

of applications will all be kept confidential, except to those involved in the review process, to the extent permitted by law. In addition, the identities of review panel members will remain confidential throughout the entire review process and will not be released to applicants. At the end of the fiscal year, names of panel members will be made available. However, panelists will not be identified with the review of any particular application

I. Requirement To Participate in Civil Rights Training

All recipients of federally assisted programs are required to comply with Federal civil rights laws and regulations. USDA/RMA policies and procedures requires recipients of federally assisted programs to attend mandatory civil rights training sponsored by RMA, to become fully aware of civil rights requirements and responsibilities. Applicants should include in their budgets reasonable travel costs associated with attending at least two two-day RMA designated events that includes a Project Directors meeting and required civil rights training.

VII. Additional Information

A. Requirement to Use Program Logo

Applicants awarded partnership agreements will be required to use a program logo and design provided by RMA for all instructional and promotional materials.

B. Requirement to Provide Project Information to an RMA-Selected Contractor

Applicants awarded partnership agreements will be required to assist RMA in evaluating the effectiveness of its outreach program by providing documentation of outreach activities and related information to any contractor selected by RMA for program evaluation purposes. This requirement also includes providing demographic data on program participants.

C. Private Crop Insurance Organizations and Potential Conflicts of Interest

Private organizations that are involved in the sale of Federal crop insurance, or that have financial ties to such organizations, are eligible to apply for funding under either of the two educational programs described in this announcement. However, such entities will not be allowed to receive funding to conduct activities that would otherwise be required under a Standard Reinsurance Agreement or any other agreement in effect between FCIC and the entity. Such entities will also not be

allowed to receive funding to conduct activities that could be perceived by producers as promoting one company's services or products over another's. If applying for funding, such organizations are encouraged to be sensitive to potential conflicts of interest and to describe in their application the specific actions they will take to avoid actual and perceived conflicts of interest.

D. DUNS Number

A Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number is a unique nine-digit sequence recognized as the universal standard for identifying and keeping track of over 70 million businesses worldwide. A Federal Register notice of final policy issuance (68 FR 38402) requires a DUNS number in every application (*i.e.*, hard copy and electronic) for a grant or cooperative agreement. Therefore, potential applicants should verify that they have a DUNS number or take steps needed to obtain one. For information about how to obtain a DUNS number, go to <http://www.grants.gov>. Please note that the registration may take up to 14 business days to complete.

E. Required Registration for Grants.gov

The Central Contract Registry (CCR) is a database that serves as the primary Government repository for contractor information required for the conduct of business with the Government. This database will also be used as a central location for maintaining organizational information for organizations seeking and receiving grants from the Government. Such organizations must register in the CCR prior to the submission of applications via [grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) (a DUNS number is needed for CCR registration). For information about how to register in the CCR, visit <http://www.grants.gov>. Allow a minimum of 5 days to complete the CCR registration.

Signed in Washington, DC on May 3, 2005.

Ross J. Davidson, Jr.,
Manager, Federal Crop Insurance Corporation.

[FR Doc. 05-9112 Filed 5-5-05; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-08-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Federal Crop Insurance Corporation

Request for Applications (RFA): Research and Development Risk Management Research Partnerships

Announcement Type: Announcement of availability of funds and request for

application for risk management research partnerships.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number (CFDA): 10.456.

Dates: The closing date and time for receipt of an application is 5 p.m. CDT on July 5, 2005. Applications received after the deadline will not be evaluated by the technical review panel and will not be considered for funding. All awards will be made and agreements completed no later than September 30, 2005.

Overview: The purpose of the Risk Management Research Partnerships is to fund the development of non-insurance risk management tools that will be utilized by agricultural producers to assist them in mitigating the risks inherent in agricultural production. The proposals must address at least one of the ten objectives listed in part I.D. In addition, all proposals must clearly demonstrate the usefulness and benefits of the tool to producers of priority commodities and provide a plan for ongoing maintenance and support as described in part I.D. Approximately \$4 million is available to fund an undetermined number of partnerships. Projects may be funded for a period of up to three years. Applications are accepted from public and private entities; individuals are not eligible to apply. No cost sharing by the applicant is required. There are no limitations on the number of applications each applicant may submit.

