

**AGENCY:** ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)

**TITLE:** Quantifying Soil Carbon Sequestration Potential Through Improved Pasture Management

**ACTION:** Request for Proposals (RFP)

**RFA No:** OAR-CCD-09-07

**CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE (CFDA):** 66.034

**SUMMARY:** Formal Agency responses to questions regarding the subject RFA

**DATE:** April 17, 2009

**Q1:** I am currently seeking a source of funding to study the effects of row-crop to pasture grazing-dairy conversion (see Current Situation below) on Soil Organic matter (OM) content and quality. Preliminary data suggests a strong increase in OM content during this conversion, but this has not been evaluated comprehensively with regard to OM sequestration vs. degradation rates as a function of time into the conversion. Nor do we understand how pasture species selection, nutrient inputs, and the inherent biogeochemical processes impact these OM sequestration/degradation rates or the degree of humidification (OM quality).

Is this a project that would be of competitive interest for this EPA program?

### **Current Situation**

High quality forage species, the capability of grazing 365 days out of the year, and a regional deficit of milk has led to a paradigm shift toward management intensive grazing (MiG) dairies in Georgia. These dairies are established on lands that were once dedicated to row-crop production, have been planted into multiple perennial grass species, are over-seeded with annual grasses in the winter, and utilize irrigation to supplement rainfall. They utilize the forage via rotational grazing systems.

**A1:** Unfortunately, EPA cannot provide feedback on pre-proposal questions to Applicants. See **Section IV. H** of the RFP. Also refer to the Scope of Work in the RFP in **Section I** for more information.

### **H. Pre-Proposal Assistance and Communications**

In accordance with EPA's Assistance Agreement Competition Policy (EPA Order 5700.5A1), EPA staff will not meet with individual applicants to discuss draft proposals, provide informal comments on draft proposals, or provide advice to applicants on how to respond to ranking criteria. Applicants are responsible for

the contents of their proposals. However, EPA will respond to questions in writing from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the proposal, and requests for clarification about the announcement.

**Q2** I am faculty at University of Florida-Range Cattle Research and Education Center in Ona, FL. I am interested in submitting a proposal in response to RFP OAR-CDD-09-07 (Quantifying Soil C Sequestration Potential Through Improved Pasture Management) and was wondering if you can please help me understand what EPA is looking for.

The proposal I intend to submit to EPA is focus on determining how biomass removal and pasture type [a.rangeland (native vegetation), b. perennial biomass energy crop, c. improved pasture under hay production, d. improved pastures grazed by beef cattle, e. degraded pastures, and f. silvopasture systems] affect ecosystem structure with especial emphasis on the amounts and characteristics of soil C stocks. One of the central hypotheses we want to test is whether management practices intended to increase biomass production and high biomass removal as bioenergy crops, hay or through consumption by grazing animals can potentially control C allocation and partitioning and, therefore, have major effects on C sequestration. Do you think this project would be relevant to this program? I was also wondering how many proposals are anticipated to be funded.

**A2.** Please review the entire text of the EPA RFP to see the type of outputs and outcomes that EPA is seeking from this proposal. I can't provide you any specific information beyond that as it would disadvantage others that are also planning to submit proposals.

Regarding your question on the number of proposals intended to be funded under this RFP, EPA intends to fund one proposal

**Q3.** I am applying for EPA's grant to measure carbon sequestration potential with improved pasture management. I work for a farming entity and will be partnering with another organization. We have already contacted several farmers who have managed intensive grazing systems some with cool or warm season pastures. Those farmers have received confirmation from their neighbors with continuous grazing or row-crop fields as participants. Our goal is to compare steady state carbon among similar slopes and soil series on these farms.

I am trying to fill in the budget sheet SF424A but am confused and in the narrative don't see any helpful hints on how to fill it out. Am I only filling in budget info for this grant request in those budget sheets?

Also I don't see a % indicated for indirect costs. Does EPA have a standard % they allow for indirect costs?

**A3.** The 424A budget form should include the Applicants' requested EPA funds and if applicable any non-federal matching or in-kind funds in the budget categories for their proposed project. In the RFP, Section IV, it states that a budget narrative is also required for each budget category detailing how the Applicant will be spending their grant funds. If an Applicant is requesting indirect costs in their budget, then a federally negotiated indirect cost rate (IDC) will be needed. Please visit <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/> to learn how to apply for a federal IDC rate.

**Q4.** We just submitted a proposal in grants.gov. Since there is no place for a detailed Year 2 budget in g.g., I emailing the complete 2-year budget here.

**A4.** Because of recent submission problems with Grants.gov, EPA is allowing email submission, as well as hard copy submission, as an acceptable form of submitting a proposal or portion of a proposal.

Applicants should be able to include a multi-year budget in the SF424A by using the four columns beside Item #6 "Object Class Categories" the corresponding columns (1-4) refer to years 1-4 and column five is for the total. Please also be sure to include a detailed budget narrative explaining how you are utilizing these funds. Please attach the detailed budget that was sent by email as a PDF to your grants package via grants.gov if you feel it is useful, but it is absolutely required to fill out the SF424A budget form along with a budget narrative. Even though you have already submitted your package through grants.gov, it is fine to resubmit if it is necessary to include the updated budget information.