



## 2026 Request for Proposals

### REMINDERS FOR 2026 PROGRAM

- Proposals should be written in clear, concise language understandable by agriculture and industry stakeholders, not for an academic audience.
- Applied and Extension proposals must clearly state how results will be shared with Michigan producers.
- Proposals must be submitted through the M-AAA portal, and a PD (Proposal Description) must be routed through MSU's Kuali Research (KR) system.
- Co-PIs and/or Co-Is are limited to a total of two.
- Apart from Postdocs, the faculty and academic staff's salary is unallowable.
- Committed Cost Share/Matching Funds are not allowable. Instead, leveraged resources should be described in the proposal narrative in non-quantitative terms (see the "Proposal Components" section).
- Covering part of the salary of faculty outside of MSU (either through a subaward or consultant arrangement) is not permitted.

### Introduction

The Michigan Alliance for Animal Agriculture (M-AAA) announces a request for proposals for funding research and extension projects that enhance Michigan's Animal Agriculture. The M-AAA is a partnership between Michigan animal agriculture and allied industries, the Michigan State University (MSU) College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, MSU College of Veterinary Medicine, MSU AgBioResearch, MSU Extension, and the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, focused on the advancement of Michigan's animal agriculture economy.

All proposals must address critical needs relevant to Michigan's Animal Agriculture Industries and are requested in the following funding categories: 1) Applied Research, 2) Extension, and 3) Seed Grants.

### Eligibility

Principal Investigator(s), Co-PIs, and Co-Is must be employed by Michigan State University and hold a faculty/academic staff appointment (e.g., Assistant Professor, Postdoctoral Associate, Extension Educator, etc.). There are no restrictions on the employment status of other team members. When additional Co-PIs and Co-Is are included on the Cover Page of the application, please correctly identify them in the appropriate categorization. Only include those who will make a substantial contribution to the overall project objectives. The **total** number of Co-PIs and Co-Is is limited to two.

As this is an intramural funding opportunity, and all faculty and academic staff are eligible to serve as PI or Co-PI, a PI/Co-PI exception approval from the Office of Research and Innovation is **NOT** required for proposal submission.

Beginning in 2023, individuals who fail to provide required progress reports by the designated due dates or who cannot provide justification for their inability to significantly address the award's objectives during the previous two funding cycles will be ineligible to submit proposals for the current funding cycle.

### Proposal Resubmission

Researchers who submitted proposals in the previous funding cycle but were not selected for funding are eligible to resubmit revised proposals. The revised proposals must include a brief response to the reviewer's concerns with a description of the corresponding changes.



Proposals funded in the previous funding cycle are not eligible for renewal.

### **Project Continuations**

PIs submitting a proposal within the topic area of a previously successful M-AAA proposal must include a brief statement describing how the proposed study builds upon previously funded M-AAA project (s).

### **Timeline:**

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| • <b>December 8th, 2025</b>            | Call for proposals                     |
| • <b>January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2026</b> | Proposals due by 5:00 pm               |
| • <b>April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026</b>    | Notification of awards                 |
| • <b>June 1, 2026</b>                  | Project funds available                |
| • <b>May 31, 2027</b>                  | Termination date for one-year projects |
| • <b>May 31, 2028</b>                  | Termination date for two-year projects |

### **Industry Priorities:**

**M-AAA's primary audience is stakeholders, and the program's goal is to facilitate applied research and Extension projects directly tied to industry partners' immediate priorities. Proposals should be written in clear, concise language that is understandable to both agricultural *and* industry stakeholders.**

All proposals must state how proposed activities will benefit Michigan Animal Agriculture and Michigan's economy, with particular emphasis on projects consistent with the stated annual priorities of Michigan Animal Agriculture Commodity and Allied Groups (Attachment A). All proposals must deliver tangible results within the specified timeframe. Applicants are **strongly encouraged** to contact the M-AAA industry stakeholder representatives listed below to discuss proposed activities, their relationship to the stated priorities, and potential sources of support for the proposal. Letters of support from industry stakeholders are highly encouraged. Discussions with and/or letters from stakeholders will be considered during the review process.

