CALL FOR NOMINATIONS: 2019 NEW INNOVATOR IN FOOD AND AGRICULTURE RESEARCH AWARD

The Foundation for Food and Agricultural Research (FFAR) seeks nominations for its 2019 New Innovator in Food and Agriculture Research Award. With this program, FFAR intends to support and promote the future generation of exceptionally talented and creative new faculty who are conducting critical research and establishing research programs that will lead to expanded availability of food and facilitate the global practice of sustainable agriculture as the world's population grows to more than 9 billion people by the year 2050. The New Innovator Award seeks to promote career advancement of highly creative and promising new scientists who intend to make a long-term career commitment to research in food and agriculture and bring innovative, ground-breaking research initiatives and thinking to bear on problems facing food and agriculture.

> ## Key Dates
>
> Nomination Period Open: **January 16, 2019 at 10:00 am ET**
>
> Nominations Due: **February 28, 2019 at 3:00 pm ET**
> *Nominations must be made by the nominee's institution. Up to two nominations per institution. Self-nominations are not accepted.*
>
> Nominees invited to submit full proposals: **March 11, 2019 at 12:00 pm ET**
> *Open only to individuals nominated by their institutions.*
>
> Full Applications Due: **April 24, 2019 at 3:00 pm ET**

U.S. institutions of higher education, U.S. nonprofit institutions other than institutions of higher education, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture are invited to nominate <u>up to two applicants</u> for the 2019 New Innovator in Food and Agriculture Research Award.

Within the scope of the New Innovator Program, investigators will have the freedom to explore new avenues of inquiry that arise during their research. Therefore, FFAR is interested in the program of research to be explored and its impact as opposed to a list of very specific aims. It is expected that through this program investigators will have the ability to pursue highly creative ideas, to firmly establish their early lines of research into important food and agriculture scientific areas and provide stability in funding during their critical early career years by reducing the time spent on writing applications.

FFAR anticipates funding no more than ten awards between the two research categories listed below. When submitting full proposals to FFAR, applicants should select the category that best fits their research program. FFAR will not discriminate proposals based on category selection.

Category 1-- Target Areas of Research:
- Achieving a Deeper Understanding of Nutrition and Healthful Food Choices
- Enhancing Sustainable Farm Animal Productivity, Resilience, and Health
- Improving Plant Efficiency
- Managing Food Production Systems to Enhance Nutritional Outcomes
- Optimizing Agricultural Water Use
- Spurring Food System Innovation
- Transforming Soil Health

OR

Category 2--FFAR Challenge Areas:
- Advanced Animal Systems
- Health and Agriculture Nexus
- Next Generation Crops
- Soil Health
- Sustainable Water Management
- Urban Food Systems

ELIGIBILITY

I. Eligible Institutions
- U.S. Institutions of Higher Education
  - Public/state controlled institutions of higher education
  - Private institutions of higher education
- U.S. Nonprofit Research Institutions other than Institutions of Higher Education
- U.S. Department of Agriculture

In keeping with FFAR goals to reach a diverse and broad range of institutions and individuals who participate in its programs, the following types of higher education institutions are encouraged to apply for FFAR programs:

- Hispanic-serving Institutions
- 1890s Land Grant Institutions and other Historically Black Colleges and Universities
- Tribal Colleges and Universities
- Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions
- Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions

Institutions may submit up to two nominees to the 2019 New Innovator Award program. To coordinate and streamline submission of nominations by each institution, FFAR recommends that the nomination(s) be submitted through the organization's Office of Sponsored Programs or a similar central office.

II.   Eligible Individuals

Faculty members at eligible institutions with the creative ideas, skills, knowledge, and resources necessary to carry out the proposed research program as Principal Investigator are invited to work with their institution to develop an application for support. The nominated faculty member must have been hired on or after **August 1, 2015**, for a tenure-track or equivalent position and may work in any discipline or any department within the institution. Preference will be given to individuals near the onset of their independent research career and who are within eight years of receiving a Ph.D. or equivalent degree. Individuals with significant research experience prior to obtaining their faculty position will not be considered for this award.

