

## **Agenda Item 6: NRSP Review Committee**

**Presenter: Craig Nessler**

**September 22, 2008**

The NRSP Review Committee met in Memphis on June 3-4 to discuss the NRSPs' budget requests and proposals. The Review Committee developed the following recommendations for the FY '09 NRSP portfolio. These were communicated to the 1862 regional research associations for discussion at their summer meetings. The NRSP-RC had a conference call on August 15 to consider comments received from the regional associations and developed the final recommendations listed below which are to be voted on during the ESS business meeting.

At their June meeting, the NRSP-RC also discussed how it could better manage and oversee the development of NRSP renewal proposals, including the external and peer reviews and the writing committee's responses to those reviews. Specific procedures were developed to guide the initial review and proposal development phases to help accomplish this goal. These procedures are outlined in the letter below from Craig Nessler to the NRSP-7 Administrative Advisors, whose project is terminating in September 2009.

### **NRSP Review Committee Recommendations for FY2009:**

#### **NRSP-1 – Research Planning Using the Current Research Information System (CRIS)**

\$346,829 FY'09 budget recommended for approval.

Comments –

- Important for One Solution Stakeholder Committee to stay engaged with REE policy makers and IT folks to make sure the databases are useful for universities as well as USDA and Congress.
- Current project terminates Sep 30, 2010.

#### **NRSP-3 – The National Atmospheric Deposition Program (NADP)**

It is recommended that the NRSP-3 renewal proposal not be approved and that this activity be established as a multistate project that can be funded through MRF by participant AES's and other sources. The NRSP-3 group is commended for exemplifying the ideal of becoming self supporting.

**Note:** Disapproval of the NRSP-3 renewal proposal will automatically grant a one year extension for this project to Sep 30, 2009 with a budget of \$50,000.

Comments –

- Off-the-top funding is now less than 2%, an excellent example of decreasing dependency on this funding source.
- NE region suggested this project become a multistate project with participating stations supporting the \$50,000.
- No compelling argument to keep this project as an NRSP and maintain a low level of funding.
- Current project terminates Sep 30, 2008.

#### **NRSP-4 – High Value Specialty Crop Pest Management**

\$481,182 FY'09 budget is recommended for approval.

Project extension to Sep 30, 2010 is recommended for approval.

Comments –

- Specialty Crops Research Initiative is not designed to support this type of activity, so this funding still needs to come from off-the-top Hatch.

- Project group should consider how they could reduce dependence on off-the-top funding when the renewal proposal and next 5-year budget are developed.
- Current project terminates Sep 30, 2009.

#### **NRSP-5 – National Program for Controlling Virus Diseases of Temperate Fruit Tree Crops**

Project extension to Sep 30, 2009 is recommended for approval.

\$145,678 FY'09 budget is recommended for approval, if funds do not become available from the National Clean Plant Network.

Comments –

- 2008 Farm Bill includes mandatory funding for NRSP-5 activities through the National Clean Plant Network.
- It appears these funds will be administered through APHIS, but it is not sure the funds will be available for FY'09, so off-the-top funding approval is needed to ensure continuation.
- If it is learned that APHIS will provide funding for FY'09 prior to the ESS meeting, the off-the-top funding request will be withdrawn.
- If APHIS provides funding during FY'09, the difference between that funding and the approved off-the-top will be returned to CSREES for redistribution to the SAES.
- One year project extension is needed to allow off-the-top funding in '09, if necessary.
- Current project terminates Sep 30, 2008.

#### **NRSP-6 – Inter-Regional Potato Introduction Project: Acquisition, classification, preservation, evaluation and distribution of potato (Solanum) germplasm**

\$110,000 FY'09 budget is recommended for approval and the National Plant Germplasm Coordinating Committee is requested to consider new ways to fund this by end of the current project.

Comments –

- Request that the National Plant Germplasm Coordinating Committee take another look at whether or not this project should be funded in some other way through the National Plant Germplasm system.
- As project is rewritten there needs to be a serious justification for off-the-top funding.
- Current project terminates Sep 30, 2010.

#### **NRSP-7 – A National Agricultural Program for Minor Use Animal Drugs**

\$325,000 FY'09 budget is recommended for approval, minus any funds made available to this project in the FY'09 federal budget.

Comments –

- Proposal for renewal of this project in 2009 will have to show substantial funding from other sources, including industry, and a plan to transition away from off-the-top funding.
- Current project terminates on Sep 30, 2009.

#### **NRSP-8 – National Animal Genome Research Program**

The renewal project from Oct 1, 2009 to Sep 30, 2013 is recommended for approval.

\$500,000 FY'09 budget is recommended for approval with the understanding that subsequent years' funding be contingent on more details regarding other funding sources supporting the NRSP-8 activities and information on efforts to obtain funding from industry and other non-public sources.

