

# 2023 Annual Report



This report outlines FFAR's key activities for 2023, as required by law. A 2023 Impact Report will also be available in summer 2024 that contains this information as well as additional details on grant impacts.

This report, as well as past Annual and Impact Reports, are available on the [FFAR website](#).



**FOUNDATION FOR  
FOOD & AGRICULTURE  
RESEARCH®**

Bold science for big challenges





## Bold Science for Big Challenges

Thank you for supporting the Foundation for Food & Agriculture Research (FFAR).  
Connect with us to learn more about funding opportunities, awards, impacts and news.

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A man with a beard, wearing a red, blue, and white plaid shirt, is looking down at a tablet computer he is holding in his hands. The background is a soft-focus outdoor scene with trees and a fence.

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# What We Do

The [Foundation for Food & Agriculture Research](#) (FFAR) builds public-private partnerships to support bold science. Our research, co-created with the agriculture community, increases public agriculture research investments, fills critical research gaps and complements the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) research agenda.

## Priority Area Research

With the release of our [Research Strategy](#), FFAR-funded research focuses on four Priority Areas:

### Cultivating Thriving Production Systems

Our Production Systems research supports animal and crop systems by increasing productivity, combating pests and disease, supporting animal welfare and safeguarding farmers' livelihoods.

### Sustaining Vibrant Agroecosystems

Our Agroecosystems research deepens our understanding of how agriculture systems interact with the surrounding environment. This research focuses on how changes in environmental conditions, production systems and practices affect biodiversity, water systems and climate change to ultimately support efficiency, regeneration and resilience.

### Bolstering Healthy Food Systems

Our Food Systems research promotes the availability of nutritious foods, improves human health, develops novel food processes and products and advances the United States food system's functionality.

### Strengthening the Scientific Workforce

Our Scientific Workforce programs continue our longstanding commitment to address critical shortages in research and scientific workforce training.

## Our Mission

We build collaborative partnerships to support audacious science addressing today's food and agriculture challenges.

## Our Vision

We envision a world in which pioneering, collaborative science provides every person access to affordable, nutritious food grown on thriving farms.



# Implementing Our Strategic Plan

The Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 required FFAR to investigate paths toward greater self-sufficiency. Our [2019 Strategic and Sustainability Plan](#) (Strategic Plan), developed by an external group, identified four paths to further leverage public funds and diversify funding models:

1. Strengthen FFAR's core model: increase leverage and impact of congressional funding.
2. Build new funding models: scale FFAR's model for even greater impact and establish a strong, diversified funding base.
3. Continue to benefit from congressional funding: maintain FFAR's credibility and independence and provide even greater leverage of taxpayer dollars.
4. Invest in key enablers: build new capabilities, models and capacity to execute on strengthening the core.

In addition to these four paths, FFAR strategically invests the federal funding received from Congress, and to date, has generated enough investment income to cover the Foundation's operational costs. By offsetting operational costs with investment income, FFAR directs all taxpayer funds allocated by the Farm Bill to research.

The Strategic Plan identified opportunities to bring in additional funding from non-federal sources while also positing that FFAR cannot build public-private partnerships to fund research without federal funding to attract non-federal funding partners.

## Strengthening FFAR's Core Model

Under this path, we have focused on increasing our matching funding ratio, developing new consortia and growing our co-funding partnerships.

Since the Strategic Plan was released, FFAR increased the matching ratio, or the amount leveraged, on average, from non-federal partners for every federal dollar, from \$1.25 to \$1.40.

FFAR also celebrates four years of growth in the number and diversity of co-funding partnerships and increasing the amount of matching funding invested in food and agriculture research. Looking ahead, FFAR has developed plans to build on that success by:

1. Continuing to increase the number and scope of co-funding partnerships;
2. Further diversifying FFAR's partner portfolio to engage new and underrepresented business sectors;
3. Implementing new partnership models tailored to attract new and diverse partners;
4. Expanding the amount of unrestricted or thematic funding that does not require a match; and
5. Enhancing partner stewardship to maximize investment of new and longstanding partners.

