

Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA)/Strategic Agricultural Initiative Grant Program: FY2005 Request for Proposals

OVERVIEW INFORMATION:

- 1. Federal Agency Name:** U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 9, Agriculture Office, Strategic Agricultural Initiative.
- 2. Funding Opportunity Title:** Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA)/Strategic Agriculture Initiative Grant Program: FY2005 Request for Proposals.
- 3. Announcement Type:** Second Announcement for Fiscal Year 2005.
- 4. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:** 66.716, Surveys, Studies, Demonstrations, Educational Outreach, and Special Projects within the Office of Prevention, Pesticides, and Toxic Substances.
- 5. Statutory Authority:** Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), Section 20.
- 6. Date:** All proposals must be **received by 5:00 p.m. Pacific Standard Time (PST) on August 8, 2005.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

EPA Region 9 is soliciting proposals to help implement the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) and to support efforts by the agricultural community to “transition” away from high risk pesticides to lower risk pesticides and sustainable practices in food production. The program supports grants for education, extension, demonstration, and implementation projects for FQPA transition and reduced-risk practices for pest management in agriculture.

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Authority

EPA expects to award grants under the authority provided in FIFRA section 20 which authorizes the Agency to issue grants or cooperative agreements for research, public education, training, monitoring, demonstration and studies. Regulations governing these cooperative agreements are found at 40 CFR part 30 for institutions of higher education, colleges and universities, and non-profit organizations; and 40 CFR part 31 for States and local governments. In addition, the provisions in 40 CFR part 32, governing government wide debarment and suspension; and the provisions in 40 CFR part 34, regarding restrictions on lobbying apply. All costs incurred under this program must be allowable under the applicable OMB Cost Circulars: A-87 (States and local governments), A-122 (nonprofit organizations), or A-21 (universities). Copies of these circulars can be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/>. In accordance with EPA policy and the OMB circulars, as appropriate, any recipient of funding must agree not to use assistance

funds for lobbying, fund-raising, or political activities (e.g., lobbying members of Congress or lobbying for other Federal grants, cooperative agreements or contracts). See 40 CFR part 34.

B. Program Description

1. *Purpose and Scope* - The purpose of the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) Strategic Agricultural Initiative (SAI) Grant Program is to help implement FQPA and support “transition” efforts by growers to more environmentally-sound pest management practices. The program supports grants for education, extension, demonstration and implementation projects for FQPA transition and reduced-risk practices for pest management in agriculture. Priority is placed on project proposals that include a “whole systems” approach by integrating pest, soil, and crop management practices, address an array of commodities, focus on sustainable agriculture, incorporate conservation planning, and are submitted by applicants that have a proven track record of grower participation and adoption of sustainable pest management practices. Successful applicants will also have an outreach and extension component to their program. “Sustainable” agriculture refers to farming practices that are environmentally sound, economically viable, and socially responsible.

2. *Goals and Objectives* - The goals of the FQPA Strategic Agriculture Initiative are:

- Utilize demonstration projects, outreach, and/or education to increase the adoption of reduced-risk/integrated pest management (IPM) practices that provide alternatives to the use of highly toxic pesticides and/or pesticides impacted negatively by FQPA decisions.
- Encourage partnerships between producers, commodity groups, scientists, extension, local/state/federal government agencies, and other stakeholders to demonstrate, promote, and utilize reduced-risk/IPM practices in the field.
- Actively engage scientists, producers, industry, and local/state/federal partners in the specifics of implementing FQPA.
- Measure and document the effects of using the reduced-risk/IPM programs on the environment, human health and community.
- Facilitate a sustainable whole farm systems approach that utilizes conservation planning and reduced-risk/IPM practices.
- Demonstrate region-specific pest management practices and integrated crop management systems to replace pesticide uses which may be cancelled under FQPA.

C. Background

The Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA), passed by Congress in 1996, establishes health-based standards for pesticide residues in raw and processed food. It is intended to

protect public health from exposure to pesticides and to create an environment favorable for the development and adoption of lower risk, effective crop protection tools for U.S. agriculture. The EPA, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and numerous agricultural organizations are working on efforts to implement the FQPA. For this effort, EPA established regional programs for FQPA implementation and partnership activities to reduce risks and use of pesticides in agriculture. For more background information on FQPA, visit the EPA website at www.epa.gov/oppfead1/fqpa/.