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Background

The Risk Management Agency (RMA), on behalf of the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC), is committed to meeting the risk management needs and improving or developing risk management tools for the nation's farmers and ranchers. It does this by offering Federal crop insurance and other risk management products and tools through a network of private-sector entities and by overseeing the creation of new products, seeking enhancements in existing products, and by expanding the use of a variety of risk management tools. Risk management tools include a variety of risk management options and strategies developed to assist producers in mitigating the risks inherent in agricultural production. Risk management tools may include: financial management tools to mitigate price and production risks; tools to enhance measurement and prediction of risks in order to facilitate risk diversification; tools to improve production management, harvesting, record keeping or marketing. For the

purposes of this announcement, risk management tools do not include insurance products, plans of insurance, policies, modifications thereof or any related material.

B. Purpose

The purpose of this program is to fund partnership agreements that assist producers, minimize their production risks, and/or develop risk management tools. The agreements are for the development of risk management tools for use directly by agricultural producers. To aid in meeting these goals each partnership agreement awarded through this program will provide the recipient with funds, guidance, and the substantial involvement of RMA to carry out these risk management initiatives. Applications requesting funding for the development of insurance products, plans of insurance, policies, modifications thereof or related materials are excluded from consideration under this announcement.

C. Authorization

In accordance with section 522(d) of the Federal Crop Insurance Act (Act), FCIC announces the availability of funding for risk management research activities. Priority will be given to those activities addressing the need for risk management tools for producers of the following agricultural commodities (For purposes of this announcement, these commodities are collectively referred to as "Priority Commodities"):

- *Agricultural commodities covered by section 196 of the Agricultural Market Transition Act (7 U.S.C. 7333) (Noninsured Assistance Program (NAP)).* Commodities in this group are commercial crops that are not covered by catastrophic risk protection crop insurance, are used for food or fiber (except livestock), and specifically include, but are not limited to, floricultural, ornamental nursery, Christmas trees, turf grass sod, aquaculture (including ornamental fish), and industrial crops.

- *Specialty crops.* Commodities in this group may or may not be covered under a Federal crop insurance plan and include, but are not limited to, fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, syrups, honey, roots, herbs, and highly specialized varieties of traditional crops.

- *Underserved commodities.* This group includes: (a) Commodities, including livestock that are covered by a Federal crop insurance plan but for which participation in an area is below the national average; and (b) commodities, including livestock, with inadequate crop insurance coverage.

D. Objectives

Proposals must meet two major objectives to be eligible for funds under the Risk Management Research Partnerships. The first objective is that the proposal must meet at least one of the project objectives stated below.

The project objectives listed below highlight the research priorities of RMA. The objectives are listed in priority order, with the most important objective designated as 1, the second most important designated as 2, etc. The order of priority will be considered in making awards. The suggested emphasis discussed within each objective is not meant to be exhaustive. Applicants may propose other topics within any project objective but justification for those topics must be provided.

RMA encourages proposals that address multiple risks and will result in the development of tools that provide an integrated or holistic approach to risk mitigation. Preference will be given to such proposals.

Proposals may address multiple objectives, but each proposal must specify a single primary objective for funding purposes.

In the order of priority, the project objectives are:

1. To develop risk management tools to assist producers in finding alternative products, techniques or strategies related to disease management (*e.g.*, soybean rust) and/or pest mitigation under various farming practices.

2. To develop risk management tools to assist producers in reducing the impact of multiple-year losses, such as the multiple-year losses due to sustained or recurring drought and to increase the economic and production stability of agricultural producers.

3. To develop risk management tools to assist forage and rangeland producers in improving techniques for one or more of the following: Managing production, *e.g.*, optimization of grazing patterns; establishing and maintaining forage production records; drought mitigation; and harvesting or marketing production.

4. To develop risk management tools to assist limited resource and/or traditionally underserved farmers and ranchers and/or producers with limited English language proficiency that traditionally produce agricultural commodities covered by NAP, specialty crops and underserved agricultural commodities. The tools developed under this objective should address risks that may be specific to the targeted producers and/or will assist the targeted producers in gaining meaningful access to existing risk management tools and information. (Definitions: A limited

resource farmer is a producer or operator of a farm with an annual gross income of \$20,000 or less derived from all sources of revenue or a producer on a farm of less than 25 acres (aggregated for all crops) where a majority of the producer's gross income from farming operations does not exceed \$20,000; and/or direct or indirect gross farm sales not more than \$100,000 in each of the previous two years adjusted for inflation using Prices Paid by Farmer Index as compiled by the National Agricultural Statistical Service (NASS) and a total household income at or below the national poverty level for a family of four, or less than 50 percent of county median household income in each of the previous two years (to be determined annually using Commerce Department Data). Underserved farmers and ranchers include: Women, African Americans, Asians and Pacific Islanders, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, and Hispanics.)

