

Department of Agriculture



TSU & UT AgResearch: Enhancing Tennesseans food security, economic prosperity, and One Health

- Objective: Enable our partners at UT AgResearch and TSU College of Agriculture to develop practical solutions to mitigate negative impacts on the food supply chain, public health, and economic prosperity that Tennesseans have encountered during the COVID-19 pandemic and in potential future large-scale disruptions.
- Cost: \$68,320,000
- Length of project: 3 years
- Temporary # of employees: 0

TSU & UT AgResearch:

- This investment in research facilities, research equipment, and related supporting infrastructure at Tennessee's land grant institutions will enable innovative developments to mitigate weaknesses in food and agriculture supply chains and enhance food security – issues which Tennesseans experienced more significantly during the Covid-19 pandemic than any other time in recent history.
- **\$50M** would go to **UT** to invest at the **10 AgResearch and Education Centers** across the state, aiming to accelerate economic recovery, increase the resiliency of agriculture and food supply systems, and improve public health.
- **\$18.32M** would go to **TSU** to construct a **Center for Food and Animal Sciences** to house and develop much-needed technologies addressing key areas of human and animal health, food safety and production, and enhance ongoing research efforts.

TSU & UT AgResearch:

- These challenges will persist well beyond the pandemic, and innovations and solutions discovered now will have lasting impact on the state's top industry.
- There is an urgent need to develop and adopt automation technologies that will allow for uninterrupted production, harvesting, transportation, processing, and distribution across the food production continuum.
- There is also a need to boost local food production through research on Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA). While not intended to replace modern, mainstream farming operations, investment in research to fill the knowledge gaps surrounding CEA would offer a strategy to increase resiliency to shocks like the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Additionally, inclusion in the Tennessee Resiliency Plan would keep this transformational agriculture investment from competing with other necessary demands for taxpayer dollars during the regular budgetary process.