

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1011

June 13, 2023

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Chair
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug
Administration, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Hoeven
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug
Administration, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Heinrich and Ranking Member Hoeven,

As you develop the Fiscal Year 2024 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies appropriations bill, I write to request that \$1.5 million of the total amount appropriated for the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) be used for salaries and expenses to support an onion genetics and breeding expert at USDA.

The Vidalia onion is one of Georgia's greatest agricultural treasures. Named Georgia's state vegetable in 1990 and grown in 20 counties in South Georgia, the Vidalia onion brings more than \$150 million to Georgia each year. Continuing to research and develop new onion varieties will be crucial for the growth of this flagship Georgia crop.

As you know, ARS has not hired an in-house onion breeding expert since 2021. Research in onion breeding and genetics is vital for the prosperity of onion growers in Georgia and across the country. Developing high-yield, disease-resistant onion hybrids directly benefits the livelihoods of onion growers. Therefore, I am requesting that the Subcommittee reprioritize the essential work conducted by a USDA onion genetics and breeding expert.

Thank you for your support for the onion industry, and I look forward to working with you on this important issue in the future.

Sincerely,



Jon Ossoff
U.S. Senator

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

CHAIR, SUBCOMMITTEE ON HUMAN
RIGHTS AND THE LAW

OSSOFF.SENATE.GOV