5. To develop risk management tools to assist livestock producers in improving techniques for one or more of the following: Planning and managing the production of livestock, including disease management and control; improving techniques for breeding of livestock; and managing price, revenue, or production and market risks.

6. To develop risk management tools to assist agricultural producers in developing a better understanding of the interaction of financial markets, marketing, crop insurance, and production costs and assist producers in the determination of the optimal combination of risk management strategies.

7. To clarify labor requirements and assist producers in complying with requirements to better meet the physically intense and time-compressed planting, tending, and harvesting requirements associated with the production of specialty crops and underserved agricultural commodities.

8. To develop risk management tools encouraging self-protection for production agricultural enterprises vulnerable to losses due to terrorism.

9. To provide risk management tools to State foresters or equivalent officials for the prescribed use of burning on private forest land for the prevention, control and suppression of fire.

10. To develop risk management tools to further increase the economic and production stability of wild salmon fishermen.

II. Award Information

A. Award Description

Approximately \$4 million is available for partnership agreements that will fund the development of risk management tools and other projects listed in section I.D. Awards under this program will be made on a competitive basis. Projects may be funded for a period of up to three years for the activities described in this announcement. Projects can also be in two parts with the first part including the research and feasibility studies and the second part including the development, implementation, delivery and maintenance of the risk management tool. If the development of the tool is determined not to be feasible, the partnership may be terminated by RMA after completion of the first part with funding reduced accordingly.

There is no commitment by RMA to fund any particular project or to make a specific number of awards. Applicants awarded a partnership agreement for an amount that is less than the amount requested will be required to modify their application to conform to the reduced amount before execution of the partnership agreement. No maximum or minimum funding levels have been established for individual projects. All awards will be made and agreements completed no later than September 30, 2005.

Recipients of awards must demonstrate non-financial benefits from a partnership agreement and must agree to substantial involvement of RMA in the project. RMA encourages collaborative efforts and geographic diversity of proposed projects.

In conducting activities to achieve the purpose of this proposed research, the recipient will be responsible for the activities listed under Section II. A. 1 of this part. RMA will be responsible for the activities listed under Section II. A. 2 of this part.

1. Recipient Activities

The applicant will be required to perform the following activities:

- a. Finalize, in cooperation with RMA, the partnership agreement.
- b. Finalize, in cooperation with RMA, the plan to administer, maintain and update the risk management tool in the future.
- c. Define non-financial benefits and the substantial involvement of the RMA.
- d. Coordinate, manage, document and implement the timely completion of the approved research and development activities.
- e. Abide by the plans and provisions contained in the partnership agreement.

f. Report on program performance in accordance with the partnership agreement.

g. The recipient may be required to make a presentation to the FCIC Board of Directors.

h. Adhere to RMA guidelines for systems development and information technology development.

2. RMA Activities

RMA will be substantially involved during the performance of the funded activity. Potential types of substantial involvement may include, but are not limited to the following activities:

- a. Collaborate on the research plan;
- b. Assist in the selection of subcontractors and project staff;
- c. Review and approve critical stages of project development before subsequent stages may be started;
- d. Provide assistance in the management or technical performance of the project;
- e. Collaborate with the recipient in the development of materials associated with the funded project, as it relates to publication or presentation of the results and the distribution of the risk management tools to the public, any producer groups, RMA, and the FCIC Board of Directors;
- f. Assist in the collection of data and information that may be available in RMA databases;
- g. Collaborate with the recipient in the development of a proposal to administer, maintain and update the risk management tool in the future.
- h. Similar type of activities.

B. Other Activities

In addition to the specific activities listed above, the applicant must develop a plan for the delivery of the risk management tool to producers and the ongoing maintenance and support of the risk management tool, including how the applicant will fund the delivery, support, maintenance and updating of the tool to maintain its applicability, benefits, usefulness, and value to producers. The applicant must also deliver the risk management tool to producers and support, maintain and update the tool as applicable. The applicant may suggest other activities that would contribute directly to the purpose of this program. For any additional activity suggested, the applicant should identify the objective of the activity, the specific tasks required to meet the objective, specific timelines for performing the tasks, and specific responsibilities of the partners. For any additional activity suggested, the applicant should identify specific ways in which RMA could or should

have substantial involvement in that activity.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Proposals are invited from qualified public and private entities. Eligible applicants include colleges and universities, Federal, State, and local agencies, Native American tribal organizations, non-profit and for-profit private organizations or corporations, and other entities. Individuals are not eligible applicants.