*Implementing Our Strategic Plan continued*

## Build New Funding Models

FFAR has also made progress identifying new funding models. In 2023, FFAR received \$4.455 million through the USDA and the U.S. Department of State, which we used to leverage an additional \$6 million, to date, in funding from other governments, industry groups, commodity groups and nonprofits and philanthropies to establish the [Efficient Fertilizer Consortium](#), with additional funding commitments expected in 2024. This Consortium is a public-private partnership that funds research advancing enhanced efficiency and novel fertilizer products and practices to improve crop production and decrease environmental impact.

More recently, FFAR conducted an external evaluation of its [consortia](#) to identify those models and elements most successful at leveraging additional funding. FFAR is using this information to create and validate new consortium models that engage numerous funders around research needs prioritized by the food and agriculture industry.

FFAR invests every federal dollar received in agricultural research and we look for opportunities to leverage these additional funds in ways that support grantees. For example, since 2020, our increased matching ratio enabled FFAR to waive the matching requirement for the [New Innovators in Food & Agriculture Research Award](#), a fellowship for early-career scientists that supports grantees in focusing on their research without the additional pressure of securing funding.

## Invest in Key Enablers

FFAR continues to invest in resources to further our reputation and growth. In addition to improving our Grants Management System, FFAR made several changes to help academics secure a match, including:

- Allowing universities to count salaries as a “cash” match;
- Expanding specific costs which can be covered under “direct costs” to support academic applicants; and
- Reducing reliance on applicant match requirements by securing matching funds from non-federal partners prior to releasing a solicitation. In 2023, a significant portion of FFAR programs have not required applicants to secure their own matching funds.

The updated Grants Management System further allows FFAR to capture the impact of our grants. Since 2019, FFAR has created an Impacts & Operations Team and hired staff to develop an impact tracking process. This team is building and implementing this process to more thoroughly measure and communicate our [impact](#).

Lastly, in 2023, FFAR conducted a year-long process to develop a [Research Strategy](#) that included extensive input from stakeholders across the food and agriculture value chain. This Research Strategy ensures that FFAR stays current on industry needs and can deliver impactful research to our stakeholders.



# 2023 Year in Review

2023 marked FFAR's eighth year of grantmaking and our biggest yet. With matching funding from our partners, FFAR awarded 74 grants, investing \$145 million in audacious food and agriculture research. Of this \$145 million, \$60 million was FFAR funding, which was matched with \$85 million from our partners.

2023 was also FFAR's most impactful year. The year brought a new research direction, a unique partnership opportunity with USDA as well as unprecedented federal funding.

## Developing & Unveiling a Research Strategy

FFAR established a [Research Strategy](#) in 2023 to ensure our research investments meet our stakeholders' evolving and future needs.

In January 2023, FFAR began assessing the state of food and agriculture to identify where research investments can best address major challenges today and tomorrow. FFAR engaged with a range of stakeholders to develop a comprehensive understanding of current and emerging food and agriculture research needs. Specifically, FFAR solicited input from 23 industry, nonprofits, academia and international actors and interviewed 74 stakeholder organizations, including 23 companies, 13 commodity groups, 10 producer trade associations, six foundations, seven nonprofits, five federal agencies, the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, six research universities, four scientific societies and the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities. FFAR also hosted a public webinar, through which FFAR received 76 written comments.

We then developed an evidence-based research framework informed by stakeholder feedback, analyses, gaps assessments and forecasting. The resulting Research Strategy aligns FFAR's research with industry, farmer and consumer needs.

FFAR completed the Research Strategy in December 2023 and transitioned our research focus from our previously established Challenge Areas to four overarching [Priority Areas](#). These Priority Areas seek to foster greater collaboration across disciplines, strengthen the scientific workforce and provide the impacts stakeholders need.

## AIM for Climate Summit

In May 2023, FFAR supported the [Agriculture Innovation Mission \(AIM\) for Climate Summit](#), a three-day event hosted by the U.S. government in Washington, D.C., that brought together global partners to increase and accelerate investment in and support for agriculture and food systems innovation for climate action. The Summit, planned with USDA, included over 1,150 participants from 42 countries.

