FY 2017

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE GRANT PROGRAM

PROGRAM GUIDELINES AND APPLICATION FORMS

Illinois Department of Agriculture
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ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE GRANT PROGRAM

PROGRAM GUIDELINES AND PROPOSAL APPLICATION FORMS

BACKGROUND

In the 1995 Legislative Session, the Illinois General Assembly passed Conservation 2000, a bill introduced for the development of a comprehensive and long-term approach to conserving, protecting, and managing Illinois' natural resources. In 2008 the program was extended through June 30, 2021 and renamed the Partners For Conservation Fund. Sustainable Agriculture is an important component of the Partners For Conservation Fund. As concern for the environment grows in both urban and rural areas, the Sustainable Agriculture movement will play a major role in efforts to maintain agricultural productivity and protect water quality. Sustainable Agriculture may be defined as any management system which protects the environment by holding soil erosion to tolerable limits, by keeping pollutants out of surface and groundwater, and by employing pest control strategies that are not harmful to natural systems, farmers, their neighbors or consumers.

The Sustainable Agriculture Act was signed into law in January, 1990. It called for research, demonstration and educational efforts related to Sustainable Agriculture systems. The Sustainable Agriculture (SA) Committee established by the Act, as well as the Governor's Water Resources and Land Use Priorities (WRLUP) Task Force, have both made several recommendations in published reports regarding Sustainable Agriculture. The Sustainable Agriculture component of the Partners For Conservation Fund supports the following:
- *On-Farm Research and Demonstration grants*
- *Outreach and Education grants*
- *University Research grants*

PROGRAM PURPOSES

The Illinois Department of Agriculture is seeking proposals (one year only), through its Sustainable Agriculture Grant Program to carry out research, education, and on-farm demonstration projects that address one or more of the following purposes as listed in the Sustainable Agriculture Act.

1.   To identify agricultural practices which maintain productivity and minimize environmental degradation.

2.   To relate overland runoff, sediment transport, stream flow quantity and quality, and groundwater quantity (recharge) and quality to specific agricultural practices.

3.   To integrate and coordinate experimental field and on-farm research and educational efforts of cooperating individuals, agencies, institutions, and organizations.

4.   To test and refine alternative approaches to organizing and conducting on-farm research and demonstration projects.

5.   To test the organizational approach of joint farmer/specialist development of a computerized decision support system (expert system) as an approach to fostering sustainable agriculture.

6.   To develop an expert system embodying the expertise of experienced farmers and agency, institutional, and agri-business specialists to help answer the question of what tillage and crop management system should be used in a particular field in a particular year.

7.   To test the usefulness of the existing conservation tillage knowledge base in making tillage system selection, implementation, and management decisions.

8.   To identify the most critical needs for research and educational programs related to sustainable agriculture.

COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM COMPONENTS

On-Farm Research and Demonstrations

This category is primarily for producers and farmer-based, non-profit organizations.   Projects within this category will research and/or demonstrate component practices on real working farms that investigate or characterize a sustainable agriculture system. Projects that propose innovative experimentation showing the most promise for furthering the development of a sustainable agricultural system will be accepted for funding.

Outreach and Education

Projects within this category will educate the general public about sustainable agriculture and food systems, educate farmers regarding the use of sustainable agriculture practices and alternative marketing strategies, or projects that help build credibility for sustainable agriculture issues. Examples include, but are not limited to: conducting or producing field days, workshops, publications, curriculum, scholarships, training programs, computerized data bases, press and media tours, slide shows, videos, radio/TV programs, displays, surveys, speaker bureaus and marketing activities.

University Research

This category is reserved exclusively for university or other professional researchers within agricultural industries or institutions. Successful proposals in this category will identify clear objectives that answer questions or address problems in the development of sustainable agriculture and/or food systems. Applied research that involves stakeholders (farmers) is strongly encouraged at some level. Proposals must establish clear objectives and include applied research with a summary analysis.

ELIGIBILITY

Any unit of government, organization, educational institution, non-profit group or individual is eligible to receive funding through the Sustainable Agriculture Grant Program provided they can demonstrate: (1) an understanding of sustainable agriculture practices/systems and (2) the ability/skills to carry out the project in a timely/professional manner. Cooperative projects with two or more organizations are encouraged. Successful projects should include a method to disseminate information to the agriculture community and the public. In addition, written summaries attached to project proposals should provide information on the social, economic and environmental benefits of the project. Grant Review Committee members may participate in competitive grants, but are NOT eligible to apply as an individual or as the project coordinator of an organization.

MAXIMUM GRANT AMOUNT

Competitive grants may be awarded to individuals for up to **$10,000** and units of government, non-profit groups, institutions or organizations may apply for up to **$20,000** per project in any one year. All grants are subject to annual review and appropriations by the Illinois General Assembly.

PROPOSAL REVIEW PROCESS

All proposals submitted to the Illinois Department of Agriculture will be reviewed by a committee appointed by the Director or his/her representative.

