

The amount of funding for this program is currently unknown and therefore all or part of this RFA is subject to change depending on the economic situation and the amount of Hatch funds received from the federal government

**AAES Production Agriculture Research Funding Program (PAR)
Request for Applications (RFA)
Submission Deadline: February 15, 2017**

The purpose of this Production Agriculture Research (PAR) funding program is to provide funds to conduct research that address critical needs relevant to Alabama agriculture. Proposals submitted for the PAR program must have the following components:

- a) Address a problem that is relevant to Alabama agriculture (including forestry and related industries).
- b) Address the means by which proposed activities will enhance commodity specific or overall Alabama agriculture.
- c) Outline long term benefits to Alabama agriculture.
- d) Include a demonstration/outreach component.
- e) Provide a metric to measure and report impact (e.g. economic, social, publications and bulletins, etc.).
- f) Include plans for dissemination of information to relevant Alabama agriculture groups.

Note that proposals that do not address these components will be eliminated from the competition and will be returned to the applicant without review.

Multidisciplinary approach to problem solving is highly encouraged. In addition, proposals must clearly identify which of the following AAES priorities area(s) will be addressed:

- Enhancing Agricultural Production Systems.
- Food Nutrition, Health and Well-being, and Childhood Obesity.
- Food Safety.
- Climate Variability and Change, and Water for Agricultural and Natural Resource.
- Bioenergy and Biobased Products.

Eligibility

The leading principal investigator must have an AAES appointment and a USDA-approved (or pending USDA approval) Hatch project or a Hatch/Multistate project (membership in multistate project only is NOT sufficient for this requirement. The P.I. must also officially file a Hatch project under the Hatch/Multistate Project category in the REEport system). Investigators can only be the lead P.I. on one proposal. **Leading principal investigators who were previously funded with AAES grants, but have not submitted proposal(s) for extramural funding (of any type) since the AAES grant(s) are not eligible for this competition.** These rules do not apply to co-principal investigators.

Proposal Guidelines

Format

- Margin: 1 inch at the top, bottom, left and right.
- Font size: minimum of 12 point.
- Spacing: single- or double-spaced on 8.5 x 11 inch pages.
- Pages should be numbered.

Funding level: Funding amount is for up to \$50,000 for two years

Proposals must include the following sections:

1. *Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station Hatch/Multistate Grant Proposal Cover Form* – signatures are needed on the cover form. All the forms are available at: <http://aaes.auburn.edu/resources/aaes-research-funding-programs/>
2. *Abstract* of 250 words.
3. *Proposal Narrative:* This should not exceed 5 pages (including figures and tables). The page limit will be strictly enforced to ensure fair and equitable competition. Proposals that fail to comply with the page limit will be returned without review. The narrative should include the following
 - a. Problem Statement
 - b. Objective and Rationale
 - c. Materials and Methods
 - d. Summary and Conclusion
 - e. Metrics to Measure Success and Impact
 - f. Dissemination Plan
4. *References (no page limit):* All work cited in the text, including that of key personnel, should be referenced in this section of the application. All references must be complete, including titles and all co-authors in a professional journal format, listed in alphabetical order, using the last name of the first author or listed by number in the order of citation.
5. *Facilities & Equipment (no page limit):* In addition to describing available equipment, list applicable items of nonexpendable equipment, and facilities in the outlying units that are necessary to conduct and successfully complete the project.
6. *Functions of Key Personnel:* Clearly describe the roles and responsibilities of the P.I. and co-P.I.s. Biographical sketches for all key personnel should be attached.
7. *Budget:* Provide a budget for each year, use USDA standard format similar to <http://aaes.auburn.edu/resources/aaes-research-funding-programs/>. Funds can be requested for:
 - a. Salaries and Wages
 - b. Fringe Benefits (for FY 2016: 32.0% for full time employees, 9.6% for part time employees and 4.8% for Graduate Assistants., 0% for undergraduates)
 - c. Materials and Supplies, including payment to human subjects
 - d. Travel directly relevant to proposed effort
 - e. Equipment – total is limited to \$5,000
 - f. Publication Costs

8. *Budget Justification*: Provide a justification for budget requests. Budget requests can be made for technical or postdoctoral salary support, graduate research assistantships, and undergraduate research support. AAES recognizes the importance of graduate and undergraduate training and encourages P.I.s to involve graduate and undergraduate students in agricultural research. Request for summer salary for P.I.s on 9-month appointment is allowed only for the leading P.I. up to one-month salary per year regardless of the number of collaborators; fringe benefits must be included for all salaries as appropriate, payments for various materials, chemicals, and supplies, travel directly related to the project, publication costs, and/or equipment (up to \$5,000 total) can be requested. Funds cannot be requested for indirect costs such as office supplies, phones, cell phones, internet service, subscriptions, memberships, laptop computers, ipads, software, desktop computers, or computer peripherals (e.g., printers, data storage, etc.). Salaries already supported by AAES funds cannot be charged to these projects
9. *Curriculum Vitae*: A two-page resume for each investigator excluding publication lists that should be limited to presentation of academic and research credentials. The publication list should be chronological list of all publications in refereed journals during the past 4 years. Please indicate with an “*” publications that have resulted from previous AAES grants.
10. *Current and Pending Support From for each P.I.*: A template can be found with budget pages at: <http://aaes.auburn.edu/resources/aaes-research-funding-programs/>.
11. *Collaboration*: Evidence e.g. letter(s) of support, from collaborators only providing services or materials should be provided that the collaborators involved have agreed to render services. If a collaborator is playing an active role in the project, a senior/key person profile (biographical sketch, current and pending support) should be completed for the collaborator.

