

APHIS is requesting comment from stakeholders regarding the utility of a privately managed database for holding animal location and movement information. Among the issues you may wish to comment on are the following:

- How should a private database system be funded? Please give the reasons for your response.
- Should the NAIS allow for multiple privately managed databases? Please explain why or why not.
- Should a public (government) system be made available as well as a privately managed system so that producers would have a choice? Please give the reasons for your response.
- Should a privately managed system include all species? Please give the reasons for your response.
- Would either system work equally well at the State level? Please explain why or why not.

The NAIS Draft Strategic Plan and the NAIS Draft Program Standards may be viewed on the Internet at <http://www.usda.gov/nais>. The documents may also be accessed through EDOCKET (see **ADDRESSES** above for instructions for accessing EDOCKET). You may request paper copies of the documents by calling or writing to the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**. Please refer to the titles of the documents when requesting copies. The documents are also available for review in our reading room (information on the location and hours of the reading room is listed under the heading **ADDRESSES** at the beginning of this notice).

Done in Washington, DC, this 3rd day of May 2005.

Peter Fernandez,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 05-9113 Filed 5-5-05; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-34-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Commodity Credit Corporation

Information Collection; Standard Operating Agreement Governing Intermodal Transportation

AGENCY: Commodity Credit Corporation, USDA.

ACTION: Notice; request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) is seeking comments from all interested individuals and organizations on the extension with revision of an approved information collection associated with the intermodal transportation services.

The information collection supports the domestic and export food assistance program needs. Also, this information collection allows CCC to determine the availability of intermodal marketing companies to meet the intermodal transportation needs of CCC for the movement of its freight.

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

ADDRESSES: Comments must be addressed to Penny Carlson, Acting Chief, Planning and Analysis Division, Kansas City Commodity Office, 6501 Beacon Drive, Kansas City, Missouri 64133-4676. Comments may be also submitted either by e-mail to: pkcarlson@kcc.usda.gov or by fax to: (816) 926-1648. The comments must also be sent to the Desk Officer for Agriculture, Office of Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, Washington, DC 20503. Comments must include the OMB number and the title of the information collection.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Penny Carlson, Acting Chief, Planning Analysis Division, (816) 926-6509 and pkcarlson@kcc.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Description of Information Collection

Title: Standard Operating Agreement Governing Intermodal Transportation.
OMB Control Number: 0560-0194.
Expiration Date: October 31, 2005.
Type of Request: Extension with revision.

Abstract: CCC, through the Kansas City Commodity Office (KCCO), solicits bids from transportation companies for the purpose of providing intermodal transportation of agricultural commodities. Intermodal Marketing Companies (IMC) provide rail trailer-on-flatcar/container-on-flatcar (TOFC/COFC) service that CCC hires to provide program transportation needs. Those IMC's, who choose to do business with the KCCO Export Operations Division (EOD) are required to complete and submit the KC-9 (Standard Operating Agreement Governing Intermodal Transportation) at one time only. EOD uses the completed form to determine if IMC is available and meets CCC requirements for hauling agricultural products for CCC.

Estimate of Burden: Average 1 hour per response.

Respondents: Intermodal Marketing Companies.

Respondents: 22.

Estimated Number of Annual Responses per Respondent: 1.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 22 hours.

Comment is invited regarding: (1) Whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (2) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of burden including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information collected; or (4) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of the information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

All comments received in response to this notice, including names and addresses when provided, will be a matter of public record. Comments will be summarized and included in the submission for OMB approval.

Signed at Washington, DC, on April 29, 2005.

James R. Little,

Executive Vice President, Commodity Credit Corporation.

[FR Doc. 05-9030 Filed 5-5-05; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-05-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Federal Crop Insurance Corporation

Request for Applications (RFA) Community Outreach and Assistance Partnership Program; Initial Announcement

Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA): This program is listed in the CFDA under 10-455, Community Outreach and Assistance Partnership Program.

Dates: The closing date and time for receipt of an application is 5 p.m. eastern time on June 20, 2005.

Applications received after the deadline will not be considered for funding. All awards will be made and partnership agreements completed no later than September 30, 2005.

