



## National Agricultural Biotechnology Council

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*Providing an open forum for exploring issues in agricultural biotechnology*

Tom Vilsack  
US Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.  
Washington, DC 20250

May 14, 2012

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

The USDA has made many of the critical contributions that have enabled agriculture to provide adequate and safe food for the United States at consumer-friendly prices, with surpluses for export to the rest of the world. Furthermore, future contributions of agricultural research—including those by the USDA/ARS—may be even more significant, including achievement of energy self-sufficiency and reduction of greenhouse-gas emissions per unit of food produced by further development of high-yield agriculture while enhancing stability of productivity. Perhaps agriculture's greatest potential lies in the enhancement of human health, especially in providing low-cost preventative approaches that will preempt current more costly disease-treatment approaches.

The USDA's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary marks the conclusion of an extraordinarily successful first phase for agriculture; however, an even more spectacular second phase is possible—especially with expanding tools and knowledge—with contributions to come from public and private agricultural research institutions in solving the multiplicity of pressing problems that society faces in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: enabling an adequate, safe food supply for an expanding world population, creating renewable energy, improving human nutrition and health, mitigating global climate change, increasing agricultural sustainability, and improving water use efficiency and quality.

Ralph W.F. Hardy  
President, NABC

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