

March 21, 2022

The Honorable Sanford Bishop
Chairman
U.S. House of Representatives Appropriations
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug Administration,
and Related Agencies
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Andy Harris
Acting Ranking Member
U.S. House of Representatives Appropriations
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug Administration,
and Related Agencies
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Chairwoman
U.S. Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug
Administration, and Related Agencies
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Hoeven
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug
Administration, and Related Agencies
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairs Bishop and Baldwin and Ranking Members Harris and Hoeven,

We, the undersigned organizations, write to you in support of ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF) as a proven intervention to address global hunger and childhood malnutrition. Malnutrition claims the lives of more than three million kids each year – more than AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis combined. Children suffering from severe malnutrition, or wasting, require immediate nutrition intervention in the form of RUTF to survive.

RUTF is a medical food paste made of peanuts, powdered milk, vegetable oil, sugar, soy and multivitamins that can bring a wasted child back from the brink of death in a matter of weeks. This energy-dense, fortified paste is shelf stable for up to two years and does not require mixing with potentially contaminated water. RUTF is specially formulated to contain the essential nutrients and ingredients in requisite amounts determined by experts convened by the World Health Organization (WHO) to be scientifically essential for nourishment of these vulnerable children.¹ A typical treatment regimen consists of three RUTF packets every day for about six weeks and costs less than \$1 per day. Up to 90 percent of children treated will recover.

Despite being ranked as one of the most effective child survival interventions, RUTF is vastly underfunded and underprioritized by the international community. Globally, only \$200 million is invested annually in RUTF production, which is only enough to treat 25 percent of children suffering from wasting.

The U.S. is already one of the world's largest and most cost-efficient producers of RUTF and the agricultural inputs needed to produce it. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) reports roughly \$45 million in annual procurement of RUTF, which supports the sourcing of peanuts, soy protein, dairy, vegetable oil and sugar from across the country. American farmers have the capacity to expand production to begin meeting more of the emergency global need, but the missing ingredient is

¹ <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240022270>

funding. An additional \$200 million per year for U.S. RUTF procurement would double the global supply to finally reach the majority of wasted children with this lifesaving treatment.

As Congress turns its attention to fiscal year 2023 appropriations legislation, we encourage you to consider this opportunity to address global childhood malnutrition while simultaneously stimulating the domestic agricultural economy. Specifically, we are requesting that \$200 million be set aside for procurement of WHO guidance²-compliant RUTF from funding provided for the P.L. 480 Title II program, the United States' premier international food assistance program.

Sincerely,

American Soybean Association
American Sugar Alliance
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Milk Producers Federation
U.S. Dairy Export Council
U.S. Peanut Federation

CC:

Chairman David Scott, House Agriculture Committee
Ranking Member Glenn 'GT' Thompson, House Agriculture Committee
Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow, Senate Agriculture Committee
Ranking Member John Boozman, Senate Agriculture Committee

² <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240022270>