FFAR recognizes that agriculture and food sciences are highly complex, requiring individuals from a variety of disciplines to realize the potential in each field or research area. Particularly for early stage investigators, collaborators are often essential for success. While this award is made to an outstanding early career investigator, applicants should include information regarding essential collaborators and include letters of support from those collaborators. In these letters, the collaborators should comment on the potential of the individual to achieve success.

Award Information

- Anticipated Award Duration: Up to 36 months
- Amount per Award: Up to $100,000/year for up to three years. One-to-one cash match is required.

    o FFAR will award each applicant up to $100,000 per year for up to three years with an additional $100,000 required cash match from non-federal sources for a total award of up to $600,000. Applicants may ask for a longer duration, provided the total funds (FFAR request + Cash Match) do not exceed $600,000 and FFAR's allocation does not exceed 50% of the total award amount.

    o To receive an award, the match must be secured by the nominating institution. Matching must be from a non-federal source and may not come from funds already designated for other purposes. For example, a faculty member's start-up package that was developed through employment negotiations may not be redirected to cover the match. **Only cash match will be accepted for this program. In-kind match is not permitted for this Program**. Indirect costs are limited to 10% of the total award. Unrecovered indirect cost is not permitted. Construction and renovation costs are not allowed. Salaries of principal investigators are allowed for time not covered by institutional or other grant funds and effort should be commensurate with the research proposed.

- Estimated Number of Awards: Up to ten (10) awards. This depends on the quality and budgets of successful proposals. FFAR reserves the right to negotiate all or none of the applications received for funding consideration under this opportunity.
- Anticipated Award Date: Late summer 2019.

Application Components

Nomination Application

1. Required
   - Nominee Name
   - Nominee's date of appointment to tenure-track or equivalent position (on or after 8/1/2015)
   - Nominator Contact Information
   - Nominee Contact Information
   - Comments on Nominee and nominee's research project/program (500-word limit)
   - Will nominee's institution provide the match? *Note: Faculty start-up package does not qualify.*

2. Optional Information – will not affect the evaluation of the nominee.
   - Demographic Information

Full Proposal

1. Required
   - Project Title
   - Research Area **or** FFAR Challenge Area
   - Proposed Budget
     - Total Request from FFAR
     - Total Cash Match
   - Budget Justification
   - Project Duration
   - Key Personnel
   - Public Abstract
   - Project Summary
   - Project Description
   - Project timeline (by year)
   - Goals and objectives (by year)
   - Anticipated Outcomes
   - Barriers to adopting research outcomes
   - Data Management Plan
   - Current and Pending Support
   - Facilities, Equipment and other Resources
   - References Cited
   - Organization Assurances
     - Research involving human subjects

- o Research involving vertebrate animals
        - o Research involving Recombinant DNA
        - o Research involving National Security implications
        - o Research involving hazardous materials
        - o Research involving human fetal tissue
        - o Research involving NEPA review
    - Attachments
        a. Required Attachments
            - o Budget Form
            - o PI and Key Personnel Biosketch: Three-page limit per individual listed as PI or key personnel in the project. Include link to download Biosketch Instructions
            - o Match Verification Letter
            - o References Cited
        b. Optional attachments to support project description - this section should not be used to circumvent the page limit for the Research Program Plan Section.
            - o Graphics, Figures, Equations, and Tables - The textbox for the Research Program Plan does not support equations, tables, graphics, and figures. Applicants may upload a PDF document with graphics, figures, tables, or a list of equations to support the research program plan. Refer to RFA for page limit.
            - o Letters of Support - Applicants may provide letters of institutional, collaborator, or stakeholder support for the proposed project. Please combine all letters of support into a single PDF document before uploading as an attachment.

Application Submission Guidelines

Applications must be submitted through FFAR's online application receipt system – SM Apply. Only nominations and applications submitted through this portal will be considered eligible for evaluation. There is a two-hour grace period for all deadlines. Nominations or full proposals that are not submitted by the deadline or within the grace period will not be accepted. To be fair to all our applicants, FFAR cannot grant an extension to applicants who missed the deadlines posted in the Key Dates section.

