

**Written Comments of the Irrigation Association to the  
Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research Board of Directors  
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**Submitted by**  
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On behalf of the more than 1,600 members of the Irrigation Association, thank you for the opportunity to briefly discuss our support of the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research, the importance of irrigation efficiency in agriculture, and our continued involvement in the Irrigation Innovation Consortium.

**About the Irrigation Association**

The Irrigation Association is a national trade association with a mission of *promoting efficient irrigation*. We strive to achieve this mission through the implementation of our strategic plan, focusing on two main initiatives: professional development and advocacy. In addition to conducting various educational offerings throughout the United States, providing nationally recognized certifications for professionals in irrigation and promoting best management practices through sound public policy, the IA also conducts the annual Irrigation Show and Education Week, which is the world's largest trade show focused on irrigation technology.

**Our Support for FFAR's Strategic and Sustainability Plan**

Many challenges lie ahead for U.S. agriculture. Climate change, trade uncertainty, access to capital, market forces, an aging workforce, and urbanization all threaten the future viability of U.S. food production. FFAR is correct in comparing U.S. versus foreign public investment in agriculture production and research. Even though the United States is at the forefront of agricultural innovation, we lag in public investment to ensure the viability and stability of our agricultural sector.

The Irrigation Association believes in the strength of public-private partnerships and the role FFAR plays in driving agricultural innovation.

As the FFAR board and the Sustainable Water Management Advisory Council continue to set the direction of FFAR relating to water management, including identifying future opportunities to drive research in this area, the Irrigation Association encourages FFAR to continue your balanced approach when addressing agricultural productivity and natural resource conservation. Many times, government programs address just one part of agricultural production, without looking at the whole picture. An example is promoting water conservation to enhance stream flow. This can be a very positive outcome, but yield may be adversely affected. Water conservation through efficiency and increasing yield are not mutually exclusive from one another and we appreciate FFAR's continued balanced approach of supporting farmers and the environment.

The Irrigation Association also encourages FFAR to continue your work with corporate entities through various sustainability and corporate social responsibility plans. The Irrigation Association is seeing many farming practice decisions being driven by CSR/sustainability plans that call for a reduction in natural resource/chemical use of their suppliers. Through FFAR's public-private partnership model, this is an opportunity for FFAR to serve as a conduit between corporations, NGOs and the farming community to continue promoting sustainable agriculture through market drivers.

### **Irrigation Innovation Consortium**

The Irrigation Innovation Consortium was established in April of 2018 as a collaborative research effort to accelerate the development and adoption of water and energy efficient irrigation technologies and practices through public-private partnerships. Made possible through a matching grant by FFAR, the IIC has five founding university partners, along with eight founding industry partners, including the Irrigation Association, which now drives innovation and research in all aspects of irrigation through the development of more strategic collaborative partnerships that generate new synergies by leveraging each other's expertise, technology and resources.

Speaking on behalf of the irrigation industry, we see that this consortium is already making an impact on research and innovation. Through driving discussion among industry and academic leaders, we are now bridging a gap between two essential partners in agricultural, turf and landscape irrigation – truly identifying the current and future research needs of our industry and driving money where it needs to go to achieve our research and innovation goals.

From technology research to data gathering, the Irrigation Association looks forward to using the results from the IIC to continue achieving our mission: promoting efficient irrigation. We thank FFAR for your continued role in making this plan a reality.

### **Conclusion**

We look forward to our continued partnership with FFAR. We also look forward to supporting the implementation of FFAR's strategic and sustainability plan, while advocating for a sustainable funding model to ensure the future success of the foundation.