

CHARTER FOR THE KANSAS FERTILIZER RESEARCH FUND

*Originally Drafted by W.L. Hargrove, Director, KCARE
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Background

New Section 5 of the Kansas seed law, K.S.A. 2-1415 *et seq.*, as amended by Senate Bill 767 (May, 1990), created a fertilizer research fund “to be expended to the agricultural experiment stations under the supervision of Kansas State University”. The fund was established for the purpose of “conducting research on fertilizers, anhydrous ammonia, and related materials concerning efficient methods of application, storage and handling, their effect upon environmental quality, and efficiency and safety in the use of fertilizers, anhydrous ammonia and related materials in crop production.” Responsibility for administration of this program has been delegated to the Associate Director for Research in K-State Research and Extension, and to the Kansas Center for Agricultural Resources and the Environment (KCARE).

Mission

The mission of this program is to fund research that is consistent with the purpose of the fund, as described above, and that addresses problems of significance in the state of Kansas. The ultimate goal of the program is the efficient, cost effective and environmentally sustainable use of nutrients to support Kansas agriculture. This will be accomplished by establishing a competitive grants program that encourages:

- scientific innovation
- relevance to present and future plant nutrient management issues in Kansas
- support of students and new young scientists
- cost-effectiveness
- dissemination and interpretation of results to appropriate audiences
- interdisciplinary approaches
- interagency collaboration

In implementing this program K-State desires to:

- Involve the many plant nutrient management stakeholders in identifying research needs and utilize their input to prioritize the research needs of the state
- Foster collaboration among state agencies, federal agencies, and other institutions of higher education in the state on plant nutrient management issues
- Leverage additional financial support from state, private, and other federal sources
- Be recognized in Kansas as a major institution to go to for fertilizer and plant nutrient management research

Program Areas to be Funded

“Fertilizers, anhydrous ammonia, and related materials...” is interpreted to include any and all organic and inorganic sources of plant nutrients, whether manufactured or natural. This would include (but not be limited to): plant materials, crop residues, livestock manure and other forms of organic waste materials, compost, and industrial by-products, as well as the commonly used fertilizers in pure or blended form, such as anhydrous ammonia, urea, ammonium nitrate, diammonium phosphate, muriate of potash, and others.

Research funded by the Fertilizer Research Fund should address one or more of the following issues related to the materials defined above:

- **Improved nutrient recommendations**, utilizing new or revised soil tests, plant analysis, applications of crop sensors, remote sensing and other analytical techniques.
- **efficient methods of application**, including various forms of plant nutrients and rates, timing, and methods of application;
- **use efficiency**, including impacts on crop production, economics, and profitability;
- **safety**, including risks associated with applicator exposure and measures to reduce risk, onsite or offsite human health impacts, and safe handling procedures.
- **their effect upon environmental quality**, with special attention to protecting air quality and the quality of both surface and ground water resources of the state;
- **storage and handling**, including environmental and human health risks associated with storage and handling and measures to decrease those risks;

The primary focus of any funded project should be research. However, integration of extension and educational efforts are encouraged. A technology transfer plan will be required for each funded project.

Competitive Grants Process and Call for Proposals

Work funded by the Fertilizer Research Fund is subject to availability of funds (which varies with the collection of the \$0.04 tonnage fee).

In general, it is anticipated that two, multi-year projects would be funded at a given time. One type of project may include budgeting for a graduate student and would be expected to span two or three years. It is anticipated that, while such a project is active, a second project could be approved, but contain a smaller budget to cover primarily operating expenses and equipment.

The competitive grants process will follow the following general schedule:

June 15 The Stakeholder Council will meet to develop the prioritized list of research needs for the “Call for Pre-Proposals”

July 1 The Call for Pre-Proposals will be issued

August 1 Pre-Proposal submission due date

September 1 Select Pre-proposals to be developed into full proposals

October 15 Full proposals due to KCARE office.

November 1 Stakeholder Council meet to select projects to be funded.

December 15 Award notifications

Stakeholder Advisory Council

We propose to establish a Stakeholders Advisory Council comprised of representatives from the fertilizer industry, production agriculture, state and federal agencies, and other scientists. This Stakeholder Council will:

- Advise K-State in the management of the Fertilizer Research Fund
- Establish the research priorities for the Fertilizer Research Fund, to be reflected in the annual Call for Proposals
- Participate in the selection of projects to be funded

The Stakeholder Council shall be comprised of the following:

- Associate Director of the Agricultural Experiment Station
- Director of KCARE
- A representative from the KS Department of Agriculture
- A representative from the fertilizer industry
- A County Agricultural Extension Agent
- A representative of the Kansas Agribusiness Retailers Association
- An agricultural producer

The term of all members of the Council (except the Associate Director of AES and the KCARE Director) will be for three years, with the opportunity to serve two consecutive terms. A member having served two consecutive terms should be off the Council for three years in order to be considered for additional terms on the Council.

The Council shall operate as follows:

The Director of KCARE shall serve as Chairman, and facilitate the meetings. The Council shall meet at least once per year and as frequently as deemed necessary. Meetings may occur via conference call or other electronic media (e.g. Skype, Adobe Connect, etc.). One likely via teleconference, will be held to discuss priorities and to make input into the competitive grants program “Call for Proposals” in June. Input on pre-proposals would be solicited from the committee via e-mail. A second meeting meeting would be to discuss proposals and select projects to be funded.

