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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service

Applications for FY 2001 National Research Initiative Competitive Grants Program

AGENCY: Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of the Availability of the Solicitation for Applications for the Fiscal Year 2001 National Research Initiative Competitive Grants Program, and Request for Stakeholder Input.

SUMMARY: This notice announces the availability of the fiscal year (FY) 2001 solicitation for applications which is titled the "NRI Program Description" for the National Research Initiative (NRI) Competitive Grants Program administered by the Competitive Research Grants and Awards Management Division, Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES). The solicitation invites applications for competitive grant awards in agricultural, forest, and related environmental sciences for FY 2001.

By this notice, CSREES also requests input regarding the FY 2001 NRI program solicitation from any interested party. These comments will be considered in the development of the next solicitation for applications for this program. Such comments will be used in meeting the requirements of section 103(c)(2) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998.

DATES: Proposals must be postmarked on or before the dates provided in the table at the end of this notice.

User comments are requested within six months from the issuance of this notice. Comments received after that date will be used to the extent practicable.

ADDRESSES: Written user comments should be submitted by mail to: Policy and Program Liaison Staff; Office of Extramural Programs; USDA-CSREES; STOP 2299; 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.; Washington, D.C. 20250-2299; or via e-mail to: RFP-OEP@reeusda.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: USDA/CSREES/NRI, Stop 2241, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-2241. Phone: (202) 401-5022. E-mail: nricgp@reeusda.gov.

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CSREES is requesting comments regarding the FY 2001 NRI solicitation for applications from any interested party. In your comments, please include the name of the program and the fiscal year solicitation for applications to which you are responding. These comments will be considered in the development of the next solicitation for applications for the program. Such comments will be used in meeting the requirements of section 103(c)(2) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998, 7 U.S.C. 7613(c). Comments should be submitted as provided for in the "Addresses" and "Dates" portions of this notice. The e-mail address in the "Addresses" portion is intended only for receiving comments regarding the FY 2001 NRI program solicitation, and not for requesting information or forms.

Authority and Applicable Regulations

The authority for this program is contained in 7 U.S.C. 450i(b). Under this program, subject to the availability of funds, the Secretary may award competitive research grants, for periods not to exceed five years, for the support of research projects to further the programs of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Regulations applicable to this program include the following: (a) the regulations governing the NRI, 7 CFR part 3411, which set forth procedures to be followed when submitting grant proposals, rules governing the evaluation of proposals and the awarding of grants, and regulations relating to the post-award administration of grant projects; (b) the USDA Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations, 7 CFR part 3019; (c) the USDA Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations, 7 CFR part 3015; (d) the USDA Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments, 7 CFR part 3016; and (e) 7 U.S.C. 3103(17), which defines "sustainable agriculture."

Conflicts of Interest

For the purpose of determining conflicts of interest in accordance with 7 CFR 3411.12, the academic and administrative autonomy of an institution shall be determined by reference to the 2000 Higher Education Directory, published by Higher Education Publications, Inc., 6400 Arlington Boulevard, Suite 648, Falls Church, Virginia 22042. Phone: (703) 532-2305.

Project Types and Eligibility Requirements

The FY 2001 NRI program solicitation solicits proposals for the following types of projects:

I. Conventional Projects

(a) Standard Research Grants: Research will be supported that is fundamental or mission-linked, and that is conducted by individual investigators, co-investigators within the same discipline, or multidisciplinary teams. Any State agricultural experiment station, college, university, other research institution or organization, Federal agency, national laboratory, private organization, corporation, or individual may apply. Proposals submitted by non-United States organizations will not be considered for support.

(b) Conferences: Scientific meetings that bring together scientists to identify research needs, update information, or advance an area of research are

recognized as integral parts of research efforts. Any State agricultural experiment station, college, university, other research institution or organization, Federal agency, national laboratory, private organization, corporation, or individual is an eligible applicant in this area. Proposals submitted by non-United States organizations will not be considered for support.