D. FQPA/SAI Linkage to EPA Strategic Plan and Anticipated Outcomes/Outputs

1. *Linkage to EPA Strategic Plan/GPRA Architecture.* These assistance agreements will support EPA Strategic Plan Goal 4 - Healthy Communities and Ecosystems; Objective 4.1 - Chemical, Organism and Pesticide Risk; Program/Project 92 - Field Programs.

2. *Outcomes.* Through this grant program, EPA expects to: 1) increase the number of growers using reduced-risk/IPM tools and techniques; 2) measure quantitative and qualitative benefits to human health, the environment, and communities; and 3) support partnerships between crop producers, EPA, other federal/state/local agencies, and other interested stakeholders to implement reduced-risk/IPM programs and to leverage funds from other sources to increase the scope of the FQPA/SAI program.

3. *Outputs.* The anticipated outputs of these projects include: 1) educational and outreach materials for growers; 2) conservation plans for growers that include reduced-risk pest management; 3) conferences, seminars, and on-site field training; and 4) partnerships established between federal and non-federal programs to provide reduced-risk/IPM programs for crop producers.

II. Award Information

A. Amount of Funding Available

The EPA Region 9 Strategic Agricultural Initiative anticipates having approximately **\$92,000** in 2005 to award to eligible applicants. Projects up to **\$92,000** will be considered for funding. Proposals applying for more than \$92,000 will not be considered for funding and will be eliminated from the grant competition. Indirect cost rates must be included in the \$92,000 maximum funding amount. Costs incurred prior to the grant award will not be reimbursed. Should additional funding become available for award, the Agency may award additional grants based on this solicitation in accordance with the final selection process and agency policy, and without further notice of competition, so long as the additional award selections are made within four months of the original selection decisions.

B. Funding Type

The funding for selected projects is in the form of a grant awarded under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), Section 20.

C. Total Number of Awards

The number of awards will depend on individual proposal costs and the total final amount of Federal funding available. Proposals to supplement existing projects are eligible to compete with proposals for new awards.

D. Start Date/Project Duration

Award funds for the selected proposals will be available December 2005. Funding may be used for **up to two years** from the time that the grants are awarded. Awards do not require matching funds.

E. Disclaimer

EPA Reserves the right to reject all proposals and make no awards.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Grant funds are available to public and private non-profit organizations, including commodity groups/associations, farmers groups, individual farmers, State agencies, Tribes, local governments, universities and colleges. For-profit organizations are not eligible; however, ineligible groups are encouraged to work with an eligible organization to submit proposals. The project(s) to be awarded under this competition must be performed in EPA Region 9, which includes California, Nevada, Arizona, Hawaii and the Pacific Trust Islands.

B. Eligible Proposals

In addition to what is stated in A above, in order to be eligible for awards, proposals must:

1. Address one or more of the *Goals and Objectives* of the FQPA/SAI program listed above in Section I.B.2. of this announcement.
2. Support implementation projects, which **may include** a *component* for *applied on-farm research*, as long as they also have *demonstration, education and/or outreach* activities. Proposals that involve basic research will not be considered.
3. Request funding for \$92,000 or less. Proposals requesting more than \$92,000 will not be considered for award.

Proposals that do not meet all of the threshold eligibility factors described in A and B above will not be considered for funding.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Content and Format of Proposal

All proposals must be limited to 12 pages and contain the information described below, using a 12 point font. Any pages in excess of 12 will not be reviewed. **One original hard paper copy and one electronic copy** (CD, 3.5”disk, or e-mail attachment) **are required.**

All proposals must contain the following:

1. **Cover Page** (Page 1). The cover page should list the following information:

Project Title:

Project Coordinator:

Organization Name and Address:

Telephone No.: Fax No.: Email Address:

Project Duration (including Starting Date and Ending Date):

First Year Funding Request:

Second Year Funding Request, if applicable:

Total Funding Request:

Please indicate if this proposal is a continuation of a previously EPA funded project.
Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please provide the following:

EPA Assistance Number: _____

Budget Period of Project: _____

2. **Executive Summary** (*recommended maximum two pages*). The Executive Summary should be a stand alone document containing the specifics of what is proposed and what you expect to accomplish regarding measuring or movement toward achieving project goals. This summary should identify the measurable environmental results you expect including potential human health and ecological benefits.