An 11 member Sustainable Agriculture Review Committee will review grant proposals and make recommendations to the Department. Committee members will represent the following agencies and organizations: Illinois Department of Agriculture, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, University of Illinois - Extension, and Sustainable Agriculture Organizations. The Committee will also include a representative from the following sectors: Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Ag Business, Farm Managers, Commodity Groups, Environmental/Consumer Groups, Universities, and one at-large member.

PROPOSAL FORMAT

Please be aware when developing your proposal that the timeline when funding becomes available can occur any time between January 1 and June 30 of 2016 so certain projects that miss their window of opportunity to begin work prior to the release of funds will have to begin the project the following year. One year proposals for research, demonstration and education projects must be typewritten, single spaced on 8½ x 11 inch paper with at least 1" minimum vertical and horizontal margins with a font size of no less than twelve (12). Staple applications in the upper left hand corner (do not use paper clips or other fasteners). Do not use plastic covers or binders. **Failure to meet format requirements will disqualify a proposal from consideration.** Mail **original and 10 copies** of the entire application (including support letters); include the following information in the order given:

    A.   **Application Form (SA 93-01)**

- Include project title, administrating organization, contact person, address/city/state/zip, telephone number, fax number, e-mail address, F.E.I.N. number, project coordinator, cooperating organizations or individuals, budget request and indicate the one funding category you choose to be considered under.

- Attach sheets to list additional cooperating agencies/organizations as needed.

    B.   **Project Objectives and Rationale** (6 single-sided pages or less)
(Project applications exceeding 6 pages of text will not be considered;
reference pages are considered part of the text).

- Description of project
     What is the goal (or goals) of the project?

- Need for the project
     Why is the project necessary?
- Plan of work

Detailed description of activity/activities and who is involved (organizations and/or individuals). Is the project a cooperative effort with other agencies, organizations, institutions or individuals? Are farmers involved? Include a project time line outlining when, who, and what work is to be completed.

- Participant experience and qualifications
  Briefly explain how each participant is qualified to carry out the proposed project.

- Intended impacts
  What are the anticipated social, economic and/or environmental impact(s)? What will be the results and benefits from the project? Will the project significantly increase the use of sustainable agriculture practices in Illinois? Quantify when possible.

- Intended outreach
  What is the extent of outreach efforts to educate and inform the public of project results and/or benefits? Are the results relevant for others to apply to their operations? Quantify when possible. Example: Conduct 2 field days with estimated 160 in total attendance.

C. Project Budget

- Complete attached project budget form (SA 93-03)
  (Note: No funding will be provided for land or major equipment purchases such as farm machinery, computer hardware, buildings, GIS Systems, permanent fencing, vehicles or livestock). No funding will be provided for food.

- A budget narrative (two pages maximum) should be included to explain expenses in more detail. Please describe and include sources of matching funds.

- Administrative expenses relating to the grant may be claimed up to 10% of the total grant request. Expenses incurred above 10% should be shown as matching funds.

- Matching funds can be cash, materials, in-kind such as salary or other contributions from cooperating individuals or organizations.

- Farmers receiving $600 or more in a calendar year must be provided a 1099 tax form by January 31 and the IRS no later than February 28. If you have any questions about whether a 1099 is required you should contact the IRS. (It is the responsibility of the organization that received the grant to submit the 1099 forms to the farmers and the IRS).

- Identify other funding sources applied for (e.g., SARE).

- University of Illinois rules prevent outside agencies from using U of I employees as match (check with other organizations for eligibility before using them as match).

D.   Interim, Final Reporting Overview:

- Reports are due on **December 30, 2017 and December 30, 2018** unless otherwise detailed in the grant agreement. (Report content requirements overview will be sent to project coordinators of successful grants). Budget reports are also required December 30, 2017 and December 30, 2018. **NO TIME EXTENSION WILL BE GIVEN TO COMPLETE PROJECTS/REPORTS. Uncompleted projects will be subject to grant recovery by the Department.**

- **A minimum of 6 digital pictures are required to be submitted with the final report.**

E.   Attachments:

- Cooperative projects should include letters of support from cooperating organizations essential to the success of the project. Letters must be included with the application and not mailed separately. Allow plenty of time to get your letters prior to the deadline so they can be included.

- Do not include any additional attachments to the proposal. Cover letters, pictures, news articles, etc. will not be used by the review committee for consideration.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

The Sustainable Agriculture Review Committee and the Department shall consider each project for funding based on its objectives, cost, plan of work, cooperation with appropriate agencies and organizations, the social, economic and environmental impacts, availability of funds, outreach efforts and whether it addresses the purposes as described in the Act.

Project Objectives

Are the objectives of the project clearly stated? Do the objectives address sustainable agriculture research and education needs? Does the applicant have the ability to carry out the objectives in a timely and professional manner?

Project Cost

Is the projected budget and associated costs of the project reasonable and detailed? What is the extent of matching funds contributed by the applicant and others?

