

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**Cooperative State Research,
Education, and Extension Service****Special Research Grants Program,
Potato Research: Request for
Applications and Request for Input**

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

ACTION: Notice of Request for Applications and Request for Input.

SUMMARY: The Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) announces the availability of grant funds and requests applications for the Special Research Grants Program, Potato Research (Potato Research) for fiscal year (FY) 2002 to facilitate or expand ongoing State-Federal food and agricultural research programs. The amount available for support of this program in FY 2002 will be approximately between \$1,447,000 and \$1,600,000.

This notice identifies the objectives for Potato Research projects, the eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and the application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for a Potato Research grant.

By this notice, CSREES additionally requests stakeholder input from any interested party for use in the development of the next Request for Applications (RFA) for this program.

DATES: Applications must be received by close of business (COB) on January 21, 2002 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline will not be considered for funding. Comments regarding this RFA are requested within six months from the issuance of this notice. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

ADDRESSES: The address for hand-delivered applications or applications submitted using an express mail or overnight courier service is: Special Research Grants Program, Potato Research; c/o Proposal Services Unit; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; U.S. Department of Agriculture; Room 1307, Waterfront Centre; 800 9th Street, SW.; Washington, DC 20024; Telephone: (202)401-5048.

Applications sent via the U.S. Postal Service must be sent to the following address: Special Research Grants Program, Potato Research; c/o Proposal Services Unit; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; U.S. Department of Agriculture; STOP 2245; 1400 Independence

Avenue, SW.; Washington, DC 20250-2245.

Written stakeholder comments should be submitted by mail to: Policy and Program Liaison Staff; Office of Extramural Programs; USDA-CSREES; STOP 2299; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW.; Washington, DC 20250-2299; or via e-mail to: *RFP-OEP@reeusda.gov*. (This e-mail address is intended only for receiving comments regarding this RFA and not requesting information or forms.) In your comments, please state that you are responding to the Special Research Grants Program, Potato Research RFA.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact Ann Marie Thro; telephone: 202-401-6702; fax: 202-401-4888; email: *athro@reeusda.gov*.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance**

This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under number 10.200.

Stakeholder Input

CSREES is requesting comments regarding this RFA from any interested party. These comments will be considered in the development of the next RFA for the program. Such comments will be used to meet the requirements of section 103(c)(2) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7613(c)(2)). This section requires the Secretary to solicit and consider input on a current RFA from persons who conduct or use agricultural research, education and extension for use in formulating future RFA's for competitive programs. Comments should be submitted as provided for in the **ADDRESSES** and **DATES** portions of this Notice.

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A. Legislative Authority and Background

The authority for this program is contained in subsection (c)(1)(B) of section 2 of the Competitive, Special, and Facilities Research Grant Act, of Pub. L. No. 89-106, as amended (7 U.S.C. 450i(c)(1)(B)). Only section 3400.1, Applicability of regulations, subpart C, Peer and Merit Review Arranged by Grantees, and subpart D, Annual Reports, of the administrative regulations at 7 CFR part 3400 for the Special Grants Programs awarded under the authority of section 2(c) of this Act (7 U.S.C. 450i(c)) apply to grants solicited and awarded under subsection (c)(1)(B).

In accordance with the statutory authority, grants awarded under this program will be for the purpose of facilitating or expanding ongoing State-Federal food and agricultural research programs that—

(i) Promote excellence in research on a regional and national level; (ii) promote the development of regional research centers; (iii) promote the research partnership between the Department of Agriculture, colleges and universities, research foundations, and State agricultural experiment stations for regional research efforts; and (iv) facilitate coordination and cooperation of research among States through regional research grants.

B. Purpose, Priorities, and Fund Availability

The purpose of this grant program is to support potato research that focuses on varietal development/testing. As used herein, varietal development/testing is research using traditional and biotechnological genetics to develop improved potato variety(ies). Aspects of evaluation, screening and testing must support or complement the development of improved varieties.

There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards. Approximately between \$1,447,000 and

\$1,600,000 will be available to fund applications in FY 2002.

C. Definitions

For the purpose of this program, the following definitions are applicable:

Administrator means the Administrator of the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) and any other officer or employee of the Department to whom the authority involved may be delegated.

Authorized departmental officer (ADO) means the Secretary or any employee of the Department with delegated authority to issue or modify grant instruments on behalf of the Secretary.

Authorized organizational representative (AOR) means the president, or chief executive officer of the applicant organization or the official, designated by the president or chief executive officer of the applicant organization, who has the authority to commit the resources of the organization.

Budget period means the interval of time (usually 12 months) into which the project period is divided for budgetary and reporting purposes.

Department or USDA means the United States Department of Agriculture.