Although an applicant may be eligible to compete for an award based on its status as an eligible entity, other factors may exclude an applicant from receiving Federal assistance under this program (e.g. debarment and suspension; a determination of non-performance on a prior contract, cooperative agreement, grant or partnership; a determination of a violation of applicable ethical standards).

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost sharing, matching, in-kind contributions, or cost participation is not required.

C. Other

1. Applicants must demonstrate the usefulness of the proposed risk management tool and the benefits of the tool to producers of priority commodities. Applicants must include information supporting the need for the tool, such as a market analysis, or communications from producers or producer organizations expressing a need for the proposed tool. The proposal must also clearly define how the proposed tool will meet the needs of the producer groups identified. The second objective is that the proposed risk management tool meet specific identified needs of the producer and the proposed risk management tool be supported by the applicant without the need of resources from RMA. Refer to part V.B for the review and selection process.

2. If the project proposed for development requires ongoing maintenance, support and delivery to producers beyond the development stage, the applicant must submit a plan to continue the maintenance, support and delivery of the tool without relying on RMA's resources. If the applicant does not plan to directly support, maintain and deliver the tool using non-award funds after the development period funded by this award is completed, then the proposal should identify a third party sponsor who will

do so. For example, if a proposed tool would require constant updating of data and availability on a Web site in order to be utilized by producers, then a sponsor should be identified that would be able to provide the funds necessary to maintain and host the tool. Third party sponsors may include government agencies, grower organizations, industry organizations, private sector entities, etc. If the tool proposed does not require support, maintenance, updating or revisions to maintain applicability or value or does not require continued delivery to producers, the proposal should so state and provide the basis why such actions are not required. Refer to part V.B for the review and selection process.

3. Applicants must be able to demonstrate they will receive non-financial benefits as a result of the partnership agreement. Non-financial benefits must accrue to the applicant and must include more than the ability to provide employment income to the applicant or for the applicant's employees or the community. The applicant must demonstrate that performance under the partnership agreement will further the specific mission of the applicant (such as providing research or activities necessary for graduate or other students to complete educational programs). Refer to part V.A.2 for evaluation criteria.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address To Request Application Package

Applicants may download an application package from the Risk Management Agency Web site at: <http://www.rma.usda.gov>. Applicants may also request an application package from: USDA, RMA/RED, 6501 Beacon Drive, Stop 0813, Kansas City, Missouri 64133-4676, phone: (816) 926-6343, fax: (816) 926-7343, e-mail: RMARED.Application@rma.usda.gov.

Completed and signed application packages sent via the U.S. Postal Service must be sent to the same address. Applicants using the U.S. Postal Service should allow for extra security-processing time for mail delivered to government offices.

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

A complete and valid application package must include an original, twelve complete paper copies are requested, three copies are required, and one copy (Microsoft Word format

preferred) of the application package on diskette or compact disc, and:

1. A completed and signed OMB Standard Form 424, "Application for Federal Assistance".

2. A completed and signed OMB Standard Form 424-A, "Budget Information—Non-construction Programs". Reviewers will need sufficient information to effectively evaluate the budget. Indirect cost for projects submitted in response to this solicitation are limited to 10 percent of the total direct cost of the agreement. A sample budget narrative, including suggestions for format and content, is available on the RMA Web site (<http://www.rma.usda.gov>) or upon request.

3. A completed and signed OMB Standard Form 424-B, "Assurances, Non-construction Programs".

4. A completed and signed OMB Standard Form LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities."

5. A completed and signed AD-1047, "Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters (Primary Covered Transactions.)"

6. A completed and signed AD-1049, "Certification Regarding Drug-Free Workplace."

7. A statement of the non-financial benefits of any partnership agreement to the recipient. (Refer to Part II.B "Non-financial Benefits").

8. A completed Form R&D-1, "Title Page and Proposal Summary." Each proposal must specify the single primary objective for evaluation and funding purposes. The same or similar proposals cannot be submitted multiple times with different primary objectives specified. If the same or similar proposals are submitted, the first received will be the only one evaluated.