II. Agricultural Research Enhancement Awards

To contribute to the enhancement of research capabilities in the research program areas described herein, the FY 2001 NRI program solicitation solicits applications for Agricultural Research Enhancement Awards. Such applications may be submitted by any State agricultural experiment station, college, university, other research institution or organization, Federal agency, national laboratory, private organization, corporation, or individual; however, further eligibility requirements are defined in 7 CFR 3411.3 and restated in the FY 2001 NRI program solicitation, which is titled the "NRI Program Description."

Applications submitted by non-United States organizations will not be considered for support. However, United States citizens applying as individuals for Postdoctoral Fellowships may perform all or part of the proposed work at a non-United States organization. Agricultural Research Enhancement Awards are available in the following categories:

(a) Postdoctoral Fellowships.

(b) New Investigator Awards.

(c) Strengthening Awards: Institutions in USDA Experimental Program for Stimulating Competitive Research (EPSCoR) entities are eligible for strengthening awards. 7 CFR 3411.2(o) sets forth how EPSCoR entities are determined. For FY 2001, USDA EPSCoR states consist of the following:

Alaska
Arkansas
Connecticut
Delaware
Hawaii
Idaho
Kentucky
Maine
Mississippi
Montana
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Mexico
North Dakota
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota

Vermont
West Virginia
Wyoming

For FY 2001, other USDA-EPSCoR entities consist of the following:

American Samoa
District of Columbia
Guam
Micronesia
Northern Marianas
Puerto Rico
Virgin Islands

Investigators at small and mid-sized institutions (total enrollment of 15,000 or less) may also be eligible for Strengthening Awards. An institution in this instance is an organization that possesses a significant degree of autonomy. Significant degree of autonomy is defined by being independently accredited as determined by reference to the 2000 Higher Education Directory, published by Higher Education Publications, Inc., 6400 Arlington Boulevard, Suite 648, Falls Church, Virginia 22042. Phone: (703) 532-2305.

Institutions which are among the most successful universities and colleges for receiving Federal funds for science and engineering research, except those in USDA EPSCoR entities, are ineligible for strengthening awards. The top 100 institutions for receiving these funds, excluding those in USDA EPSCoR entities, are as follows:

Baylor College of Medicine
Boston University
California Institute of Technology
Carnegie-Mellon University
Case Western Reserve University
Colorado State University
Columbia University
Cornell University
CUNY Mount Sinai School of Medicine
Duke University
Emory University
Florida State University
Georgia Institute of Technology
Harvard University
Indiana University
Indiana University Purdue University at Indianapolis
Johns Hopkins University
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Medical College of Wisconsin
Michigan State University
New York University
North Carolina State University
Northwestern University
Ohio State University
Oregon Health Sciences University
Oregon State University
Pennsylvania State University
Princeton University
Purdue University
Rockefeller University
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

Scripps Research Institute
Stanford University
State University of New York at Stony Brook
Thomas Jefferson University
Tufts University
Tulane University
University Corporation for Atmospheric Research
University of Alabama Birmingham
University of Arizona
University of California Berkeley
University of California Davis
University of California Irvine
University of California Los Angeles
University of California San Diego
University of California San Francisco
University of California Santa Barbara
University of Chicago
University of Cincinnati
University of Colorado Boulder
University of Colorado Health Sciences Center
University of Florida
University of Georgia
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
University of Illinois Chicago
University of Iowa
University of Maryland Baltimore
University of Maryland College Park
University of Massachusetts Medical School Worcester
University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey
University of Miami
University of Michigan Ann Arbor
University of Minnesota Twin Cities
University of Missouri Columbia
University of North Carolina Chapel Hill
University of Oklahoma
University of Pennsylvania
University of Pittsburgh
University of Rochester
University of Southern California
University of Texas at Austin
University of Texas Health Science Center Houston
University of Texas Health Science Center San Antonio
University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center
University of Texas Medical Branch Galveston
University of Texas SW Medical Center Dallas
University of Utah
University of Virginia
University of Washington
University of Wisconsin Madison
Utah State University
Vanderbilt University
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
Virginia Commonwealth University
Wake Forest University
Washington University
Wayne State University
Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute

Yeshiva University, New York

See 7 CFR 3411.3 and the FY 2001 NRI program solicitation for complete details on programs and eligibility.

