

November 14, 2025

Dr. Jaye Hamby
Director
National Institute of Food and Agriculture
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250-2201

Dear Dr. Hamby,

On behalf of agInnovation Northeast and the Association of Northeast Extension Directors, the coalition of agricultural research and Extension leaders from across the northeast region, we write to express our deep concern regarding the termination of funding for the Northeast Integrated Pest Management (NE IPM) Center.

For over two decades, the Northeast IPM Center has served as a vital hub for research coordination, stakeholder engagement, and applied problem-solving. Its programs have advanced integrated pest management practices that improve agricultural productivity, protect natural resources, and safeguard human health. For example:

- **Spotted Lanternfly (SLF) Control:** Through the NE IPM Center's coordination, a multistate research and outreach network leveraged \$7.3 million in USDA funding and \$5 million in grower cost share to combat the invasive spotted lanternfly, advancing sustainable management solutions that have prevented billions of dollars in crop losses and reduced reliance on frequent insecticide applications.
- **High Tunnel IPM and Biological Control:** NE IPM Center investments in high-tunnel pest management catalyzed \$3.7 million in additional USDA funding and demonstrated that early applications of entomopathogenic nematodes could prevent up to \$22,500 in crop losses *per tunnel* thus promoting profitable, low-cost, biological alternatives to chemical pesticides.
- **Perennial Forage and Land Stewardship:** By bridging knowledge gaps between farmers and non-farming landowners, the NE IPM Center improved adoption of sustainable weed management across the Northeast. 88% of program participants reported increased IPM knowledge and 83% implemented non-chemical control practices to strengthen stewardship of Northeast agricultural landscapes.

The Center's capacity for regional collaboration, linking researchers, producers, and educators across twelve states, represents precisely the kind of networked, science-based partnership that NIFA has long championed. We fully recognize NIFA's responsibility to assess program effectiveness and allocate resources strategically. However, the Northeast's loss of this critical infrastructure diminishes regional and national capacity in pest management research and implementation at a time when agricultural systems face escalating biological, environmental, and economic pressures.

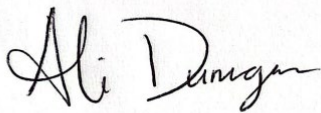
We respectfully request that NIFA:

- Provide clarification regarding the rationale and process for the decision to discontinue funding for the Northeast IPM Center and NIFA's plans to ensure expertise is maintained and accessible;
- Engage with regional leaders to identify options for maintaining essential IPM coordination and capacity in the Northeast; and
- Ensure that future programmatic decisions of this magnitude are communicated through open and transparent dialogue with affected institutions and stakeholders.

Our shared mission to serve American agriculture depends on collaborative regional networks like the Northeast IPM Center. We urge NIFA to continue to prioritize the critical work of the Northeast IPM.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. We would welcome an opportunity to discuss this with you or members of your leadership team.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ali Dunigan".

Ali Dunigan

Executive Director, Association of Northeast Extension Directors

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Richard C. Rhodes III".

Richard C. Rhodes III

Executive Director, agInnovation Northeast