Plan of Work

Is the plan of work detailed? Is the timeline realistic and detailed? Are activities listed in logical order? Are new or innovative approaches being used? To what extent are the planned items achievable?

Cooperative Efforts

Is the project a cooperative effort with other agencies, organizations, institutions, or individuals? Are there farmers involved? Are necessary letters from cooperating organizations included?

Impacts

> Are social, economic and environmental impacts clearly stated and what is their magnitude? Will the project significantly increase the use of sustainable agriculture practices in Illinois?

Outreach

> What is the extent of outreach efforts to educate and inform the public of project results and/or benefits? Are the results relevant for farmers to apply to their operations?

GRANT REQUIREMENTS

Following the review and selection of proposals by the Sustainable Agriculture Review Committee, all applicants will be notified by letter whether their project has been funded. The Illinois Department of Agriculture will enter into a written grant agreement with successful applicants. The grant agreement specifies the terms and conditions of the grant including project duration, funding amount, payment schedule, and other necessary administrative or statutory requirements.

PROGRAM TIMETABLE

July 1, 2016	-	Request for new proposals announced.
October 15, 2016	-	New proposals for funding must be received by the Department.
December, 2016	-	New applications prioritized [Section 750.40(b)1] by Sustainable Agriculture Review Committee. Qualified organizations notified by Department of project approval. **(Provided funding is available)**
January, 2017	-	Meetings held to discuss grant expectations, reporting requirements. Grant Agreements signed.
Subject to Funds Availability	-	Allocation of approved funds sent to grant recipients.
December 30, 2017	-	Interim progress report must be received by the Department. (Late reports will jeopardize funding.) Budget report is required on all projects.
December 30, 2018	-	Detailed final report summarizing the project received by the Department**. (Included with the final report shall be a minimum of six digital images that pertain to the grant project accomplishments.)** Two written copies and one electronic copy of the report are required. **(Late or uncompleted reports will jeopardize future funding.) NO TIME EXTENSIONS WILL BE GIVEN TO COMPLETE PROJECTS/REPORTS.**

FY 2017
ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE   **Application number**
SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE GRANT PROGRAM
_____
PROPOSAL APPLICATION FORM (SA-93-01)   Office use only

PROJECT TITLE: _____

_____

ADMINISTRATING ORGANIZATION:_____

CONTACT PERSON: _____

ADDRESS/CITY/STATE/ZIP:_____

TELEPHONE:_____ FAX:_____

E-MAIL ADDRESS:_____ F.E.I.N. NUMBER: _____

PROJECT COORDINATOR: _____

ADDRESS/CITY/STATE/ZIP_____

TELEPHONE_____ EMAIL_____

COOPERATING AGENCIES/ORGANIZATIONS/INDIVIDUALS: Attach agency/organization letters of support.

NAME:_____

ADDRESS/CITY/STATE/ZIP: _____

DESCRIBE INVOLVEMENT: _____
                  (USE A SEPARATE SHEET TO LIST ADDITIONAL PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR
INVOLVEMENT.)

BUDGET REQUEST (One Year Only)   MATCHING FUNDS   TOTAL BUDGET

TOTAL $**_____   **$_____ $_____

Select **one** appropriate category that represents the purpose for the project and the grant category for which the project is to be considered.

_____ 1. On-Farm Research or Demonstration _____ 2. Outreach and Education _____ 3. University Research

Mail original and 10 copies of the entire application to: Illinois Department of Agriculture
                                                               Bureau of Land and Water Resources
                                                               State Fairgrounds, P.O. Box 19281
                                                               Springfield, Illinois 62794-9281
                              UPS Address: 801 Sangamon Avenue, Springfield, IL 62702

Proposals must be received by 4:30 p.m. -October 15, 2016 (fax copies will not be accepted)

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PROJECT PROPOSAL BUDGET FORM (SA 93-03)

Personal Services (Salaries & Benefits)	REQUEST	MATCHING	TOTAL
Name			
_____	$_____	$_____	$_____
_____	$_____	$_____	$_____
_____	$_____	$_____	$_____
_____	$_____	$_____	$_____
Travel Expenses (state rates apply)	$_____	$_____	$_____
Office Supplies/Expenses (I.e. telephone, postage. etc.)	$_____	$_____	$_____
Rented or leased equipment (cannot be purchased)	$_____	$_____	$_____
Printing/Photo Copying	$_____	$_____	$_____
Tour/Field Days (excluding food)	$_____	$_____	$_____
Additional Misc. Expenses (list)			
_____	$_____	$_____	$_____
_____	$_____	$_____	$_____
_____	$_____	$_____	$_____
_____	$_____	$_____	$_____
_____	$_____	$_____	$_____
_____	$_____	$_____	$_____
_____	$_____	$_____	$_____
_____	$_____	$_____	$_____
_____	$_____	$_____	$_____
PROJECT TOTALS:	**$_____**	**$_____**	**$_____**