MI Allied Poultry Industries:

MI Cattlemen's Association:

MI Farm Bureau:

MI Horse Industry:

MI Meat Association:

MI Milk Producers Association:

MI Pork Producers Association:

MI Sheep Producers Association:

MI Department of Agriculture and Rural Development:

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Nora Wineland [winelandn@michigan.gov](mailto:winelandn@michigan.gov)

### **Funding Categories:**

In previous funding cycles, there has been a lack of attention (in numerous proposals) placed on a clear description of the industry relevance of the research proposed. Proposals must clearly state the potential benefits (economic or societal) of the proposed study to the targeted commodity group(s) and/or the animal agriculture industry in general. Sample sizes should be clear in the proposal, where applicable, and supported by power calculations. Ensure that plans are in place to disseminate project results to relevant commodity groups. Communication of results to the scientific community via traditional journal articles alone is insufficient. Failure to communicate (in the proposal) specific plans for disseminating results to the larger industry audience in Michigan will disqualify the proposal from funding consideration.

***All proposals must articulate the following to be considered for funding and be written in clear, concise language that is understandable by agriculture and industry stakeholders:***

#### **Applied research:**

- Relevance to animal agriculture industry priorities
- Technical merit and feasibility
- Means by which proposed activities will enhance commodity-specific or overall animal agriculture industry
- Long-term benefits to MI animal agriculture
- Plans for dissemination of information to relevant commodity groups

#### **Extension:**

- Relevance to animal agriculture industry priorities
- Utilization of a team of campus and field-based personnel, as feasible
- Technical merit and feasibility
- Current/future need for proposed activities
- How proposed programming will enhance commodity-specific or overall animal agriculture industries

Partnerships between campus and field-based Extension personnel are critical to maximizing the impact of M-AAA-supported Extension activities. Demonstration of such partnering in the development and execution of proposed activities should occur, as feasible, and will be given strong consideration in funding decisions.

#### **Seed funding:**

- Relevance of research area to animal agriculture
- Technical merit and feasibility
- How proposed activities will advance the development of a highly competitive extramural grant proposal
- Timeline, target funding agency, and program for future extramural proposal submission

### **Funding Scope and Guidelines:**

- Applied research projects may be proposed for a one- or two-year duration with a maximum budget of \$75,000/year for a total maximum budget request of \$150,000.
- Extension projects may be proposed for a one—or two-year duration, with a maximum budget of \$40,000/year and a maximum total budget request of \$80,000.
- Seed grant projects are limited to a maximum budget of \$25,000 for one year.

- Subawards or consultant arrangements to pay for the effort of faculty outside of MSU (either through a subaward or consultant arrangement) are not permitted. Professional service costs and other types of consultant arrangements are allowed to facilitate necessary collaborations.

### **Proposal Evaluation and Award Criteria:**

<b>Evaluation criteria</b>	<b>Applied Research</b>	<b>Extension</b>	<b>Seed Funding</b>
Relevance to animal agriculture industry(s) and annual priorities, potential long-term impact	20	25	30
Technical merit and feasibility;	30	20	50
Investigator qualifications	10	10	-
Mechanisms to deliver research information generated to relevant MI commodity groups	20	30	-
Leverage of external and other resources; extent of partnering with Michigan animal agriculture industries	20	15	-
Plans for future extramural funding and the importance of seed funding to future success	-	-	20

Outreach activities for Applied and Extension proposals must include a clear and straightforward plan to disseminate information to Michigan producers. This could include, but is not limited to, publication in commodity publications, presentations at commodity-sponsored events, and information dissemination through MSU Extension activities, with the primary audience being the indicated commodity producers.