Overview: In accordance with section 522(d) of the Federal Crop Insurance Act (Act), the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC), operating through the Risk Management Agency (RMA), announces the availability of approximately \$5 million in fiscal year (FY) 2005 for collaborative outreach and assistance programs for women, limited resource, socially disadvantaged and other traditionally under-served farmers and ranchers, who produce Priority

Commodities as defined in Part I.C. Awards under this program will be made on a competitive basis for projects of up to one year. Recipients of awards must demonstrate non-financial benefits from a partnership agreement and must agree to the substantial involvement of RMA in the project. This announcement lists the information needed to submit an application under this program.

For Further Information Contact:

Marie Buchanan, National Outreach Program Manager, Telephone (202) 690-2686, Facsimile (202) 690-1518, e-mail: Marie.Buchanan@rma.usda.gov.

Application materials can also be downloaded from the RMA Web site at <http://www.rma.usda.gov>.

This Announcement Consists of Seven Parts

Part I—General Information

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- B. Purpose
- C. Definition of Priority Commodities
- D. Program Description

Part II—Award Information

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I. General Information

A. Legislative Authority and Background

This program is authorized under section 522(d)(3)(F) of the Act which authorizes FCIC funding for risk

management training and informational efforts for agricultural producers through the formation of partnerships with public and private organizations. RMA promotes and regulates sound risk management solutions to improve the economic stability of American agriculture. One of RMA's four strategic goals is to ensure that its customers and potential customers are well informed of the risk management solutions available. On behalf of FCIC, RMA does this by offering Federal crop insurance products through a network of private-sector partners, overseeing the creation of new risk management products, seeking enhancements in existing products, ensuring the integrity of crop insurance programs, providing risk management education and information and offering outreach programs aimed at equal access and participation of underserved communities. A priority must be given to reaching producers of Priority Commodities as defined in section C of this part.

B. Purpose

The purpose of this program is to fund projects that provide women, limited resource, socially disadvantaged, and other traditionally underserved producers of Priority Commodities with training, informational opportunities and assistance necessary to understand:

- (1) The kind of risks addressed by existing and emerging risk management tools;
- (2) The features and appropriate use of existing and emerging risk management tools; and
- (3) How to make sound risk management decisions.

Each partnership agreement awarded through this program will provide the applicant with funds, guidance, and the substantial involvement of RMA to deliver outreach and assistance programs to producers in a specific geographical area.

C. Definition of Priority Commodities

For purposes of this program, Priority Commodities are defined as:

- *Agricultural commodities covered by (7 U.S.C. 7333).* 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 produced by small, limited resource, socially disadvantaged, or beginning farmers and ranchers.

A project is considered as giving priority to Priority Commodities if the majority of the educational outreach and assistance activities are directed to women, limited resource, socially disadvantaged and other traditionally under-served producers of one or more of the three classes of commodities listed above or any combination of the three classes.

D. Program Description

This program will support a wide range of innovative outreach and assistance activities in farm management, financial management, marketing contracts, crop insurance and other existing and emerging risk management tools FCIC, working through RMA, will be substantially involved in the activities listed under paragraph 2. The applicant must identify specific ways in which RMA could have substantial involvement in the proposed outreach activity. Applications that do not contain substantial involvement by RMA will be rejected.

In addition to the specific, required activities listed under paragraph 1, 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 time lines for performing the tasks, and specific responsibilities of the partners.

1. In conducting activities to achieve the purpose and goal of this program, award recipients will be required to perform the following activities:

Develop and finalize a risk management outreach delivery plan that will contain the tasks needed to accomplish the purpose of this program, including a description of the manner in which various tasks for the project will be completed, the dates by which each task will be completed, and the partners that will have responsibility for each task. Task milestones must be listed to ensure that progress can be measured at

various stages throughout the life of the project. The plan must also provide for the substantial involvement of RMA in the project. (Note: All partnership agreements resulting from this announcement will include delivery plans in a table format. All applicants are strongly encouraged to refer to the table in the application package, when preparing a delivery plan and to use this format as part of the project description.)

- Assemble risk management instructional materials appropriate for producers of Priority Commodities to be used in delivering education and information. This will include: (a) Gathering existing instructional materials that meet the local needs of producers of Priority Commodities; (b) identifying gaps in existing instructional materials; and (c) developing new materials or modifying existing instructional materials to fill existing gaps.

