

April 4, 2024

The Honorable Andy Harris
Chairman
U.S. House of Representatives
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food
And Drug Administration, and Related
Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sanford Bishop
Ranking Member
U.S. House of Representatives
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food
And Drug Administration, and Related
Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Chairman
U.S. Senate Appropriations
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug
Administration, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

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

Dear Chairs Harris and Heinrich and Ranking Members Bishop and Hoeven:

We, the undersigned organizations, write to urge you to provide robust Fiscal Year 2025 funding for emergency food assistance response, specifically for the procurement of Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF) through the Food for Peace Title II program.

In recent years, acute food insecurity has dramatically worsened around the globe. Today more than 45 million children under 5 suffer from the most severe form of malnutrition – known as wasting.¹ Wasting is when the body becomes so starved of nutrients that it begins to consume itself. Approximately 1 million children die from this condition each year, meaning that wasting drives roughly 20% of child deaths globally.

RUTF — a simple medical food paste made of peanuts, powdered milk, vegetable oils, soy, sugar, and multivitamins — is the gold standard treatment for severe wasting. The paste is specially formulated to contain essential nutrients and ingredients in requisite amounts determined by experts convened by the World Health Organization (WHO) to be scientifically essential for nourishment of children suffering from severe acute malnutrition.² A typical treatment regimen consists of 3 packets daily for about 6 weeks and costs less than \$1 per day. Up to 90% of children treated will recover from malnutrition.

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. U.S. therapeutic food producers source peanuts, soy, dairy, and

¹ UNICEF, WHO, World Bank Group Joint Malnutrition Estimates, 2023 edition.

<https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/themes/topics/joint-child-malnutrition-estimates-unicef-who-wb>

² WHO Guideline on the Dairy Protein Content in Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Foods for Treatment of Uncomplicated Severe Malnutrition. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240022270>

sugar across 28 different states. American farmers have the capacity to expand production to meet more of the emergency global need, but the missing ingredient is sustained funding.

In 2022, Congress provided the resources for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to make an unprecedented commitment of \$200 million to scale up the procurement of RUTF. That funding was matched by philanthropic and sovereign donors – including from the governments of Canada, Ireland, and The Netherlands – to total \$577 million. This scaled investment resulted in a 37% increase³ in treatment coverage rates in 15 countries with the highest malnutrition burden.⁴

Historically, only 1 in 4 children suffering from wasting have had access to this lifesaving treatment and without sustained funding, RUTF coverage rates will drop back down to previous levels of 20-25%, leaving vulnerable communities in need. An additional \$100 million per year for RUTF procurement would ensure continuity in coverage and harness the power of American farmers to save lives.

As Congress turns its attention to Fiscal Year 2025 appropriations legislation, we encourage you to consider this unique opportunity to address global malnutrition while simultaneously stimulating the domestic agricultural economy. Specifically, we request \$100 million from the P.L. 480 Title II program be directed for the procurement of WHO guidance-compliant Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food.

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
Admiral Packaging, Inc. (Providence, Rhode Island)
American Natural Processors, Inc. (Dakota Dunes, South Dakota)
Edesia Nutrition (North Kingstown, Rhode Island)
MANA Nutrition (Fitzgerald, Georgia)
Glanbia Nutritionals (Chicago, Illinois)
Sucro Sourcing (Coral Gables, Florida)

³ Increase is from 2021 to 2022. 2023 impact data still being assessed.

⁴ UNICEF Advocacy Snapshot: “An unprecedented global response to prevent a deadly malnutrition crisis”, June 2023. <https://www.unicef.org/media/141771/file/UNICEF-Advocacy-snapshot-Malnutrition-June-2023.pdf>