3. **Proposal Narrative and Workplan** (*recommended maximum of five pages*). Include a well-conceived workplan that is realistic and appropriate to achieving the identified objectives, and addresses each of the selection criteria listed in Section V. This should include a brief background on the main issues or challenges, specific objectives, main activities, and expected outcomes and deliverables. Include the project area, and a timeline.

4. **Performance Measures and Expected Outcomes.** (*recommended maximum two pages*). The workplan should also include performance measures that demonstrate the progress or environmental benefits of the project. Include specific milestones. How will you measure

improvements to human health, the ecosystem, or quality of life? Pick two or three measures from the SAI Toolbox (<http://www.aftresearch.org/sai> (SAI Grant Applicants, Performance Measures).

In addition to performance measures listed in Section V (Selection Criteria), all project proposals and reports (progress and final) must include the following four **mandatory elements** for reporting of project measures:

- B Number of acres likely to be impacted by the project;
- B Current level of pest management and the level that is expected to be achieved at the end of the project based on the SAI Transition Index (<http://www.aftresearch.org/sai> (SAI Grant Applicants).
- B Percent reduction or pound per acre reduction expected in the use of highly toxic active ingredients and/or pesticide products;
- B Evidence that applicant expects to partner with others and/or encourage favorable attention to the project with media releases or other outreach activities.

5. *Budget/Resources (recommended maximum two pages)*. Please submit a detailed budget with your proposal, linking the cost of each objective with the budget. Include information on other funding sources (leveraged funds), if any. Describe how leveraged resources will be obtained and what role EPA funding will play in the overall project.

6. *Programmatic Capability. (recommended maximum one page)*. Applicants are required to submit information in the proposal that addresses the programmatic (technical) capability ranking factor identified in Section V of this announcement. In conducting the programmatic capability evaluation, the Agency will consider the information submitted by the applicant as well as relevant information from other sources including Agency files. Include the qualifications and background of the main people or organizations involved as an attachment. Also include letters of support from growers or other partners/collaborators, specifying their contribution in project implementation.

B. Submission of Grant Proposals

Applicants must submit a hard copy of their proposal along with an electronic version in Word Perfect or MS Word on a 3.5" disk, CD, or as an attachment via e-mail. Send or deliver all proposals to:

Cindy Wire
Agriculture Program, Strategic Agricultural Initiative
US EPA, Region 9 (CED-1)
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105
e-mail address: wire.cindy@epa.gov

All proposals must be **received by 5:00 p.m. Pacific Standard Time (PST) on August 8, 2005**. Proposals received after this date will not be reviewed.

C. Confidential Business Information

In accordance with 40 CFR 2.203, applicants may claim all or a portion of their application/proposal as confidential business information. EPA will evaluate confidentiality claims in accordance with 40 CFR Part 2. Applicants must clearly mark applications/proposals or portions of applications/proposals they claim as confidential. If no claim of confidentiality is made, EPA is not required to make the inquiry to the applicant otherwise required by 40 CFR 2.204(c)(2) prior to disclosure.

D. Intergovernmental Review

Applicants must comply with the Intergovernmental Review Process and/or consultation provisions of Executive Order 12372 or Section 204 of the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act, if applicable, which are contained in 40 CFR Part 29. Further information regarding this requirement will be provided if your proposal is selected for funding.

E. Funding Restrictions

Award will not allow for the reimbursement of pre-award costs. Indirect cost rates will not increase the \$92,000 maximum funding amount.

Allowable Costs: EPA grant funds may only be used for the purposes set forth in the grant agreement, and must be consistent with the statutory authority for the award. Grant funds may not be used for matching funds for other Federal grants, lobbying, or intervention in Federal regulatory or adjudicatory proceedings. In addition, Federal funds may not be used to sue the Federal government or any other government entity. All costs identified in the budget must conform to applicable Federal Cost Principles contained in OMB Circular A-87; A-122; and A-21, as appropriate.