All proposals will be reviewed by a group of experts, comprising MSU and commodity group representatives. Every effort will be made to identify experts to review proposals that do not seek funding through the 2026 program. Inclusion as a project team member on a submitted proposal will automatically exclude such an individual from the review of proposals submitted for consideration in the same funding category. Upon completion of the review process, proposals will be ranked within a category based on the above scoring criteria for final funding determination by the M-AAA.

Reporting guidelines for funded projects will be clearly articulated at the time of award notification and upon account establishment. Strict adherence to reporting guidelines throughout and after project termination is required to communicate project goals and impacts to stakeholders and promote the long-term sustainability of program funding. Failure to meet report deadlines may result in early termination of project funding.

All funds awarded must be spent by the termination date. It is essential to review account balances and make every effort to spend money and complete the project within a reasonable timeframe. In previous funding cycles, a lack of attention to spending in relation to the project timeline has been apparent, resulting in late or unexpended project funds. This puts the future of the entire program in jeopardy.

Requests for a single no-cost extension of remaining funding for up to 6 months must provide significant justification for the delay in progress on funded Applied Research, Extension, or Seed projects and explain how remaining funds will be used to address the project's broad goals. No-cost extensions are not automatic and will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the Director of MSU AgBioResearch or a designee. Any funds remaining upon the final project termination date will be returned to M-AAA. No-cost extensions must be requested well in advance (as soon as possible) and be directed to Lynn Richardson (lynnr@msu.edu).

## 2026 Proposal Guidelines

### **Proposal Components:**

\*Note items 2-9 cannot exceed three pages in length.

- 1) Cover page (first page of the whole proposal; proposal summary must be in lay terms appropriate for industry audience)
- \* { 2) Problem statement and relevance to industry priorities
- 3) Objectives
- 4) Approach and feasibility
- 5) Anticipated results and impact
- 6) Industry partnering (including a non-quantitative description of leveraged resources) and scope
- 7) Timeline
- 8) Brief response to reviewer concerns and explanation of changes to proposal (revised proposals only)
- 9) Brief statement on relationship to previously M-AAA-funded proposal(s)
- 10) Budget (use the budget form on the website; do not include match/cost share)
- 11) Brief budget justification
- 12) Literature cited
- 13) Team qualifications (one-page vitae for each project member outlining qualifications to complete proposed research or extension activity)
- 14) Letters of industry support (encouraged but not required)

Use Arial 11-point font, 0.5-inch margins on all sides.

### **Submission Guidelines**

Proposals must be submitted through the online Proposal Submission Portal for the M-AAA program. The online portal can be accessed on the M-AAA webpage at <https://www.canr.msu.edu/maaa/index>. All proposals should be uploaded as a single PDF and must include items 1-13 listed above. Please ensure that you have access to the proposal submission portal well in advance of the deadline. A user guide and access request form can be found at the link above.

Additionally, a PD document must be routed through the MSU KR system (include a cover page and budget on the provided budget template as attachments to the PD) and use sponsor code 020125 in the KR system. Please work with your department/unit administrator to facilitate this process.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact Lynn Richardson at 517-884-7895 or via email at [lynnr@msu.edu](mailto:lynnr@msu.edu).

