



Federal Research, Education and Extension Grants

The work of OFRF and the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC) on the 2008 Farm Bill has secured expanded federal funding for sustainable and organic agriculture research, education and extension programs. We hope you will consider taking advantage of the Fiscal Year 2009 grant opportunities listed below. We've included links to where to find the most up-to-date information on the programs. Many of these programs are detailed in the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition's *Grassroots Guide to the 2008 Farm Bill*, found at www.sustainableagriculturecoalition.org/publications/grassrootsguide.

Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative (OREI)

The 2008 Farm Bill increased the program's mandatory funding from \$3 million in 2008 to \$18 million for 2009! This is a huge opportunity for new organic projects. Succeeding years will only become more competitive, so high-quality proposals will have their best chance for funding in 2009. The bill also added two new research purposes to the organic research program: examining optimal conservation and environmental outcomes relating to organically produced agricultural products, and developing new and improved seed varieties particularly suited for organic agriculture.

OREI grants are awarded on a competitive basis for the development and implementation of research, extension, and higher education programs to, "improve the competitiveness of organic producers and surmount challenges of organic production and marketing." State agricultural experiment stations, colleges and universities, other research institutions and organizations, federal agencies, national laboratories, private organizations, corporations, and individuals are eligible to apply for grants under the program.

The 2009 Request for Applications for OREI was released January 16th, 2009. Applications were due March 9th, 2009. More information is at www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/organicagricultureresearchandextensioninitiative.cfm. Look for additional info on www.ofrf.org.

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE)

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) is a competitive grants program providing grants to researchers, agricultural educators, farmers and ranchers, and students in the United States. SARE funds high-quality, farmer-based research and education on economic, agronomic, and environmental aspects of sustainable agriculture farming systems. SARE offers grants through four regions – North Central, Northeast, South and West – and offers several different grant opportunities. Grant funding for 2009 is \$14.4 million for the research/education component, including the highly popular Producer Grants program and \$4.6 million for Professional Development grants. For 2009 requests for proposals, application deadlines and other information, contact the SARE regional offices, found at www.sare.org.

Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP)

The Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) will offer competitive grants to fund new partnerships that build local and regional training, education, outreach and technical assistance to support new farming opportunities, including mentoring, land link programs, financial planning classes, organic transition, credit management, conservation planning, etc. Although authorized in the 2002 Farm Bill, it never received funding; the new Farm Bill has provided \$18 million in mandatory funding for FY 09. To be eligible to receive a BFRDP grant, the recipient must be a collaborative state, tribal, local, or regionally-based network or

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OFAN is a project of the Organic Farming Research Foundation.

For more information about OFAN, contact Tracy Lerman at tracy@ofrf.org.

partnership of public or private entities. The RFA is expected to be released in the next few weeks. More info available at www.csrees.usda.gov/business/reporting/stakeholder/bfrdp.html.

Agriculture and Food Research Initiative

The Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) takes the place of both the National Research Initiative (NRI) and the Initiative for Future Agricultural and Food Systems (IFAFS). Created in the 2008 Farm Bill, AFRI will provide grants on a competitive basis for fundamental and applied research, extension, and education to address food and agricultural issues. AFRI reflects many of the same purposes as its predecessors and includes five new priorities: conventional (classical) plant breeding; conventional (classical) animal breeding; renewable energy; domestic marketing strategies; and rural entrepreneurship. Previous NRI/IFAFS priorities for small and medium sized farms, rural development, and managed ecosystems have been continued.

State agricultural experiment stations, colleges and universities, university research foundations, other research institutions and organizations, federal agencies, national laboratories, private organizations or corporations, and individuals are eligible to apply for grants under the program. A program announcement was issued in December 2008 and the RFP is expected in late February or early March 2009. The program has multiple deadline dates occurring throughout FY 2009 depending upon the subject of the proposal. A copy of the program announcement, due dates, and details on funding available can be found at www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/afri/afri.html.

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Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers ("Section 2501")

The Outreach and Technical Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers program, also known as the "Section 2501" program after its Farm Bill section number, provides grants to Land Grant Institutions (1862, 1890, or 1994), Native American Tribal Governments and organizations, Latino-Serving Institutions, State Controlled Institutions of Higher Education, and community-based organizations and non-profits that work with minority farmers and assist them in owning and operating farms and participating in agricultural and USDA-specific programs. This program's funding has ranged in recent years from \$5.9 million to \$6.4 million in discretionary dollars, but the 2008 Farm Bill funded it at \$15 million in mandatory funds for FY09. The program will have a new home at USDA and the contact information for the program will be updated in NSAC's *Grassroots Guide to the 2008 Farm Bill* once this placement occurs - www.sustainableagriculturecoalition.org/publications/grassrootsguide.

Risk Management Education and Partnership Grants Program

Risk management education and partnership programs fund projects to inform farmers about crop insurance, futures, options, forward contracts, as well as broader risk management topics such as crop and enterprise diversification, conservation planning, new and value-added markets, debt reduction, and asset building strategies. There will be less funding for this program in 2009 than in years past. More information can be found in NSAC's *Grassroots Guide to the 2008 Farm Bill* - www.sustainableagriculturecoalition.org/publications/grassrootsguide.

Specialty Crop Research Initiative

Newly authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill, the Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI) is a competitive grant program that funds specialty crop research and extension projects conducted by federal agencies, national laboratories, colleges and universities, research institutions and organizations, private organizations or corporations, State agricultural experiment stations, and individuals. SCRI is funded at \$50 million for FY 2009. The RFA was released on February 2, 2009. Applications are due by April 15, 2009. Letters of intent are requested by March 2, 2009, but are not required. More information can be found at www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/specialtycropresearchinitiative.cfm.

Small Business Innovation Research Program

The Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program offers grants to qualified for-profit small businesses (including small and medium-sized organic farms) in support of high quality, innovative research related to important scientific problems and opportunities in agriculture that could lead to significant public benefit if successfully commercialized. The USDA SBIR program has awarded more than 2,000 grants since its inception in 1983, allowing hundreds of small businesses to explore their technological potential and profit from the commercialization of their innovative ideas. For more information, visit www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/sbir/sbir.html.

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For more information about OFRF, visit www.ofrf.org.**

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