9. A proposal narrative submitted with the application package should be limited to 10 single-sided pages. Reviewers will need sufficient information to effectively evaluate the application under the criteria contained in part V. A sample narrative, including suggestions for format and content, is available on the RMA Web site (<http://www.rma.usda.gov>) or upon request.

10. An appendix containing any attachments that may support information in the narrative (Optional).

11. A completed Form R&D-2, "Statement of Work."

Applicants are responsible for ensuring the application materials are received by the closing date. Incomplete application packages will not receive further consideration.

C. Submission Dates and Times

The closing date and time for receipt of an application is 5 p.m. CDT on July 5, 2005. Applications received after the deadline will not be evaluated by the technical review panel and will not be considered for funding.

D. Funding Restrictions

No maximum or minimum funding levels have been established for individual projects or for categories of objectives. The funding level by category of objective will be determined by FCIC. Indirect cost for projects submitted in response to this solicitation are limited to 10 percent of total direct cost of the agreement. Each project may be funded for a period of up to three years for the activities described in this announcement.

Partnership agreement funds may not be used to:

1. Plan, repair, rehabilitate, acquire, or construct a building or facility including a processing facility;

2. To purchase, rent, or install fixed equipment;

3. Repair or maintain privately owned vehicles;

4. Pay for the preparation of the partnership application;

5. Fund political activities;

6. Pay costs incurred prior to receiving this partnership agreement;

7. Fund any activities prohibited in 7 CFR parts 3015 and 3019, as applicable.

E. Other Submission Requirements

1. An original and twelve (12) paper copies are requested, three copies are required, of the complete and signed application, and one copy (Microsoft Word format preferred) on diskette or compact disc must be submitted in one package at the time of initial submission.

2. Applicants are encouraged to submit completed and signed application packages using overnight mail or delivery service to ensure timely receipt by the USDA. The applicable address for such submissions is: RMA/RED Partnership Agreement Program, USDA, RMA/RED, 6501 Beacon Drive, Stop 0813, Kansas City, Missouri 64133-4676.

3. All applications must be submitted and received by the deadline. Applications that do not meet all of the requirements in this announcement are considered incomplete applications. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered in this competition and will be returned to the applicant.

4. Applications submitted through express, overnight mail or another delivery service will be considered as

meeting the announced deadline if they are received in the mailroom at the address stated above for express, overnight mail or another delivery service on or before the deadline.

Applicants are cautioned that express, overnight mail or other delivery services do not always deliver as agreed. Applicants should take this into account because failure of such delivery services will not extend the deadline. The address must appear on the envelope or package containing the application with the note "Attention: RMA/RED Partnership Application."

Mailed applications will be considered meeting the announced deadline if they are received on or before the deadline in the mailroom at the address stated above for mailed applications. Applicants are responsible for mailing applications well in advance, to ensure that applications are received on or before the deadline time and date. Applicants should be aware that there may be significant delays in delivery if applications are mailed using the U.S. Postal Service due to the additional security measures that mail delivered to government offices now require.

5. RMA cannot accommodate transmissions of applications by facsimile or through other electronic media. Therefore, applications transmitted electronically will not be accepted regardless of the date or time of submission or the time of receipt.

V. Application Review Information

A. Criteria

1. Research Objectives—Maximum 40 Points

The application must receive a minimum score of 24 points under this criterion in order to be considered for further evaluation and funding. Applications receiving less than 24 points will be eliminated and will not be evaluated under criteria 2 through 4.

The proposal must clearly define the development, management and implementation of a risk management tool designed to meet the needs of the producers outlined for at least one of the objectives listed in part I.D. Proposals that best meet the objective and are innovative, clear, concise, useful, easy to understand, and address multiple risks that result in the development of tools that provide an integrated or holistic approach to risk mitigation will be given the highest score. The proposal will be reviewed to determine if it is similar to a project that has been funded, has been recommended for funding, or is currently under development through other means.

2. Indication of RMA Involvement and Non-Financial Benefits—Maximum 10 Points

The proposal clearly indicates areas of substantial involvement by RMA and clearly indicates benefits derived from the partnership that extend beyond the financial benefits or funding of the research proposal. Those proposals that clearly outline the involvement of RMA in all aspects of the project and demonstrate non-financial benefit will receive the highest score. Examples of non-financial benefits would be the benefits derived by an educational institution by providing research opportunities to students or benefits derived through the furtherance of an organization's mission.

