

Fiscal Year 2025 Funding for Food Animal Residue Avoidance Databank (FARAD)



AVMA SUPPORTS

AVMA urges continued funding of \$2.5 million for FARAD to carry out its vital services, which help keep animals healthy and the U.S. food supply safe.

KEY POINTS:

FARAD is a key program to protect the U.S. food supply against accidental or intentional contamination of animal-derived foods so that they are safe for human consumption.

In 2023, FARAD scientists directly assisted with 5,833 inquiries (33% increase from 2022) impacting 5.8 million animals (68% increase from 2022) representing dairy, beef, swine, poultry, small ruminant, and honeybee production systems.

About FARAD: FARAD is a university-based program supported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) that maintains and provides an array of resources for veterinarians, extension specialists, farmers, regulatory personnel and others who are the stewards of our nation's expansive commercial food animal industries and the growing number of small backyard livestock operations. Since 1982 this program has provided real time support service to veterinarians and related stakeholders.

FARAD Network and Staff: FARAD is supported and staffed by highly-trained veterinary pharmacologists, toxicologists, pharmacists, and food animal specialists at five colleges of veterinary medicine: North Carolina State University, Kansas State University, University of California-Davis, University of Florida, and Virginia Tech. Together, the FARAD team identifies, analyzes, and generates residue avoidance information to determine scientifically-based drug or chemical withdrawal advice in situations involving legal extra-label drug use, accidental contaminations, or agro-terrorism in both major and minor food-producing animal species.

Funding History:

USDA	FY	Final	P.L.
NIFA/Extension	2024	\$2,000,000	118-122
NIFA/Extension	2023	\$2,500,000	117-328
NIFA/Extension	2022	\$2,500,000	117-103
NIFA/Extension	2021	\$2,500,000	116-260
NIFA/Extension	2020	\$2,500,000	116-94
NIFA/Extension	2019	\$2,500,000	116-6

- This modest but essential federal investment in FARAD has demonstrated its value with measurable results. The network of institutions maximizes federal funds by working in concert with each other and leveraging unique veterinary expertise and university resources.
- FARAD databases contain the most updated comprehensive collection of residue data in the world.
- FARAD assists addressing situations where animals are impacted by natural disasters, such as California wildfires, and trains small and large animal veterinarians on legal drug use in food animals.
- FARAD assisted during the COVID-19 pandemic when reduced consumer outlets resulted in production line shifts (dairy and poultry products) and swine movement was halted due to transportation shortages requiring alternate drug therapies.
- FARAD is working on projects to help save medically important antibiotics for human use.

AVMA also urges Congress to increase FARAD's authorization to \$5 million in the Farm Bill to ensure that our food supply stays safe, secure, and affordable.

Importance of Federal Funding

Congress in FY 2023 provided the full authorized level of \$2.5 million to the network, which provided much-needed certainty for staff planning and has allowed the network to make significant progress on a range of efforts. Full funding has allowed FARAD to:

- Hire and train additional personnel including a resident in veterinary clinical pharmacology and human pharmacists, to respond to inquiries and to expand pharmacokinetic modeling capabilities;
- Modernize the public website. In 2023, the website received 384,356 page views, 249,460 unique visits, and 17,465/21,000 Spanish translated unique visits and page views, respectively;
- Bolster FARAD's ability to provide *real-time* expert advice in situations involving accidental or intentional contamination of food producing animals;
- Develop and validate higher-level mathematical approaches for determining safe withdrawal periods, validate withdrawal estimates and expand into reducing food safety risks after contaminant exposures in livestock;
- Broaden the Department of Homeland Security data elements and analyses to help mitigate the impact of intentional acts of bioterrorism on the nation's food supply;
- Strengthen the Global FARAD Drug Database (gFARAD) to ensure the safety of imported food products and expand U.S. domestic exports;
- Create a mobile app for veterinarians to easily access withdrawal time information, especially in rural areas where cellular networks are unavailable.

FARAD will continue to fill knowledge gaps for improved residue avoidance in food products intended for human consumption and continue to make findings publicly available using an online interface for inquiries from veterinarians and livestock producers in the U.S. An increase in funding to \$5 million per year would allow for further expansion of these vital services and account for the increased cost associated with these services.

FARAD & AMDUCA Animal Medicinal Drug Use Clarification Act

Due to the limited availability of approved drugs for treating diseases in food animals, veterinarians often use drugs not specifically approved for a particular indication in a given species. Such uses, classified as extra-label drug use (ELDU), are allowable under the Animal Medicinal Drug Use Clarification Act (AMDUCA).

However, in order to be compliant with AMDUCA, veterinarians must "...establish a substantially extended withdrawal period prior to marketing of milk, meat, eggs, or other edible products..." and, furthermore, the extended withdrawal period must be "...supported by appropriate scientific information."

A simple extension of the withdrawal period based on a guess can result in farmers losing market value for their animals by keeping them around for unnecessarily long periods of time. If that guess is too short there may be a loss in value if residues are detected at slaughter or milk processing plants. Most veterinarians lack the time, expertise and resources to calculate a science-based extended withdrawal period and therefore must seek expert assistance through FARAD. Again, this expert assistance assures a safe food supply free of drug and chemical residues.

FARAD is the only US food safety program that deals with products regulated by FDA, USDA and EPA as well as accidental environmental exposures to chemical contaminants.

FARAD Authorization

Congress authorized FARAD in 1998 (P.L. 105-185; 7 USC 7642, Sect. 604) as a result of a USDA Office of the Inspector General report which determined that the FSIS National Residue Program for Cattle was "not accomplishing its mission of monitoring the food supply for harmful residues." The report stated "Together, FSIS, FDA and EPA have not established thresholds for many dangerous substances (e.g., copper or dioxin), which has resulted in meat with these substances being distributed in commerce."