Grantee means the organization designated in the grant award document as the responsible legal entity to which a grant is awarded.

Peer review is an evaluation of a proposed project for scientific or technical quality and relevance performed by experts with the scientific knowledge and technical skills to conduct the proposed work or to give expert advice on the merits of a proposal.

Peer reviewers means experts or consultants qualified by training and experience to give expert advice on the scientific and technical merit of grant applications or the relevance of those applications to one or more of the proposal evaluation criteria. Peer reviewers may be ad hoc or convened as a panel.

Project Director means the single individual designated by the grantee in the grant application and approved by the Authorized Departmental Officer who is responsible for the direction and management of the project (also known as a principal investigator for research activities).

Prior approval means written approval evidencing prior consent by an authorized departmental officer.

Project means the particular activity within the scope of the program supported by a grant award.

Project period means the total length of time as stated in the award document and modifications thereto, if any, during which Federal sponsorship begins and ends.

Secretary means the Secretary of Agriculture and any other officer or employee of the Department to whom the authority involved is delegated.

D. Eligibility

Applications may be submitted by State agricultural experiment stations, land-grant colleges and universities, research foundations established by land-grant colleges and universities, colleges and universities receiving funds under the Act of October 10, 1962, as amended (16 U.S.C. 582a et seq.), and accredited schools or colleges of veterinary medicine. The proposals must be directly related to potato varietal development/testing. Although an applicant may be eligible based on its status as one of these entities, other factors may exclude an applicant from receiving Federal assistance under this program (e.g., debarment or suspension, a determination of non-responsibility based on submitted organizational management information, etc.). Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project.

E. Indirect Costs

Pursuant to Section 1473 of the National Agriculture Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, as amended, 7 U.S.C. 3319, indirect costs are not allowable costs under section 2(c)(1)(B) projects, and no funds will be approved for this purpose. Further, costs that are a part of an institution's indirect cost pool (e.g., administrative or clerical salaries) may not be reclassified as direct costs for the purpose of making them allowable.

F. Matching Requirements

Cost-sharing is not required nor will it be a factor in the awarding of any grant.

G. Funding Restrictions

CSREES has determined that grant funds awarded under this authority may not be used for renovation or refurbishment of research, education, or extension space; the purchase or installation of fixed equipment in such space; or the planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or construction of buildings or facilities.

H. Types of Applications

In FY 2002, applications may be submitted to the Potato Research Program as one of the following three types of requests:

(1) *New application*. This is a project application that has not been previously submitted to the Potato Research Program. All new applications will be reviewed competitively using the selection process and evaluation criteria described in Part IV—Review Process.

(2) *Renewal application*. This is a project application that requests additional funding for a project beyond the period that was approved in an original or amended award. Applications for renewed funding must contain the same information as required for new applications, and additionally must contain a Progress Report (see Project Description, Part III.B.6). Renewal applications must be received by the relevant due dates, will be evaluated in competition with other pending applications in appropriate area to which they are assigned, and will be reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications.

(3) *Resubmitted application*. This is an application that had previously been submitted to the Potato Research Program but not funded. Project Directors (PD's) must respond to the previous review panel summary (see Response to Previous Review, Part III.B.5). Resubmitted applications must be received by the relevant due dates, will be evaluated in competition with other pending applications in appropriate area to which they are assigned, and will be reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications.

Part II—Program Description

A. Project Types

Each proposal submitted in FY 2002 shall request funding for a period not to exceed one year. Funding for additional years will depend upon the availability of funds and progress toward objectives. FY 2002 awardees would need to re compete in future years for additional funding.

B. Applicant Peer Review Requirements

Subsection (c)(5)(A) of the Competitive, Special, and Facilities Research Grant Act, as amended (7 U.S.C. 450i(c)(5)(A)) requires applicants to conduct a scientific peer review of a proposed research project in accordance with regulations promulgated by the Secretary prior to the Secretary making a grant award under this authority. Regulations implementing this requirement are set forth in 7 CFR

3400.20 and 3400.21. The regulations impose the following requirements for scientific peer review by applicants of proposed research projects:

1. Credible and independent. Review arranged by the grantee must provide for a credible and independent assessment of the proposed project. A credible review is one that provides an appraisal of technical quality and relevance sufficient for an organizational representative to make an informed judgment as to whether the proposal is appropriate for submission for Federal support. To provide for an independent review, such review may include USDA employees, but should not be conducted solely by USDA employees.

2. Notice of completion and retention of records. A notice of completion of the review shall be conveyed in writing to CSREES either as part of the submitted proposal or prior to the issuance of an award, at the option of CSREES (Part III, B. 15.). The written notice constitutes certification by the applicant that a review in compliance with these regulations has occurred. Applicants are not required to submit results of the review to CSREES; however, proper documentation of the review process and results should be retained by the applicant.

