A corn cob with green text

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**Request for Proposals**

**Grow Discover Research Program**

**2024 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) FOR CORN RESEARCH**  
The Wisconsin Corn Promotion Board (WCPB) is accepting proposals related to corn production stewardship and expanded uses for corn.

**GENERAL RESEARCH PRIORITIES**  
Proposals addressing needs in Production Stewardship should focus on the following topics related to corn production in Wisconsin: soil fertility, nutrient management, water quality, drainage systems, agronomics, tillage and soil health, or genetics. Proposals addressing needs in Expanded Uses should focus on: new product development utilizing corn, ethanol or other distilled product utilization, green chemistry, expanded co-product utilization or export, or novel utilization for livestock. Economic return as predicted value to a Wisconsin corn farmer is considered a very important component of funded research. Where applicable, estimation of the cost to a farmer of an adopted practice or discovery OR potential economic value to a farmer of an adopted practice or discovery is strongly encouraged to be included in the proposed research. Examples of project priorities identified by WCPB have been listed below.

**PROJECT PRIORITIES**

Three general priority categories for project proposals are defined below.

**A. Production Stewardship Research Priorities**

* Development of a multi-disciplinary research and extension/education efforts to address key challenges facing Wisconsin corn producers across focus areas including but not limited to air and water quality, soils, genetics, biological innovations, coated biodegradable fertilizer, PFAS, physiology, economics, and corn production systems.
* Evaluation of innovative irrigation or drainage system practices designed to optimize field productivity while maintaining sound environmental stewardship and sustainability.
* Research in soils and nutrient management including but not limited to phosphorus, improved time release nitrogen fertilizer, manure management, and increased understanding of nitrogen mineralization or immobilization processes.
* Evaluation of crop management decision tools and/or robotics’ technologies and/or precision agriculture tactics for optimizing both productivity and economic advantage in corn production while maintaining sound environmental stewardship and sustainable practice.
* Development of sustainable strategies such as reduced tillage in rotation systems and cover crop systems for Wisconsin corn production. Research should endeavor to address challenges including but not limited to residue management, cover crop establishment, crop competition, nutrient management, weed management, proper soil carbon measurement, quantification, and valuation, and economic viability with a multi-disciplinary approach rather than a single element focus.

**B. Expanded Uses Research Priorities**

* Research with high materials,, to increase bio-based opportunities for corn utilization (i.e. polymers, plastics materials, and chemical extracts, etc.) as well as research advancing the progression from discovered materials to consumer products.
* Advancement in corn and/or co-product conversion to value-added products (i.e. green chemicals, fuels, nutrient sources, oil, acids, feed sources etc.).
* Evaluation of the long-term economic, environmental, and societal benefits of utilizing ethanol blended transportation fuels including opportunities for sustainable aviation fuels.
* Research with potential for advancement of engine technology toward more efficient and environmentally sound utilization of ethanol blended fuels and evaluation of possible advantages of ethanol blends for ICE’s beyond octane.
* Development of novel utilization of corn or co-products for human and/or livestock uses including investigation of challenges with DDGS variability, protein content, presence of antibiotics or mycotoxins, fertilizer DDGS uses and determining best fit for domestic use and international export.

**C. Unsolicited Research**

* Research projects that do not match the above priorities will be given limited consideration or may be considered for partial funding to be used to leverage other funding sources.

**PROPOSAL CONTENT**

These instructions prescribe the proposal format and the approach for development of a preliminary proposal. It is anticipated that the project may require more than one year to complete, therefore identify realistic 12-month workloads that can be completed in each year. The online Primary Research Proposal application form includes the following required information:

1. General Information;

2. Summary; (Language within the proposal must not include “the Wisconsin Corn Growers Association” because of auditing requirements)

3. Background and Goal(s) of the research;

4. Objectives and Timeline; (Provide general yearly timeline if project is multiple year).

5. Materials and Methods; (Citations should be limited to those needed to support the proposal)

6. Deliverables;

7. Education and Outreach; (If relevant)

8. Collaborator(s); (Identify each, their area of expertise, and email contact information)

9. A reasonably precise budget page should be completed as part of the proposal; (Individual Co-PI budgets should be also included if applicable and can be uploaded at the end of the proposal).

Successful funding will also require the PI to submit a Synopsis (250 words or less) of the proposed project along with the Work Plan and a separate Statement of Benefits to Wisconsin corn farmers (125 words or less). Language must not include “the Wisconsin Corn Growers Association” because of auditing requirements. These additional documents are not expected with the preliminary proposal but will be requested with successfully funded projects. The synopsis should describe the relevance of the project to one or more of the research priorities and the methods proposed to produce research that will advance existing knowledge of the topic. The synopsis will also be used in Wisconsin Corn print and online outreach efforts.

**PROPOSAL DELIVERY AND DEADLINE**

Proposals must be submitted online no later than 3:00 p.m., Central Standard Time, **February 16, 2024.** Call or email Nicole Wagner, Executive Director, with questions concerning this RFP: 262-372-3289; nicole@wicorn.org

**PROPOSAL EVALUATION**

The Wisconsin Corn Research Committee will review preliminary proposals based on the following criteria: relevance of the project to the priorities set forth in the RFP; technical soundness and scientific merit; non-duplicative and novel objectives of the research; capabilities of investigator(s) and collaborator(s); and relevance to Wisconsin agriculture.

Following a review by the Discovery and Development Focus Team, successful and non-successful respondents will be notified by February 27, 2024. Successful proposals will need to submit a work plan, synopsis, and statement of benefits to Wisconsin corn farmers as previously outlined by March 29, 2024.

**CONDITIONS OF FUNDING ACCEPTANCE**

A contract and associated workplan must be submitted for selected proposals. Funding for each successful proposal for 2024, including all extended duration projects, will also be expected to produce quarterly reports (dates will be identified in the 2024 contract) for the respective focus team. On-time reporting is directly tied to invoicing on funded projects.

Funding expectations may also include possible media interview(s) concerning the project, coordinated by Wisconsin Corn communications staff, and/or an invited poster at Corn∙Soy Expo held in Wisconsin Dells and a final report upon completion including a full abstract as outlined in the contract. Quarterly and final reports are considered non-proprietary and will be placed on the Wisconsin Corn website and used to communicate with Wisconsin corn growers and the general public. Media interviews or the poster at Corn∙Soy Expo are intended to communicate with both corn farmers and the general public the value of the research and its relevancy to Wisconsinites. The abstract submitted with the final report upon completion of the research will be used in Wisconsin Corn print and online outreach efforts. The final report on the completed project will be due before the final 10% of the funds are remitted.

**The WCPB is a producer-funded organization, and it is essential that the WCPB be recognized as a funding source when research information is orally presented or distributed in written form.**