

NRSP Review Committee Recommendations for off the top funding (ballots distributed during regional meetings)

NRSP Project	Title	NRSP Project Request	NRSP Review Committee Motion
NRSP-1	National Information Management and Support System (NIMSS) [2011-16]	\$50,000	Approve FY13 budget of \$50,000
NRSP-3	The National Atmospheric Deposition Program (NADP) [2009-14]	\$50,000	Approve FY13 budget of \$50,000
NRSP-4	Enabling Pesticide Registrations for Specialty Crops and Minor Uses [2010-15]	\$481,182	Approve FY13 budget of \$481,182
NRSP-6	The US Potato Genebank: Acquisition, Classification, Preservation, Evaluation and Distribution of Potato (Solanum) Germplasm [2010-15]	\$150,000	Approve FY13 budget of \$150,000
NRSP-7	A National Agricultural Program for Minor Use Animal Drugs [2009-14]	\$325,000	Approve FY13 budget of \$325,000
NRSP-8	National Animal Genome Research Program [2008-13]	\$500,000	Approve FY13 budget of \$500,000
NRSP-9	National Animal Nutrition Program [2010-15]	\$175,000	Approve FY13 budget of \$175,000
NRSP_temp261	ipmPIPE National Research Support Project	\$150,000	Disapprove this proposal and budget
NRSP review process changes as outlined in the NRSP-RC agenda brief below.		N/A	Approve these recommend changes to the NRSP project review process

Item 4.2: NRSP RC Program Management and Recommendations

Background: The ESS expends considerable time and resources in managing the National Research Support Program which is intended to provide off the top funding in support of research. Currently there are 7 NRSPs receiving a total of \$1.731 million. Management activities include those of the NRSP Review Committee whose responsibilities include reviewing proposals progress and annual budgets. This committee meets a minimum of 3-4 times per year usually by conference call. In addition each regional association sets aside time for discussion of renewal or new proposals as well as for discussion of annual budgets. Taken together these activities constitute considerable transactional costs for a program that comprises less than 1% of Hatch funds.

After a year of deliberation, an NRSP Task Force made series of far reaching recommendations in 2002 on how the Program should be implemented and managed. These recommendations were adopted by the Section in 2003. However, one of the provisions, approval of 5 year budgets that included a caveat to reduce project funding if Hatch funds were reduced, was reversed the following year as Directors wanted to maintain annual budget approvals.

With the exception of the reversal for the NRSP-5 reduction in 2009, there have been few questions about annual budget approval and no reversal of the Committee recommendations. With this in mind, perhaps it is again time to consider the matter of providing 5 year budget approvals.

A second major provision was the requirement that each NRSP develops a Management and Business Plan indicating how the project would reduce off the top funding to a low maintenance level. This would potentially free up funds allowing the Directors to consider implementation of new projects as appropriate. Thus, NRSPs should expect a finite period of off-the-top funding; however some projects may not be readily transitioned to other sources of funds.

The requirement for a Management and Business Plan must be examined. The program requires submission of a plan that must include “provisions for developing alternative funding or reducing off-the-top funding to a minimal level”. Included would be an assessment of transition options, and alternative funding sources, but few projects actually do this.

There are several examples where off the top funds have been reduced (NRSP-3) or eliminated (NRSP-5). However, there are other projects that continue to have large, if not growing, contributions from off the tops funds.

Proposed Changes to Operational Guidelines

1. The NRSP RC would recommend 5 year budget approvals for new and renewing projects, with the stipulation that if Hatch funds are reduced, NRSP funding will also be reduced by the same percentage. Typically there would be no more than 2-3 projects under consideration for five year renewal in any given year. This would allow for in depth discussion if needed.

- There would a 3rd year review to assess progress toward goals, objectives and funding targets. The interim review would be provided to the Directors as part of the committee's report at the regional association summer meetings and may include a recommendation for the reduction of funding if adequate progress has not been made.
- Approval of NRSP RC recommendation on five year budgets, new projects and other actions would be by a simple majority vote of those voting at the ESS Annual Meeting

2. All NRSPs should expect a finite time frame for off the top support after which resources would decline to a maintenance level (e.g. \$50,000 to \$100,000/year). This would allow the project to maintain visibility as an NRSP and provide a conduit for outside resources to leverage AES funds. An excellent example of this can be found in the history of NRSP-3.

3. The NRSP RC recommends that an upper limit be established on the total funds that can be expended on NRSP projects. The committee suggests \$2,000,000 annually, which is slightly higher than the current \$1.731 million but still well less than 1% of Hatch. This limit combined with more effective management and planned reduction of funding to existing projects would facilitate the development of new high priority NRSPs.

Action Requested: Approve the NRSP-RC's budget/proposal recommendations and the recommended changes to the NRSP Program Management, as outlined above.