3. Renewal and supplemental grants. Review by the grantee is not automatically required for renewal or supplemental grants as defined in 7 CFR 3400.6. A subsequent grant award will require a new review if, according to CSREES, either the funded project has changed significantly, other scientific discoveries have affected the project, or the need for the project has changed. Note that a new review is necessary when applying for another standard or continuation grant after expiration of the grant term.

Part III—Preparation of an Application

A. Program Application Materials

Program application materials are available at the CSREES Funding Opportunities web site (<http://www.reeusda.gov/1700/funding/ourfund.htm>). If you do not have access to the web page or have trouble downloading material and you would like a hardcopy, you may contact the Proposal Services Unit, Office of Extramural Programs, USDA/CSREES at (202) 401-5048. When calling the Proposal Services Unit, please indicate that you are requesting the RFA and associated application forms for the Special Research Grants Program, Potato Research. These materials also may be requested via Internet by sending a message with your name, mailing

address (not e-mail) and phone number to psb@reeusda.gov. State that you want a copy of the RFA and the associated application forms for Special Research Grants Program, Potato Research.

B. Content of Applications

1. General

Use the following guidelines to prepare an application. Proper preparation of applications will assist reviewers in evaluating the merits of each application in a systematic, consistent fashion:

(a) Prepare the application on only one side of the page using standard size (8½" × 11") white paper, one-inch margins, typed or word processed using no type smaller than 12 point font, and single or double spaced. Use an easily readable font face (e.g., Geneva, Helvetica, Times Roman).

(b) Number each page of the application sequentially, starting with the Project Description, including the budget pages, required forms, and any appendices.

(c) Staple the application in the upper left-hand corner. Do not bind. An original and 18 copies (19 total) must be submitted in one package, along with 2 additional copies of the "Project Summary," Form CSREES-2003, as a separate attachment.

(d) Include original illustrations (photographs, color prints, etc.) in all copies of the application to prevent loss of meaning through poor quality reproduction.

(e) The contents of the application should be assembled in the following order:

- (1) Proposal Cover Page (Form CSREES-2002)
- (2) Table of Contents
- (3) Project Summary (Form CSREES-2003)
- (4) Response to Previous Review
- (5) Project Description
- (6) References
- (7) Appendices to Project Description
- (8) Key Personnel
- (9) Collaborative Arrangements (including Letters of Support)
- (10) Conflict-of-Interest List (Form CSREES-2007)
- (11) Budget (Form CSREES-2004)
- (12) Budget Narrative
- (13) Matching
- (14) Current and Pending Support (Form CSREES-2005)
- (15) Assurance Statement(s) (Form CSREES-2008)
- (16) Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (Form CSREES-2006)
- (17) Page B, Proposal Cover Page (Form CSREES-2002), Personal Data on Project Director

2. Proposal Cover Page (Form CSREES-2002)

a. Page A

Each copy of each grant application must contain a "Proposal Cover Page", Form CSREES-2002. One copy of the application, preferably the original, must contain the pen-and-ink signature(s) of the proposing PD's and the authorized organizational representative (AOR), the individual who possesses the necessary authority to commit the organization's time and other relevant resources to the project. If there are more than four co-PD's for an application, please list additional co-PD's on a separate sheet of paper (with appropriate information and signatures) and attach to the Proposal Cover Page (Form CSREES-2002). Any proposed PD or co-PD whose signature does not appear on Form CSREES-2002 or attached additional sheets will not be listed on any resulting grant award. Complete both signature blocks located at the bottom of the "Proposal Cover Page" form. Please note that Form CSREES-2002 is comprised of two parts—Page A which is the "Proposal Cover Page" and Page B which is the "Personal Data on Project Director."

Form CSREES-2002 serves as a source document for the CSREES grant database; it is therefore important that it be accurately completed in its entirety, especially the e-mail addresses requested in blocks 4.c. and 18.c. However, the following items are highlighted as having a high potential for errors or misinterpretations:

(a) *Type of Performing Organization (Block 6A and 6B).*

For block 6A, a check should be placed in the appropriate box to identify the type of organization which is the legal recipient named in block 1. Only one box should be checked. For block 6B, please check as many boxes that apply to the affiliation of the PD listed in block 16.

(b) *Title of Proposed Project (Block 7).*

The title of the project must be brief (140-character maximum, including spaces), yet represent the major thrust of the effort being proposed. Project titles are read by a variety of nonscientific people; therefore, highly technical words or phraseology should be avoided where possible. In addition, introductory phrases such as "investigation of," "research on," "education for," or "outreach that" should not be used.

(c) *Program to Which You Are Applying (Block 8).* Enter Special Research Grants Program, Potato Research. The reference to Program Area (i.e., name of the program component)

and Number should be ignored in this block.