## Attachment A

### **INDUSTRY PRIORITIES**

#### **Michigan Allied Poultry Industries**

- Cage Free:
  - Understanding and encouraging performance of behavior that leads to positive welfare
  - Hen movement through cage-free systems: ensuring easy and safe movement among vertical tiers
  - Hen distribution among and use of resources to optimize stocking rates and system design
  - Feed additives for improved health/livability in cage free birds
  - Calcium/ phosphorus requirements of older (65+ week old) hens for better shell strength
- General:
  - Labor shortage / Workforce development (i.e., non-seasonal worker information to inform policy makers)
  - Extension project aiming to mitigate avian influenza and other poultry related disease by strengthening biosecurity measures within small and commercial poultry operations
  - HPAI vaccination options
  - Environmental E-coli mitigation strategies
  - Using no-antibiotic methods to reduce the incidence of enteritis
- Nutrition:
  - Assessing how feed additives (i.e. enzymes, probiotics, prebiotics) perform in a real-world farming environment, considering all the variables present on a working farm, rather than controlled farm settings (research farm)
  - Feed formulations based on digestible P and digestible Ca to enhance nutrient utilization, minimize environmental impact by reducing excess mineral excretion, and meet precise dietary requirements for poultry.
  - Feeding non-bound amino acids in commercial diets at increasing inclusion levels
  - Strategies to maintain intestinal health and reduce intestinal health disorders in a non-antibiotic era
  - The interaction of pro and prebiotics when poultry are also being treated with an antibiotic
- Floor Birds:
  - Strategies to reduce foot pad dermatitis

#### **Michigan Cattlemen's Association**

- Health and Well Being (including but not limited to):
  - Bovine TB-Improved prevention methods, improved testing.
  - Bovine Respiratory Disease - Improved detection methods, control and preventative protocols, antibiotic alternatives.
  - Animal welfare and cattle handling improvements
- Beef Industry Environmental Sustainability (including but not limited to):
  - Producer and processor waste and resource management.
  - Grazing & pasture systems for soil health, biodiversity, and carbon sequestration.
- Economic Sustainability (including but not limited to):
  - Creation of value from MI's traceability program.
  - Identification of methods to improve product quality.
  - Modernizing feedlot systems (infrastructure, management, biosecurity).
  - Precision technologies and decision support for producers.

- Industry Outreach
  - Creation of or improvements to resources available to the industry including increased collaborations with outside sources (e.g., other land grant universities).
  - Risk management tools and financing mechanisms.
  - Recruitment and rural vet capacity.

### **Michigan Farm Bureau**

- Development of new animal health protection tools to manage current and emerging diseases, with an emphasis on the role of vaccines in disease protection.
- Workforce development and education: Training for jobs and careers in animal agriculture.
- Livestock management tools and systems that are more efficient and economically sustainable for producers.
  - Nutrition research that enhances productivity and health of the animals
  - New facility design for welfare and animal handling
  - Technology development for animal health and management
- Development of new tools to enhance food safety.
- Enhancement and growth of the Michigan meat packing and dairy processing industries.
  - Research in treatment options for wastewater management, with a focus on cost-effective options for small livestock processing facilities.
- Development of new automated tools to address labor issues in the livestock and dairy industries.

### **Michigan Horse Industry**

- Equine Health:
  - Develop tools to better identify, manage and treat current and emerging diseases (e.g. PPID, EHV-1, genetic storage myopathies, etc.), including investigating a novel group of genetic lipid storage myopathies in equines (RR-MADD and RTD), and researching the causes, expansion and earlier onset of Cushings Disease/PPID.
  - Additional research in preventative health management, gastrointestinal disease, and nutrition.
  - Map equine veterinary care coverage across Michigan with travel times, emergency coverage and case outcomes, to identify incentives for practitioners and determine alternative delivery models finding scalable approaches to expand access while sustaining practitioner income and well-being.
- Land Use Challenges: Investigate land use, development and zoning pressures (escalating land values, competition from development, environmental issues, and zoning or permitting hurdles) that make establishing or expanding equestrian facilities difficult.
- Equine Industry Stability, Growth and Long-Term Vitality:
  - Investigate challenges facing equestrian owners and businesses (e.g. lesson barns, boarding facilities, training operations, show venues) that threaten long-term viability of equestrian operations: equine recreational opportunities, youth and new owner outreach, increasing labor costs, insurance, workers compensation, operator burnout, and difficulty attracting and retaining qualified staff while navigating complex employment and safety regulations.
  - Investigate the barriers to entry into the horse industry, such as the affordability of horse keeping, aging demographics, and retaining youth engagement in various equestrian disciplines.