Funding Categories for FY 2001

The FY 2001 NRI program solicitation solicits proposals, subject to the availability of funds, for support of high priority research of importance to agriculture, forestry, and related environmental sciences, in the following research categories (ANTICIPATED FY 2001 (FY01) funding and ACTUAL FY 2000 (FY00) funding, rounded to the \$0.1M, follows in parentheses):

- Natural Resources and the Environment (FY01: \$19.1M, FY00: \$19.1M)
- Nutrition, Food Quality, and Health (FY01: \$14.9M, FY00: \$14.9M)
- Plant Systems (FY01: \$38.2M, FY00: \$38.2M).
- Animal Systems (FY01: \$27.0M, FY00: \$27.0M).
- Markets, Trade, and Policy (FY01: \$4.3M, FY00: \$4.3M).
- New Products and Processes (FY01: \$7.6M, FY00: \$7.6M).

Support for research opportunities listed below may be derived from one or more of the above funding categories based on the nature of the scientific topic to be supported. In addition, the funds described above may be used to fund proposals submitted to supplementary NRI solicitations and/or solicitations for multiagency programs in which the NRI is participating.

Pursuant to 7 U.S.C. 450i(b)(10), no less than 10 percent (FY01: \$11.1M, FY00: \$11.1M) of the available funds listed above will be made available for Agricultural Research Enhancement Awards (excluding New Investigator Awards), and no more than 2 percent (FY01: \$2.2M, FY00: \$2.2M) of the available funds listed above will be made available for equipment grants. Further, no less than 30 percent (FY01: \$33.4M, FY00: \$33.4M) of the funds listed above shall be made available for grants for research to be conducted by multidisciplinary teams, and no less than 40 percent (FY01: \$44.5M, FY00: \$44.5M) of the funds listed above shall be made available for grants for mission-linked systems research.

CSREES is prohibited from paying indirect costs exceeding 19 per centum of the total Federal funds provided under each award on competitively awarded research grants (7 U.S.C. 3310). An alternative method of calculation of this limitation is to multiply total direct costs by 23.456 percent.

Research Opportunities

The funds appropriated as listed above will be used to support research grants in the following areas:

NATURAL RESOURCES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Plant Responses to the Environment
Ecosystem Science
Soils and Soil Biology
Watershed Processes and Water Resources

NUTRITION, FOOD SAFETY, AND HEALTH

Improving Human Nutrition for Optimal Health
Food Safety
Epidemiological Approaches for Food Safety

ANIMALS

Animal Reproduction
Animal Growth and Nutrient Utilization
Animal Genome and Genetic Mechanisms
Animal Genome: Basic Reagents and Tools
Animal Health and Well-Being

BIOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT OF PESTS AND BENEFICIAL ORGANISMS

Entomology and Nematology
Biologically Based Pest Management
Biology of Plant-Microbe Associations
Biology of Weedy and Invasive Plants

PLANTS

Plant Genome
Plant Genetic Mechanisms
Plant Growth and Development
Plant Biochemistry

MARKETS, TRADE, AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Markets and Trade
Rural Development

ENHANCING VALUE AND USE OF AGRICULTURAL AND FOREST PRODUCTS

Value-Added Products Research
Food Characterization/Process/Product Research
Non-Food Characterization/Process/Product Research
Improved Utilization of Wood and Wood Fiber

AGRICULTURAL SYSTEMS RESEARCH (integrated, multidisciplinary research on agricultural systems)

Application Materials

This notice does not constitute the FY 2001 NRI program solicitation. Those wishing to apply for a grant under this program should obtain a copy of the FY 2001 NRI program solicitation, which is

titled the "NRI Program Description," and a copy of the NRI Application Kit. The NRI Program Description and the NRI Application Kit contain the information and materials necessary to prepare and submit a proposal. The FY 2001 NRI program solicitation, which contains research topic descriptions, and the NRI Application Kit, which contains detailed instructions on how to apply and the requisite forms, are available through the NRI home page, www.reeusda.gov/nri. CSREES encourages the use of these electronic documents. However, if necessary, paper copies of these application materials may be obtained by sending an e-mail with your name, complete mailing address (not e-mail address), phone number, and materials that you are requesting to psb@reeusda.gov. Materials will be mailed to you (not e-mailed) as quickly as possible. Alternatively, paper copies may be obtained by writing or calling the office indicated below.