3. Research Approach, Methodology, Development and Implementation—Maximum 40 Points

The proposal clearly demonstrates a sound research approach and defines the methodology to be used as well as describes the development and implementation of the risk management tool. Proposals that demonstrate a clear, concise and generally accepted research methodology and innovative approach will receive the highest number of points.

4. Management—Maximum 10 Points

The proposal clearly demonstrates the applicant's ability and resources to coordinate and manage all aspects of the proposed research project. The applicant whose approach is the most cost effective and optimizes the use and effective application of the funding will receive the highest score.

B. Review and Selection Process

Each application will be evaluated using a five-part process. First, each application will be screened by RMA to ensure that each proposal specifies a single primary objective for evaluation and funding purposes and the proposal meets the objectives stated in part I.D. The same or similar proposals cannot be submitted multiple times with different primary objectives specified. If the same or similar proposals are submitted, the first received will be the only one evaluated. Applications that do not meet the objectives stated in part I.D and all other requirements in this announcement or are incomplete will not receive further consideration.

Second, the proposal must clearly demonstrate the usefulness of the tool and the benefits of the tool to producers of priority commodities and demonstrate that there is a reasonable expectation that the tool will actually be used by a substantial number of such

producers. Any proposal that does not do this will not receive further consideration.

Third, the plan will be evaluated to ensure that the risk management tool can be delivered to producers and will be supported, maintained, updated or revised as necessary. Any proposal where the plan does not adequately address each of these issues will not receive further consideration. If the plan states that particular such actions are not necessary, the basis for such a determination will be evaluated and the proposal reviewed to determine if such determination is reasonable. If it is determined that any such actions are required and they are not contained in the plan, the proposal will not receive further consideration.

Fourth, all eligible applications will be evaluated using the criterion in part V.A.1. Applications must score at least 24 points under this criteria in order to be to be evaluated further.

Fifth, all applications scoring the required 24 points will be evaluated further under part V.A.2 through 4.

For the second, third steps, a review panel will consider all applications that are complete and meet the objectives in part I.D. and all other requirements in this announcement. If the panel determines that an application is eligible to be reviewed under steps four and five, the review panel will review the merits of the applications. The evaluation of each application will be conducted by a panel of not less than three independent reviewers. The panel will be comprised of representatives from USDA, other Federal agencies, and others representing public and private organizations, as needed. The narrative and any appendixes provided by each applicant will be used by the review panel to evaluate the merits of the project that is being proposed for funding.

The panel will examine and score applications based on the evaluation criteria and weights contained in part V.A.

In order to be considered for funding, a proposal must score at least 75 points.

For the last step, those applications meeting the minimum number of points will be listed in initial rank order by objective. The highest-ranking proposal for each objective will be funded in the order of priority (the highest ranking proposal meeting objective 1 will be funded first and the highest ranking proposal meeting objective 2 will be funded second, etc.). It is possible that funds could be exhausted before funding projects for every objective. If there are funds remaining, the process will be repeated until the funds are

obligated. The projects selected for funding will be presented, along with funding level recommendations, to the Manager of FCIC, who will make the final decision on awarding of a partnership agreement.

If the Manager of FCIC determines that any application is sufficiently similar to a project that has been funded or has been recommended to be funded under this announcement or any other research and development program, then the Manager may elect to not fund that application in whole or in part.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Receipt of applications will be acknowledged by e-mail, whenever possible. Therefore, each applicant is encouraged to provide an e-mail address in the application. If an e-mail address is not indicated on an application, receipt will be acknowledged by letter. There will be no notification of incomplete, unqualified or unfunded applications until the awards have been made.

When received by RMA, applications will be assigned an identification number. This number will be communicated to applicants in the acknowledgement of receipt of applications. An application identification number should be referenced in all correspondence regarding the application. If the applicant does not receive an acknowledgement within 15 days of the submission deadline, the applicant should contact the Research and Development Division at (816) 926-6343.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. Access to Panel Review Information

Upon written request, scores from the evaluation panel, not including the identity of reviewers, will be sent to the applicant after the review and awards process has been completed.

2. Notification of Partnership Agreement Awards and Notification of Non-Selection

Following approval of the applications selected for funding, notice of project approval and authority to draw down funds will be made to the selected applicants in writing. Within the limit of funds available for such purpose, the awarding official of RMA shall enter into partnership agreements with those applicants whose applications are judged to be most meritorious under the procedures set forth in this announcement. The

partnership agreement provides the amount of Federal funds for use in the project period, the terms and conditions of the award, and the time period for the project.