No additional materials, appendices, or supplementary documentation will be accepted.

Proposal Submission

Proposals must be received by 4.45 pm on February 15, 2017. Proposals should be submitted in one single pdf file to aaesgrant@auburn.edu

Proposal Review and Evaluation

- a) **Each application will be evaluated in a two-part process.** First, each application will be screened to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements as set forth in this RFA. **Applications that do not meet the guidelines as stated in the RFA will be eliminated from the competition and will be returned to the applicant without review.** Second, a review panel will evaluate applications that meet these requirements for technical content. In addition to the review panel, written comments may be solicited from *ad hoc* reviewers. Recommendation for funding is dependent on comments from ad-hoc reviewer (if applicable), and peer-review panel comments/discussion.
- b) **Review Panel Selection and Evaluation Process:** The review panel members will consist of representation of expertise of research areas. This review panel may include internal, external, or a mix of internal/external members. The Review Panel will meet, discuss, evaluate, rank, and make recommendations for funding. The review panel will rank all the

proposals into categories of must fund, high priority for funding, medium priority for funding, lower medium priority for funding, low priority for funding, and do not fund. Funding decisions and funding levels will be determined based on the evaluation ranking in consideration of the availability of funds as discussed by the AAES Assistant Director and the AAES Business Office. Final funding decisions will be approved by the AAES Director. A panel summary, along with reviews, will be sent to the leading P.I. upon completion of the funding cycle evaluations.

Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Points
Scientific soundness; appropriateness of methodology; feasibility of completion; investigation qualifications	20
Innovation/creativity	15
Adequacy and suitability of project in relation to PAR program components (a-f on page 1)	15
Metrics and measurement of impact	15
Dissemination	15
Leverage of external and other funding sources	10
Partnership with others	10

Award Notice

Upon the completion of funding decisions, the leading P.I. will be notified. In case of funding, the award announcement will include the following:

1. Title of project
2. Project period, specifying the duration of the project AAES intends to support the project without requiring re-competition for funds
3. Total dollar amount as approved by the AAES Director during the project period
4. Instructions on completion of the required REEport forms and a non-technical abstract

Requirements for approved projects, for release of funds:

In order to reduce redundant reporting, a single page of the P.I. Pledge Form will be included as a part of the AAES PAR program. On this form, the P.I. will be asked if the proposed project falls under the scope of his/her existing Hatch project or Hatch/Multistate project(s) (please note: participation in multistate project is insufficient, the P.I. must have a Hatch/Multistate project number). If the answer is yes, then the P.I. will be asked to pledge by signing that all the methodologies and procedures in the project are covered by the existing Hatch/Multistate project in compliance with federal and state regulations concerning human subjects, animal welfare, recombinant DNA, and any other hazardous materials, and that the P.I. will comply with all the reporting requirements set for Hatch projects or the AAES/Multistate Funding program.

If the proposed project does not fall under the existing Hatch or Hatch/Multistate project(s), the P.I. must complete the following before the release of funds:

1. Projects approved by the Director of the AAES must be entered into REEport as a new project.
2. Each year, a progress report must be completed in the REEport system for the period of October 1 to September 30. Hatch funds will be withheld if reports are not completed to the satisfaction of the Director. A final report will be filed in the last year of the project covering the last year only.
3. Approvals for work with animals, human subjects (including those participating in surveys), hazardous materials (including biological agents and toxins), and recombinant DNA are required. Such approvals must be finalized and documented by completing the Assurance Statement in the project initiation, by using the project change tabs in REEport, or by signing the P.I. Pledge Form prior to release of funds for approved projects. The P.I. should notify the research office when these forms are completed. Information for each category is listed below.

A. **Animals** – an approved Animal Subjects Review Form (ASRF) will be needed for approved projects before funds are released. More information can be obtained at: <https://cws.auburn.edu/OVPR/pm/compliance/iacuc/forms>

B. **Recombinant DNA, Radioactive Products, Hazardous Materials, and Biologicals** – contact the Office of Safety and Environmental Health, Leach Science Center, 844-4870. More information can be obtained at: <https://cws.auburn.edu/OVPR/pm/compliance/ibc/forms>

C. **Human Subjects** – training and IRB approvals needed. More information can be obtained at: <https://cws.auburn.edu/OVPR/pm/compliance/irb/forms>

The Director of the AAES reserves the right to redistribute or retract monies if problems arise relative to satisfactory progress or compliance of all terms as set with this RFA, or due to economic necessity of the AAES. An annual progress report and a termination report are required, and should be made in the REEport system. The federal deadline for reports may vary, but should be completed annually no later than January 15. Notification of the required annual reports will be sent to each P.I. yearly. Nonproductive projects may not be funded for the second year if satisfactory progress is not documented.