

Message from the Chair



ARD UPDATES

Dear Colleagues:

The February Budget and Advocacy Committee (BAC) met in Washington, D.C. and the most recent NIFA developments were revealed. President Obama has released his budget for 2011 and, considering what is going on in the country, seeing the freeze in most of the USDA/NIFA lines, including the 1890 lines, was not unexpected. USDA/NIFA had influenced the Administration to substantially increase the competitive grants program, AFRI. The President's budget did recommend increasing it—from the FY2010 enacted amount of \$262,482,000 to \$428,845,000 for FY2011. These increases came about because all of the 406 Legislative Authority (Water Quality, Food Safety, Regional Pest Mgmt. Centers, and four other 406 programs) were zeroed out. ALL earmarks were erased as were the Sun Grant Program and a few other initiatives. Dr. Beachy explained that while these programs are no longer listed as distinct lines, the initiatives will still be funded, but within the NIFA Institutes. If you are affected because of the loss of these lines, your job will be to thoroughly read the upcoming AFRI RFAs to find out where to submit your proposals. The problem is, however, the writing of the RFAs is going slowly and the previously anticipated date of February for their release has a new anticipated date of March 15th. Also, while the RFAs are being written by current NIFA Directors, the 2011 RFAs will be guided by newly hired Lead Scientists who will head the five NIFA Institutes. In summary the increased funding in AFRI for 2011 will support the following priorities: 1). Bioenergy—assisting rural communities to create wealth, become economically strong and self-sustaining. The increased funding will also support centers for biomass production. 2). Global Climate Change—research on mitigation potentials and adaptive capacities of agricultural and environmental systems. 3.) Global Food Security—creating interdepartmental initiatives and partnerships to deliver programs for at-risk-nations. 4). Nutrition and Health—identify behavioral factors that influence obesity; develop behavioral and environmental instruments that prevent obesity; address micro-nutrient content of new food crops. 5). Food Safety: new and improved rapid detection methods; improved harvesting and processing technologies; improving understanding of disease-causing microorganisms. Will keep you posted.

Sincerely,


Orlando F. McMeans, ARD Chair

1890 Capacity Building Grant Program Workshops

Dr. Ali Mohamed will be providing Capacity Building Program Workshops to get your faculty's stakeholder inputs about the 2010 RFA; to provide tips for proposal development; to discuss integrated program proposals; to review the Logic Model; and to help them understand what is expected in impact write-ups. The schedule is as follows:

March 3, 2010 at West Virginia State University. for the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, Virginia State University., Delaware State University., Kentucky State University. and North Carolina A&T State University.

March 17, 2010 at Alcorn State University. for Southern University, University of Arkansas Pine Bluff, Prairie View A&M University, and Langston and Lincoln Universities.

March 31, 2010 at Alabama A&M University for Tuskegee University, Florida A&M University, Tennessee State University., Fort Valley State University., and South Carolina State University.

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AFRI RFAs for 2011

NIFA will commit up to \$800 million to fund new grants, and the funding will be contingent on annual appropriations in following years. AFRI is the NIFA flagship competitive grant program that was once called the NRI. AFRI will support work in the following areas: plant/animal health and production and plant/animal products; food safety, nutrition and health; renewable energy, natural resources, and environment; agriculture systems and technology; and agriculture economics and rural communities. Programs must use a disciplinary-based approach to building a foundation of knowledge critical for solving current and future problems.

Grants in 2010 will fund up to \$25 million and be for a longer duration, i.e. five year grants that are renewable. NIFA expects the proposals will be integrative of basic and applied research, have deliberate education or extension programs included and include multi-institutions. In addition, up to \$5 million in funding opportunities will be offered for pre- and postdoctoral fellowship grants.

All RFAs are found on NIFA's website (<http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/afri/afri.html>) and on Grants.gov. Some program areas require letters of intent at a three week turn-around time. Please consider applying for AFRI funds. Some of the proposals written for the Capacity Building Grants Program are also a very good fit within some of the NIFA Institutes and the funding will favor integrated, multi-institutional grants.

New Development

Beginning with the FY 2012-2016 Plan of Work Update and 2010 Annual Report, due on April 1, 2011, NIFA is requiring that all Plans of Work (POW) include the five NIFA Priority Areas: Global Food Security and Hunger, Climate Change, Sustainable Energy, Childhood Obesity and Food Safety. This is being requested because it is vital to demonstrate that both competitive grants and formula grants contribute to these areas. Therefore, in the "Planned Programs" Section of your POW, you have two choices: Choose "Add New Program" then complete the process, or choose to Edit a current planned program and change the name to one of the five priority issues by choosing one of the five titles at the Planned Program title page. In your 2009 Annual Report of Accomplishments and Results, you will have similar choices and can follow the process accordingly. For better instructions go to http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/reporting/planrept/pow_newletters.html or contact the Plan of Work Staff at pow@nifa.usda.gov or call Bart Hewitt at 202-720-0747.

Opportunities

Program	Closing Date	Contact
Higher Education Challenge Grants	February 5, 2010	Gregory Smith gsmith@nifa.usda.gov
Food Systems Leadership Institute (FSLI) - developing individual and institutional leadership for a 21st Century food system.	Accepting applications now	http://www.fsli.org/index.cfm?showpage=179
Multistate Research Award for Excellence- to publicly recognize high quality multistate research	February 26, 2010	Submit to Carolyn Brooks
Plant Feedstock Genomics for Bioenergy (USDA/DOE)	February 18, 2010	Ed Kaleikau ekaleikau@nifa.usda.gov