### **Michigan Meat Association**

- Operational processing, wastewater disposal options, and food safety controls
  - Investigations of practices or product characteristics for food safety control involving biological, chemical, or physical hazards (e.g., extended shelf life, reduced oxygen packaging, fermented meat products, antimicrobial agents, chemical residues, foreign and natural objects).
  - Investigations into the best available technology for wastewater treatment prior to discharge to meet updated EGLE standards (e.g., nutrient uptake from crops receiving slaughterhouse or meat processor wastewaters)
- Workforce development
  - Training and resources for entry-level and current employees with credit and non-credit programs with hands-on and lecture sessions (e.g., meat cutter training, animal welfare and humane handling, humane harvesting, operational processing techniques)
- Emerging issues
  - Investigations (research and extension) in identification, controls, or prevention of issues or topics that affect meat, poultry, and game animal food safety (e.g., chronic wasting disease and bovine tuberculosis, pathogenic microbial identification and control, parasite, prions, diseases, genetic and muscle abnormalities)

### **Michigan Milk Producers Association**

- Alternative uses of milk
- Impact of the use of short corn in feeding dairy cattle
- Use of High Oleic Oil soybeans in dairy cattle diets
- Assistance with the dairy industry's sustainability efforts – innovative opportunities that demonstrate the dairy industry's commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Including but not limited to demonstrating proper accounting of the impact of upcycling nutrients instead of letting them go to landfills, efficient methods to reduce methane gas and research on both feed and reproductive efficiency.

### **Michigan Pork Producers Association**

- Emerging/Foreign diseases (e.g. H5N1, African Swine Fever) and implications for a secure pork supply.
- Consumer acceptance of production practices (research on alternative housing methods, castration/pain mitigation and animal care and handling) and strategies for enhancement of consumer image of swine industry.
- Environmental Issues (manure management, air quality, water availability, mortality management (large scale in relation to a disease or marketing challenge).
- Workforce development/labor shortage (i.e., Precision farming to address labor shortages, or information to help drive policy changes)
- Antibiotic/Antimicrobial alternatives

### **Michigan Sheep Producers Association**

- Improving sheep production efficiencies emphasizing these focal areas: forage utilization, nutritional management, reproductive management, health programs, and development of new and refinement of existing production systems\*
- Development of tools to allow producers to track and improve production and sustainability metrics



- Producer education programs focused on flock expansion and improvement of production efficiencies including the involvement of producers in on-farm research
- Producer education programs and applied research on the use of sheep in vegetation management of solar arrays
- Identification of methods to improve product quality (meat, milk, wool)
- Development of new uses for wool and sheep by-products (i.e., wool as enrichment for potted plants, wool to enrich soil health, and others).

### **Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD)**

- MI reportable animal diseases (including but not limited to the economics, biosecurity, pathogenesis, control, treatment, and prevention)
- Animal welfare (including but not limited to species standards, impact on health and public perception)
- Environmental sustainability (including but not limited to nutrient management, water quality, wastewater management, climate change, and regenerative agriculture)
- Emerging contaminants and diseases (including but not limited to evaluation of impact and risk to agriculture)

### **Associate Members**

Associate members do not contribute directly to the determination of research priorities for the M-AAA grants programs, review of proposals or initial funding decisions. Priorities exclusive to associate members are not directly supported by the M-AAA grants program, but proposals addressing shared priorities are encouraged.

### **Michigan Soybean Committee**

- Maximize the value (biological and financial) of soybean meal in livestock nutrition and health including, but not limited to, bypass protein and amino acids.
- Utilization of livestock manure as a crop nutrient source – specifically, the effect of protein sources on nutrient composition of animal waste.
- Effect of protein sources in animal diets on meat quality, rate of gain, overall animal health and milk production.
- Increase the use of soybean products (meal, hulls, oil, etc.) in the animal agriculture industry.

\*Shared priorities of the Michigan Soybean Committee