(d) *Type of Request (Block 14)*. Check the appropriate box.

(e) *Project Director (PD) (Blocks 16–19)*. Blocks 16–18 are used to identify the PD and Block 19 to identify co-PD's. If needed, additional co-PD's may be listed on a separate sheet of paper and attached to Form CSREES–2002, the Proposal Cover Page, with the applicable co-PD information and signatures. Listing multiple co-PD's, beyond those required for genuine collaboration, is discouraged.

(f) *Other Possible Sponsors (Block 21)*. List the names or acronyms of all other public or private sponsors including other agencies within USDA to which your application has been or might be sent. In the event you decide to send your application to another organization or agency at a later date, you must inform the identified CSREES program contact as soon as practicable. Submitting your application to other potential sponsors will not prejudice its review by CSREES; however, submitting the same (*i.e.*, duplicate) application to another CSREES program is not permissible.

b. Page B

Page B should be submitted only with the original signature copy of the application and should be placed as the last page of the original copy of the application. This page contains personal data on the PD(s). CSREES requests this information in order to monitor the operation of its review and awards processes. This page will not be duplicated or used during the review process. Please note that failure to submit this information will in no way affect consideration of your application.

3. Table of Contents

For consistency and ease in locating information, each application must contain a detailed Table of Contents immediately following the proposal cover page. The Table of Contents should contain page numbers for each component of the application. Page numbering should begin with the first page of the Project Description.

4. Project Summary (Form CSREES–2003)

The application must contain a "Project Summary," Form CSREES–2003. The summary should be approximately 250 words, contained within the box, placed immediately after the Table of Contents, and not numbered. The names and affiliated organizations of all PD's and co-PD's should be listed on this form, in

addition to the title of the project. The summary should be a self-contained, specific description of the activity to be undertaken and should focus on: overall project goal(s) and supporting objectives; plans to accomplish project goal(s); and relevance of the project to the goals of the Potato Research Program. The importance of a concise, informative Project Summary cannot be overemphasized. If there are more than four co-PD's for an application, please list additional co-PD's on a separate sheet of paper (with appropriate information) and attach to the Project Summary (Form CSREES–2003).

5. Response to Previous Review

This requirement only applies to "Resubmitted Applications" as described under Part I, H, "Types of Applications." Project Directors (PD's) must respond to the previous review panel summary on no more than one page, titled "RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS REVIEW," which is to be placed directly after the "Project Summary," Form CSREES–2003.

6. Project Description

Please Note: The Project Description shall not exceed 20 pages of written text and up to five additional pages for figures and tables. This maximum (25 pages) has been established to ensure fair and equitable competition. The Project Description must include all of the following:

a. Introduction: A clear statement of the long-term goal(s) and supporting objectives of the proposed activities should be included. Summarize the body of knowledge or other past activities which substantiate the need for the proposed project. Describe ongoing or recently completed significant activities related to the proposed project including the work of key project personnel. Preliminary data/information pertinent to the proposed project should be included. In addition, this section should include in-depth information on the following, when applicable:

- (1) Estimates of the magnitude of the issues and their relevance to stakeholders and to ongoing State-Federal food and agricultural research.
- (2) Role of the stakeholders in problem identification, planning, and implementation and evaluation as appropriate.
- (3) Reasons for having the work performed at the proposing institution.

b. Objectives: Clear, concise, complete, and logically arranged statement(s) of specific aims of the proposed effort must be included in all proposals.

c. Methods: The procedures or methodology to be applied to the proposed effort should be explicitly stated. This section should include but not necessarily be limited to:

- (1) A description of stakeholder involvement in problem identification, planning, implementation and evaluation;
- (2) A description of the proposed project activities in the sequence in which it is planned to carry them out;
- (3) Techniques to be employed, including their feasibility and rationale for their use in this project;
- (4) Kinds of results expected;
- (5) Means by which data will be analyzed or interpreted;
- (6) Pitfalls that might be encountered; and
- (7) Limitations to proposed procedures.

d. Cooperation and Institutional Units Involved: Cooperative, multi-institutional and multi-disciplinary applications are encouraged. Identify each institutional unit contributing to the project and designate the lead institution or institutional unit. When appropriate, the project should be coordinated with the efforts of other State and/or national programs. Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each institutional partner of the project team.

e. Facilities and Equipment: All facilities which are available for use or assignment to the project during the requested period of support should be reported and described briefly. All items of major equipment or instrumentation available for use or assignment to the proposed project should be itemized. In addition, items of nonexpendable equipment needed to conduct and bring the project to a successful conclusion should be listed, including dollar amounts and, if funds are requested for their acquisition, justified.

f. Project Timetable: The proposal should outline all important phases as a function of time, year by year, for the entire project, including periods beyond the grant funding period.

g. Renewal Applications: If the proposal is a renewal of an existing project supported under the same program, include a clearly identified summary progress report describing the results to date. The progress report should contain the following information:

1. A comparison of actual accomplishments with the goals established for the active grant;
2. The reasons for slippage if established goals were not met; and
3. Other pertinent information, including, when appropriate, cost

analysis and explanation of cost overruns or unexpectedly high unit costs.

