ARKANSAS SOYBEAN PROMOTION BOARD

GUIDELINES FOR PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND PROJECT REPORTING

Revised, 1999
INTRODUCTION

The soybean producers of Arkansas assess themselves a fee on harvested soybeans for the purpose of supporting research and promotion. It is the responsibility of the Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board to represent the producers and to allocate these funds in support of soybean research and extension projects and to fund promotional activities.

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to the faculty in the Division of Agriculture on proposal preparation and reporting requirements and to ensure that the Division meets its proposal submission and reporting responsibilities to the Soybean Promotion Board (SPB) at each of its regularly scheduled meetings. In addition, the document explains the proposal development and review process. This document should prove useful to the SPB as a working document on the research funding and reporting process. It is our intention to continue to revise this document as we refine our working relationship with the Board to improve coordination. Supporting documents and formats for project proposals and reporting are included.

PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT

All research and extension faculty are eligible to submit a proposal for funding consideration by the Soybean Promotion Board. In November, a call for proposals is distributed to all appropriate unit heads for distribution to interested faculty. Proposals must follow the proposal and budget format enclosed and must be submitted to the Experiment Station Grants and Contracts Office by the stated deadline for submission. All SPB proposals are divided into three Priority Groups (I. Improving Soybean Profitability, II. Base Programs, and III. New and Innovative Programs), each administered by a separate research subcommittee of the Board. Although faculty are asked to select a Priority Group in the proposal submission, the Division reserves the right to reassign projects to another category in cooperation with the Board to balance proposals among the Priority Groups. Project proposals are limited to three years maximum, but funding approval is on an annual basis and is subject to availability of funds. Budget development should be limited to one year but proposals should indicate funding duration and whether the proposal is new or continuing.

In general, budget increases for on-going projects are limited to an inflationary increase subject to availability of funds and board approval. Any changes in project title or direction, or budget adjustment, must have prior approval from the appropriate Associate Director and be communicated during proposal submission.

All proposals should be submitted electronically as an email attachment or disk (Word Perfect preferred). Prior to submission, each unit administrator should review the proposal to ensure that the proposal is in the correct format and that the budget is correct.
Each budget should provide an estimate of AES or CES expenses in addition to the funds requested. This should include the portion of the PI's salary based on the time allocation to the project, other technical support salaries or hourly wages from other funding sources and other estimated expenses.

Under maintenance and operations, budget requests for station maintenance should be developed using the Guidelines for Research Budget Development for Field Research at the Research and Extension Centers and Branch Stations. These guidelines are available in the AES Grants and Contracts Office or from the unit. Investigators should prepare a separate Land Use Request Form for each field research location and submit it directly to the appropriate resident director at the same time the proposal is submitted. This form should not be attached to the submitted proposal.

All proposals are evaluated by a faculty committee composed of research and extension scientists who do not receive SPB funding. Each faculty member on the committee provides a written evaluation of the proposal and the committee meets as a group to discuss each project. Proposals are evaluated on the basis of scientific merit, appropriateness to Board priorities, and anticipated usefulness to Arkansas producers. The Board will be asked to complete a survey of research priorities every three years to establish Board priorities for use by the Division in the evaluation process. The Chair of the review panel will prepare a written summary for each proposal and submit a summary ranking of all proposals by mean score, a summary of all scores from each panel member, and the evaluations from all panel members to the Associate Directors. All evaluations will be maintained in the Experiment Station for at least one year. Summary evaluations will be returned to each lead investigator following the conclusion of the funding process.

Following submission of the panel recommendations, the Associate Director of the Experiment Station and Associate Director of the Cooperative Extension Service will meet to consider the recommendations of the panel and to develop the Division recommendations to the Board. Final approval of the Division recommendations will be made by the Associate Vice President for Research and the Associate Vice President for Extension.

Beginning in 1999, faculty submitting new proposals will be asked to attend the winter board meeting to give a brief oral presentation on the proposed research.

The Associate Directors will meet with the board at the Spring funding meeting to present the Division recommendations and to discuss project proposals. Summary evaluations of the review panel will be shared with the board at their request. Subcommittee recommendations will be considered at the Spring funding meeting. Faculty will be notified of funding decisions following receipt of the meeting minutes.

Equipment requests cannot be included on proposals submitted to the SPB. Proposed research that requires an equipment item to accomplish the project can submit a separate request in writing to the Associate Director of the Experiment Station or Extension.
PROJECT REPORTING

All faculty receiving funding from the SPB are required to submit a short (three page maximum) annual research summary. This summary is utilized by the Board to assess progress on Board-funded research projects and is submitted with the bound proposals for the next funding year prior to the pre-funding meeting with the research subcommittees. All summaries should avoid the use of scientific jargon and clearly state the major results of your work. Each summary should include an impact statement regarding the potential impact of this research on Arkansas soybean producers. In addition, faculty with USB-funded projects also should prepare a research summary for these projects and submit them at the same time. All faculty are expected to attend the Fall and Summer Board meetings and be prepared to discuss your research when the Board breaks out into their research subcommittees. Priority Group Leaders are expected to coordinate the discussion for all projects within their Priority Group.

The Division will provide a financial report by project for the Board at the Spring meeting. Faculty with multiple projects should maintain separate cost center accounts for each project to facilitate accurate reporting by project.

From time to time faculty may be asked to prepare a 10-20 minute presentation summarizing a particular area of research at the request of the Board. This presentation would focus on some area of current interest or concern by the Board.

TERMINATION REPORTS

At the conclusion of a project, investigators will be required to prepare a more extensive termination report and present an oral summary of their research at the summer board meeting. The written report should summarize the research over the entire life of the project and clearly indicate how the new knowledge has impacted the producer or the industry. It should be written for the board rather than for a scientific audience. The report format should include: title, PI(s), project number (cost center number), project duration, annual and total funding (board funding and AES/CES contribution), objectives as listed on the original proposal, results, conclusions and impact. The results section should focus on critical information relevant to the board without statistical analyses or other highly technical information. A methods section is not required unless it is important as background for your results. The impact section is the most important section for the board. This section should contain the take-home message for the board and demonstrate how the research will benefit the producer or the industry. For example, will the research result in a more cost effective management system, result in higher yields, reduce a pest problem, increase profitability, or improve use of a product?

The oral summary should be brief and focus only on the critical results and projected impact of the research. We will have you distribute your report at the same time, which will allow you to focus only on the critical information needed to understand the impact of your research.
CALENDAR OF IMPORTANT EVENTS

November

Division faculty meet to discuss research progress and research priorities with the Division Administration.

Call for proposals distributed to unit heads and faculty.

December

Fall SPB meeting. Division faculty attend to summarize research and discuss research priorities for the next year.

January

Proposals submitted for technical review.

Research summaries submitted.

February

Research proposals and research summaries bound and submitted to the Board at least one week prior the pre-funding meeting.

Associate Directors prepare Division recommendation and meet with research subcommittees.

March

Board meets to approve project proposals. Division administration submits summary budget report by project.

July-August

Summer Board meeting. Faculty attend to provide research updates.
SOYBEAN BOARD PROPOSAL OUTLINE
(narrative limited to three pages single-spaced)

Title:

Investigators:

Priority Area: (I. Improving Soybean Profitability, II. Base Programs, III. New and Innovative Programs)

Status: (new or renewal, ex - renewal, year 2 of 3)

Value to the Grower:

Objectives:

Justification:

Procedures:

Timetable: (duration in years, three years maximum)

Locations: