

# Seeds and Breeds for the Future Act

*Sponsored by Senator Tammy Baldwin*

Securing a resilient agricultural and food system in the face of increasingly challenging environmental conditions is critical to national security and international competitiveness. The Seeds and Breeds for the Future Act aims to tackle this vulnerability by supporting research and development into ready-to-use, regionally-adapted and publicly available seed varieties and animal breeds. These investments would help farmers confront drought and varying growing conditions by providing improved plant and animal varieties that are developed to suit their specific regions' growing conditions. Not only will this effort increase hardiness and yields for farmers, but it will also enable the U.S. to maintain a robust and resilient food and agricultural system.

## **Current challenge:**

- Public plant and animal breeding programs are facing shrinking budgets, declining institutional support, increased labor and land costs, and little federal investments.
- 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 classically bred cultivars and breeds developed specifically for 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:**

- Creates a \$75 million carveout in USDA research grants for the development of new public seeds ("cultivars") and animal breeds;
- Promotes efficient use of grants by establishing a coordinator to develop a strategy for public cultivar research and an interagency working group informed by stakeholders to coordinate activities of the multiple research agencies;
- Ensures public accessibility of the plants and breeds developed using the grant funding carve out in the Seeds and Breeds for the Future Act;
- Ensures that American farmers, producers and businesses are the beneficiaries of the USDA investments into the research and development of seeds and breeds; and
- Outlines priorities for competitive research grants including: public cultivars and animal breeds that are regionally adapted, as well as bred for environmental resilience including changing climate, bred to enhance the nutritional and health outcomes of local and Native American, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian populations, or bred with beneficial and compatible characteristics and behaviors for dual-use renewable energy-agricultural systems.