

Farmer Led Trial Application Rubric 2025/2026

Scoring Matrix

Points possible	Poor: Not clear, ideas do not appear viable	Good: Basic ideas, unclear if they are viable	Very good: Some very good ideas, farmer has put in good effort	Excellent: Clear, viable ideas, farmer has put in very good effort
10	1-3	4-6	7-8	9-10
5	1-2	3	4	5

Application Question	Criteria	Points Possible	Score
<i>Beginner farmer or rancher (less than 10 years of farming experience)</i>	Does the farmer identify as a beginning farmer/rancher?	Yes: 3 No: 0	
<i>Veteran farmer or rancher (served in the US Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, or Coast Guard, or in the reserve components)</i>	Does the farmer identify as a veteran farmer?	Yes: 2 No: 0	
<i>Do you or a partner farmer directly involved in managing the trial identify as Black, Indigenous, or a Person of Color (BIPOC)? Primary applicant or farming partner</i>	At least one of the farmers who will be directly involved in this project identify as Black, Indigenous, or a Person of Color (BIPOC)	Yes: 5 No: 0	
<i>Please select up to three research priorities that apply to your application (Research Priorities: Weed Suppression; Maintaining or improving yields; Soil Health; Cover Crops;</i>	The research question(s) align closely with the research priorities OFRF has identified.	10	

<p><i>Insect pest suppression; Disease suppression; Organic crop variety and seed trials; Organic livestock breeds and management)</i></p>			
<p><i>Please share up to three research questions you are interested in testing on your farm. See Step 1 in the Farmer's Guide to On-Farm Research</i></p>	<p>The idea(s) or research question(s) can clearly lead to a simple, doable on-farm trial. The framing of the research question indicates the applicant has reviewed the Farmer's Guide to On Farm Research.</p>	<p>10</p>	
<p><i>Explain why testing these ideas or questions is important to your farm</i></p>	<p>The proposal includes a clear and convincing explanation of why this trial can be important to the farmers' operation.</p>	<p>10</p>	
<p><i>Describe any past observations and/or research you may have done on these questions/ideas, as well as any connections with research or extension professionals that may provide you additional support.</i></p>	<p>The response demonstrates the applicant has been making observations and actively looking into their challenge. An excellent response would indicate the farmer has also looked into research done on other farms or specialists that have experience with the challenge.</p>	<p>10</p>	
<p><i>What do you want to compare in your on-farm trial (for example practices, inputs, or seed varieties)?</i></p>	<p>The applicant clearly explains the treatments, practices, and/or comparisons they are interested in making. Descriptions indicate they have read the Farmer's Guide to On Farm Research.</p>	<p>10</p>	

<i>What measurements would you take to help you answer your research question?</i>	The proposal specifies realistic suggestions for measurements and materials needed to answer the research question. The descriptions indicate they have read the Guide or looked into additional research.	10	
<i>What do you think are the biggest challenges you might face while conducting the research trial? How would you manage these challenges to ensure you successfully complete the trial?</i>	The farmer shows a good understanding of the potential challenges associated with conducting these trials, and proposes possible solutions.	5	
<i>Tell us more about your background or experience in agriculture, education and research?</i>	The response to this question demonstrates the farmer would benefit from OFRF technical support AND indicates they have the ability to complete an on-farm trial.	10	
<i>Have you ever received funding for on-farm research for your farm before?</i>	The farmer has little or limited experience in on farm research. They may have completed a SARE project or worked with a researcher in the past, but still demonstrate a clear need for OFRF's support.	10	
<i>How much space or land can you use for this research trial?</i>	The farmer has space available AND they are willing to commit to using the appropriate space for conducting the trial.	5	
	Total Possible Score:	100	