

Program Background

The Michigan Soybean Promotion Committee (MSPC) has been administering programs in the areas of soybean research, education, and market development since a grower approved assessment program became effective in 1976.

Headquartered in Frankenmuth, the Committee is governed by a seven member board of soybean producers representing seven distinct soybean producing districts as defined in the 1976 approved referendum and subsequently amended. This board directs the program for which these Proposal's are being solicited. Any project approved and administered by the MSPC shall be conducted in accordance with the Soybean Promotion, Research and Consumer Information Act, P.L. 101-624 and with the Soybean Promotion and Research order, 7 CFR Part 1220 by virtue of the MSPC being appointed by the United States Department of Agriculture to administer the federal program in Michigan. Through the years, the MSPC has strived to act on behalf of our states nearly 11,000 soybean producers to solicit worthy projects designed to accomplish our MISSION – *increasing producer profit opportunities while enhancing a positive public image of the soybean industry.*

Purpose

The Michigan Soybean Promotion Committee invites the submission of Proposals in the described priority areas as listed on page 5.

Objectives

With this *Request for Proposal* solicitation, our objective is to not only invite the submission of proposals but to effectively select those proposals most directly addressing our industry's needs while properly administering the program through project completion and follow-up. These funds should not replace other sources of funding; rather, should be used as "seed money" to generate and leverage other sources of funds to expand efforts on behalf of the Michigan soybean producer.

Procedures

Please do not exceed three pages total with the narrative being brief but concise and written for review by non-technical reviewers. This will allow the review committee to more easily judge those proposals deemed most appropriate while not overburdening principal investigators with the development of an extensive proposal before some degree of funding assurance. Principal investigators submitting Proposals which are selected as likely candidates for funding **may** be asked to submit additional details to allow for funding consideration. Highest priority will be given to proposals addressing the most pressing needs of our industry which exhibit collaboration across departments/disciplines as well as creativity for leveraging soybean funding.

Reference the attached Proposal format and transfer headlines and other requested items to your own proposal with details as requested. To assist in your proposal preparation, an electronic version of our RFP can be accessed at www.michigansoybean.org and select the research link.

Confidential/ Proprietary Information

Proposals will be considered confidential/proprietary information and will be made available only to the MSPC board members and those reviewers pertinent to the project selection process and on a confidential basis.

Proposals submitted in response to this solicitation are subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Pages containing confidential/proprietary information must be clearly marked.

Proposal Submission

12 copies of all Proposals capable of entry into a 3-ring binder and the *CD-ROM or flash drive* should be submitted no later than November 14, 2011 to:

Keith Reinholt, Field Operations Director
Michigan Soybean Promotion Committee
PO Box 287/140 W Tuscola Street
Frankenmuth, MI 48734

Note that an electronic proposal submission will not be accepted.

Include a proposal cover sheet (format attached), which includes an abstract of the proposal along with a *CD-ROM or flash drive* containing your proposal saved on Microsoft Word 2003 or Microsoft Word 2007.

For questions regarding the RFP process, please contact our Frankenmuth office at phone 989/652-3294 or e-mail reinholt@michigansoybean.org. Acceptance of any proposal by the MSPC shall not impose any obligations on the MSPC or entitle the requestor to any financial compensation or reimbursement for cost incurred in producing, assembling, or providing the proposal to the MSPC.

Funding Attributes

The MSPC will fund all approved projects in three segments. 25% of the total grant will be provided upon the execution of the Project Award to allow the project initiation. Upon the completion of an acceptable mid project review, 50% of the grant will be provided. The final portion of the grant will be provided upon the receipt of a general project expenditure itemization and the submission of an acceptable final report. Should the summary of the projects total expenditures be less than the approved budgeted amount, the provided grant amount will reflect reported expenditures. MSPC funding payments will be in the form of a check written payable to the sponsoring organization for their deposit into an appropriate project account. **The MSPC grant program makes no provision for funding indirect costs.** Prior to initiating the funding, a completed *Project Award* referenced in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) must be on file by both organizations. If an MOU does not exist with your organization, this contract document must be developed and implemented before project initiation.

Potential Funding Available

Supported projects in 2011 resulted in 24 projects funded in an amount exceeding \$600,000. We are funded through a system inter-related with the soybean crop size and price. With such uncertainty, we can only estimate a similar level of funding will be available in 2012.

Selection Process and Timeline

After reviewing all Proposals, the MSPC will select those deemed most applicable and request additional documentation as needed. All principal investigators will be notified when the screening process is complete by early 2012. The following timetable (though approximate) is pertinent to Proposal submission through final proposal approval:

- November 14, 2011 is Proposal submission deadline
- January 1, 2012 invitation for further written documentation of proposal (if needed)
- January 15, 2012 invitation to personally address proposal before the Committee (if needed)
- March 31, 2012 final approval of proposals to receive funding

As indicated, the MSPC will meet in early 2012 to hear oral comments on all new projects under funding consideration that may require responses to varying questions.

Should any proposal not be funded, it will be kept on file for a period of one year for possible reconsideration should additional funds become available during this time frame.

The final funding decision will be the responsibility of the directors of the MSPC who also reserve the right to refuse any proposal that does not comply with these guidelines or contains budgeted amounts in excess of our program scope.