V. Proposal Review and Selection Criteria

A. Proposal Review

All proposals will first be reviewed for threshold eligibility purposes (see Section III) by the Region 9 SAI coordinator. Eligible proposals will then be evaluated by a panel of EPA staff using the selection criteria listed below.

B. Selection Criteria (Total 100 points)

1. Program focuses on sustainable agriculture and uses conservation planning and a whole systems approach. Proposals will be evaluated based on: (i) The description of the program's approach to methods for grower participation and adoption of sustainable pest management practices, along with applied research

- and extension program components, and; (ii) The extent that a “whole systems” approach to pest management is encouraged. The project should strive to integrate pest, soil, crop, and water management practices. **(10 points)**
2. *Importance of project in relation to FQPA.* Proposals will be evaluated based on the extent that they address critical pest management issues relative to FQPA and are consistent with the goals of the FQPA Strategic Agriculture Initiative. Projects must focus on actual results, getting information and agricultural practices into the hands of growers who actually use them to shift away from FQPA-targeted pesticides to other methods of pest management. **(15 points)**
 3. *Commodity and region-wide significance and degree of transferability to other areas.* Proposals will be evaluated based on the extent they address agricultural commodity pest problems, discuss critical pest management issues (explaining the importance of the project and the commodity) and address how the agricultural practice and reduced-risk tools could be adapted to other locations with similar cropping systems. **(10 points)**
 4. *On-farm demonstration with active roles for multiple grower participation.* Proposals will be evaluated based on the extent of their partnerships and the participation of growers as part of the project activities. Cooperation with scientists, extension officers, pest control advisors, other non-profit organizations, and other partners is encouraged. Letters of support from collaborators, indicating their contributions to the project, should be provided for this factor. **(10 points)**
 5. *Clearly stated and measurable objectives.* Proposals will be evaluated based on their clarity and ability to explain the project objectives and the degree to which the proposed project will: (i) Reduce or eliminate the use of highly toxic pesticides; and (ii) Increase farmers’ adoption of reduced-risk alternatives and/or sustainable integrated pest or crop management methods. Include a clear explanation of the methods (both qualitative and quantitative) that will be used to measure progress and impacts. Measures of success should be linked to reduction of pesticide use/risks, implementation of alternative agricultural practices, and/or similar impacts. **(10 points)**
 6. *Environmental Measurement/Outcomes* (Medium and Long-term outcomes) Projects will be evaluated on their likelihood of achieving predicted environmental results, expected outcomes, project goals, and produce on-the-ground, quantifiable environmental change. Is a description of expected outcomes included? Does the proposal include two to three performance measures that can be tracked throughout the project? These measures can be Adirect@ or Asurrogate@ measures. Direct measures identify actual environmental changes occurring with IPM adoption. In contrast, surrogate measures identify changes in strategies or behavior that should lead to environmental changes. Special consideration will be given to those partnering with agencies or organizations already monitoring environmental quality in the project area.

To identify appropriate project performance measures, choose from the measures listed in the Strategic Agriculture Initiative Toolbox located at <http://www.aftresearch.org/sai/> (SAI Grant Applicants, Performance Measures). If you choose to use unique performance measures other than those listed in the Toolbox, they must be clearly described and submitted as part of the proposal. If your project is selected for funding, measures included in your proposal may be subject to negotiation. Be sure to describe the method you will use to attain data to support the measures indicated.

Does the proposal also include: (i) number of acres likely to be impacted by the project; (ii) current level of pest management and the level that is expected to be achieved at the end of the project based on the SAI Transition Index <http://www.aftresearch.org/sai/> (SAI Grant Applicants); and (iii) percent reduction or pound per acre reduction expected in the use of highly toxic active ingredients and/or pesticide products. **(15 points)**