Comments –

- Need to include grants and other funding sources that support activities of this project in the FY'10 budget request to justify recommendation of this level of funding again.

- Current project terminates Sep 30, 2008.

### **NRSP\_temp101 – USDA UV-B Monitoring and Research Program: Enhancement of Network Data Products, Research Support, and National Research Collaboration**

It is recommended that this new NRSP project proposal not be approved. Any subsequent submission of this proposal should include a better justification of the activity as a NRSP, explanation of the priority need for this information and its use, and how this activity could support research on global climate change.

#### Comments –

- Discussion at the spring regional meetings resulted in the following general opinions on this project proposal:
  - West favored approval and funding
  - Northeast was not favorable because the proposal did not justify the project as a NRSP and the deliverables from the activity are not a high priority need.
  - North Central was not in favor of approving this proposal and thought it was more suited to being established as a multistate project.
  - South did not favor approval because most stations not using this data and generally thought that the data collection should be supported by other agencies.

#### **Letter to NRSP-7 Administrative Advisors**

Date: June 25, 2008

To: NRSP Administrative Advisors of Projects Terminating September 30, 2009

NRSP-7 A National Agricultural Program for Minor Use Animal Drugs

L. Garry Adams (S)  
John Baker (NC)  
Kirklyn M. Kerr (NE)  
David Thawley (W)

From: Craig Nessler, NRSP Review Committee Chair

Re: NRSP Renewal Proposal Review Process

During our recent meeting, the NRSP Review Committee discussed how it could better manage and oversee the development of NRSP renewal proposals, including the external and peer reviews and the writing committee's responses to those reviews. The following procedures during the initial review and proposal development phases were approved to accomplish this.

- External review of the NRSP project should be done in early fall one year prior to the termination date. The review needs to include both a review of current project's accomplishments and a merit and scientific (peer) review of a preliminary draft of the proposed future project.
- The draft proposal should be entered into NIMSS prior to the review so that it is available on line for the external review team.
- The external review team will be established by CSREES in consultation with the project's AAs and the NRSP-RC. Tom Bewick, the CSREES representative on the NRSP-RC ([tbewick@csrees.usda.gov](mailto:tbewick@csrees.usda.gov) or 202-401-3356), will be primary contact for this.
- Initial review should be done in August or September and cover past accomplishments and proposed future activity. Reviewer comments are sent to the NRSP AAs and the NRSP-RC.

- The NRSP writing committee will revise and complete the proposal in NIMSS and notify the NRSP-RC when the final draft is ready for final review by the external review team.
- The NRSP writing committee completes any final revisions necessary and submits the proposal as final in NIMSS no later than January 15. The NRSP writing committee and/or the Administrative Advisor will also submit by email to the NRSP-RC Chair a brief explanation of how the proposal was revised to address any significant review comments or concerns.
- During proposal development the NRSP writing committee should pay particular attention to addressing the following two sections of the NRSP Guidelines relative to off-the-top funding.
  - Paragraph V.E. Management and Business Plan

“In general, NRSPs should expect a finite period of off-the-top funding. This is not a reflection of the quality of work being conducted or the research being supported by the project. Rather, this allows the SAES system to continually assess needs and develop new projects as necessary. For this reason, the business plan of project renewals must include a transition plan and provisions for developing alternative funding or reducing off-the-top funding to a minimal level. Included would be an assessment of transition options, and alternative funding sources.

However, not all projects may be shifted to other funding sources. Projects seeking to continue with significant amount of off the top funding should fully justify the request.

The renewal application should include a critical assessment of the original plan and address any shortcomings to ensure that the project will function more smoothly or effectively in the future. The proposal must indicate what additional resources have been generated or leveraged and indicate how those and any additional resources will be continued or sought.

Note. Not all projects can be transitioned to other funding sources and, if the project meets an ESCOP priority, the project may continue with off-the-top funding.”
  - Paragraph V. H. Budget

“The NRSP team must present an annual budget for each of the five years (See Appendix F). The budget must take into account all sources of funds (Multistate Research Funds, industry, federal agencies, grants and contracts, and SAESs). There are two tables in Appendix F, one for MRF and one for Other Sources. For the SAESs, the project should estimate the in-cash and in-kind contributions. The budget narrative should provide an estimate of the per cent contribution from each funding source.”

If you have any questions about any aspect of this process, please contact me or Eric Young (Exec. Vice Chair) at [eric\\_young@ncsu.edu](mailto:eric_young@ncsu.edu) or 919-513-1746. Please see the attached NRSP Guidelines for more details on the entire process for renewal of a current NRSP.

Thank you,  
Craig Nessler