Selection Criteria

Proposals must specifically address the 9 targeted areas as listed on page 5, be submitted by the indicated deadline of November 14, 2011 and be presented in the proper format.

With limited financial resources, very few projects are funded in excess of \$25,000 and any indication of leveraged funding is a positive.

Proposals are normally distributed to our board for review and to selected peer review based on proposal content. A point scoring system is not used; instead, grower knowledge of pertinent needs and the ability of individual proposals to meet a critical need within the proposal format is part of the selection criteria.

Projects of a continuing nature will receive priority only if adequate progress is exhibited and reported to our board in a timely manner.

Follow-up Requirements

Communication between the principal investigator and the MSPC will be ongoing through project completion and evaluation. Through such communication, a reporting time frame will be developed. The MSPC expects at least one written **and** oral mid project report as well as both written and oral final reports. The mid project report need not contain a detailed listing of expenditures, but a general knowledge of up to date expenditures is expected. The final report containing a verbal description must be complete with graphs, tables, etc. as well as the requirement of a research abstract (no more than two pages in length) suitable for placing on a database for quick, easy referencing. In addition, a general project itemization of expenditures with a final project billing from your organizational department handling such accounting is needed before the final portion of the grant will be provided.

The MSPC strongly believes that project completion is not an end in itself. A continued effort is needed to see that all project results of an applied nature are returned to our grower investors for use in increasing soybean producers' profit opportunities.

Unique Provisions

INDIRECT COSTS:

No funds for indirect costs (overhead) will be provided; therefore, proposed budgets should not contain a budgeted amount for this line item.

NON EXPENDABLE PROPERTY:

Acquisition of non-expendable property, such as equipment, has special provisions requiring the submission of a separate, supplemental proposal setting forth in detail an explanation of the application of such property to the success of the proposed project.

**Priority RFP
Areas for
Consideration
In 2012**

To support our *strategic objectives*, we have targeted the following 9 areas for particular focus in 2012. The list is random with no particular order of importance. Please indicate in your Proposal the specific area your research will address. Eventual funding will focus on and be evaluated upon the projects ability to contribute to the success of these priority areas.

1. Applied research in the ever changing area of weed management for an effective, cost competitive environment enabling Michigan producers to remain globally competitive.
2. Practical research in the areas of white mold, nematode, aphids, brown stem rot, soybean rust, sudden death syndrome **or other** viruses/diseases/insects responsible for decreasing producer profits.
3. Development of water management/tillage/cropping practices/soil amendment and/or alternative production systems to address the agronomics and resultant information dissemination of soybean production for assisting Michigan producers to increase soybean profit opportunities.
4. Basic and applied research in the area of soybean germplasm enhancement relevant to the production of soybeans in Michigan's unique environment.
5. Composition research directly leading to positive changes in: protein, oil, desirable fatty acids, enzymes, amino acids, etc. without a corresponding decrease in yield/other desirable traits.
6. Development of processes or applications leading to increased usage of soybean/products for animal applications with an emphasis on leveraged, multi commodity group involvement with a science based environmental approach to solving the livestock challenges that is fair and unbiased and that allows for livestock industry's growth.
7. Development of processes or applications leading to increased usage of soybean/products for industrial manufacturing application and/or programs designed to gain greater market penetration into existing industrial markets where soybean products can offer tangible benefits (generally considered non-food use).
8. Development of processes or applications leading to increased usage of soybean/products for food applications; including, potential health related issues/applications.
9. The development, promotion, testing, interaction, cooperation, etc. of areas of discipline needed to enhance Michigan's unique position as the "first choice" provider of soybeans/soybean products used for Human Consumption.

Application Requirements For Proposal Submission

As indicated elsewhere in this RFP, you can access an electronic format for your proposal preparation at www.michigansoybean.org and select the research link.

Each Proposal submitted to the MSPC based on this RFP should contain the following four supporting documents:

1. An MSPC *Proposal Cover Sheet* which includes a brief abstract of the proposal (format attached).

2. Your Proposal should include the following information preferable on no more than three pages:

Project Title: One description sentence

Participating PI's/Co PI's: Identify all PI/Co PI's project participants.

MSPC Priority Area to which this Proposal responds: List corresponding number and/or description.

Background: Describe in sufficient detail the area/issue being addressed and its application to the soybean industry.

Objectives: List short, concise, focused objective statements, with a rationale or justification for each. Such rationale may include potential environmental, biological, economic and/or social consequences of the resulting project.

Procedures: This category should include methods used and, where appropriate, a timetable for the completion of each objective listed.

Evaluation: Briefly explain what results will be expected at the mid-point and at the end of the project as well as how these results will be reported to the Committee so they can evaluate the project's progress.

Soybean Industry Benefits: How will our industry benefit? What is the potential impact and on whom? Suggestions on how to inform producers of results of this new research to increase profit opportunities would be valued.

Signatures Required: Where applicable the Proposals should contain the signatures of BOTH the Principle Investigator and the Department Chairperson.

3. A detailed Budget Plan based on the suggested annual budget matrix table included with the RFP and containing salaries/benefits, supplies, travel, publications, etc. and showing, where applicable, other sources of funds to be leveraged with the soybean grant.

4. A *CD-ROM or flash drive* containing your proposal saved on Microsoft Word 2003 or Microsoft Word 2007.