

**Dialog Regarding Applied Economics Needs in the
NIFA Transdisciplinary Paradigm**

**May 12, 2011
Notes from the Call**



An overview of the needs at NIFA including:

1. Need more and stronger applications. Most programs have a 15% success rate and the traditional social science programs could have about a 30% success rate. In FY 2010 it was about 25%.
2. Remind faculty of the need to acknowledge NIFA funding (poster displays, articles, etc.)
3. When the RFA is released in 2012, encourage your faculty to contact NIFA to serve as Panel Members and Managers. There are many non-financial benefits to being a reviewer, including working with others in the profession, increased understanding of the process and the opportunity to review several well-written proposals.
4. Send comments to NIFA by email if you have comments of appreciation and/or suggestions for improvement. These comments are needed (even if brief)! Send emails with comments to: RFP-OGFM@nifa.usda.gov. C-FARE will also be sending comments regarding the RFP's. Please feel free to forward us any comments you may have so we can include them in our consolidated input.

Suggestions from Departments to Encourage Faculty

1. Make it rewarding for faculty to apply for grants. In many cases the faculty can get summer pay.
2. Incentives from the department and/or university to apply. An example provided was an incentive for submitting proposals (1% of budget up to \$1,000) for review by the university at least three weeks before the deadline.
3. If the department head has a structure in place to stay informed regarding the point in the application process of faculty members.
4. Work with college/university to increase amount of overhead returned to departments and PI's.
5. Encourage faculty to include in the grant a release from teaching. This may be of more interest for big grants, versus going on sabbatical.

Recommendations for NIFA

1. Send them both comments of appreciation and suggestions.
2. On the call there was a general appreciation for changing the AFRI Foundational program for Markets and Trade to now being offered every year.
3. Encourage NIFA to publish the RFP deadline dates in advance.
4. The process since moving to AFRI has been confusing. Identifying where and when economists can contribute has not been clear.
5. Some economists who contacted NIFA National Program Leaders were encouraged not to submit large proposals with economists as the lead. This message continues to impact the number of applications from our discipline across the board.
6. Recommendation to have a calendar that will remain the same each year so people know in advance when RFP will be due.
7. Recommendation to lengthen the application/submission deadline from the date when the RFP is published.