During the AIM for Climate Summit, FFAR Executive Director [Dr. Saharah Moon Chapotin](#) led a [plenary session](#) on the importance of agriculture climate research that featured remarks from several FFAR stakeholders. FFAR grantees and partners also spoke on panels, hosted interactive exhibits and opened their research sites for tours. Ultimately, the Summit was a significant opportunity to highlight the importance of food and agriculture research in addressing climate change.

## COP28

FFAR expanded our presence at the 28th Conference of Parties (COP28) hosted by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. COP28 featured agriculture on the agenda in a more significant way this year, with a new themed day for "Food, Land Use and Agriculture." FFAR participated in five panels discussing the importance of agriculture research to mitigate climate change. COP28 presented FFAR with a global platform to showcase FFAR-funded research at the intersection of agriculture and climate.

## 2023 Farm Bill Extension

Congress passed and President Biden signed into law a one-year Farm Bill extension on November 17, 2023. For the first time, the [Farm Bill extension included funding for FFAR](#) and other orphan programs – programs that received funding in past Farm Bills but are not guaranteed continual funding in future Farm Bills. This Farm Bill extension included \$37 million for FFAR, which allows us to continue funding pioneering food and agriculture research in 2024.



# FFAR Grants 2016-2023

Congress created FFAR in 2014 and the Foundation has been awarding grants since 2016.

380

## GRANTS AWARDED

550+

## FUNDING PARTNERS

\$750M

FFAR & MATCHING  
FUNDS AWARDED

\$1:\$1.40

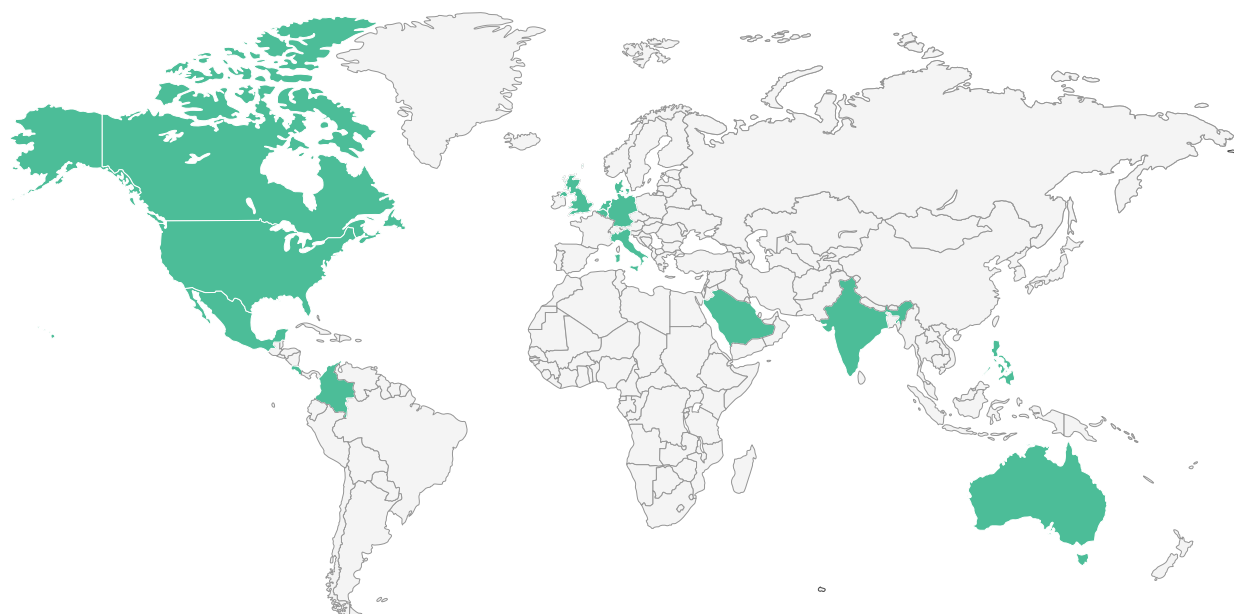
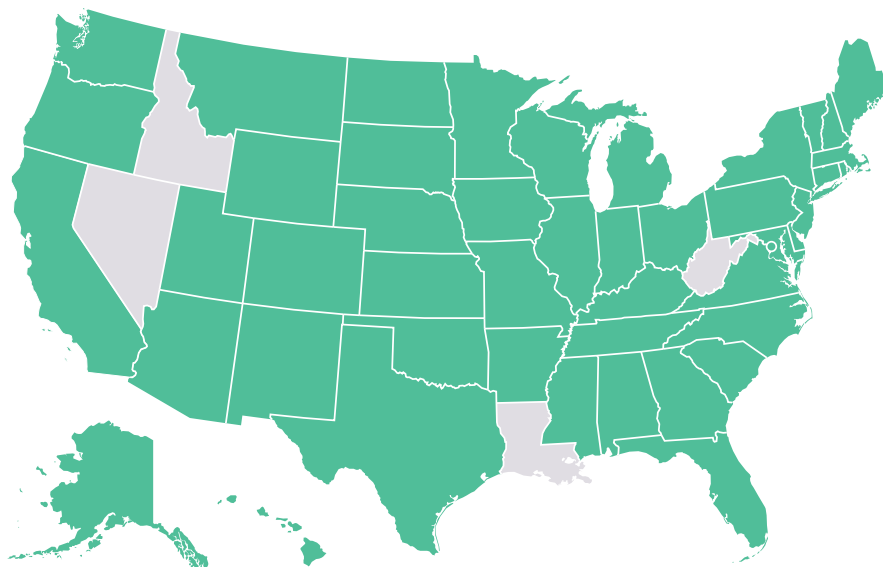
### RATIO OF FFAR FUNDING TO MATCHING FUNDS

