

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 4, 2011

Acting Director Chavonda Jacobs-Young
National Institute of Food and Agriculture
United States Department of Agriculture
Jamie L. Whitten Building, Room 305-A
1400 Independence Ave., SW., Stop 2201
Washington, DC, 20250-2201

Dear Acting Director Jacobs-Young,

We write to you regarding a \$494,162 grant awarded in September through the Biotechnology Research Assessment Grants (BRAG) program to AquaBounty Technologies, Inc. We believe this grant is inappropriate given recent press reports about the company's deteriorating financial situation. We also find it questionable that this grant to conduct research on decreasing the risk of gene flow from genetically engineered (GE) fish was given to the very company that seeks to profit off of approval of its GE fish.

The risk of gene flow is a serious concern posed by GE fish and is currently being studied by numerous academic institutions around the world. The National Institute of Food and Agriculture's (NIFA) BRAG program was never intended to be in the business of subsidizing companies to overcome products unfit for the market. According to its mission statement, the BRAG Program seeks "to support the generation of new information that will assist Federal regulatory agencies in making science-based decisions about the effects of introducing into the environment genetically engineered organisms." In essence, BRAG supports institutions to research and assess risks – not help companies create new risks. We find this type of award a gross misuse of taxpayer funds and an extreme departure from the mission and letter of the BRAG program.

As the Institute surely knows, your grant comes more than one year after the FDA's decision to begin the approval process for the AquaAdvantage salmon, which the company has promised will already be sterile and unable to reproduce in the wild as a result of their technologies. In light of the current FDA proceedings, we question why this NIFA grant is necessary as it appears the company has already researched and developed similar technologies.

Congressional opposition to the approval of GE fish for human consumption has been clearly stated numerous times, most notably when the House passed the FY2012 Agriculture Appropriations Act, which contains explicit GE salmon prohibitions. This pervasive opposition stems from serious concerns regarding the review process being used by the FDA in considering AquaBounty Technologies' application as well as a plethora of human health, economic, animal welfare and environmental risks, including the risk of gene flow.

We understand the tremendous need for well-funded research into the risks of gene flow throughout agriculture but have grave concerns with your decision making and ask that you immediately rescind the grant to AquaBounty.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



DON YOUNG
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



PETER DEFAZIO
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

CC: Secretary Tom Vilsack
Under Secretary Kathleen Merrigan