US Department of Agriculture Research Program Opportunities

Bob Rummer, Director Research Development KU
NIFA’s Competitive Grants Program

**Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI)**

- a) Plant health, production, products
- b) Animal health, production, products
- c) Food safety, nutrition, and health
- d) Bioenergy, natural resources, and environment
- e) Agricultural systems and technology
- f) Agricultural economics and rural communities

Nat’l Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)

~$1.5B annual budget
AFRI 2018 RFA’s

• Foundational and Applied Science ($220M)
  • New initiatives on microbiome, food and ag cyberinformatics, plant and animal breeding

• Sustainable Agricultural Systems ($100M)
  • Evolution of the Challenges programs

• Education and Workforce Development ($24M)
  • K-14, undergraduate pathways, grad and post-doc

Release: Dec 1 to March 31
https://nifa.usda.gov
Agriculture and Food Research Initiative
Competitive Grants Program

Foundational Program

Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 Request for Applications (RFA)

LETTER OF INTENT DEADLINE: Varies by Program Area
APPLICATION DEADLINE: Varies by Program Area

ELIGIBILITY: See Part III, A of RFA
1. Sustainable Agroecosystems: Functions, Processes and Management

Program Area Priority Code – A1401

Proposed Budget Requests –

• Budgets for Standard Grants, Strengthening Standard Grants, and New Investigator Grants must not exceed $500,000 total per project (including indirect costs) for project periods of up to 4 years.
• Conference and FASE Grants must adhere to the guidelines outlined beginning in Part II, D.
• Requests exceeding budgetary guidelines will not be reviewed.

Requested Project Types – Research Projects
Requested Grant Types – Standard, Conference, and FASE (Strengthening Standard, New Investigator, Strengthening Conference, Seed, Equipment, and Sabbatical) Grants only

Letter of Intent not required for this program area priority

Application Deadline – June 21, 2017 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time)

Program Area Priority Contacts – Dr. Nancy Cavallaro (202) 401-5176 or n cavallaro@nifa.usda.gov, and Dr. Karelyn Cruz (202) 604-7742 or karelyn.cruz@nifa.usda.gov

Program Area Priority -
This priority area calls for research that will lead to one or more of the specific program goals listed above via a) foundational research to advance scientific understanding of processes and interactions, b) development of models and decision support tools, and/or c) the assessment and development of new management/conservation practices and/or processes. Research should lead to substantial improvements in water, nutrient, carbon, and/or land use efficiencies or footprints, or improvements to impaired natural resources and ecosystem services within a managed plant and/or animal production system. Applicants may
Project Types

- Research Projects—single-function
- Education Project—lifelong learning
- Extension
- Integrated—at least 2 of the 3

Grant Types

- Standard Grants—targeted R,E,E, or I projects
- Coordinated Ag Project (CAP)—large scale, REE
- Conference Grants
- Food and Ag Science Enhancement (FASE)—capacity
Can we be competitive in USDA proposals?

1. USDA is a mission-focused agency
   - Describe your innovation as a solution
2. Do you understand the issue?
   - Describe the state-of-the-art
3. Credibility—can you deliver
   - Partners, leverage programs, stakeholders
Urban Agriculture, Vertical Farming, Aquaponics, and Non-Traditional Agriculture.—The Committee acknowledges the need for an expanded USDA role in support of the emerging industries of vertical farming, urban agriculture, aquaponics, and alternative forms of agriculture in American cities and surrounding communities. Support from the Department is needed for producers who often have different needs than traditional agricultural producers. These non-traditional methods of agricultural production have the potential to reduce the use of water and pesticides, improve yields for particular crops, serve lower income populations, and provide year round crops at the local level. USDA should consider intramural and extramural research where the Department and its stakeholders can work towards advancing technologies in this field.

Safe and Abundant Water Supply.—The Committee supports technological development to address key agricultural water resource issues across the U.S. to support agricultural production.

Harmful Algal Blooms.—The Committee supports NRCS’ ongoing work to prevent soil erosion leading to harmful algal blooms through the introduction of cover crops and encourages continued targeting of watersheds where harmful algal blooms pose a threat.

Greenhouse Technology Research.—The Committee recognizes the importance of advancing greenhouse technology and exploring its capabilities to address the energy and water challenges inherent in four-season production systems, beginning in food insecure communities across the country. The Committee encourages ARS to work with the Department of Energy (DOE) for greenhouse technology research.
Agroecosystems Research.—Section 7406 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 specifies priority areas for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative [AFRI], including an emphasis on the fundamental structures and functions of ecosystems, the biological and physical bases of sustainable production systems, minimizing soil and water losses, and biological diversity. The intended goal of this section is ecologically-based management of production systems that generates ecosystem services with benefits to farmers, rural and urban communities, and the environment. Therefore, the Committee strongly urges making agroecosystems research, including explicit integration of social, economic and environmental dimensions, with direct routes to implementation, as an increased priority for funding within the AFRI program.

Water Quality.—The Committee encourages USDA to research alternatives to land application of animal manures in areas where over-application is harming fresh water drinking supplies. The Committee also urges USDA to identify alternative collection and processing options to remove toxic elements and yield usable material.

Milkweed.—The Committee is concerned about the rapid decline in milkweed for monarch butterfly habitat. The Committee encourages NRCS consider the increased benefits of restoring milkweed for monarch habitat in fiscal year 2018.

The Committee encourages NRCS to consider the needs of organic farmers, who implement a wide variety of creative methods to improve water quality and enhance the environment, while implementing RCPP.
Does Your Research touch ...

• Rural communities
• Technology
• Ecology and the environment
• Food, nutrition, or health
• Economics and social science
• Education

Consider applying to the FY18 programs