40%+

OF PROJECTS ARE  
CLIMATE-RELATED

## National & Global Reach

FFAR has made awards in 46 states, the District of Columbia and 14 countries.





# 2023 Grantmaking

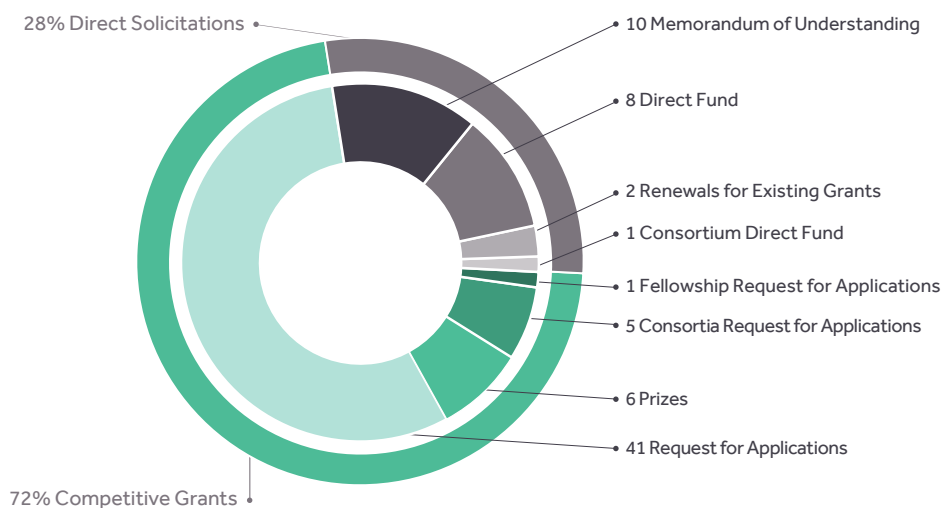
## Research & Convenings in 2023

FFAR awarded 74 new grants in 2023 totaling \$145 million – our largest grantmaking year yet. The [FFAR website](#) contains a full list of FFAR grants awarded in 2023 as well as those awarded since 2014.