If you are a new user, register for an account by clicking the green "Register" button at the top right corner of the home page. You will receive a confirmation email to activate your account before you can sign-in to your account. Once you log in, click on the corresponding program to start your application. Nominators, please be prepared to submit the name of nominee(s), department, institution, title, start date of current position, and day of receiving a Ph.D. or equivalent degree.

Once nominations are reviewed by FFAR, only applications listing these nominated individuals as principal investigator and meeting eligibility criteria will be invited to submit full proposal applications. Nominees may submit an application only after receiving an invitation through the

online application receipt system. Full proposal application receipt for nominees will be open on March 11, 2019.

Application Review Process
Nominations Review
All submitted nominations will go through an internal review process to ensure that the nominee is eligible for the award. Only eligible nominees will be invited to submit a full proposal application. Nominators should expect to be notified of whether their nominees are invited to submit a full proposal no later than three weeks of the nomination submission deadline. Only invited nominees can submit a full proposal application.

Full Proposal Review
Submitted full proposals will undergo further review using a two-stage peer review process: (1) External Peer Review, and (2) FFAR Advisory Council review. In the first stage, applications will be evaluated by an independent, external peer review panel of scientific experts using the proposal review criteria posted in RFA. In the second stage, applications judged to be most meritorious by external peer review panels will be evaluated and recommended for funding by the FFAR Advisory Council based on comparisons with applications from the same cycle and FFAR's program priorities. All reviewers are required to read and acknowledge acceptance of FFAR's [Conflict of Interest Policy](#) and [Non-Disclosure Agreement](#). We make reasonable efforts to ensure that proposals are not assigned to reviewers with a real or apparent conflict with the applicant or project personnel. Reviewers with a conflict of interests are recused from evaluating or participating in the discussions of proposals with which they have a conflict. Each stage of the review is conducted confidentially, and as such, FFAR is responsible for protecting the confidentiality of the contents of the applications.

Applications recommended for funding by the Advisory Council will go to FFAR's Executive Director for the final funding decision after considering program priorities set by the FFAR Board of Directors, and portfolio balance across programs.

Review Criteria
Full proposals are evaluated based on scored primary review criteria and unscored secondary review criteria. The bullets under each criterion may serve as a guideline to applicants when writing their proposals, and as a guideline to reviewers on what to consider when judging proposals. The bullets are illustrative and not intended to be comprehensive. Reviewers will evaluate and score each primary criterion and subsequently assign a global score that reflects an overall assessment of the application. The overall assessment will not be an average score of the individual criterions; rather, it will reflect the reviewers' overall impression of the application. Evaluation of the scientific merit of each application is within the sole discretion of the peer reviewers and they may raise additional factors to consider that are not covered in the bullets for each criterion.

Primary Review Criteria
Primary criteria will evaluate the scientific merit and potential impact of the proposed project. Concerns with any of these criteria potentially indicate a major flaw in the significance and/or design of the proposed work. Examples of primary review criteria are, Quality of the Candidate, Scientific and Technical Background, Research Environment, Leadership Potential, Communication Skills, Research Significance and Impact, and Value of Fellow-Mentor Pairing.

Secondary Review Criteria
Secondary criteria contribute to the global score assigned to the application. Concerns with these criteria potentially question the feasibility of the proposed research. Examples of secondary review criteria are, Budget, Scalability and Dissemination, Protections for Human and Animal Subjects, and Previous Project Performance.

Award Administration
Selection Notice
Following the full proposal review, the principal investigator and the authorized organization representative listed on the project will be officially notified by email whether (1) the proposal has been selected for funding pending contract negotiations, or (2) the proposal has not been selected funding. If a proposal is selected for funding, the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research reserves the right to request additional or clarifying information for any reason deemed necessary, including, but not limited to, matching funds, or other budget information. Potential grantees are free to accept or reject the Grant Agreement as offered.