The progress report should be placed immediately after the "Project Summary".

7. References

All references to works cited should be complete, including titles and all co-authors, and should conform to an acceptable journal format. References are not considered in the page-limitation for the Project Description.

8. Appendices to Project Description

Appendices to the Project Description are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project. The addition of appendices should not be used to circumvent the text and/or figures and tables page limitations.

9. Key Personnel

The following should be included, as applicable:

(a) The roles and responsibilities of each PD and/or collaborator should be clearly described; and

(b) Vitae of the PD and each co-PD, senior associate, and other professional personnel. This section should include vitae of all key persons who are expected to work on the project, whether or not CSREES funds are sought for their support. The vitae should be limited to two (2) pages each in length, excluding publications listings. The vitae should include a presentation of academic and research credentials, as applicable, *e.g.*, earned degrees, teaching experience, employment history, professional activities, honors and awards, and grants received. A chronological list of *all* publications in *refereed journals* during the past *four (4) years*, including those in press, must be provided for each project member for whom a curriculum vitae is provided. Also list only those *non-refereed* technical publications that have *relevance* to the proposed project. All 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.

10. Collaborative Arrangements

If it will be necessary to enter into formal consulting or collaborative arrangements with others, such arrangements should be fully explained and justified. If the consultant(s) or collaborator(s) are known at the time of application, a vitae or resume should be provided. In addition, evidence (*e.g.*, letter of support) should be provided that the collaborators involved have

agreed to render these services. The applicant also will be required to provide additional information on consultants and collaborators in the budget portion of the application. See instructions in the application forms for completing Form CSREES-2004, Budget.

11. Conflict-of-Interest List (Form CSREES-2007)

A "Conflict-of-Interest List," Form CSREES-2007, must be provided for all individuals who have submitted a vitae in response to item 9.(b) of this part. Each Form CSREES-2007 should list alphabetically, by the last names, the full names of the individuals in the following categories: (a) All co-authors on publications within the past four years, including pending publications and submissions; (b) all collaborators on projects within the past four years, including current and planned collaborations; (c) all thesis or postdoctoral advisees/advisors within the past four years; and (d) all persons in your field with whom you have had a consulting or financial arrangement within the past four years, who stand to gain by seeing the project funded. This form is necessary to assist program staff in excluding from application review those individuals who have conflicts of interest with the personnel in the grant application. The program contact must be informed of any additional conflicts of interest that arise after the application is submitted.

12. Budget (Form CSREES-2004)

a. General

Prepare the Budget, Form CSREES-2004, in accordance with instructions provided with the application forms. A budget form is required for each year of requested support. In addition, a cumulative budget is required detailing the requested total support for the overall project period. The budget form may be reproduced as needed by applicants. Funds may be requested under any of the categories listed on the form, provided that the item or service for which support is requested is allowable under the authorizing legislation, the applicable statutes, regulations, and Federal cost principles, and these program guidelines, and can be justified as necessary for the successful conduct of the proposed project. Applicants also must include a budget narrative to justify their budget requests (see section b. below.)

b. Budget Narrative

All budget categories, with the exception of Indirect Costs, for which support is requested, must be

individually listed (with costs) in the same order as the budget and justified on a separate sheet of paper and placed immediately behind the Budget form.

13. Current and Pending Support (Form CSREES-2005)

All applications must contain Form CSREES-2005 listing other current public or private support (including in-house support) to which personnel (*i.e.*, individuals submitting a vitae in response to item 9.(b) of this part) identified in the application have committed portions of their time, whether or not salary support for person(s) involved is included in the budget. Please follow the instructions provided on this form. Concurrent submission of identical or similar applications to the possible sponsors will not prejudice application review or evaluation by the CSREES. However, an application that duplicates or overlaps substantially with an application already reviewed and funded (or to be funded) by another organization or agency will not be funded under this program. Please note that the project being proposed should be included in the pending section of the form.