7. *Outreach/Use of extension to enhance the likelihood of grower adoption.* Proposals will be evaluated to the extent that there are clear plans for extension; outreach or communications that will likely lead to effective learning and adoption of new practices, and how the long term, sustainable adoption will be measured. **(10 points)**
8. *Programmatic Capability (Technical Experience)/Qualification and experience of the applicant relative to the proposed project and involvement of key institutions and stakeholders.* Proposals will be evaluated based on the applicant's: (i) past performance in successfully completing federally and/or non-federally funded projects similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project; (ii) a history of meeting reporting requirements on prior or current assistance agreements with federal and/or non-federal organizations and submitting acceptable final technical reports; (iii) organizational experience and ability to plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the project; and (iv) staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the project. **(10 points)**
9. *Project Utilizes Leveraging (Funding and Partnerships).* Applicants will be evaluated based on the extent they demonstrate (i) how they will coordinate the use of EPA funding with other Federal and/or non Federal sources of funds to leverage additional resources to carry out the proposed project(s) and/or (ii) that EPA funding will compliment activities relevant to the proposed project(s) carried out by the applicant with other sources of funds or resources. Applicants may use their own funds or other resources for a voluntary match or cost share if the standards of 40CFR 30.23 or 40 CFR 31.24, as applicable, are met. Only eligible and allowable costs may be used for matches or cost shares. Other Federal grants

may not be used as matches or cost shares without specific statutory authority (e.g. HUD's Community Development Block Grants). **(10 points)**

VI. Award Administration Process

A. Award Decisions and Formal Application Process

Decisions on the grants are expected to be made by August 8, 2005 and applicants will be notified within the following week. If your proposal is selected for funding, you will need to complete a formal application for Federal funding. An application kit containing financial and administrative forms and general information on Federal grants will be mailed to award recipients. Blank application forms may also be obtained electronically at: <http://www.epa.gov/earth1r6/6md/grants.htm> . Required forms include an SF 424 and SF424A Budget Sheet. EPA staff will be available for assistance in completing the forms. It is anticipated that the **formal application will be due by Close of Business on September 7, 2005.**

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

The award and administration of these grants will be governed by the Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to states, tribes, and local governments set forth at 40 CFR Part 31. Grants awarded pursuant to this solicitation are subject to the regulations for "Environmental Program Grants" set forth at the 40 CFR Part 35, subpart B. In addition, the provision in 40 CFR Part 32 governing government-wide debarment and suspension, and the provisions in 40 CFR Part 40 regarding restrictions on lobbying apply.

Award recipients must have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number on their formal SF-424 application form. A DUNS number can be obtained by calling 1-866-705-5711. A DUNS number is not required until the full application is submitted.

All costs incurred under this program must be allowable under the applicable OMB Cost Circular A-87. Copies of this circular can be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars>. In accordance with the EPA policy and the OMB circular, any recipient of funding must agree not to use assistance funds for fund-raising, or political activities such as lobbying members of Congress or lobbying for other federal grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts. See 40 CFR Part 40.

Nonprofit applicants that are recommended for funding under this announcement will be subject to pre-award administrative capability reviews consistent with Sections 8.b,8.c, and 9.d of EPA Order 5700.8, 'EPA Policy on Assessing Capabilities of Non-Profit Applicants for Managing Assistance Awards'. Nonprofit applicants that qualify for funding may, depending on the size of the award, be required to fill out and submit to

the Grants Management Office the Administrative Capability Form, with supporting documents, contained in Appendix A of EPA Order 5700.8.

C. Reporting

The selected grant recipients will be asked to complete at least one progress report after the grant is awarded, and a final report within 90 days following the end of the grant period. Progress reports should address the status of all of the objectives and activities in the proposal, environmental impacts measured/observed, and a statement of expenses. Quarterly Financial Status Reports (FSRs) will also be required.

D. Dispute Resolution Process

Grant competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005) which can be found at <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20051800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2005/05-1271.htm>.

Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting the Regional SAI contact, Cindy Wire, via e-mail at wire.cindy@epa.gov, or by phone at 415-947-4242.

VII. Agency Contacts

If you have questions or need additional information regarding this FQPA/Strategic Agricultural Initiative RFP, please contact:

Cindy Wire, EPA Region 9 Agriculture Program, Strategic Agricultural Initiative, phone: (415) 947-4242, e-mail: wire.cindy@epa.gov