



**LEOPOLD CENTER  
FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE**

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## **Request for pre-proposals (RFP) – Summer 2009**

The Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture was established by the Iowa Legislature as part of the Iowa Groundwater Protection Act of 1987. Its legislatively mandated *mission* is to identify and reduce negative environmental and socio-economic impacts of agricultural practices, contribute to the development of profitable farming systems that conserve natural resources, and cooperate with Iowa State University Extension to inform the public of new findings.

The Center's work is organized in three initiative areas—*ecology, marketing and food systems, and policy*—each aimed at enhancing the condition and viability of Iowa's natural resources in varying, yet integrated ways. Each initiative has a separate section in this RFP.

### **Important information about the RFP process**

**Who may submit a pre-proposal?** Investigators representing any *Iowa* nonprofit organization/agency and/or educational institution (such as soil and water conservation districts, schools and colleges, and regional development groups). The Center strongly encourages the involvement and collaboration of farmers, landowners, and farm-based businesses in the pre-proposal process.

Please refer to each initiative's RFP section to find the best fit for your pre-proposal, and follow these general directions. Prepare a **one- or two-page concept paper** containing these elements:

- Separate **cover page** with project title, complete contact information for the principal investigator including mailing address, phone number and email address, dollar request by year, and the initiative area—*ecology, marketing and food systems, or policy*—that best fits your pre-proposal. Do not count the cover page or letters of support as part of your page total.
- **Objectives**—What do you want to achieve? Must be well defined and measurable.
- **Strategies**—What activities will help you achieve project objectives? Describe by objective.
- **Focus areas**—How does your pre-proposal fit within one or more focus areas for one of the initiatives?

- **Outcomes**—What will happen in Iowa during the short and intermediate term if you achieve your objectives?
- **Outreach**—How (and with whom) will you share project results?
- **Evaluation**—How will you determine if you have achieved your objectives?
- **Budget** estimate and brief financial explanation by calendar year, starting February 1, 2010. Funding may be for multiple years, depending on initiative or special call area.
  - Estimate total expenses and itemize by: Salary and Wages; Equipment/Supplies/Materials; Travel; Consultants; and Other.
  - Which of the following best describes your estimated budget? Does this change per year of your request?
    - \_ LCSA will provide all funding.
    - \_ LCSA funds are a start, but work is contingent on other funds to meet all desired outcomes.
    - \_ LCSA funds are filling a gap in ongoing work sponsored by other funding.
    - \_ LCSA funds will support completing part of the work even if funds from other sources are not received.

**How to submit?** An electronic copy (sent via e-mail or delivered on a CD) *or* one hard copy must be received by **5:00 p.m., Wednesday, August 19, 2009**. No faxes, please. Electronic version should be a .doc or .txt file or contained within the body of the e-mail. Send your copy to the appropriate contact person listed in the RFP.

**What happens after submission?** An invitation to submit a full proposal will be based upon review of all pre-proposals by the Leopold Center Advisory Board and staff. Pre-proposals will be screened for adherence to recommendations found in this RFP as well as economic, environmental, and community/social sustainability. The Center will notify all applicants in late September 2009 as to whether they will be invited to submit a full proposal. Full proposals will be due in early November, and funding decisions made by mid-January 2010.

## **Marketing and Food Systems Initiative** **(Contact: Rich Pirog)**

### **Marketing and Food Systems Initiative objectives:**

- Research and test new marketing strategies and business structures that allow Iowa's farmers and communities to retain more of the value for energy, food, or fiber produced.
- Support education, conduct research, and facilitate partnerships to increase investment and support of local and regional food, fiber, and energy enterprises.
- Conduct research and education to address challenges that impede farmers and farmer networks from being equal partners in energy, food or fiber-based value chains.

### **Focus areas for Marketing and Food Systems Initiative Summer 2009 RFP:**

- Projects that help initiate new or contribute to existing Iowa-based multi-organizational working groups based on farmer and community needs and documented challenges in food, fiber, or energy enterprises. Projects that support or complement the work of existing Value Chain Partnerships\* (see page 4 in the Marketing RFP) working groups are a key part of this focus area.
- Research into the community, health, safety, economic, and environmental impacts of Iowa-grown foods that are produced using the principles of sustainable agriculture, and identification of how these factors enhance consumer choice of these foods.
- Research that examines energy efficiencies, greenhouse gas emissions, new technologies, and other environmental and social factors that impact food, fiber, and energy value chains.
- Research, demonstration, and education to increase market opportunities and reduce risk for new, immigrant, and transitioning farmers as well as farmers aggregating supply from farmer networks to sell to larger volume buyers.
- Strategies that increase access to healthy, nutritious, affordable local food that is produced using principles of sustainable agriculture for children in Iowa's elementary and secondary schools and colleges, as well as families coping with economic hardship.