14. Assurance Statement(s) (Form CSREES-2008)

A number of situations encountered in the conduct of projects require special assurances, supporting documentation, etc., before funding can be approved for the project. In addition to any other situation that may exist with regard to a particular project, applications involving any of the following elements must comply with the additional requirements as applicable.

a. Recombinant DNA or RNA Research

As stated in 7 CFR part 3015.205(b)(3), all key personnel identified in the application and all endorsing officials of the proposing organization are required to comply with the guidelines established by the National Institutes of Health entitled, "Guidelines for Research Involving Recombinant DNA Molecules," as revised. If your project proposes to use recombinant DNA or RNA techniques, you must so indicate by checking the "yes" box in Block 20 of Form CSREES-2002 (the Proposal Cover Page) and by completing Section A of Form CSREES-2008. For applicable applications recommended for funding, Institutional Biosafety Committee approval is required before CSREES funds will be released. Please refer to the application forms for further instructions.

b. Animal Care

Responsibility for the humane care and treatment of live vertebrate animals used in any grant project supported with funds provided by CSREES rests with the performing organization. Where a project involves the use of living vertebrate animals for experimental purposes, all key personnel identified in an application and all endorsing officials of the proposing organization are required to comply with the applicable provisions of the Animal Welfare Act of 1966, as amended (7 U.S.C. 2131 et seq., and the regulations promulgated thereunder by the Secretary in 9 CFR parts 1, 2, 3, and 4 pertaining to the care, handling, and treatment of these animals. If your project will involve these animals, you should check "yes" in block 20 of Form CSREES-2002 and complete Section B of Form CSREES-2008. In the event a project involving the use of live vertebrate animals results in a grant award, funds will be released only after the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee has approved the project. Please refer to the application forms for further instructions.

c. Protection of Human Subjects

Responsibility for safeguarding the rights and welfare of human subjects used in any grant project supported with funds provided by CSREES rests with the performing organization. Guidance on this issue is contained in the National Research Act, Pub. L. No. 93-348, as amended, and implementing regulations promulgated by the Department under 7 CFR Part 1c. If you propose to use human subjects in your project, you should check the "yes" box in Block 20 of Form CSREES-2002 and complete Section C of Form CSREES-2008. Please refer to the application forms for additional instructions.

15. Certifications

By signing Form CSREES-2002, the AOR of the applicant institution is providing the required certification that the full proposal has received a credible and independent peer review arranged by the institution (see Part II. A.).

Note that by signing Form CSREES-2002 the applicant is providing the certifications required by 7 CFR part 3017, regarding Debarment and Suspension and Drug-Free Workplace, and 7 CFR part 3018, regarding Lobbying. The certification forms are included in the application package for informational purposes only. These forms should not be submitted with the application since by signing Form CSREES-2002 your organization is

providing the required certifications. If the project will involve a subcontractor or consultant, the subcontractor/consultant should submit a Form AD-1048, Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion—Lower Tier Covered Transactions, to the grantee organization for retention in their records. This form should not be submitted to USDA.

16. Compliance With the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (Form CSREES-2006)

As outlined in 7 CFR part 3407 (the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service regulations implementing NEPA), the environmental data for any proposed project is to be provided to CSREES so that CSREES may determine whether any further action is needed. In some cases, however, the preparation of environmental data may not be required. Certain categories of actions are excluded from the requirements of NEPA.

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 CSREES-2006, "NEPA Exclusions Form," must be included in the application indicating whether the applicant is of the opinion that the project falls within a categorical exclusion and the reasons therefore. If it is the applicant's opinion that the proposed project falls within the categorical exclusions, the specific exclusion(s) must be identified.

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

C. Submission To Applications

1. When To Submit (Deadline Date)

Applications must be received by COB on January 21, 2002 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline will not be considered for funding.

2. What To Submit

An original and 18 copies must be submitted. In addition submit two additional copies of the application's

Project Summary. All copies of the application and the Project Summary must be submitted in one package.

3. Where To Submit

Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit completed applications via overnight mail or delivery service to ensure timely receipt by the USDA. The address for hand-delivered applications or applications submitted using an express mail or overnight courier service is: Special Research Grants Program, Potato Research; c/o Proposal Services Unit; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; U.S. Department of Agriculture; Room 1307, Waterfront Centre; 800 9th Street, SW.; Washington, DC 20024; Telephone: (202) 401-5048.

Applications sent via the U.S. Postal Service must be sent to the following address: Special Research Grants Program, Potato Research; c/o Proposal Services Unit; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; U.S. Department of Agriculture; STOP 2245; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW.; Washington, DC 20250-2245.

D. Acknowledgment of Applications

The receipt of all applications will be acknowledged by e-mail. Therefore, applicants are strongly encouraged to provide accurate e-mail addresses, where designated, on the Form CSREES-2002. If the applicant's e-mail address is not indicated, CSREES will acknowledge receipt of the application by letter.

If the applicant does not receive an acknowledgment within 60 days of the submission deadline, please contact the program contact. Once the application has been assigned an application number, please cite that number on all future correspondence.