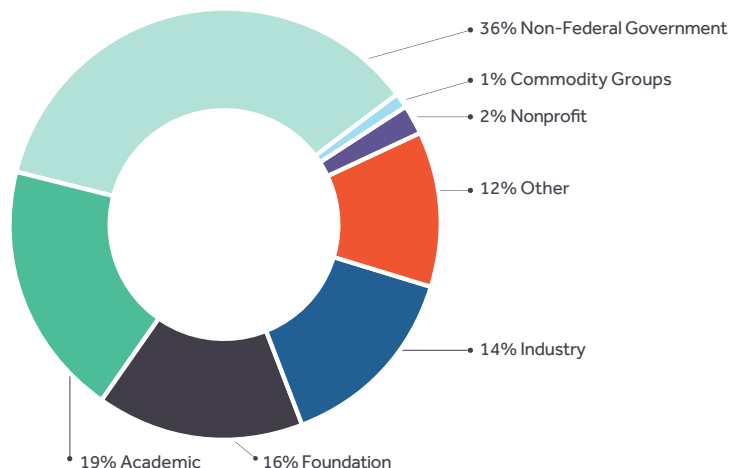


FFAR remains committed to competitive funding opportunities to ensure inclusivity and increase access to FFAR grants. Of the 74 grants awarded in 2023, 72% were awarded through competitive grant opportunities and 28% of grants from direct solicitation.

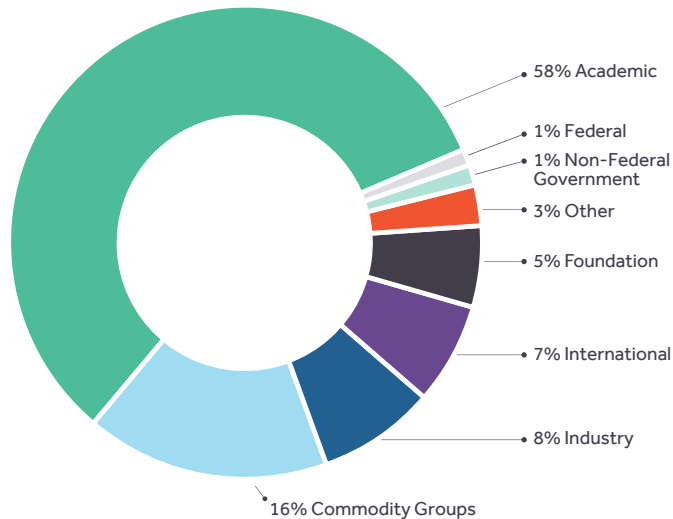
**Funding Mechanism by Type 2023**



**Percent Matching Funds Received, by Donor Type 2023**



**Percent of FFAR Grantees, by Institution Type 2023**



# 2023 Scientific Workforce Awardees

Addressing the accelerating and unprecedented global challenges faced by the U.S. food and agricultural enterprise requires a dynamic and highly skilled scientific workforce. Moreover, developing a diverse and inclusive workforce is critical to drive innovation, foster creative solutions and lead pioneering science. FFAR supported training and career advancement for more individuals in 2023 than in any previous year. These 68 fellows, grantees and prize winners represent bold scientific leaders who are providing unique research advancing the food and agriculture sectors.

30

FFAR FELLOWS

8

TRIBAL AGRICULTURE  
FELLOWS

3

KIRCHNER FELLOWS

2

FFAR-OCP DISRUPTIVE  
FERTILIZER TECHNOLOGY  
FELLOWS

13

VETERINARY STUDENT  
RESEARCH FELLOWS

11

NEW INNOVATOR IN FOOD  
& AGRICULTURE RESEARCH  
AWARDEES

1

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES  
PRIZE IN FOOD & AGRICULTURE  
SCIENCES WINNER





# 2023 Financials

## ASSETS

|   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| Cash and equivalents                      | \$ 15,041,356         |
| Certificate of deposit                    | 200,601               |
| Contributions receivable                  | 16,252,284            |
| Awardee match receivable, net of discount | 126,893,596           |
| Federal appropriation receivable          | 37,000,000            |
| Investments                               | 179,950,908           |
| Other assets                              | 198,189               |
| Right-of-use assets - operating, net      | 334,486               |
| <b>Total assets</b>                       | <b>\$ 375,871,420</b> |

## LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS

|   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| <b>Liabilities</b>                      |                       |
| Accounts payable and accrued expenses   | \$ 880,013            |
| Grants payable, net of discount         | 226,079,670           |
| Deferred sponsorship revenue            | 57,000                |
| Deferred rent                           | 701,378               |
| <b>Total liabilities</b>                | <b>227,718,062</b>    |
| <b>Net assets</b>                       | <b>148,153,358</b>    |
| <b>Total liabilities and net assets</b> | <b>\$ 375,871,420</b> |

## STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

Year Ended December 31, 2023

### REVENUE

|                                      |                       |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Recognition of federal appropriation | \$ 49,693,920         |
| Matching award revenue               | 73,279,350            |
| Investment income, net of fees       | 26,304,399            |
| Consortia contributions              | 2,700,608             |
| Federal grant revenue                | 1,238,811             |
| Contributions                        | 64,045                |
| <b>Total revenue</b>                 | <b>\$ 153,281,134</b> |

### EXPENSES

|                            |                       |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Program Services</b>    |                       |
| Grants & awards program    | \$ 151,426,880        |
| <b>Supporting Services</b> |                       |
| General & administrative   | 3,423,563             |
| Development                | 1,594,606             |
| <b>Total expenses</b>      | <b>\$ 156,445,049</b> |

**Total change in net assets**

**(\$3,163,915)**

# Additional Financial Information

As part of FFAR's commitment to transparency, we are providing further details about gifts received as well as federal or state grants, contracts or cooperative agreements awarded to the Foundation in 2023.

Concerning gifts of real or personal property, the Foundation did not receive any gifts of real or personal property in 2023.

However, FFAR received additional federal funding through three cooperative agreements awarded to the Foundation in 2022 and 2023. These agreements include:

1. USDA Funding for the AIM for Climate Summit: \$747,000

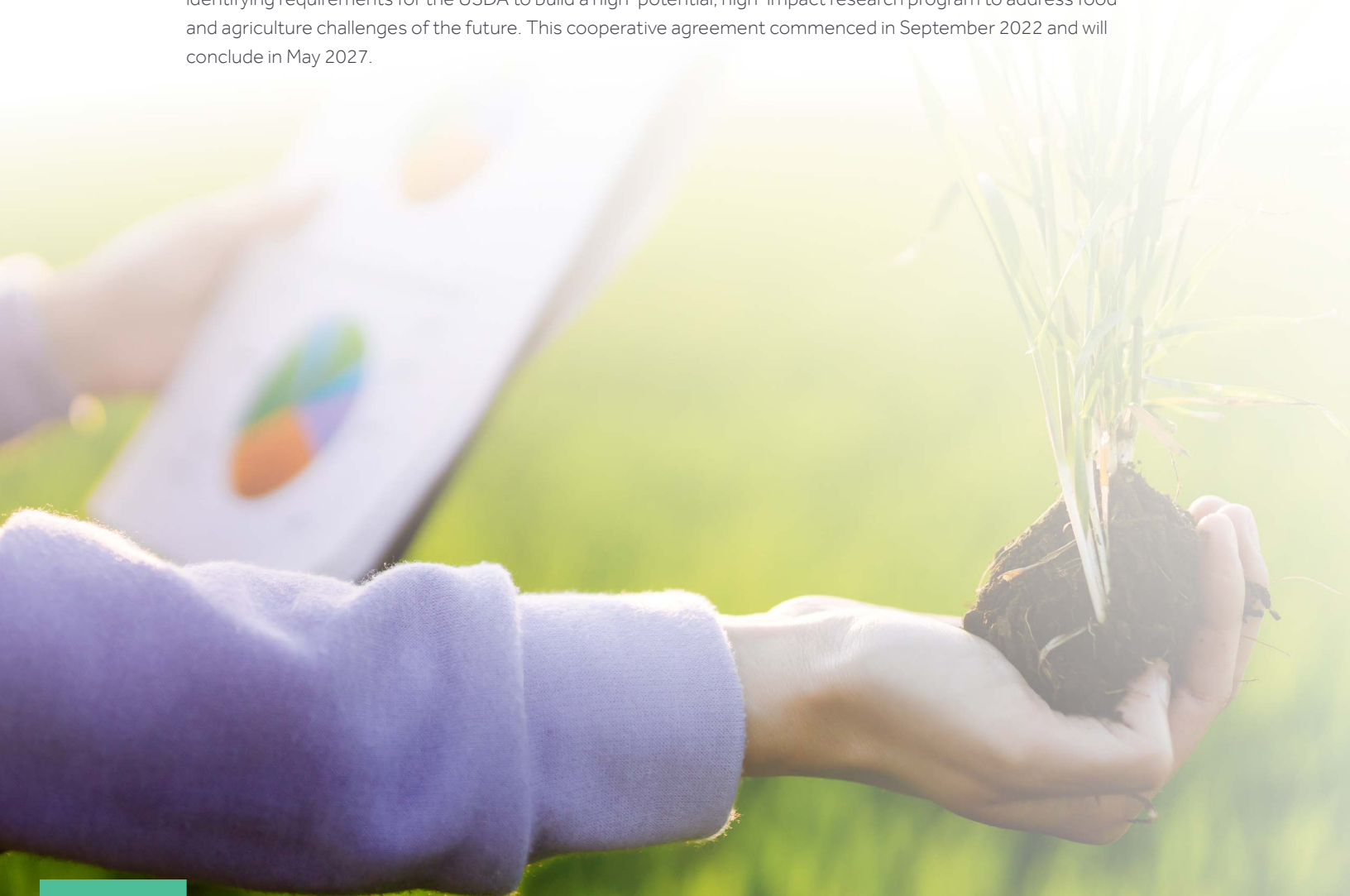
FFAR supported the USDA in hosting the May 2023 AIM for Climate Summit in Washington, D.C. that showcased agricultural innovation to mitigate climate change. Through this agreement, USDA provided FFAR with \$747,000 and FFAR further raised \$395,000 through sponsorships and exhibit booth fees to support the Summit.

