

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**Cooperative State Research,
Education, and Extension Service****Special Research Grants Program,
Water Quality for Fiscal Year 1995;
Solicitation of Applications**

Applications are invited for competitive grant awards under the Special Research Grants Program, Water Quality for Fiscal Year 1995.

Authority and Funding

The authority for this program is contained in section 2(c)(1)(A) of the Act of August 4, 1965, Public Law No. 89-106, as amended by the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990, Public Law No. 101-624 (7 U.S.C. 450i(c)(1)(A)). This program is administered by the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). (The CSREES was established by Section 251(d)(1) of Public Law 103-354, the Federal Crop Insurance Reform and Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994, and the functions of the Cooperative State Research Service were transferred to the CSREES by Section 2.b(7) of the Secretary of Agriculture's Memorandum 1010-1, dated October 20, 1994.) Under this program, and subject to the availability of funds, the Secretary may award grants for periods not to exceed five years, for the support of research projects to further the program discussed below. Proposals may be submitted by State agricultural experiment stations, all colleges and universities, other research institutions and organizations, Federal agencies, private organizations or corporations, and individuals. Proposals from scientists at non-United States organizations will not be considered for support.

Funds will be awarded on a competitive basis to support water quality research within the scope of the program. A total of approximately \$1,000,000 will be available for this program in Fiscal Year 1995. Funding requested for each proposal submitted in Fiscal Year 1995 shall not exceed \$500,000 for a period of one year. Two proposals are expected to be funded in Fiscal Year 1995. Under this program, the maximum total funding that may be requested over a funding period of five years shall not exceed \$2,000,000 per proposal. Funding for years two through five will depend upon the availability of funds and progress toward the objectives.

Pursuant to Section 712 of Public Law 103-330, (the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1995), funds available in Fiscal Year 1995 to pay indirect costs on research grants awarded competitively by CSREES may not exceed 14 per centum of the total Federal funds provided under each award.

In addition, pursuant to Section 719(b) of Public Law No. 103-330, in case any equipment or products may be authorized to be purchased with funds provided under this program, entities receiving such funds are encouraged to use such funds to purchase only American-made equipment or products.

Applicable Regulations

Regulations applicable to this program include the following: (a) the administrative provisions governing the Special Research Grants Program, 7 CFR part 3400, as amended (56 FR 58146, November 15, 1991) 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 Federal Assistance Regulations, 7 CFR part 3015; (c) the USDA Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments, 7 CFR part 3016; (d) the Audits of Institutions of Higher Education and Other Nonprofit Institutions, 7 CFR part 3051 (58 FR 41410, August 3, 1993); (e) the Governmentwide Debarment and Supervision (Nonprocurement) and Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Grants), 7 CFR part 3017, as amended; and (f) New Restrictions on Lobbying, 7 CFR part 3018.

Program Description

Program-related questions should be directed to either of the following:
Dr. Maurice L. Horton
Dr. Berlie L. Schmidt
Phone No. (202) 401-4504
Fax No. (202) 401-1706

The scope of research includes developing principles to better understand the processes and interactions occurring in soil and crop management systems involving the use of certain pesticides, fertilizers and wastes which may impact water quality. The research should have a holistic point of view including products to be developed and a plan for transfer of new technology.

The focus of the Fiscal Year 1995 research is to develop new and innovative agricultural management strategies for use by farmers and public officials to reduce or prevent pollution of water sources. The research must address water quality problems at the landscape—watershed scale. Traditional small plot research is not excluded but must be integrated into an overall project where direct evidence is obtained at the watershed scale. The proposed strategies for reducing pollution should be developed in partnership with Federal, State and local agencies, universities, private industry, public interest groups or other stakeholders. Economic and environmental impacts upon water quality are to be considered. The final product of the research should be agricultural management systems that will be effective in reducing pollution on a watershed scale, economical to implement, sustainable, acceptable to producers, and in compliance with policy guidelines.

In the water quality program, the term "AGRICULTURE" encompasses the production of food, feed, fiber, and industrial crops, trees and livestock, and includes rural residences and rural communities, forests and wooded areas. Proposals on health risk problems are excluded.

Format for Research Grant Proposals

The administrative provisions governing the Special Research Grants Program, 7 CFR part 3400, set forth instructions for the preparation of grant proposals. The following proposal format requirements are in addition to or deviate from those contained in 7 CFR part 3400.4(c). In accordance with 7 CFR part 3400.4(c), to the extent that any of the following additional requirements are inconsistent or in conflict with the instructions at 7 CFR part 3400.4(c), the provisions of this solicitation shall apply.