Part IV—Review Process

A. General

Each application will be evaluated in a 2-part process. First, each application will be screened to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements as set forth in this RFA. Second, applications that meet these requirements will be technically evaluated by a review panel.

Reviewers will be selected based upon training and experience in relevant scientific, extension, or education fields, taking into account the following factors: (a) The level of relevant formal scientific, technical education, or extension experience of the individual, as well as the extent to which an individual is engaged in relevant research, education, or

extension activities; (b) the need to include as reviewers experts from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific, education, or extension fields; (c) the need to include as reviewers other experts (e.g., producers, range or forest managers/operators, and consumers) who can assess relevance of the applications to targeted audiences and to program needs; (d) the need to include as reviewers experts from a variety of organizational types (e.g., colleges, universities, industry, state and Federal agencies, private profit and non-profit organizations) and geographic locations; (e) the need to maintain a balanced composition of reviewers with regard to minority and female representation and an equitable age distribution; and (f) the need to include reviewers who can judge the effective usefulness to producers and the general public of each application.

B. Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria below will be used in reviewing applications submitted in response to this RFA:

I. Relevance

Relevance and importance of proposed research to specific problems or opportunities; value of expected results for States beyond the State in which the project leader resides and will perform the work—20 points.

II. Quality

Overall scientific and technical quality of the proposal and the specific approach proposed—20 points.

III. Feasibility

Feasibility of attaining objectives; adequacy of training, experience, facilities, and equipment—20 points.

IV. Participation

Proposals that provide evidence of cooperation or involvement of multiple institutions or states—5 points.

Proposals that list more than one state as recipient of funds—10 points.

Evidence of stakeholder participation, including growers, in developing the project objectives—5 points.

Stakeholder participation in project implementation or monitoring—5 points.

V. Co-Funding

Proposals that provide evidence of funding from identified state, regional, or industry sources (e.g., check-off programs)—15 points.

C. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality

During the peer evaluation process, extreme care will be taken to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may impact review or evaluation. For the purpose of determining conflicts of interest, the academic and administrative autonomy of an institution shall be determined by reference to the 2002 Higher Education Directory, published by Higher Education Publications, Inc., 6400 Arlington Boulevard, Suite 648, Falls Church, Virginia 22042. Phone: (703) 532-2300. Web site: <http://www.hepinc.com>.

Names of submitting institutions and individuals, as well as application content and peer evaluations, will be kept confidential, except to those involved in the review process, to the extent permitted by law. In addition, the identities of peer reviewers will remain confidential throughout the entire review process. Therefore, the names of the reviewers will not be released to applicants. At the end of the fiscal year, names of panelists will be made available in such a way that the panelists cannot be identified with the review of any particular application.

Part V—Grant Awards

A. General

Within the limit of funds available for such purpose, the awarding official of CSREES shall make grants to those responsible, eligible applicants whose applications are judged most meritorious under the procedures set forth in this RFA. The date specified by the awarding official of CSREES as the effective date of the grant shall be no later than September 30 of the Federal fiscal year in which the project is approved for support and funds are appropriated for such purpose, unless otherwise permitted by law. It should be noted that the project need not be initiated on the grant effective date, but as soon thereafter as practical so that project goals may be attained within the funded project period. All funds granted by CSREES under this RFA shall be expended solely for the purpose for which the funds are granted in accordance with the approved application and budget, the regulations, the terms and conditions of the award, the applicable Federal cost principles, and the Department's assistance regulations (parts 3015 and 3019 of 7 CFR).

B. Organizational Management Information

Specific management information relating to an applicant shall be submitted on a one-time basis as part of the responsibility determination prior to the award of a grant identified under this RFA, if such information has not been provided previously under this or another CSREES program. CSREES will provide copies of forms recommended for use in fulfilling these requirements as part of the preaward process. Although an applicant may be eligible based on its status as one of these entities, there are factors which may exclude an applicant from receiving Federal financial and nonfinancial assistance and benefits under this program (e.g., debarment or suspension of an individual involved or a determination that an applicant is not responsible based on submitted organizational management information).

C. Grant Award Document and Notice of Grant Award

The grant award document shall include at a minimum the following:

(1) Legal name and address of performing organization or institution to whom the Administrator has awarded a grant under the terms of this request for applications;

(2) Title of project;

(3) Name(s) and institution(s) of PD's chosen to direct and control approved activities;

(4) Identifying grant number assigned by the Department;

(5) Project period, specifying the amount of time the Department intends to support the project without requiring recompensation for funds;

(6) Total amount of Departmental financial assistance approved by the Administrator during the project period;

(7) Legal authority(ies) under which the grant is awarded;

(8) Appropriate Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number;

(9) Approved budget plan for categorizing allocable project funds to accomplish the stated purpose of the grant award; and

(10) Other information or provisions deemed necessary by CSREES to carry out its respective granting activities or to accomplish the purpose of a particular grant.