### **Marketing and Food Systems Initiative outcomes**

Funded projects will deliver a broad range of measurable outcomes including (but not limited to):

- Increased participation in an ongoing or new working group or network that leverages the learning of diverse group participants to benefit farmers and communities;
- Profitable farmer-led businesses and networks that significantly contribute to the health and well-being of Iowans in rural and urban communities;
- Increased opportunities for beginning, immigrant, and transitioning farmers in existing and new markets;

- Increased local and state investment in community-based food, fiber, and energy enterprises;
- Increased understanding of distinguishing characteristics of local and regional foods differentiated by more sustainable production practices; and
- Improvements in the quality of Iowa’s soil, water, and wildlife resources.

**Important considerations**

- ▶ Pre-proposals that support or complement the work of one of the existing Value Chain Partnerships working groups (see text below) are encouraged: To learn more about these groups, go to [www.valuechains.org](http://www.valuechains.org) or contact Rich Pirog at the Leopold Center.
- ▶ Please articulate how your proposed work will address one or more of the objectives and outcomes listed in this RFP.
- ▶ Identify which focus area(s) listed above provides the best fit with your pre-proposal.
- ▶ Pre-proposals should, where appropriate, explain how the proposed work will build on Leopold Center or other Iowa projects to create more sustainable food, fiber, and energy enterprises.
- ▶ Pre-proposals that respond to documented farmer marketing challenges and that show strong partnerships across organizations are recommended.
- ▶ Budget requests for Marketing and Food Systems Initiative funding can be for one or two years.

**Other pre-proposal ideas?**

Other innovative marketing and food systems research or education ideas not fitting the specific focus areas will be considered. It is highly recommended, however, that you contact the Marketing and Food Systems Initiative program leader *prior* to submitting the pre-proposal to discuss any ideas that are outside the focus area topics in this RFP.

**\*Value Chain Partnerships – the Iowa Network for Food and Agriculture Working Groups**

Value Chain Partnerships is an Iowa-based network for food and agriculture working groups that strives to deliver social, environmental, and economic benefits to its clients and communities. Network members leverage funding and expertise to identify food system challenges, foster learning and innovation, and implement solutions.

**Pork Niche Market Working Group (initiated 2001)**

- This working group is comprised of Iowa-based niche pork companies and supporting groups. Its aim is to create and maintain more competitive and viable operations for smaller-scale players in the pork sector.

**Regional Food Systems Working Group (initiated 2003)**

- This working group is comprised of geographically based practitioners and community leaders. Its aim is to increase the investment in and support for local and regional food businesses in Iowa.

**Small Meat Processors Working Group (initiated 2006)**

- This working group is comprised of small meat processors, state agencies, and producer groups. Its aim is to improve the vitality of small-scale meat processing plants in Iowa.

**Fruit and Vegetable Working Group (initiated 2007)**

- This working group is comprised of fruit and vegetable growers and buyers and their assistance providers. Its aim is to build the production, handling, and marketing capacity of Iowa's fruit and vegetable industries.

**Grass-Based Livestock Working Group (initiated 2008 – also a Leopold cross-initiative group)**

- This working group functions across all three Leopold Center initiatives and includes grass-based farm and food businesses and the outreach professionals who support them in Iowa. Its aim is to promote sustainable, diverse grass-based livestock production, enhanced environmental services, and niche marketing of grass-based products.

**Leopold Center Cross-Initiative Working Groups linked to the Marketing and Food Systems Initiative**

**Grass-Based Livestock Working Group**

See description above.

**Farm Energy Working Group**

This working group, led by the UNI Center for Energy and Environmental Education in collaboration with the National Center for Appropriate Technology, supports the implementation of a variety of energy conservation, efficiency and renewable energy practices to meet the needs of Iowa's small and midsize farms.

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**Questions about your Marketing and Food Systems pre-proposal?**

Contact: Rich Pirog, Associate Director and Marketing and Food Systems Program Leader

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