The sections of the proposal shall be assembled in the following order: (1) Application for Funding, (2) Title of Project, (3) Abstract, (4) Key Words, (5) Justification, (6) Objectives, (7) Procedures, (8) Research Timetable, (9) Literature Review, (10) Current Research, (11) Facilities and Equipment, (12) Collaborative Arrangements, (13) Curriculum Vitae of Investigators, (14), Budget, (15) Assurance Statements(s), if applicable, (16) Current and Pending Support, and (17) NEPA statement. Items (2) through (9) are limited to 25 pages, including any figures or tables. 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, do not include meetings attended, seminars given, or personal data such as birth date, marital status, or community activities. The vitae shall be no more than 2 pages each in length, excluding publications listings. A chronological list of all relevant publications in referred 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 those non-referred 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.

Application for Funding. Attach a completed and signed Application for Funding, Form CSRS-661, to the front of the proposal. The original copy of Form CSRS-661, must contain pen-and-ink signatures of the principal investigator(s) and the authorized organizational representative. Form CSRS-661 and other required forms and certifications are contained in the Application Kit.

Type and Paper Size. Type should be no smaller than 12 characters per inch (12 pitch or 10 point), single-spaced on one side of 8 1/2"x11" paper with margins of one inch or greater. Total length of the proposal text shall not exceed 25 pages as stated above. Reduction by photocopying or other means for the purpose of meeting above-stated page limits is not permitted. Attachment of appendices is not permitted. Proposals which do not fall within the guidelines of this solicitation will be eliminated from the competition and will be returned to the applicant, as stated in Section 3400.14(a) of the Administrative Provisions governing the Special Research Grants Program.

Abstract and Key Words. The body of the proposal should be prefaced by an abstract and key words which are used to classify the proposal.

Abstract. Include factual, concise, and clear statements of proposed research as phrases or sentences. Limit the length of the abstract to about one-half page.

Key Words. Select two double words or four single words that describe the research emphasis, such as water quality, conservation tillage, nitrates, tillage, models, or contaminants.

Justification. Describe the water quality problems, or potential problems, including: where they occur; relevance to site-specific, watershed, regional, State, and national size scales. The expected application or use of resulting

information should be explained; for example: value to the economy, methods of chemical analyses, need for specific model, basis of recommendations, understanding of processes, or relevancy to a specific water quality research program.

Multi-Institutions/Organizations. Multi-disciplinary and multi-institution collaboration is required. Collaborators must demonstrate significant contributions to the planning and conduct of the research. Collaborators or cooperative arrangements may include universities, other research organizations, or federal or state agencies such as the Agricultural Research Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Cooperative State Research Education, and Extension Service (except Natural Resources and the Environment, which will be the unit within CSREES awarding the special grant), State Agricultural or Natural Resource Agencies, Economic Research Service, U.S. Geological Survey, and the Environmental Protection Agency. Projects such as Hydrologic Unit Areas, Management Systems Evaluation Areas (MSEA), Demonstration Sites, Farmstead Assessment, and Area Studies provide excellent opportunities for collaboration. Evidence, such as letters of intent, should be provided to assure peer reviewers that the collaborators involved have agreed to render their service.

Budget, Form CSRS-55. A copy of Form CSRS-55, along with instructions for completing it, is included in the Application Kit. Applicants should note the special instructions shown below when completing Form CSRS-55.

Item D., "Nonexpendable Equipment." Requested items of equipment must be itemized (by description and cost) on a separate sheet of paper attached to Form CSRS-55, or in the body of the proposal. The need for all requested equipment must be fully justified in the proposal.

Item F., "Travel." The type and extent of travel and its relationship to project objectives should be described and justified. It should be noted that the terms and conditions of any grant awarded under this program will require Principal Investigators, as defined at 7 CFR 3400.2(c), to participate in at least one annual regional or national research reporting, evaluation, and planning workshop or conference, for the purpose of interstate, interagency, and interdisciplinary coordination in this water quality program. Funds may be requested under this budget category for these workshop/conference costs.

Item I., "All Other Direct Costs." Subawards are to be shown on each budget sheet of the primary budget. Subawardee budgets should be provided on separate forms in the same detail.

Item K., "Indirect Costs." The recovery of indirect costs under this program may not exceed the lesser of the grantee institution's official negotiated indirect cost rate or the equivalent of 14% of total Federal funds awarded. This limitation also applies to the recovery of indirect costs by any subawardee or subcontractor, and should be reflected in the subrecipient budget.

Compliance With the National Environmental Policy Act

As outlined in 7 CFR part 3407 (the CSREES regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969), environmental data for any proposed project is to be provided to CSREES so that CSREES may determine whether any further action is needed. The applicant shall review the following categorical exclusions and determine if the proposed project may fall within one of the categories.

