

2021 AAES PRODUCTION AGRICULTURE RESEARCH FUNDING PROGRAM (PAR)

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

February 19, 2021

PURPOSE

The purpose of the AAES 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 address stakeholder-identified agricultural production issues and challenges in Alabama with the ultimate goal of developing or implementing immediate or near-term solutions. Specifically, successful proposals must have the following components:

- Address a problem that is relevant to Alabama agriculture (including forestry and related industries). Proposals must demonstrate stakeholder involvement and focus on the development or implementation of immediate or near-term solutions to the problem. Project ideas are expected to be based on assessments of stakeholder needs conducted in consultation or collaboration with appropriate stakeholder groups including Alabama Farmers Federation (ALFA), commodity organizations, Extension specialists/agents, and AAES Outlying Station Directors.
 - Stakeholder involvement can be demonstrated through letters of support from stakeholder group(s), participation of stakeholders in the project, or at least one explicit citation that documents the specific stakeholder-identified needs addressed by the proposed project.
 - Note that the project title and summary should be written in plain, non-technical language.
 - Address the means by which proposed activities will enhance a specific commodity or Alabama agriculture overall.
 - Outline long term benefits to Alabama agriculture.
 - Include a demonstration/outreach component.
 - Provide metrics to measure and report anticipated outputs and outcomes/overall impact of the project.
 - “Outcomes” are defined as measurable and documented changes in knowledge, action or condition as a result of the project.
 - “Impact” is a sustainable societal, environmental, and/or economic change affecting people.
- For more information on examples of project outputs, outcomes and impact, please review the [AAES Hatch Reporting Workshop](#).
- 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 interdisciplinary research collaborative systems will be addressed:

- Plant Production and Management Systems
- Food Animal Systems
- Integrated Food and Human Health Systems
- Sustainable Ecosystems and Renewable Resource Management

ELIGIBILITY

- The lead principal investigator (P.I.) and other co-investigators receiving AAES funds (Co-P.I.s) must have an AAES appointment and a USDA-approved (or pending USDA approval) Hatch or Hatch/Multistate project (membership in multistate project only is NOT sufficient for this requirement).
- The P.I. and Co-P.I.s must also have submitted their 2020 Hatch or Hatch/Multistate project report in the REEport system in a

timely fashion. For faculty members hired within the last 12 months, the requirement of having a Hatch project can be waived upon the approval of the department head. The department head should email their request for waiver to the Associate Dean for Research & Associate Director of AAES (Dr. Henry Fadamiro) before a proposal is submitted. Note: A waiver of the requirement for Hatch projects for faculty hired within the last 12 months will only ensure consideration of their proposal by the evaluation panel. If recommended for funding, the P.I. and Co-P.I.s must submit a Hatch project in REEport before release of awarded funds.

- Investigators can only be the lead P.I. on one proposal.
- Faculty members who received an AAES PAR grant in 2020 (as lead P.I.) are not eligible to apply this year.
- Faculty members who previously received (as lead P.I.) an AAES grant (i.e., PAR, AgRSEED or Equipment grant), but have not submitted competitively reviewed proposal(s) for extramural funding as lead P.I. or Co-P.I. (excluding internal and commodity funding) since their last AAES grant(s) are not eligible for this competition.

FORMAT

Proposal guidelines:

- 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 (i.e., \$25,000 per year)

Proposals must include the following sections:

1. **Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station [Grant Proposal Cover Form](#)**
2. **Non-Technical Summary (250 words)** - This should be written in plain, non-technical language. It is an opportunity to sum up the importance of your project in terms that general citizens can understand. It should cover three main points: i) what is the issue or problem being addressed and why?, ii) what methods/approaches will be used to collect data and inform target audiences, and iii) what are the expected outcomes/impacts.
3. **Proposal Narrative** - This should not exceed six (6) 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. Introduction and Problem Statement (including demonstration of stakeholder involvement and focus on immediate/near-term solutions)
 - B. Objective and Rationale
 - C. Approach
 - D. Metrics to Measure Success and Outcomes/Impact
 - E. Dissemination Plan
 - F. Leveraging Plan (all proposals should include a plan for leveraging this seed funding).
4. **Efforts to Leverage Prior AAES Funding (no page limit)** - Like other AAES funding programs, PAR is a seed funding program. An important measurement of its success is the leverage of additional funding from extramural sources. Thus, PIs must demonstrate effort to leverage prior AAES funding including:
 - A. If the P.I. has received AAES funding support (i.e., AgRSEED/Hatch Funding Program, PAR, Equipment or Good to Great grants) in the past five years (i.e., since 2016), please provide a list of extramurally funded projects with information on funded project including title, Lead P.I., Co-P.I.s, funding agency, funding period, and dollar amount of the grants/ contracts (please do not list Auburn University intramural grants or commodity funding). Earmarked funding can be listed, but must be so noted.
 - B. A separate list of proposals that were submitted to extramural sources (not including internal or commodity funding), but were not funded, should also be included. This list should provide information on each submitted proposal including title, Lead P.I., Co-P.I.s, funding agency, requested dollar amount, date submitted, and the outcome (including panel ranking). This information will be used to determine program eligibility (see Eligibility section).
5. **References Cited (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.
6. **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.

