMS AND AGRICULTURAL
10 ENGINEERING.—Biosystems and agricultural
11 engineering, including precision agriculture
12 technologies and mechanization and automation
13 technologies for specialty crops.

14 “(E) BIOTECHNOLOGY.—Development of
15 animal and plant biotechnologies that will in-
16 crease agricultural productivity.

17 “(F) CROP PRODUCTION, PROTECTION,
18 AND RESILIENCE.—Crop production and protec-
19 tion, including the development, manufacture,
20 and use of fertilizer, crop protection tools, and
21 adjuvants in increasing productivity and pro-
22 tecting crops from damaging pests and diseases.

23 “(G) DIGITAL AGRICULTURE.—Developing,
24 evaluating, and deploying digital agriculture, in-

1 including artificial intelligence and remote sensing
2 systems.

3 “(H) FARM BUSINESS AND FINANCIAL
4 MANAGEMENT.—Farm business and financial
5 management activities, including marketing
6 plans, production diversification, and cash for-
7 ward contracting.

8 “(I) FOOD QUALITY.—Improving food
9 quality, including research on the uptake of
10 perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances in
11 food, the presence of microplastics in biosolids,
12 and the efficacy and feasibility of reducing lev-
13 els of inorganic arsenic, lead, cadmium, or mer-
14 cury in food.

15 “(J) FOREIGN ANIMAL DISEASE.—Foreign
16 animal diseases, including the ecology and eti-
17 ology of emerging diseases, control methods,
18 and implementation strategies to enhance pre-
19 paredness and response efforts to protect the
20 livestock and poultry industry.

21 “(K) FORESTRY.—Forest productivity and
22 forest health, including invasive species control,
23 biochar and pyrolysis development and commer-
24 cialization, reforestation and restoration of

1 damaged landscapes, and new wood-based ma-
2 terials.

3 “(3) HOST INSTITUTIONS.—

4 “(A) IN GENERAL.—An institution eligible
5 to host or co-host a center of excellence recog-
6 nized under this subsection means—

7 “(i) a 1862 Institution, as defined in
8 section 2 of the Agricultural Research, Ex-
9 tension, and Education Reform Act of
10 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7601);

11 “(ii) a 1890 Institution, as defined in
12 section 2 of the Agricultural Research, Ex-
13 tension, and Education Reform Act of
14 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7601);

15 “(iii) a 1994 Institution, as defined in
16 section 532 of the Equity in Educational
17 Land-Grant Status Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C.
18 301 note);

19 “(iv) a non-land-grant college of agri-
20 culture, as defined in section 1404 of the
21 National Agricultural Research, Extension,
22 and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C.
23 3103);

24 “(v) a Hispanic-serving agricultural
25 college or university, as defined in section

1 1404 of the National Agricultural Re-
2 search, Extension, and Teaching Policy
3 Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3103); and

4 “(vi) a college or school of veterinary
5 medicine accredited by the American Vet-
6 erinary Medical Association.

7 “(B) DISTRIBUTION.—To the maximum
8 extent practicable, the Secretary shall ensure
9 the geographic diversity of institutions selected
10 to host or co-host a center of excellence recog-
11 nized under this subsection.

12 “(C) LIMITATION.—An institution may
13 host or co-host only one center of excellence rec-
14 ognized under this subsection during any given
15 period.

16 “(D) DUTIES.—A institution selected to
17 host or co-host a center of excellence recognized
18 under this subsection shall partner with the Ag-
19 ricultural Research Service, other Federal agen-
20 cies, State governments, other institutions of
21 higher education (as defined in section 101 of
22 the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
23 1001)), agricultural industry groups, or other
24 relevant entities to—

1 “(i) reduce duplicative efforts and
2 focus on filling gaps across research, ex-
3 tension, and education programs by en-
4 hancing coordination and improving cost-
5 effectiveness;

6 “(ii) leverage available resources by
7 using public-private partnerships;

8 “(iii) implement training and edu-
9 cational initiatives to increase awareness
10 and effectively disseminate solutions to tar-
11 get audiences through extension activities;

12 “(iv) increase economic returns to
13 rural communities by identifying, attract-
14 ing, and directing funds to high-priority
15 agricultural issues;

16 “(v) rapidly respond to emerging
17 issues that threaten any sector of the agri-
18 cultural industry of the United States;

19 “(vi) focus on workforce development
20 for employers to recruit and retain high-
21 quality employees in rural areas; and

22 “(vii) engage in assistance for admin-
23 istrative management and education re-
24 garding potentially valuable intellectual
25 property derived from federally supported

1 research, extension, and education pro-
2 grams.

3 “(4) DURATION.—The term of an award under
4 this subsection shall be for a five-year period and
5 may be renewed for not more than one additional
6 five-year period.

7 “(5) CONSTRUCTION PROHIBITED.—Funds
8 made available under this subsection shall not be
9 used for—

10 “(A) the construction of a new building or
11 facility; or

12 “(B) the acquisition, expansion, remodel-
13 ing, or alteration of an existing building or fa-
14 cility (including site grading and improvement
15 and architect fees).