(1) Department of Agriculture Categorical Exclusions (7 CFR 1b.3)

(i) Policy development, planning and implementation which are related to routine activities such as personnel, organizational changes, or similar administrative functions;

(ii) Activities which deal solely with the functions of programs, such as program budget proposals, disbursements, and transfer or reprogramming of funds;

(iii) Inventories, research activities, and studies, such as resource inventories and routine data collection when such actions are clearly limited in context and intensity;

(iv) Educational and informational programs and activities;

(v) Civil and criminal law enforcement and investigative activities;

(vi) Activities which are advisory and consultative to other agencies and public and private entities; and

(vii) Activities related to trade representation and market development activities abroad.

(2) CSREES Categorical Exclusions (7 CFR 3407.6(a)(2))

Based on previous experience, the following categories of CSREES actions are excluded because they have been found to have limited scope and intensity and to have no significant individual or cumulative impacts on the quality of the human environment:

(i) The following categories of research programs or projects of limited size and magnitude or with only short-term effects on the environment:

(A) Research conducted within any laboratory, greenhouse, or other contained facility where research practices and safeguards prevent environmental impacts;

(B) Surveys, inventories, and similar studies that have limited context and minimal intensity in terms of changes in the environment; and

(C) Testing outside of the laboratory, such as in small isolated field plots, which involves the routine use of familiar chemicals or biological materials.

(ii) Routine renovation, rehabilitation, or revitalization of physical facilities, including the acquisition and installation of equipment, where such activity is limited in scope and intensity.

In order for CSREES to determine whether any further action is needed with respect to NEPA, pertinent information regarding the possible environmental impacts of a particular project is necessary; therefore, Form CSRS-1234, "NEPA Exclusions Form" (copy enclosed), must be included in the proposal indicating whether the applicant is of the opinion that the project falls within a categorical exclusion and the reasons therefor. If it is the applicant's opinion that the proposed project falls within the categorical exclusions, the specific exclusion must be identified. The information submitted shall be identified in the Table of Contents as NEPA Considerations and Form CSRS-1234 and supporting documentation shall be placed after the Form CSRS-661, "Application for Funding," in the proposal.

Even though the applicant considers that a proposed project may fall within a categorical exclusion, CSREES may determine that an Environmental Assessment or an Environmental Impact Statement is necessary for a proposed project if substantial controversy on environmental grounds exists or if other extraordinary conditions or circumstances are present that may cause such activity to have a significant environmental effect.

Review Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated by a peer review group of qualified scientists selected in accord with Section 3400.11 of the administrative provisions governing the Special Research Grants Program. Pursuant to 7 CFR part 3400.5(a), the following selection criteria for proposals will be used in

lieu of those which appear in Section 3400.15 of the administrative provisions:

Selection Criteria—Maximum Score

Overall Scientific and Technical Quality—40

—Creative and innovative scientific approach

—Clear, concise, and achievable objectives

—Technical soundness of procedures

—Feasibility of attaining objectives

—Applicability to watershed scale systems

Justification, Review of Literature and Current Research—15

—Importance of the problem

—Relevance of proposed research to solution of the problem

—Literature focused on specific research approach and objective

Budget, Resources, and Personnel—15

—Necessary facilities, resources, and personnel available

—Funds contributed by other agencies

—Budget appropriate for proposed research

—Demonstrated scientific capability of investigators

Collaboration—20

—Evidence of significant

contributions by collaborators

—Evidence and justification of multi-disciplinary and/or multi-

institutional and multi-agency collaboration

Application of Research Results—10

—Planned application and implementation of research results

—Extension, transferability, and publication of results

—Potential for results to enhance agricultural sustainability

Total—100

How To Obtain Application Materials

Copies of this solicitation, the Application Kit, and the administrative provisions governing this program, 7 CFR Part 3400, may be obtained by writing to the address or calling the telephone number which follows: Proposal Services Branch; Awards Management Division; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; U.S. Department of Agriculture; Ag Box 2245; Washington, DC 20250-2245; Telephone: (202) 401-5048.

These materials may also be requested via Internet by sending a message with your name, mailing address (not e-mail) and phone number to

psb@morrill.esusda.gov, which states that you want a copy of the application materials for the Fiscal Year 1995 Special Research Grants Program, Water Quality. The materials will then be

mailed to you (not e-mailed) as quickly as possible.

Applicants should note that separate but complementary programs in water resources assessment and protection, soils and soil biology, and agricultural systems exist within the CSREES National Research Initiative Competitive Grants Program. For further information on that program, contact the Proposal Services Branch at the address listed above. Proposals should be submitted to the most appropriate program—submission of duplicate proposals or proposals with substantial overlap to both programs is discouraged.

What To Submit

An original and twelve copies of each proposal, prepared in accordance with the instructions found above, must be submitted. This number of copies is necessary to permit thorough, objective peer evaluation of all proposals received before funding decisions are made.

