

Good afternoon. My name is Tom Van Arsdall, and I am executive director of the National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research, or C-FAR—a *customer-led* coalition whose mission is to increase federal investments in food and ag research, extension and education.

- I would like to touch on a couple of points in my “two minutes of fame.”
- First, your counsel to the President as a voice **‘outside’ of USDA and traditional ag groups** provides invaluable credibility in making the case for taking action, and in pointing out that there are serious consequences to our nation of continuing to under-invest in our ag research enterprise.
- Second, our shared hope is that your report serves as a catalyst for moving forward—not as an end point.
- While I appreciate that there are other pressing matters ahead for PCAST, one simple action we hope you will take is to continue urging busy Administration officials to launch the recommended implementation committee process. I call this being a “friendly itch.”
- We know this “nudging” is a shared responsibility, with the heavier burden on C-FAR and other stakeholders to make the case for action.
- We took a first step in our letter to the President, which you have, and our main action request was to move forward with the implementation committee.
- C-FAR leadership is taking a number of other steps in evaluating the PCAST recommendations and evolving our position.
- One I would like to highlight is a recent “Summit” with major food and ag business leaders, as the first step in a process to understand their concerns and ramp up their involvement in this quest.
- We hope to provide PCAST with periodic updates as we move forward, building off of your good work.
- Thank you again for your leadership and important voice.