- Develop and conduct a promotional program. This program will include activities using media, newsletters, publications, or other informational dissemination techniques that are designed to: (a) Raise awareness for risk management; (b) inform producers of the availability of risk management tools; and (c) inform producers of the training and informational opportunities being offered. Minority media and publications should also be used to achieve the broadest promotion of outreach opportunities for women, limited resource and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers possible.

- Deliver risk management training and informational opportunities to women, limited resource and socially disadvantaged agricultural producers and agribusiness professionals of Priority Commodities. This will include organizing and delivering educational activities using the instructional materials identified earlier. Activities should be directed primarily to agricultural producers, but may include those agribusiness professionals that have frequent opportunities to advise farmers on risk management.

- Document all outreach activities conducted under the partnership agreement and the results of such activities, including criteria and indicators used to evaluate the success of the program. The recipient will also be required to provide information to an RMA-selected contractor to evaluate all outreach activities and advise RMA as to the effectiveness of activities.

2. RMA will be responsible for the following activities:

- Review and approve in advance the recipient's project delivery plan.

- Collaborate with the recipient in assembling risk management materials for producers. This will include: (a) Reviewing and approving in advance all educational materials for technical accuracy; (b) serving on curriculum development workgroups; (c) providing curriculum developers with fact sheets and other risk management publications prepared by RMA; (d) advising the applicant on the materials available over the internet through the AgRisk Education Library; (e) advising the applicant on technical issues related to crop insurance instructional materials; and (f) advising the applicant on the use of the standardized design and layout formats to be used on program materials.

- Collaborate with the recipient on a promotional program for raising awareness of risk management and for informing producers of training and informational opportunities. This will include: (a) Reviewing and approving in advance all promotional plans, materials, and programs; (b) serving on workgroups that plan promotional programs; (c) advising the applicant on technical issues relating to the presentation of crop insurance products in promotional materials; and (d) participating, as appropriate, in media programs designed to raise general awareness or provide farmers with risk management education.

- Collaborate with the recipient on outreach activities to agricultural producers and agribusiness leaders. This will include: (a) Reviewing and approving in advance all producer and agribusiness educational delivery plans; (b) advising the applicant on technical issues related to the delivery of crop insurance education and information; and (c) assisting the applicant in informing crop insurance professionals about educational plans and scheduled meetings.

- Reviewing and approving recipient's documentation of risk management education and outreach activities.

II. Award Information

A. Available Funding

The amount of funds available in FY 2005 for support of this program is approximately \$5 million dollars. There is no commitment by USDA/RMA to fund any particular project or to make a specific number of awards. No maximum or minimum funding levels have been established for individual projects or geographic locations. Applicants awarded a partnership

agreement for an amount that is less than the amount requested may be required to modify their application to conform to the reduced amount before execution of the partnership agreement. It is expected that awards will be made approximately 75 days after the application deadline.

B. Types of Applications

Applicants must specify whether the application is a new, renewal, or resubmitted application.

1. New Application—This is an application that was been previously submitted to the RMA Outreach Program. All new applications will be reviewed competitively using the selection process and evaluation criteria described in this RFA.

2. Renewal Application—This is an application that requests additional funding for a project beyond the period that was approved in an original or amended award. Applications for renewed funding must contain the same information as required for new applications, and additionally must contain a Progress Report. Renewal applications must be received by the relevant due dates, will be evaluated in competition with other pending applications, and will be reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications.

3. Resubmitted Application—This is an application previously submitted to the RMA Outreach office, but was not funded. Resubmitted applications must be received by the relevant due dates, and will be evaluated in competition with other pending applications and will be reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications.

III. Eligibility/Funding

A. Eligible Applicants

Educational institutions, community based organizations, associations of farmers and ranchers, state departments of agriculture, and other non-profit organizations with demonstrated capabilities in developing and implementing risk management and other marketing options for priority commodities are eligible to apply. Individuals are not eligible applicants. Applicants are encouraged to form partnerships with other entities that complement, enhance, and/or increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the proposed project. 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). Applications from ineligible or excluded persons will be rejected in their entirety.

B. Project Period

Each project will be funded for a period of up to one year from the project starting date for the activities described in this announcement.