All copies of a proposal must be mailed in one package and each copy must be stapled securely in the upper left-hand corner. Every effort should be made to ensure that the proposal contains all pertinent information when initially submitted.

One copy of each proposal not selected for funding will be retained for a period of one year. The remaining copies will be destroyed.

Where and When To Submit Applications

To be considered for funding during Fiscal Year 1995, proposals must be submitted by April 28, 1995.

Proposals submitted through the regular mail must be postmarked by April 28, 1995, and should be sent to the following address: Proposal Services Branch; Awards Management Division; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; U.S. Department of Agriculture; Ag Box 2245; Washington, D.C. 20250-2245. The telephone number is: (202) 401-5048.

Hand-delivered proposals must be submitted to an express mail or courier service by April 28, 1995, or brought to the following address by 4:30 p.m. on April 28, 1995: Proposal Services Branch; Awards Management Division; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; U.S. Department of Agriculture; Room 303, Aerospace Center; 901 D Street, S.W.; Washington, D.C. 20024. The telephone number is: (202) 401-5048.

Supplementary Information

The Special Research Grants Program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under No. 10.200.

For reasons set forth in the final Rule-related Notice to 7 CFR part 3015, subpart V (48 FR 29115, June 24, 1983), this program is excluded from the scope of Executive Order 12372, which requires intergovernmental consultation with State and local officials.

Under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980 (44 U.S.C. 3504(h)), the collection of information requirements contained in this Notice have been approved under OMB Document No. 0524-0022.

Done at Washington, DC, this 6th day of March 1995.

K. Jane Coulter,

Acting Administrator, Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service.

BILLING CODE 3410-22-M

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COOPERATIVE STATE RESEARCH SERVICE**

OMB Approved 0524-0033
Expires 6/97

National Environmental Policy Act Exclusions Form

Principal Investigator/Project Director Name	Institution
Address	

Under 7 CFR Part 3407 (CSRS's implementing regulations of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA)), environmental data or documentation is required in order to assist CSRS in carrying out its responsibilities under NEPA, which includes determining whether proposed research requires the preparation of an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement, or whether such research can be excluded from this requirement on the basis of several categories. Therefore, it is necessary for the applicant to advise CSRS whether the proposed research falls into one of the following Department of Agriculture or CSRS categorical exclusions, or whether the research does not fall into one of these exclusions (in which case the preparation of an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement may be required). Even though the applicant considers that a proposed project may or may not fall within a categorical exclusion, CSRS may determine that an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement is necessary for a proposed project should substantial controversy on environmental grounds exist or if other extraordinary conditions or circumstances are present that may cause such activity to have a significant environmental effect.

Please Read All of the Following and Check All Which Apply

- The proposed research falls under the categorical exclusion(s) indicated below:

Department of Agriculture Categorical Exclusions

(found at 7 CFR 1b.3 and restated at 7CFR 3407.6
(a)(1)(i) through (vii))

- (i) Policy development, planning and implementation which are related to routine activities such as personnel, organizational changes, or similar administrative functions
- (ii) Activities that deal solely with the functions of programs, such as program budget proposals, disbursements, and transfer or reprogramming of funds
- (iii) Inventories, research activities, and studies such as resource inventories and routine data collection when such actions are clearly limited in context and intensity
- (iv) Educational and informational programs and activities
- (v) Civil and criminal law enforcement and investigative activities
- (vi) Activities that are advisory and consultative to other agencies and public and private entities, such as legal counseling and representation
- (vii) Activities related to trade representation and market development activities abroad

CSRS Categorical Exclusions

(found at 7 CFR 3407.6(a)(2)(i) through (ii))

The following categories of CSRS actions are excluded because they have been found to have limited scope and intensity and to have no significant individual or cumulative impacts on the quality of the human environment:

- (i) The following categories of research programs or projects of limited size and magnitude or with only short-term effects on the environment:
- (A) Research conducted within any laboratory, greenhouse, or other contained facility where research practices and safeguards prevent environmental impacts
- (B) Surveys, inventories, and similar studies that have limited context and minimal intensity in terms of changes in the environment
- (C) Testing outside of the laboratory, such as in small isolated field plots, which involves the routine use of familiar chemicals or biological materials
- (ii) Routine renovation, rehabilitation, or revitalization of physical facilities, including the acquisition and installation of equipment, where such activity is limited in scope and intensity

OR

- Proposed research does not fall into one of the above categorical exclusions

(NOTE: If checked, please attach an explanation of the potential environmental impacts of the proposed research. May require completion of an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement.)

Please refer all questions regarding the completion of this form to the USDA National Biological Impact Assessment Program at (202) 401-4892.
Form CSRS-1234 (4/94)