7. **Functions of Key Personnel (no page limit)** - Clearly describe the roles and responsibilities of the P.I. and Co-P.I.s.
8. **Budget** - Provide a budget for each year, use USDA standard format similar to <https://aaes.auburn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/sites/2/2019/01/2-YearBudget.pdf>. Funds can be requested for:
 - A. Salaries and Wages
 - B. Fringe Benefits (for FY 2021: 30.4% for full time employees, 14.3% for part time employees, 4.0% for Graduate Assistants, and 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. AAES Outlying Station facility support (for projects which will be conducted in AAES Outlying Stations)
 - G. Publication Costs
9. **Budget Justification** - Provide a justification for budget requests.
 - A. 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.
 - B. Request for summer salary for faculty on 9-month appointment is allowed only for the lead P.I. for up to one-month salary per year regardless of the number of collaborators; fringe benefits must be included for all salaries as appropriate. Salaries already supported by AAES funds cannot be charged to these projects.
 - C. Payments for various materials, chemicals, supplies, and travel directly related to the project, publication costs, and/or equipment (up to \$5,000 total) can be requested.
 - D. It is expected that PAR projects will be conducted (at least in part) in an AAES Outlying Station. Projects which will be conducted in one (or more) of the AAES Outlying Stations must list the station director(s) as a collaborator, and must include an appropriate budget for the station(s) to support labor, equipment and supply costs at the station(s). Also, the P.I. must list the station(s) and include a statement of support (letter or email) from the station director confirming their participation in the development of the proposal and the agreed budget for the station.
 - E. 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.).
10. **Curriculum Vitae** - A two-page biographical sketch for each P.I./Co-P.I. (excluding publication lists) - limited to presentation of academic and research credentials. The publication list (no page limit) should be a chronological list of all publications in refereed journals during the past four years. Please indicate with an "*" publications that have resulted from previous AAES grants.
11. **Current and Pending Support Form for each P.I.** - A template can be found with budget pages at: <https://aaes.auburn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/sites/2/2019/01/Hatch-Multistate-Support-Form.pdf>.
12. **Conflict of Interest List for each P.I.** - You can provide an alphabetical list, or use the USDA Conflict of Interest List Template that can be found with budget pages at: <https://aaes.auburn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/sites/2/2019/01/HatchMultistateConflictForm.pdf>.
13. **Collaboration** - Evidence such as letter(s) of support from collaborators (those not listed as P.I./Co-P.I.) only providing services or materials should be provided to show 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 submitted by 5:00 pm on February 19, 2021. You will be using our [AAES Grant Management System](#) to submit your applications this year:

- Open an internet browser (Chrome preferred) and navigate to [AAES Grant Management System](#)
- Login with your AU username and password.
- Click Start a new grant proposal.
- Expand the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station section.
- Click the Begin a new proposal button under the appropriate program.
- Provide a title for the project by clicking the Edit title button.
- Provide a proposal description by clicking the Edit description button.
- Complete your user profile by selecting the link in RED

- Complete each section of the proposal submission form (Contact Information, Research Focus Area, etc.) by answering all questions.

When all sections are complete, review and submit your proposal.

PROPOSAL REVIEW AND EVALUATION

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, applications that meet the RFA guidelines will be evaluated by a stakeholder panel for relevance to production agriculture in Alabama and also by a technical review panel for scientific merit using the evaluation criteria listed in the table below. The technical review panel will consist of representation of expertise of relevant research areas. The technical review panel may include internal, external, or a mix of internal/external members. The panel will meet, discuss, evaluate, rank, and make recommendations for funding. Funding decisions and funding levels will be determined based on evaluation and feedback from both the stakeholder panel and the technical review panel. A panel summary, along with reviews, will be sent to the lead P.I. upon completion of the funding cycle evaluations.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

CRITERIA	POINTS
Adequacy and suitability of project in relation to PAR program components (a-f on page 1 including problem statement, stakeholder involvement, immediate/near-term solutions, etc.)	20
Scientific soundness; appropriateness of methodology; feasibility of completion; investigation qualifications	20
Innovation/creativity	10
Metrics and measurement of impact	15
Dissemination	15
Leverage of external and other funding sources	10
Partnership with others	10

AWARD ANNOUNCEMENT

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

- Title of project
- Project period, specifying the duration of the project AAES intends to support the project without requiring re-competition for funds
- Total dollar amount as approved by the AAES Director during the project period
- 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, the P.I. will be requested to complete the AAES Award Notification and Acceptance Form. 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:

- Projects approved by the Director of the AAES must be entered into REEport as a new project.
- 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.

- 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 December 31. 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.

PROPOSED TIMELINE

February 19, 2021: Proposal due by 5:00 pm to [AAES Grant Management System](#)

March 2021: Proposal review and recommendations, and award notification

April 1, 2021: Project start, pending NIFA approval

CONTACT

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