Agriculture and Food Research Initiative’s 2017
Critical Agricultural Research and Extension Program

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Purpose of CARE Program:

- Address critical challenges and opportunities to improve the Nation’s agricultural and food systems and address issues that need immediate attention
- Enhance partnerships and coordination among researchers, extension experts, and practitioners in food and agricultural enterprises
- Lead to practices that may be readily and rapidly adoptable by end-users.
Basics

Watch for Deadlines

- Letter of Intent
  - Letter due May 24, 2017
- Proposal
  - Proposals due August 9, 2017
What Have Submissions Looked Like?

- 139 Proposals Received (2014-2016)
- 51 Projects Funded (~36%)
  - 29 plant production & protection (2 co-funded by Peanut & Potato Commodity Boards)
  - 16 animal production & protection (1 co-funded by Pork Commodity Board, 1 Center of Excellence)
  - 5 pollinator related
  - 1 natural resources and environmental health

Proposals are diverse. Awards are limited in focus.

Table 1. Focus of CARE awards since the program’s inception (2013-2015).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td>Farm and farming systems</td>
<td>Growers</td>
<td>Pesticides</td>
<td>Fungicides</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Programs</td>
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<td>Plant culture practices</td>
<td>Planting</td>
<td>Plant science</td>
<td>Soil management</td>
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<td>Material forms</td>
<td>Fumigants</td>
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Where are awards going?

- States with Lead Institutions
  - 2014
  - 2015
  - 2016

Lead & Collaborating Institutions

- 28 States
- 5 EPSCoR Institutions
- 28 Land-Grant Universities
- 1 Non-Land-Grant Universities
- 2 Federal Partners
- 5 USDA/ARS
- 1 1890 Institution
- 1 1994 Institution
- 49 Integrated (Research+Extension)
- 3 Research Only (Commodity Boards)
What’s New?

- In the Request for Applications
  - Cross referenced under all Farm Bill Priority area programs
- Connect with stakeholders
  - Informational webinars
  - Grants workshops
- Directed communications to organizations
  - Multi-states
  - Professional societies
  - Journals
- Social media and public relations (working with Office of Communications)
  - Blogs
  - Twitter
  - Web page improvements

Priorities for CARE

Any of the six Farm Bill priorities:

- Plant health and production and plant products;
- Animal health and production and animal products;
- Food safety, nutrition, and health;
- Bioenergy, natural resources, and environment;
- Agriculture systems and technology; or
- Agriculture economics and rural communities.
What Makes a Competitive Proposal?

- A proposal that fully addresses criteria used for evaluation

**Scientific Merit**
- Objectives and outcomes are clear; reflect both research and extension
- Approach and methods are innovative, original, feasible and appropriate
- Fills knowledge gaps to address the problem
- Extension will lead to changes in learning, actions or conditions for stakeholders

**Qualifications**
- Roles are clearly defined
- Adequate expertise and facilities
- Project management roles are clearly defined
- Resource allocation is clear
- Budget allocates appropriate resources; up to 2/3 of budget to either research or extension activities

**Relevance**
- Program area priorities are addressed
- Accelerates progress toward the productivity and economic, environmental, and social sustainability of U.S. agriculture
- Research and extension are both necessary
- Identifies stakeholder needs and demonstrates involvement in developing, implementing or evaluation of project
- Extension activities or products accessible for long term
In Other Words

We seek proposals that:

- Provide evidence that the project is aligned to Farm Bill priorities listed above;
- Focus on a clear, time-sensitive, stakeholder-identified need or problem for agriculture;
- Explain the magnitude of the problem and the rationale for targeting it, (e.g., unexpected losses of income or employment, acres affected, estimated or actual economic costs to specified agricultural or food system, private industry, land owners, rural communities, adverse effects on the environment, risk of disease or illnesses);
- Describe a meaningful approach for blending research and extension expertise and other outreach and implementation approaches throughout the project;
- State expected solutions or improvements and how these will be assessed and measured;
- Address the potential cost of a proposed solution and describe how it can be scaled to be sustainable in the short term and long term; and
- Explain how the project will strengthen agricultural and food-production systems and how results will be adopted or applied at a local, regional, or national level.

Other Types of Proposals

- Food & Agricultural Science Enhancement (FASE)
- Centers of Excellence (CEs)
- Commodity Boards (CBs)
Food & Agricultural Science Enhancement

- **New Investigator:** Less than 5 years career track position, no federal research grants
- **Standard Strengthening:** EPSCoR or Small-midsized institutions minority serving institutions
- **Set-aside funds are available if rank below the fund line**

Centers of Excellence Criteria

- Ensures coordination and cost effectiveness by reducing duplicative efforts
- Leverages resources using public-private partnerships i.e., agricultural industry groups, institutions of higher education, and/or federal government. Resources leveraged should be commensurate with size of award.
- Implements teaching initiatives and target audiences through extension activities
- Increases economic returns to rural communities by identifying a high priority agricultural issue.
Commodity Board

The 2014 Farm Bill (Section 7404) directs USDA to solicit AFRI topics from eligible commodity boards for co-funding

Desired Benefits:
- Increase funding leverage for both parties
- Increase project relevancy
- Increase engagement between NIFA and commodity boards (and commodity groups)

Arrangements:
- Commodity board agrees to co-fund (50% of fund request; ~$150,000)
- Must have letter of support from cognizant CB within 60 days after submission
- Must fit priorities of relevant AFRI program; NIFA determines fit to specific programs

Commodity Board CARE Topic

For 2017:
- NIFA and the National Peanut Board are seeking to co-fund projects that investigate the effects of peanut bioactives on human cognition.
- Applications must address the following priority:
  - Identify bioactive compounds within peanuts that may improve cognition in humans.
Questions?

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Link to previous projects: http://tinyurl.com/AFRI-CARE2017