FFAR®

Bold science for big challenges

FFAR Delivers for American Agriculture

The Foundation for Food & Agriculture Research (FFAR) builds public-private partnerships to address the most pressing challenges facing American farmers and consumers. FFAR is a proven, pioneering model that connects food and agriculture stakeholders across the country – including with the private sector, U.S. universities and farmers – to fight agricultural pests and diseases, reduce production costs, lower consumer prices and ensure Americans have nutritious foods for a healthy life. FFAR is also increasing U.S. competitiveness globally at a time when China and Brazil are challenging America's dominance in agriculture and innovation. FFAR-funded research has real-world results. Here we provide a few examples of how FFAR is delivering for American agriculture.

Protecting the U.S. Swine Herd

The U.S. swine industry is vital to the American economy, and ensuring herd health is essential to protecting producers and consumers alike. To strengthen biosecurity in the wean-to-harvest phase, FFAR partnered with the Swine Health Information Center (SHIC) to fund 23 innovative projects to better inform how pork producers and veterinarians manage swine health. These projects are already providing practical, cost-effective solutions, such as using nylon fan socks on barn exhaust fans to reduce disease spread and customizing trailer cleaning protocols based on specific farming systems. These simple, yet impactful strategies help producers improve swine health while saving money. The results and recommendations are freely available on SHIC's website, and support a stronger, more sustainable pork industry.

Contact FFAR

Please contact us with any questions.

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Safeguarding the Future of Mid-Atlantic Viticulture

The mid-Atlantic wine industry, valued at approximately $16 billion across Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina, has grown significantly in recent years. Unlike drier wine regions, the mid-Atlantic's hot, humid climate makes grapevines vulnerable to ripe rot, a fungal disease. Funded by FFAR, University of Maryland researchers Drs. Mengjun Hu and Scott Cosseboom identified the pathogen responsible and developed targeted management strategies, including the GrapeCast risk model and improved fungicide guidelines. These tools have been widely adopted, thereby reducing fungicide use and the risk of resistance. Over four growing seasons, these tools saved growers an estimated $7 million. Continued use of these tools could save growers an estimated $44 million by 2035.

Increasing Dairy Feed Efficiency

Feeding dairy cows requires thousands of acres of cropland, making milk production costly. With funding from FFAR and the Council on Dairy Cattle Breeding, Michigan State University researcher Dr. Mike VandeHaar began improving feed efficiency through genetics. The research team found that some cows naturally eat less for the same milk output. With additional data and support from FFAR, they developed a new breeding trait called Feed Saved (FSAV), which is now part of the U.S. dairy breeding index. FSAV identifies cows that eat less due to smaller size or efficient metabolism. This change is projected to boost genetic progress in U.S. Holsteins by $7.3 million annually, benefiting farmers and lowering dairy costs for consumers. With over 10,000 records now included, prediction accuracy has increased, accelerating progress toward more cost efficient milk production.