16 “(6) REPORT.—Not later than one year after
17 the date of enactment of the American Agricultural
18 Security Research Act of 2025, and every year
19 thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the Com-
20 mittee on Agriculture of the House of Representa-
21 tives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition,
22 and Forestry of the Senate a report describing—

23 “(A) the projects initiated in the preceding
24 year by each center of excellence recognized
25 under this subsection;

1 “(B) the amount of funding for each such
2 project and the funding source;

3 “(C) the institutions participating in each
4 such project and their shares of the overall
5 funding for each project;

6 “(D) the level of cost-sharing for each such
7 project;

8 “(E) any technology transfer and intellec-
9 tual property management actions taken by
10 each such center of excellence, including the
11 number of relevant invention disclosures, any
12 provisional patents filed, any non-provisional
13 patents filed and issued, the number of licenses
14 executed, and any start-up companies reg-
15 istered; and

16 “(F) any additional information deemed
17 necessary by the Secretary.

18 “(7) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—
19 There is authorized to be appropriated to the Sec-
20 retary \$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2026
21 through 2030 to carry out this subsection.”;

22 (2) by redesignating subsection (d) as sub-
23 section (b); and

24 (3) in subsection (b), as so redesignated—

25 (A) in paragraph (1)—

1 (i) by striking “The Secretary” and
2 inserting “In addition to the centers of ex-
3 cellence recognized under subsection (a),
4 the Secretary”; and

5 (ii) by striking “3” and inserting “8”;
6 (B) in paragraph (2)—

7 (i) in subparagraph (A)—

8 (I) in the subparagraph heading,
9 by striking “AND WORKFORCE DEVEL-
10 OPMENT” and inserting “, WORK-
11 FORCE DEVELOPMENT, AND RURAL
12 STUDIES”; and

13 (II) by inserting “economics, psy-
14 chology, rural sociology, data
15 sciences,” after “mathematics,”;

16 (ii) in subparagraph (E), by inserting
17 “and developing nature-based solutions to
18 improve the composition of soil organic
19 compounds, including carbon, that are ben-
20 efcial to soil quality and the environment”
21 before the period at the end; and

22 (iii) by adding at the end the fol-
23 lowing:

24 “(G) FOREST HEALTH AND CONSERVA-
25 TION.—A center of excellence established under

1 paragraph (1) may focus on forest health, sus-
2 tainable forest management, agroforestry, en-
3 hancing forest resilience to catastrophic wild-
4 fire, supporting rural infrastructure, and urban
5 and community forestry programs to promote
6 healthy forest ecosystems and resilient commu-
7 nities.

8 “(H) FOOD SAFETY, BIOPROCESSING, AND
9 VALUE-ADDED AGRICULTURE.—A center of ex-
10 cellence established under paragraph (1) may
11 focus on food safety, bioprocessing, value-added
12 agriculture enterprise development, and innova-
13 tive food and agriculture product develop-
14 ment.”; and

15 (C) in paragraph (3), by striking “2023”
16 and inserting “2029”.

17 **SEC. 3. AGRICULTURE AND FOOD PROTECTION GRANT**
18 **PROGRAM.**

19 Section 1485 of the National Agricultural Research,
20 Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C.
21 3352) is amended to read as follows:

22 **“SEC. 1485. AGRICULTURE AND FOOD PROTECTION GRANT**
23 **PROGRAM.**

24 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish a
25 program under which the Secretary will award grants on

1 a competitive basis to eligible entities to support research,
2 extension, and education activities that improve the capa-
3 bility of the United States to protect the food and agricul-
4 tural system from—

5 “(1) a chemical, biological, cybersecurity, or
6 bioterrorism attack; or

7 “(2) other global catastrophic and existential
8 threats, as defined in section 7302 of the Global
9 Catastrophic Risk Management Act of 2022 (6
10 U.S.C. 821).

11 “(b) USE OF FUNDS.—An eligible entity that receives
12 a grant under this section shall use funds received through
13 the grant—

14 “(1) to encourage basic and applied research
15 on, and the development of, qualified agricultural
16 countermeasures;

17 “(2) to promote the development and expansion
18 of teaching programs in agriculture, veterinary med-
19 icine, and other disciplines closely allied to the food
20 and agriculture system of the United States to in-
21 crease the number of trained individuals with an ex-
22 pertise in agricultural biosecurity and cybersecurity;

23 “(3) to expand or upgrade facilities to meet bio-
24 safety and biosecurity requirements necessary to
25 protect facility staff, members of the public, and the

1 food supply while carrying out agricultural biosecur-
2 ity research;

3 “(4) to cover costs associated with the acquisi-
4 tion of equipment and other capital costs related to
5 expansion of food, agriculture, and veterinary medi-
6 cine teaching programs in agricultural biosecurity
7 and cybersecurity; or

8 “(5) to otherwise improve the capacity of the
9 United States to respond in a timely manner to
10 emerging or existing threats.

11 “(c) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—An entity eligible to re-
12 ceive a grant under this section is—

13 “(1) a State agricultural experiment station;

14 “(2) a State department of agriculture;

15 “(3) a college or university;

16 “(4) a university research foundation;

17 “(5) a research institution or organization;

18 “(6) a Federal agency;

19 “(7) a national laboratory; or

20 “(8) any group consisting of 2 or more of the
21 entities described in paragraphs (1) through (7).

22 “(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
23 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
24 \$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2026 through 2030.”.

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