2. USDA Funding for the Efficient Fertilizer Consortium: \$4,455,000

The Efficient Fertilizer Consortium is part of the U.S. government's Global Fertilizer Challenge, an international effort to strengthen food security and reduce agricultural emissions, launched by President Biden in 2022 at the Major Economies Forum. The Efficient Fertilizer Consortium was funded, in part, by the U.S. government through an investment of \$4.455 million from the U.S. Department of State that was awarded to FFAR by USDA. The cooperative agreement with USDA began in March 2023 and will conclude in June 2027. To date, FFAR has leveraged an additional \$6 million in committed funding for the Efficient Fertilizer Consortium, with additional funding expected in fall 2024 as we open the consortium to new members.

3. USDA Funding for AgARDA: \$1,700,000

FFAR signed a cooperative agreement with USDA to conduct activities in support of achieving, understanding and identifying requirements for the USDA to build a high-potential, high-impact research program to address food and agriculture challenges of the future. This cooperative agreement commenced in September 2022 and will conclude in May 2027.





# Upcoming Events & Initiatives

## Celebrating FFAR's 10-year Anniversary

July 16, 2024, marks FFAR's 10-year anniversary. Our digital media campaign, which launched on National Agriculture Day (March 19) and is hosted on our [Impact](#) page, profiles FFAR stakeholders and highlights the value of FFAR research. We are also hosting monthly scientific webinars spotlighting our research and other areas of innovation in recognition of our decade of impact. Additionally, FFAR's [Events](#) page lists numerous opportunities to participate in 10-year anniversary events. We hope you will join us.



## FFAR Convening Events

In implementing our Research Strategy, we are carrying forward our ongoing research programming while also developing new programs and collaborations. To that end, FFAR plans to host an ambitious series of convening events in 2024, with over 20 events planned throughout the year. FFAR's convenings bring together potential partners in industry, academia, government, nonprofit organizations and other sectors to learn from one another, identify common challenges, align research opportunities and establish relationships. Our convenings lead to funding partnerships that support new research programs. FFAR Convening Events are listed on the [Events](#) page.

## Assessing Consortia Models

FFAR hired an external contractor to evaluate the effectiveness of our consortia models. The evaluation focused on how we generate funding commitments and award research grants through consortia. The results of this evaluation highlighted the various consortia models' strengths and challenges along with recommendations for future development and management of consortia.



**FFAR**

[foundationfar.org](http://foundationfar.org)