(4) **Statement of Work.** The application must include a narrative statement describing the nature of the proposed research. The Statement of Work must include at least the following:

(i) **Title of the Project.** The title of the proposal must be brief, yet represent the major thrust of the project.

(ii) **Project Leaders.** List the name(s) of the principal investigator(s). Minor collaborators or consultants should be so designated and not listed as principal investigators.

(iii) **Need for the Project.** A concisely worded rationale behind the proposed research must be presented. The need for the proposed research must be clearly related to marketing and to the needs of agricultural cooperatives.

(iv) **Objectives of the project.** The specific description of the overall project goal(s) and supporting objectives must be presented.

(v) **Procedures for conducting the research.** The hypotheses or questions being asked and the methodology being applied to the proposed project must be described. A description of any subcontracting arrangements that will be used for conducting the research must be included. A tentative schedule for conducting major steps involved in the investigation must also be included.

(vi) **The expected output of the project.** A description of how the results of the research will be disseminated should be presented. Responsibility for publishing any research reports or other types of output should also be identified.

(5) **Collaborative arrangements.** If the nature of the proposed project requires collaboration or subcontractual arrangements with other research scientists, corporations, organizations, agencies, or entities, the applicant must identify the collaborator(s) and provide a full explanation of the nature of the collaboration. Evidence (i.e., letters of intent) should be provided to assure reviewers that the collaborators involved have agreed to render this service. In addition, the proposal must indicate whether or not such a collaborative arrangement(s) has the potential for conflict(s) of interest.

(6) **Personnel support.** To assist reviewers in assessing the competence and experience of the proposed project staff, key personnel who will be involved in the proposed project must be identified clearly. For each principal investigator involved, and for all senior associates and other professional personnel who expect to work on the project, whether or not funds are sought for their support, the following must be included:

(i) An estimate of the time commitments necessary:

(ii) **Curriculum Vitae.** The curriculum vitae should be limited to a presentation of academic and research credentials, e.g., educational, employment and professional history, and honors and awards. Unless pertinent to the project, it should not include meetings attended, seminars given, or personal data such as birth date, marital status, or community activities; and

(iii) **Publication List(s).** A chronological list of all publications in refereed journals during the past five years, including those in press, must be provided for each professional project member for whom a curriculum vitae is provided. Also list other non-refereed technical publications that have relevance to the proposed project. Authors should be listed in the same order as they appear on each paper cited, along with the title and complete reference as these usually appear in journals.

§§ 4285.59–4285.68 [Reserved]

§ 4285.69 Evaluation and disposition of applications.

(a) **Evaluation.** (1) All proposals received from eligible applicants and postmarked in accordance with deadlines established in the annual program solicitation shall be evaluated by the Assistant Administrator for Cooperative Services through an RDA or its successor agency staff panel. The Assistant Administrator for Cooperative Services will select the evaluation panel from staff determined to be highly qualified in the subject matter areas that were emphasized in the current year's solicitation and from those with no potential conflict of interest with the applicants.
§ 4285.70 Evaluation criteria.

(a) In evaluating the proposal, the RDA or its successor agency staff review panel and the awarding official will take into account the degree to which the proposal demonstrates the following:

1. Focus on a practical solution to a significant problem involving one or more of the following on a cooperative business basis: the preparation for market, processing, packaging, handling, storing, transporting, distributing, or marketing of agricultural products. (35%)

2. Adequacy, soundness, and appropriateness of the proposed approach to solve the identified problem. (30%)

3. Feasibility and probability of success of project solving the problem. (10%)

4. Qualifications, experience in related work, competence, and availability of project personnel to direct and carry out the project. (25%)

(b) Disposition. (1) On the basis of the Assistant Administrator for Cooperative Services’s evaluation of an application in accordance with paragraph (a) of this section, the Assistant Administrator for Cooperative Services will either:

i. Approve support using currently available funds;

ii. Defer support due to lack of funds or need for further evaluation; or

iii. Disapprove support for the proposed project in whole or in part.

(2) With respect to any approved project, the Assistant Administrator for Cooperative Services will determine the project period during which the project may be funded.

(3) Any deferral or disapproval of an application will not preclude its reconsideration or reapplication during subsequent fiscal years. However, applicants must reapply if reconsideration is desired.

(4) The Assistant Administrator for Cooperative Services will not make a cooperative agreement funding award, based upon an application covered by this part, unless the application has been properly reviewed in accordance with the provisions of this part and unless said reviewers have made recommendations concerning the scientific merit and relevance to the program of such application.

§ 4285.81 Cooperative agreement awards.

(a) General. Within the limit of funds available for such purpose, the awarding official shall make awards for cooperative agreements to those applicants whose proposals are judged most meritorious in the announced program areas under the evaluation criteria and procedures set forth in this part. The date specified by the Assistant Administrator for Cooperative Services as the beginning of the project period shall be no later than September 30 of the Federal fiscal year in which the project is approved and funds are appropriated for such purpose, unless otherwise permitted by law. All funds awarded under this part shall be expended solely in accordance with the methods identified