Award Notice
FFAR notifies applicants of whether they are selected for funding through email. The notice does not constitute an award or obligate funding from FFAR until there is a fully executed Grant Agreement.

Grant Period(s)
Upon receipt of the Grant Agreement, the potential grantee should note the Effective Date and the Expiration Date. Grantees may only use FFAR funds on project expenditures on or after the Effective Date of the Grant. Charging expenditures to the grant prior to the effective date is strictly prohibited. Likewise, grantees may not use FFAR funds after the Expiration Date except to satisfy obligations to pay allowable project costs committed on or before that date. The expiration date is the last day of a month.

Once the Grant Agreement is fully executed, the Effective Date cannot be changed. The Expiration Date may be changed with a written approval of a no-cost extension request by FFAR. If a no-cost-extension request is approved, FFAR will issue an amendment to the Grant Agreement.

If the grantee requires additional time beyond the Grant Period and the established Expiration Date to assure adequate completion of the original scope of work within the funds already made available, the grantee may request a one-time no-cost extension of up to 6 months. The

request must be submitted to FFAR at least thirty (30) days prior to the Expiration Date of the grant. The request must explain the need for the extension and include an estimate of the unobligated funds remaining and a plan for their use. This one-time extension will not be approved merely for using the unexpended funds.

Post-award Management

Reporting Requirements

After a grant is conferred, the grantee shall provide an annual financial report to FFAR showing grant expenditures to date. The grantee shall also provide an annual progress report to FFAR showing activities being carried out under the grant, including but not limited to project accomplishments to date and grant expenditures. Within 30 days of completion of all grant activities, the grantee shall provide a final progress report. The final progress report should address the original objectives of the project as identified in the proposal, describe any changes in objectives, describe the final project accomplishments, and include a final project accounting of all grant funds.

Scientific Integrity

FFAR's ability to pursue its mission to build unique partnerships to support innovative science addressing today's food and agriculture challenges depends on the integrity of the science on which it relies. A fundamental purpose of FFAR is to facilitate the advancement of knowledge and the application of the science to address challenges relevant to the FFAR's mission. All FFAR grants must be conducted with the highest standards of scientific integrity.

Grant Terms and Conditions

The Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research expects applicants to have reviewed the Grant Agreement prior to applying to ensure that the applicants are aware of the applicable terms under which the grant is offered. FFAR will only entertain potential modifications to the Grant Agreement under the most exceptional circumstances. Successful applicants are strongly encouraged to sign the Grant Agreement as presented. By submitting an application, the applicant acknowledges and accept the terms and conditions of this Call.

Requirement to Demonstrate Matching Funds

The cash match share requirement is a one-to-one FFAR-to-awardee ratio. Therefore, for every dollar FFAR awards, the grantee or a third-party institution must contribute a newly dedicated, non-federal dollar towards the project costs. For example, if a proposal requests two hundred thousand dollars ($200,000) of FFAR funds, the applicant or a third-party must be able to come up with an additional two hundred thousand dollars ($200,000) to match the request, for a grand total project budget of four hundred thousand dollars ($400,000).

The applicant agrees to identify and certify matching funds annually prior to disbursement of award funds. 100% of the required matching funds must be a cash. The match share is intended to supplement, not supplant existing funding for the principal investigator (PI). The applicant will abide by FFAR's Matching Guidelines to meet FFAR's matching requirements. To constitute a valid match, all matching funds on a FFAR grant must be expended during the grant period.

Contact Information

1. <u>Technical Help Contact</u>

   Hours of Operation: 6:00 am – 10:00 pm Eastern Time (Monday–Friday)

    i. Telephone: Click here to request a call back
    ii. Email: support@smapply.com

2. <u>Scientific and Grants Questions Contact</u>: grants@foundationfar.org

   We only accept scientific or programmatic, and grants inquiries by email. We strive to respond to inquiries within two business days, but our response time depends on the volume of questions we receive and the complexity of the questions asked. Please note that we do not monitor this mailbox on evenings, weekends, or federal holidays.