

Dear Senator Reinke,

I'm writing to you today not just as an agricultural educator, but as someone who has dedicated their life to nurturing the next generation of agricultural leaders in Ohio.

## **The Reality of Agricultural Education**

For over 20 years, I've witnessed the transformative power of agricultural education. Our program isn't just about farming - it's about developing critical thinking, leadership, and real-world skills for 29,495 FFA members across 332 schools in Ohio.

## **The Unseen Hours of an Agricultural Teacher**

Most people don't realize the extent of our commitment. My work doesn't end when the school bell rings. I spend countless summers:

- Mentoring students in Supervised Agricultural Experiences (SAEs)
- Preparing teams for Career Development Events
- Supporting students' professional growth
- Organizing community service projects

## **The Financial Struggle**

Despite my passion and dedication, the financial reality is challenging. Currently, the Agricultural Education Fifth Quarter Grant provides only a \$2,500 annual stipend per teacher. This modest funding has remained unchanged for over a decade, despite increasing costs and time commitments.

## **Funding Request Details**

I am urgently requesting your support to:

- Increase biennial funding from \$1.2 million to \$2.4 million
- Provide more adequate compensation for agricultural educators
- Reflect the true time and effort invested by teachers outside regular school hours

## **Why Funding Matters**

House Bill 96 represents more than money - it's about recognizing the critical role agricultural educators play in:

- Preparing students for future careers
- Supporting rural economic development
- Providing hands-on learning experiences
- Inspiring the next generation of agricultural innovators

## **A Vision for the Future**

Every dollar invested in agricultural education is an investment in Ohio's future. Our students aren't just learning - they're developing skills that will:

- Feed our communities
- Protect our environment
- Drive agricultural innovation
- Support economic growth

## **The Human Impact**

Behind these statistics are real students with real dreams. Students who learn leadership, responsibility, and practical skills that will serve them for a lifetime. Students who understand the critical role agriculture plays in our society.

I urge you to support the increased funding in House Bill 96 and help us continue our mission of educating and inspiring young agricultural leaders.

Sincerely,  
Shari Anderson  
Dedicated Agricultural Educator

## **Key Takeaways**

- Agricultural education transforms students' lives
- Teachers need adequate financial support
- The proposed \$2.4 million funding is crucial for sustaining agricultural education programs
- Investing in agricultural education benefits our entire community