The notice of grant award, in the form of a letter, will be prepared and will provide pertinent instructions or information to the grantee that is not included in the grant award document.

Part VI—Additional Information**A. Access to Review Information**

Copies of reviews, not including the identity of reviewers, and a summary of the panel comments will be sent to the applicant PD after the review process has been completed.

B. Use of Funds; Changes**1. Delegation of Fiscal Responsibility**

Unless the terms and conditions of the grant state otherwise, the grantee may not in whole or in part delegate or transfer to another person, institution, or organization the responsibility for use or expenditure of grant funds.

2. Changes in Project Plans

a. The permissible changes by the grantee, PD(s), or other key project personnel in the approved project grant shall be limited to changes in methodology, techniques, or other similar aspects of the project to expedite achievement of the project's approved goals. If the grantee or the PD(s) is uncertain as to whether a change complies with this provision, the question must be referred to the Authorized Departmental Officer (ADO) for a final determination. The ADO is the signatory of the award document, not the program contact.

b. Changes in approved goals or objectives shall be requested by the grantee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such changes. In no event shall requests for such changes be approved which are outside the scope of the original approved project.

c. Changes in approved project leadership or the replacement or reassignment of other key project personnel shall be requested by the grantee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such changes.

d. Transfers of actual performance of the substantive programmatic work in whole or in part and provisions for payment of funds, whether or not Federal funds are involved, shall be requested by the grantee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such transfers, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of the grant.

e. Changes in Project Period: The project period may be extended by CSREES without additional financial support, for such additional period(s) as the ADO determines may be necessary to complete or fulfill the purposes of an approved project, but in no case shall the total project period exceed five years. Any extension of time shall be conditioned upon prior request by the

grantee and approval in writing by the ADO, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of a grant.

f. Changes in Approved Budget: Changes in an approved budget must be requested by the grantee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to instituting such changes if the revision will involve transfers or expenditures of amounts requiring prior approval as set forth in the applicable Federal cost principles, Departmental regulations, or grant award.

C. Applicable Federal Statutes and Regulations

Several Federal statutes and regulations apply to grant applications considered for review and to project grants awarded under this program. These include, but are not limited to:

7 CFR Part 1.1—USDA implementation of the Freedom of Information Act.

7 CFR Part 3—USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A-129 regarding debt collection.

7 CFR Part 15, subpart A—USDA implementation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended.

7 CFR Part 3015—USDA Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations, implementing OMB directives (i.e., OMB Circular Nos. A-21 and A-122) and incorporating provisions of 31 U.S.C. 6301-6308 (formerly the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977, Pub. L. No. 95-224), as well as general policy requirements applicable to recipients of Departmental financial assistance.

7 CFR Part 3017—USDA implementation of Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) and Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Grants).

7 CFR Part 3018—USDA implementation of Restrictions on Lobbying. Imposes prohibitions and requirements for disclosure and certification related to lobbying on recipients of Federal contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, and loans.

7 CFR Part 3019—USDA implementation of OMB Circular A-110, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Other Agreements With Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations.

7 CFR Part 3052—USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-profit Organizations.

7 CFR Part 3407—CSREES procedures to implement the National

Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended.

29 U.S.C. 794 (section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973) and 7 CFR Part 15b (USDA implementation of statute)—prohibiting discrimination based upon physical or mental handicap in Federally assisted programs.

35 U.S.C. 200 et seq.—Bayh-Dole Act, controlling allocation of rights to inventions made by employees of small business firms and domestic nonprofit organizations, including universities, in Federally assisted programs (implementing regulations are contained in 37 CFR part 401).

D. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards

When an application results in a grant, it becomes a part of the record of CSREES transactions, available to the public upon specific request. Information that the Secretary determines to be of a confidential, privileged, or proprietary nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, any information that the applicant wishes to have considered as confidential, privileged, or proprietary should be clearly marked within the application. The original copy of an application that does not result in a grant will be retained by the Agency for a period of one year. Other copies will be destroyed. Such an application will be released only with the consent of the applicant or to the extent required by law. An application may be withdrawn at any time prior to the final action thereon.

E. Regulatory Information

For the reasons set forth in the final Rule-related Notice to 7 CFR part 3015, subpart V (48 FR 29114, June 24, 1983), this program is excluded from the scope of the Executive Order 12372 which requires intergovernmental consultation with State and local officials. Under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. chapter 35), the collection of information requirements contained in this Notice have been approved under OMB Document No. 0524-0039.

Done at Washington, DC, this 3rd day of December, 2001.

Colien Hefferan,

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

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