Proposal Services Unit, Office of Extramural Programs, Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, STOP 2245, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-2245, Telephone: (202) 401-5048.

Materials Available on the Internet

The following are among the materials available on the NRI home page (www.reeusda.gov/nri).

NRI Program Description

The FY 2001 NRI program solicitation is titled the "NRI Program Description." This document is available on the internet for the current fiscal year, and describes NRI funding programs. To apply for a grant, it is necessary to obtain both the FY 2001 NRI program solicitation (the FY 2001 "NRI Program Description") and the NRI Application Kit.

NRI Application Kit

This document contains guidelines for proposal preparation and the requisite forms.

NRI Abstracts of Funded Research

The abstracts available on this searchable database are nontechnical abstracts written by the principal investigator of each individual grant, starting with FY 1993. Each entry also includes the title, principal investigator(s), awardee institution, dollar amount, and proposal number for each grant. The first two digits of the proposal number indicate the fiscal year in which the proposal was submitted.

NRI Annual Report

The NRI Annual Reports starting with FY 1995 are available. These reports include descriptions of the program concept, the authorization, policy, inputs to establish research needs, program execution, and outcomes, including relevant statistics. Also included are examples of recent research funded by the NRI.

Electronic Subscription to NRI Documents

The NRI has set up a mailserver which will notify subscribers when publications such as its Program Description or Abstracts of Funded Research are available electronically on the World Wide Web. Subscribers will not receive the document itself, but instead will receive an e-mail

containing an announcement regarding the document's availability on the NRI home page.

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NRI Deadline Dates

The following fixed dates have been established for proposal submission

deadlines within the NRI. To be considered for funding in any fiscal year, proposals must be transmitted by the date listed below (as indicated by postmark or date on courier bill of lading). When the deadline date falls on a weekend or Federal holiday, transmission must be made by the following business day.

Programs offered in any fiscal year depend on availability of funds and deadlines may be delayed due to unforeseen circumstances. Consult the pertinent NRI notice in the **Federal Register**, the NRI Program Description, or the NRI home page (www.reeusda.gov/nri) for up-to-date information.

Postmarked dates and program codes	Program Areas
November 15:	
22.1	Plant Responses to the Environment.
23.0	Ecosystem Science.
25.0	Soils and Soil Biology.
26.0	Watershed Processes and Water Resources.
31.0	Improving Human Nutrition for Optimal Health.
51.9	Biology of Weedy and Invasive Plants.
80.1	Research Career Enhancement Awards.
80.2	Equipment Grants.
80.3	Seed Grants.
100.0	Agricultural Systems.
December 15:	
52.1	Plant Genome.
52.2	Plant Genetic Mechanisms.
53.0	Plant Growth and Development.
61.0	Markets and Trade.
62.0	Rural Development.
71.1	Food Characterization/Process/Product Research.
71.2	Non-Food Characterization/Process/Product Research.
January 15:	
32.0	Food Safety.
32.1	Epidemiological Approaches for Food Safety.
41.0	Animal Reproduction.
44.0	Animal Health and Well-Being.
51.2	Entomology and Nematology.
51.7	Biologically Based Pest Management.
51.8	Biology of Plant-Microbe Associations.
73.0	Improved Utilization of Wood and Wood Fiber.
February 15:	
42.0	Animal Growth and Nutrient Utilization.
43.0	Animal Genome and Genetic Mechanisms.
43.1	Animal Genome: Basic Reagents and Tools.
54.3	Plant Biochemistry.

Done at Washington, D.C., this 5 day of September 2000.
Charles W. Laughlin,
Administrator, Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service.
[FR Doc. 00-23369 Filed 9-11-00; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 3410-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Notice of Proposed Change to Section IV of the Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG) of the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Alabama
AGENCY: Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in

Alabama, U.S. Department of Agriculture.
ACTION: Notice of availability of proposed changes in Section IV of the FOTG of the NRCS in Alabama for review and comment.
SUMMARY: It is the intention of NRCS in Alabama to issue conservation practice standards:
Filter Strip—Code 393