

## **The Seeds for the Future Act**

*Led by U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin*

The *Seeds for the Future Act* promotes the development of ready-to-use regionally-adapted seed varieties that meet the needs farmers face in their regions and unique growing conditions. This would provide farmers more tools to confront drought, varying growing conditions, and to have plant varieties better suited to their area. When farmers have varieties developed for their region, they see substantial benefits in hardiness and yields.

### **The problem:**

- Over the past 20 years, universities across the country have reduced and even eliminated their public plant breeding programs, causing a shortage of new classically bred cultivars developed specifically for unique regional conditions.
- Lack of access to regionally-adapted seeds makes our domestic agricultural sector vulnerable to disruption and threatens farmers' domestic and international competitiveness.

### **The *Seeds for the Future Act's* solutions:**

- Ensures that at least \$50 million in USDA research is invested each year for the development of new public seed varieties (“cultivars”) at public research universities.
- 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 involved in plant breeding research programs at USDA.
- Increases the availability of genetic diversity researchers and farmers have to draw upon in order to grow productive crops in their region, aiding farmers, seed companies and researchers interested in further developed a variety.

### **Public Plant Breeding Success Stories**

- In response to a shortage of available and suitable hop varieties, the **Brewers Association** partnered with public universities to create a public hop breeding program using Agricultural Research Service funding. The program aims to develop disease-resistant hop cultivars with no intellectual property restrictions for beer brewers to use.
- The **University of Wisconsin – Madison** used Agricultural Research Service funding to develop a sweet corn variety that addressed specific challenges faced by organic corn growers in the upper Midwest. Farmers had been unable to find sweet corn varieties on the market that tolerated cool, wet soils typical of spring in Minnesota, and the plant breeding project worked to develop corn varieties suited to these conditions.
- The **Washington State University Bread Lab** plant breeding program uses Agricultural Research Service funding to research and develop grain varieties that both perform well for farmers and have the flavor, nutrition, and distinctive characteristics prized by craft bakers, brewers, and distillers.

(MORE)

## **Support for *Seeds for the Future Act***

Albert Lea Seed  
American Malting Barley Association (AMBA)  
Arkansas Rice Growers Association  
Beyond Pesticides  
Blue River Organic Seed  
Carolina Farm Stewardship Association  
Center for Food Safety  
Clif Bar and Company  
Common Wealth Seed Growers LLC  
Consumers Union  
Equal Exchange  
Family Farm Defenders  
Farm Aid  
Fedco Seeds  
Food & Water Watch  
Freed Seed Federation  
Harris Seeds  
Johnny's Selected Seeds  
Kamut International, Ltd.  
Louisiana Independent Rice Producers Association  
Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association  
Mandaamin Institute  
Michael Fields Agricultural Institute  
Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service  
National Barley Improvement Committee  
National Co+op Grocers  
National Farmers Union  
National Organic Coalition  
National Organic Dairy Producers Alliance  
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition  
Northeast Organic Farming Association - Interstate council  
Northeast Organic Farming Association - MA Chapter  
Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association  
Oregon Tilth  
Organic Farming Research Foundation  
Organic Seed Alliance  
PCC Community Markets  
Pesticide Action Network  
Pipeline Foods  
Rural Advancement Foundation International  
Rural Advancement Foundation International- USA  
Southeast Missouri State University  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Virginia Association of Biological Farming