The effective date of the partnership agreement shall be the date the agreement is executed by both parties. All funds provided to the applicant by FCIC must be expended solely for the purpose for which funds are obligated in accordance with the approved application and budget, the regulations, the terms and conditions of the award, and the applicability of Federal cost principles. No commitment of Federal assistance beyond the project period is made or implied, as a result of any award made pursuant to this announcement.

Notification of denial of funding will be sent to applicants after final funding decisions have been made. Reasons for denial of funding can include incomplete proposals, proposals that did not meet the objectives, scored low or were duplicative.

3. Confidential Aspects of Proposals and Awards

When an application results in a partnership agreement, it becomes a part of the official record of RMA transactions, available to the public upon specific request. Information that the Secretary of Agriculture determines to be of a confidential, privileged, or proprietary nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, any information that the applicant wishes to be considered confidential, privileged, or proprietary should be clearly marked within the application, including the basis for such designation. The original copy of a proposal that does not result in an award will be retained by RMA for a period of one year. Other copies will be destroyed. Such a proposal will be released only with the express written consent of the applicant or to the extent required by law. A proposal may be withdrawn at any time prior to award.

4. Audit Requirements

Applicants awarded the partnership agreements are subject to audit.

5. Prohibitions and Requirements With Regard to Lobbying

Section 1352 of Public Law 101-121, enacted on October 23, 1989, imposes prohibitions and requirements for disclosure and certification related to lobbying on recipients of Federal contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, and loans. It provides exemptions for Indian Tribes and tribal organizations. Current and prospective

recipients, and any subcontractors, are prohibited from using Federal funds, other than profits from a Federal contract, for lobbying Congress or any Federal agency in connection with the award of a contract, grant, cooperative agreement, or loan. In addition, for each award action in excess of \$100,000 (\$150,000 for loans) the law requires recipients and any subcontractors (1) to certify that they have neither used nor will use any appropriated funds for payments of lobbyists; (2) to disclose the name, address, payment details, and purpose of any agreements with lobbyists whom recipients or subcontractors will pay with profit or other nonappropriated funds on or after December 22, 1989; (3) to file quarterly updates about the use of lobbyists if material changes occur in their use. The law establishes civil penalties for non-compliance. A copy of the certification and disclosure forms must be submitted with the application and are available from David Fulk at the above stated address and telephone number.

6. Applicable OMB Circulars

All partnership and cooperative agreements funded as a result of this notice will be subject to the requirements contained in all applicable OMB circulars.

C. Reporting

Applicants awarded a partnership agreement will be required to submit quarterly progress and financial reports (SF-269) throughout the project period, as well as a final program and financial report not later than 90 days after the end of the project period.

VII. Agency Contact

If applicants have any questions they may contact: USDA, RMA/RED, 6501 Beacon Drive, Stop 0813, Kansas City, Missouri 64133-4676, or phone: (816) 926-6343, or fax: (816) 926-7343, or e-mail: RMARED.Application@rma.usda.gov.

VIII. Other Information

The names of applicants, the names of individuals identified in the applications, the content of applications, and the panel evaluations of applications will all be kept confidential, except to those involved in the review process, to the extent permitted by law. In addition, the identities of review panel members will remain confidential throughout the entire review process and will not be released to applicants. At the end of the fiscal year, names of panel members will be made available. However,

panelists will not be identified with the review of any particular application.

Signed in Washington, DC on May 3, 2005.

Ross J. Davidson, Jr.,

Manager, Federal Crop Insurance Corporation.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Information Collection; Request for Comments; Wildland Fire Foams

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the Forest Service is seeking comments from all interested individuals and organizations on extending the information collection, Wildland Fire Foams.

DATES: Comments must be received in writing on or before July 5, 2005, to be assured of consideration. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

ADDRESSES: Comments concerning this notice should be addressed to Victoria Henderson, Branch Director, National Interagency Fire Center, Equipment and Chemicals, State and Private Forestry, Forest Service, USDA, 3833 S. Development Avenue, Boise, Idaho 83705.

Comments also may be submitted via facsimile to (208) 387-5971 or e-mail to thenderson@fs.fed.us. Comments received may be viewed at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/chemicals/comments.html>.

