

March 2004

TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES

The Food Safety and Inspection Service Seeks Research Proposals

The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is seeking state, academic, and research institutions to work cooperatively in identifying, developing, and validating new technologies that are economically viable for small/very small meat, poultry, or egg product plants to help them meet food safety requirements.

A new technology is defined as new or, new applications of, equipment, substances, methods, processes, or procedures affecting the slaughter of livestock and poultry or processing of meat, poultry, or egg products.

FSIS is a public health agency that verifies the nation's meat, poultry, and egg products are safe, wholesome, and accurately labeled. New technologies have resulted in significant improvements in the safety of meat and poultry in recent years. FSIS is desirous of seeing that these kinds of advances continue and recognizes that many smaller establishments lack the resources that exist in larger establishments. Therefore, FSIS is funding studies through cooperative agreements to identify, develop, and validate new technologies to determine which ones are economically viable for small and very small plants, to foster their adoption and to enhance the beneficial effects of new technology on food safety and public health. FSIS will provide funding up to \$75,000 per cooperative agreement. The cooperative agreement will be funded for one year.

Cooperative agreements provide a means to transfer money, property, services, or anything of value to recipients to accomplish specific research projects. FSIS collaborates or participates in the management of the project. All parties to the agreement participate in the project and have mutual interest in the objectives and benefits, although the scope of interest may be different. The cooperative agreement document must be submitted far enough in advance of the proposed effective date to ensure that the document is signed by all parties prior to the start of any work. No funds can be obligated until after the document is signed by all parties.

Those submitting proposals (Cooperators) are expected to send a complete detailed description of proposed research (preferably including a project plan format outline) which includes the following:

1. Background and objectives (Insert a paragraph or more to explain the importance of the project, why it is needed, and who will benefit).
2. Goal: This agreement is intended... (to determine, to provide, to compile, etc.- the purpose – only needs to be a sentence or two.)
3. Amount of money (in dollars) that the cooperator will contribute to the proposed project.

4. Description of work (Be as specific and detailed as possible) Please describe in-depth the proposed project. Can be written in paragraph form or numerically listed. Following are some examples of items that may be included, but not limited to: (Every project is different.)
 - 1) The Cooperator shall develop a project timeline, with proposed dates. The proposed project timeline shall be submitted to the FSIS Contracting Officer Technical Representative (COTR)/Project Officer for review and approval.
 - 2) The Cooperator shall develop/collect (data).....
 - 3) Criteria for choosing the product or process would be based on.....
 - a) Be specific – list products, processes, etc.
 - 4) The Cooperator shall conduct a study/an analysis/an evaluation.....
 - a) Describe what the study/evaluation is
 - b) How it will be performed
 - c) Number of plants that will be used/participate, how the plants were chosen, how they will be contacted, etc.
 - d) The Cooperator shall submit these results to the FSIS COTR
 - 5) The Cooperator shall utilize the information to develop a series of publications, fact sheets, video, manual, brochure, pamphlet, a final report (publicized on the University website), etc.....
 - a) Topics would include, but not limited to:
 - i)
 - ii)
 - b) The Cooperator shall submit a copy of the video/brochure/pamphlet/report/etc. to the FSIS COTR for review and approval before publication.
 - 6) The information shall be in accordance with FSIS regulations and policy.
 - 7) The Cooperator shall provide FSIS with a master video/CD/electronic copy of the final report/pamphlet/brochure, etc.
 - 8) The Cooperator shall begin work on the project within one month of the date of the signed agreement.

Below is a list of evaluation criteria that FSIS will be using in the order of importance (with #1 being the most important) to those submitting proposals (Cooperators) including:

1. The research proposal must involve food safety (physical, chemical, biological hazards, especially *E. coli* O157:H7 and *Listeria monocytogenes*) and public health issues involving meat, poultry, or egg products.
2. The research proposal must show that it would be cost effective for small/very small plants.
3. Since small/very small plants are limited in physical size, the research proposal must address the limited size of their facilities.

4. The research proposal must show how it would enhance the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) program.

FSIS will use the following methods of evaluation for each submitted research proposal including:

1. How well does the research proposal address (describe) food safety (physical, chemical, biological hazards, especially *E. coli* O157:H7 and *Listeria monocytogenes*) and public health issues involving meat, poultry, or egg products?
2. How well does the research proposal address (describe) cost effectiveness for small/very small plants?
3. How well does the research proposal address (describe) the limited size of small/very small plant facilities?
4. How well does the research proposal address (describe) how it would enhance the HACCP program?

FSIS will convene a board from within FSIS to review and evaluate all submitted proposals. Each proposal will be reviewed and evaluated based on the list of criteria detailed earlier in this letter with #1 being given the most weight and #4 the least for ranking purposes. The final total evaluation number will determine each proposal's priority.

For those proposals that FSIS accepts and funds, the Cooperators are expected to do the following:

1. Provide personnel (knowledge, skills, and expertise), equipment, and supplies, testing facilities, and test subjects to conduct the project and develop the deliverables.
2. Submit monthly reports of meetings, publications, evaluations, and other activities carried out by the contractor, including level and type of participation.
3. Submit all documents to the FSIS COTR as requested above.
4. Within thirty days of the anniversary of the agreement or end of the agreement period of the research project the Cooperators shall submit all raw data with a written document summarizing the study, findings, and recommendations and present to FSIS in duplicate CD hard disc copies in Word format style, along with any graphs, charts, data, or other supporting data. Where appropriate, this may include a training or instructional manual, video and/or CD detailing the new technology for use by the small/very small plant operators. Where appropriate, the Cooperator may be asked to gather feedback after distribution of the information provided to the Agency and be able to present the material, if needed, to interested parties including submission for publication in a peer reviewed journal. Where appropriate, the Cooperator may be asked to post information on an internet website to which FSIS can establish a link.

The FSIS will make available appropriated funds and administrative personnel to support the purposes of the cooperative agreement including:

1. Serve as a facilitator, where appropriate, to assist the contractor in gaining access to individuals at Federally inspected meat, poultry, and egg plants to assist in obtaining relevant information and data.
2. Provide technical guidance and feedback liaison to the state, academic, and research institutions.
3. Distribute information regarding economically viable new technologies across the US and the territories to all federal and state small and very small meat, poultry, and egg plants.

The term of an agreement would be one year from its acceptance. The cooperator must spend the funds within 12 months of their allocation.

Payment of invoices for work done under cooperative agreements will be made only upon receipt of adequate reports of performance of activity included in the agreement and relevant to Project Description.

Proposals must be received by COB April 16, 2004. If you have any questions, please call either David Zeitz or Debbie Gaida at (202) 205-0675.

Proposals should be sent to the attention of Bobby Palesano, Acting Director, USDA, FSIS, OPPD, NTS, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Room 2932, South Building, Washington, D.C., 20250 .