C. Non-Financial Benefits

To be eligible, applicants must also demonstrate that they will receive a non-financial benefit as a result of a 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 their educational program). Applications that do not demonstrate a non-financial benefit will be rejected.

D. Cost Sharing or Matching

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

E. Funding Restrictions

Indirect costs for projects submitted in response to this solicitation are limited to 10 percent of the total direct costs of the agreement. 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.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Submit an Application Package

The address for submissions is USDA/RMA, Community Outreach, and Assistance Partnership Program, c/o Marie Buchanan, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Room 6709, Stop 0805,

Washington, DC 20250-0805. All applications must be submitted by the deadline. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered and will be returned to the applicant. Applications will be considered as meeting the announced deadline if they are received in the mailroom at the following address on or before the deadline. Applicants are cautioned that express, overnight mail or other delivery services do not always deliver as agreed. Applicants using the U.S. Postal Service should allow for the extra time for delivery due to the additional security measures that mail delivered to government offices in the Washington, DC, area now requires. Failure of the selected delivery services will not extend the deadline. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit completed and signed application packages using overnight mail or delivery service to ensure timely receipt.

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

1. *General*—Use the following guidelines to prepare an application. Each application must contain the following elements in the order indicated. Proper preparation of applications will assist reviewers in evaluating the merits of each application in a systematic, consistent fashion.

(a) Prepare the application on only one side of the page using standard size (8½" x 11") white paper, one-inch margins, typed or word processed using no type smaller than 12 point font, and single or double spaced. Use an easily readable front face (e.g., Geneva, Helvetica, Times Roman).

(b) Number each page of the application sequentially, starting with the Project Description, including the budget pages, required forms, and any appendices.

(c) Staple the application in the upper left-hand corner. Do not bind. An original and two copies of the completed and signed application (3 total) and one electronic copy (Microsoft Word format preferred) on diskette or compact disc must be submitted in one package. Only hard copies of OMB Standard Forms should be submitted. Do not include the standard forms on the diskette.

(d) Include original illustrations (photographs, color prints, etc.) in all copies of the application to prevent loss of meaning through poor quality reproduction.

2. *Application for Federal Assistance, OMB Standard Form 424*—Please complete this form in its entirety. The

original copy of the application must contain a pen-and-ink signature of the authorized organizational representative (AOR), individual with the authority to commit the organization's time and other relevant resources to the project. The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number (block 10) is "10-455—Community Outreach and Assistance".

3. *Table of Content*—Each application must contain a detailed Table of Contents immediately following OMB SF 424.

4. *Project Summary*—(Limited to one page, placed after the Table of Contents) The summary should be a self-contained, specific description of the activity to be undertaken and should focus on: overall project goals(s) and supporting objectives; plans to accomplish project goals; and relevance of the project to the goals of the community outreach and assistance program.

5. *Progress Report*—(Limited to three pages, placed immediately after the Project Summary) Renewal applications of an existing project supported under the same program should include a clearly identified summary progress report describing the results to date. The progress report should contain a comparison of actual accomplishments with the goals established for the project.

6. *A Project Description*—(Limited to twenty-five single-sided pages) that describes the outreach project in detail, including the program delivery plan and a Statement of Work. The description should provide reviewers with sufficient information to effectively evaluate the merits of the application under the criteria contained in Part V. The description should include the circumstances giving rise to the proposed activity; a clear, concise statement of the objectives; the steps necessary to implement the program to attain the objectives; an evaluation plan for the activities; and a program delivery plan and statement of work that describes how the activities will be implemented and managed by the applicant.

The statement of work in table format should identify each objective and the key tasks to achieve the objective, the entity responsible for the task, the completion date, the task location, and RMA's role. Applicants are strongly encouraged to refer to the sample table in the application package when preparing a delivery plan and to use this table format in that portion of the application narrative that addresses the delivery plan.

7. *Budget, OMB Standard Form 424–A*, “Budget Information, Non-Construction Program” Indirect costs allowed for projects submitted under this announcement will be limited to 10 percent of the total direct cost of the partnership or cooperative agreement. Applicants should include reasonable travel costs associated with attending at least two RMA designated two-day events, which will include a Project Directors’ meeting and civil rights training.