The public may inspect comments received at the Office of the Branch Director, National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC), Equipment and Chemicals, State and Private Forestry, Forest Service, USDA, Jack Wilson Building, 3833 S. Development Avenue, Boise, Idaho, Monday through Friday between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. Visitors are encouraged to call ahead to (208) 387-5348 to facilitate entry to the building.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Les Holsapple, Missoula Technology and Development Center (MTDC), at (406) 829-6761; Cecilia Johnson, MTDC, at (406) 329-4819; or Tory Henderson, National Interagency Fire Center, at (208) 387-5348. Individuals who use telecommunication devices for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Relay Service (FRS) at 1-800-877-8339 twenty-four hours a day, every day of the year, including holidays.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The Forest Service determined a need, "To have available and utilize adequate types and quantities of qualified fire chemical products to accomplish fire management activities safely, efficiently, and effectively." (Forest Service Manual 5192.02). To accomplish this objective the Forest Service needs to evaluate and approve manufacturer's wildland fire foam products that may be used in direct wildland fire suppression operations prior to being used on lands managed by the Forest Service and its Federal cooperators.

Evaluation and qualification is based upon meeting the standards identified in the specifications maintained by staff at the Missoula Technology and Development Center. Specification taken from the "List of Known and Suspected Carcinogens" and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's "List of Highly Hazardous Materials" are utilized in the evaluation, qualification, and approval process.

Safe products will not include ingredients that create an enhanced risk in typical use to either the firefighters involved or the public in general. A risk analysis may be required to determine if any products or ingredients in wildland fire foam pose an increased health risk to humans. The effects are based upon acute toxicity determinations of the products and a review of lists of known and suspected carcinogens. The safety of the firefighters equipment, either ground-based or aircraft, such as uniform corrosion tests or intergranular, is considered. Safety to the environment also is considered in terms of aquatic environments (fish and clean water) and terrestrial environments (wildlife and plants).

Risk determinations are undertaken to identify products which do not enhance risk to those environments in typical use. Toxicity determinations are done for acute toxicity concerns. Efficiency evaluations are based upon such items as (1) the range of mix ratios of concentrate products with water appropriate for storage and handling in typical wildland fire operations to provide products that are storable and/or can be kept available on fire equipment and (2) can be mixed and used with readily available equipment and facilities. Effectiveness tests for wildland fire foam products are based upon the products ability to reduce fire spread and intensity even after the water carrier has evaporated away.

The information is collected by manufacturers and submitted on two

completed forms, the Confidential Disclosure Sheets and Technical Data Sheets. The manufacturers submit the completed forms to staff at the Missoula Technology and Development Center, located in Missoula, Montana. These forms are available electronically via e-mail or paper via surface mail. The manufacturers may submit the completed forms electronically or via surface mail to the Missoula Technology and Development Center.

The following describes the information collection to be extended:

Title: Wildland Fire Foams.

OMB Number: 0596-0183.

Expiration Date of Approval: 09/30/2005.

Type of Request: Extension.

Abstract: The collected information includes listings of specific individual ingredients and the quantity of these ingredients in the formulation of the products, identification of the specific sources of supply for each ingredient, and the specific mixing requirements.

If a risk analysis is necessary, the Forest Service will request the manufacturer send a copy of the product labeling. In these cases a third party (either contractor or other Federal agency) is utilized to assess the specific levels of products or ingredients expected to occur in typical applications relative to human and environmental health. Once the manufacturers (and/or their suppliers) have submitted their information and payment (approximately \$15,000 to the USDA Forest Service and an additional approximate \$15,000 to third party laboratories in accordance with Federal Acquisition Regulation 9.202(a)(2)(ii)) for analysis and evaluation, the Missoula Technology and Development Center staff will begin to test the safety, efficiency, and effectiveness of the wildland fire foam products.

The one-time collection of this information for each product submitted for evaluation is necessary (1) because it takes over a year to test the wildland fire foam products for safety, effectiveness and efficiency and (2) Forest Service needs to ensure the safety, effectiveness, and efficiency of wildland fire foam products prior to their use. If this information is not collected and foam fire suppressant products are not analyzed and evaluated on an on-going basis, the ability of the Forest Service to solicit and award wildland fire foam contracts in a timely manner would not be possible.

Estimate of Annual Burden: 2.8 hours.

Type of Respondents: Manufacturers (and their suppliers) of wildland fire foam products which suppress combustion of wildland fires and which