

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Introduces legislation to support advancements in agriculture research and innovation

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today U.S. Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Tina Smith (D-MN), John Fetterman (D-PA), and Ron Wyden (D-OR) introduced legislation to invest in public research, develop regionally adapted seed varieties and animal breeds, and enable the U.S. to maintain a robust and resilient food and agricultural system.

The *Seeds and Breeds for the Future Act* promotes the development of ready-to-use, regionally-adapted, and publicly available seed varieties and animal breeds. This would give farmers more tools to confront drought, varying growing conditions, and to have plant and animal varieties that are better suited to their area. Regionally developed seed varieties often result in substantial increases in hardiness and yields. Further, it would ensure American farmers have access to domestically produced seeds and breeds that are developed through publicly available research.

“Wisconsin’s agriculture sector is a driver of our state’s economy and the heart of many of our rural communities,” **said Senator Baldwin**. “In the face of a changing climate, we must make sure our farmers and producers have the tools they need to adapt and compete on the global stage. This legislation will ensure that our farmers have regionally-adapted seed varieties and animal breeds to increase their yields and adjust to new environmental challenges. Farmers are always innovating, and this reform will make sure research is keeping up with them.”

Over the past several decades, universities across the country have reduced, or even eliminated, their public plant and animal breeding programs, causing a shortage of crops and livestock tailored to unique regional conditions. Lack of access to regionally adapted seeds and breeds makes our domestic agricultural sector vulnerable to disruption and threatens farmers' domestic and international competitiveness. The *Seeds and Breeds for the Future Act* ensures that the United States Department of Agriculture invests at least \$75 million each fiscal year for competitive research grants that support the development of regionally adapted seed varieties and animal breeds at public universities.

"Farmers and ranchers are on the front lines of the climate crisis. We need to grow our investments in the research and development of more climate-adaptive and disease-resistant plant varieties and animal breeds to make our food systems more sustainable," **said Senator Heinrich**. "I'm proud to champion this legislation to help researchers on the cutting-edge of publicly funded agricultural innovation. That includes those at New Mexico State University who are developing drought-resilient chile peppers and onions and regionally-adapted heat-tolerant cattle."

"Our farmers work hard to provide quality food for families here at home and around the world. As the world changes, we need to ensure our food systems are sustainable," **said Senator Smith**. "The Seeds and Breeds Act will make research and development on new plant and animal genetics publicly available and more accessible, keeping farmers competitive and reducing their vulnerability to disruptions such as climate change. It is an important step we should take to prioritize research making our local food systems more sustainable and energy efficient, as well as supporting nutritional outcomes for local and Native American populations."

This legislation is supported by Albert Lea Seed, American Malting Barley Association, Arkansas Rice Growers Association, California Climate & Agriculture Network, Carbon 180, Center for Food Safety, Dakota Rural Action, Family Farm Defenders, Farm Aid Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance, Freed Seed Federation, Institute for Agriculture Trade and Policy, Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future, Land Stewardship Project, Mandaamin Institute, Michael Fields Agricultural Institute, National Association of Plant Breeders, National Barley Improvement Committee, National Center for Appropriate Technology, National Co+op Grocers, National Family Farm Coalition, National Farmers Union, National Organic Coalition, National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, Native Farm Bill Coalition, Natural Resources Defense Council, Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance, Northeast Organic

Farming Association - Interstate council, Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York, Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association, Oregon Tilth, Organic Farming Research Foundation, Organic Seed Alliance, Organic Valley | CROPP Cooperative, Rural Advancement Foundation International-USA, Savanna Institute, Union of Concerned Scientists, Virginia Association of Biological Farming, Wisconsin Farm Bureau, Wisconsin Farmer's Union, Wisconsin Potato & Vegetable Growers Association, Wisconsin Soybean Association

“The only way agriculture can meet the challenges of tomorrow is through research investments to develop the next generation of crops and livestock,” **said Kevin Krentz, President, Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation.** “Many of the innovations that have helped farmers reduce their environmental impact have come from public investments in agricultural research. Wisconsin’s landscape is already benefiting from the development of new techniques and additional investment will allow farmers to further reduce their environmental footprint. Wisconsin Farm Bureau is proud to support Senator Tammy Baldwin’s Seeds and Breeds Act which will bring much needed public investment to address an ever-changing world.”

“The Native Farm Bill Coalition brings together the voices of Tribes and Native producers to support a wide variety of priorities promoting Tribal food sovereignty, creating economic development opportunities for Tribal producers, and building a strong American agricultural supply chain,” **said Kari Jo Lawrence and Cole Miller, Co-Chairs of the Native Farm Bill Coalition.** “This legislation protects tribal seeds, promotes collaboration with tribal colleges and universities and prioritizes grants for public cultivars and animal breeds that will enhance the nutritional health outcomes of Native American, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian communities.”

“To maximize their production in the most environmentally sound manner, farmers need access to seeds and animal breeds that are ideally suited to their farming systems, soils, and changing climates,” **said Abby Youngblood, Executive Director of the National Organic Coalition.** “We applaud Senator Baldwin for introducing the Seeds and Breeds for the Future bill to require USDA to increase support for development of seeds and breeds that are regionally adapted to address farmers’ needs.”

A one-pager on this legislation can be found [here](#).