8. *Budget Narrative*—detailed narrative in support of the budget should show all funding sources and itemized costs for each line item contained on the SF–424A. All budget categories must be individually listed (with costs) in the same order as the budget and justified on a separate sheet of paper and placed immediately behind the SF–424A. There must be a detailed breakdown of all costs, including indirect costs. Include budget notes on each budget line item detailing how each line item was derived. Also provide a brief narrative description of any costs that may require explanation (*i.e.*, why a specific cost may be higher than market costs). Only items or services that are necessary for the successful completion of the project will be funded as permitted under the Act, the applicable Federal Cost principles, and are not prohibited under any other Federal statute. Salaries of project personnel should be requested in proportion to the effort that they would devote to the project.

9. *Key Personnel*—The roles and responsibilities of each PD and/or collaborator should be clearly described; and the vitae of the PD and each co-PD, senior associate and other professional personnel.

10. *Collaborative Arrangements (including Letters of Support)*—If it will be necessary to enter into formal consulting or collaborative arrangements, such arrangements should be fully explained and justified. If the consultants or collaborators are known at the time of application, a vitae or resume should be provided. Evidence (*e.g.*, letter of support) should be included if the collaborators involved have agreed to render these services. Additional information on consultants and collaborators are required in the budget portion of the application.

11. *Current and Pending Support*—All applications must list all current public or private support to which personnel identified in the application have committed portions of their time, whether or not salary support for persons involved is included in the budget. An application that duplicates

or overlaps substantially with an application already reviewed and funded (or to be funded) by another organization or agency will not be funded under this program. The projects proposed for funding should be included in the pending section.

12. *Disclosure of Lobbying Activities, OMB Standard Form LLL*—All applications must contain a signed copy of this form (See Part VI (F)). Applicants who are not engaging in lobbying activities should write “Not Applicable” and sign the form.

13. A completed and signed “Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters (Primary Covered Transactions), AD 1047”.

14. A completed and signed “Certifications Regarding Drug-Free Workplace, AD–1049”.

15. Appendices are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project.

C. Acknowledgement of Applications

Applications submitted by facsimile or through other electronic media, regardless of the date or time of submission or the time of receipt, will not be considered and will be returned to the applicant. Receipt of applications will be acknowledged by e-mail, whenever possible. Therefore, applicants are 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 in writing. There will be no notification of incomplete, unqualified, or unfunded applications until the awards have been made. RMA will assign an identification number to the application when received. This number will be provided to applicants when the receipt of application is acknowledged. Applicants should reference the assigned identification number in all correspondence regarding the application.

If receipt of application is not acknowledged by RMA within 15 days of the submission deadline, the applicant should contact Marie Buchanan at (202) 690–2686 or electronically at Marie.Buchanan@rma.usda.gov.

V. Application Review Process

A. General

Each application will be evaluated using a two-part process. First, each application will be screened by RMA personnel to ensure that it meets the requirements in this announcement. Applications that do not meet the requirements of this announcement or

are incomplete will not receive further consideration.

Second, a review panel will consider the merits of all applications that meet the requirements in the announcement. A panel of not less than three independent reviewers will evaluate each application. Reviewers will be drawn from USDA, other federal agencies, and others representing public and private organizations, as needed. The project description and any appendices submitted by applicant will be used by the review panel to evaluate the merits of the project being proposed for funding. The panel will examine and score applications based on each of the four criteria contained in paragraph B of this part “Evaluation Criteria and Weights”.

The panel will be looking for the specific elements listed with each criterion when evaluating the applications and scoring them. For each application, panel members will assign a point value up to the maximum for each criterion. After all reviewers have evaluated and scored each of the applications, the scores for the entire panel will be averaged to determine an application’s final score. After assigning points for each criterion, applications will be listed in initial rank order and presented, along with funding level recommendations, to the Manager of FCIC, who will make the final decision on awarding of a partnership agreement. Applications will then be funded in final rank order until all available funds have been expended. Applicants must score 50 points or more to be considered for funding. If there are unused remaining funds, RMA may conduct another round of competition through the announcement of another RFA.

An organization, or group of organizations in partnership, may apply for funding under other FCIC or RMA programs, in addition to the programs described in this announcement. However, if the Manager of FCIC determines that an application recommended for funding under this announcement is sufficiently similar to a project that has been funded or has been recommended to be funded under another FCIC or RMA education or outreach program, then the Manager may elect to not fund that application in whole or in part.

B. Evaluation Criteria and Weights

1. Project Benefits—Maximum 45 Points

The applicant must demonstrate that the project benefits to women, limited resource, socially disadvantaged and other traditionally underserved producers warrant the funding

requested. Applicants will be scored according to the extent they can: (a) Reasonably estimate the number of producers reached through the project; (b) justify the estimates with clear specifics related to the delivery plan; (c) identify the actions producers will likely be able to take as a result of the project; and (d) identify specific measures for evaluating the success of the project. Reviewers' scoring will be based on the scope and reasonableness of the applicants' estimate of the number of producers reached through the project, clear descriptions of specific expected project benefits for producers, and well-constructed plans for measuring the project's effectiveness.

2. Project Management—Maximum 25 Points

The applicant must demonstrate an ability to implement sound and effective project management practices. Higher scores will be awarded to applicants that can demonstrate organizational skills, leadership, and experience in delivering services or programs that assist women, limited resource, socially disadvantaged and other traditionally underserved producers. If the applicant has been a recipient of other Federal or other government grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts, the applicant must also detail that they have consistently complied with financial and program reporting and auditing requirements. Applicants that will employ, or have access to, personnel who have experience in directing agricultural programs or providing education programs that benefit producers will receive higher rankings. Higher scores will be awarded to applicants with no more than two on-going projects funded by RMA under this program in previous years.

3. Collaborative Partnering—Maximum 15 Points

The applicant must demonstrate experience and capacity to partner with and gain the support of other agencies, grower organizations, agribusiness professionals, and agricultural leaders to enhance the quality and effectiveness of the program. Applicants will receive higher scores to the extent that they can document and demonstrate: (a) that partnership commitments are in place for the express purpose of delivering the program in this announcement; (b) that a broad and diverse group of farmers and ranchers will be reached; and (c) that a substantial effort has been made to partner with organizations that can meet the needs of producers that are small, have limited resources, are

minorities, or are beginning farmers and ranchers.

4. Delivery Plan—Maximum 15 Points

The applicant must demonstrate that its program delivery plan is clear and specific. For each of the applicant's responsibilities contained in the description of the program, the applicant must demonstrate that it can identify specific tasks and provide reasonable time lines that further the purpose of this program. Applicants will obtain a higher score to the extent that the tasks of the project are specific, measurable, and reasonable, have specific periods for completion, relate directly to the required activities, and program objectives described in this announcement.

5. Diversity—Maximum 20 Points

Management reserves the right to award applications up to 20 additional points to promote the broadest geographic diversity.

VI. Award Administration

A. Notification of Cooperative or Partnership Agreement Awards

Following approval by the RMA awarding official, project leaders whose applications have been selected for funding will be notified. Within the limit of funds available for such a purpose, the awarding official of RMA shall enter into partnership or cooperative agreements with applicants whose applications are judged to be most meritorious under the procedures set forth in this announcement. The agreements provide 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 agreement is the date the agreement is executed by both parties. RMA will extend to award recipients, in writing, the authority to draw down funds for conducting the activities listed in the agreement. All funds provided to the applicant by FCIC must be expended solely for the purpose for which the funds are obligated in accordance with the approved agreement 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 for any award resulting from this notice.

Applicants that are not funded will be notified within 90 days after the submission deadline. Reasons for denial of funding can include incomplete proposals, scored low or duplicative.

B. Access to Panel Review Information

Upon written request from the applicant, 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.

C. 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 an 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. Copies of proposals not receiving awards 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.

D. Reporting Requirements

Applicants awarded partnership agreements will be required to submit quarterly progress and financial reports (OMB Standard Form 269) throughout the project period, as well as a final program and financial report no later than 90 days after the end of the project period.

E. Administration

All partnership agreements are subject to the requirements of 7 CFR part 3015.

F. Prohibitions and Requirements with Regard to Lobbying

All partnership agreements are subject to the requirements of 7 CFR part 3018. A copy of the certification and disclosure forms must be submitted with the application.

G. 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.

H. Confidentiality

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

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.

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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