

Methyl Bromide Transitions

A USDA National Institute of Food & Agriculture
Integrated Competitive Grant Program

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Recent NIFA funding for MBT

- 2000-2011. 77 projects were funded by the NIFA Methyl Bromide Transitions program
- Until 2011 - approximately \$3M per year
- In 2011 – budget down to \$1.9M
- 55% success rate vs 10% for other competitively funded grants
- MBT project information is presented in the Current Research Information System (CRIS) at <http://cris.nifa.usda.gov/>

NIFA MBT Program

- Congratulations FY 2011 awardees
FY 2011 status & program timeline
- Panel process: How proposals are reviewed
- Writing a successful MBT proposal
- Status of current projects

FY 2011 MBT Awards

Title: Evaluation of methyl bromide alternatives for their efficacy at controlling pests of dry cured ham and aged cheese products

PD: Mark Schilling and 3 CoPDs Mississippi State Univ;
Amt: \$ 499,701 -

Ranking # 1; Rating High: Strengths:

- This proposal examines two pests in cured ham and cheese products, ham mite and red leg beetles. This proposal looks to expand upon previous research funded through RAMP, MeBT, and Southern IPM. This is a re-submission and project directors have responded to the comments of the previous review.
- The objectives of the study are very clearly outlined

FY 2011 MBT Awards

Title: Advanced systems for integrated management of strawberry soilborne pests in the southeast USA

PD: Frank Louws and 2 CoPDs, University of Florida

Amt: \$ 400,000

Ranking 2nd; Rating Medium; Strengths:

- This group has been working together on replacement of methyl bromide with strawberries and other crops.
- There is strong documentation that this is a need for this group of farmers and considerable amount of support for this project.
- An economist has agreed to help with the project

FY 2011 MBT Awards

Title: Eliminating the need for fumigants in southeastern melon production using an integrated program of heavy rye residues plus herbicides.

PD: Alfred Culpepper, University GA

Amt: \$ 174,831

Ranking 3rd; Rating Medium; Strengths:

- Does a very good job of quantifying the value of watermelon production in the United States and the importance of alternative pest control measures and why they are needed.
- Project addresses a Critical Use Nomination for 2012

Weakness: Focus is on weed control; isn't control of soil-borne pathogens another important reason for fumigation in melons?

FY 2011 MBT Awards

Title: Integrated pest management programs to reduce reliance on methyl bromide fumigation in rice mills

PD: Tanja McKay/6PDs; Arkansas State Univ.

Amt: \$ 495,057.00

Ranking #4; Rating Medium; Strengths:

- This proposal examines control of red flour beetle in rice.
- Innovative proposal looking at specific locations in the mills to target control actions.
- Will conduct trials at commercial rice mills.
- Protocol looks solid, economic analysis is included.

Concern: how to coordinate seven PDs over five states along with technicians, graduate students, and post docs.

FY 2011 MBT Awards

Title: Multi-state investigation into odor abatement and reduced application rates of a carbonated fumigant, dimethyl disulfide

PD: John Thomas & 7CoPds, University of Florida

Amt: \$ 500,000;

Rank 5th; Rating Medium; Strengths:

- Excellent research team, with expertise in diverse relevant areas.
- Good wealth and depth of preliminary data.
- Includes different growing conditions in two states.
- Clear justification and research methodologies.

FY 2011 Program Timeline

January	RFA Published
March	Proposals Due
July	Applicant Notifications

2012 funding available: Approx. \$1.9 M (~ to 2011)

Eligibility: Most universities can apply, others (gov't agencies) may subcontract

Writing a successful MBT Proposal

A strong application for the Methyl Bromide Transitions (MBT) program area will:

1. Describe how the proposed project supports the discovery and implementation of practical pest management alternatives for 2011 U.S. Critical Use Nominations (CUNs),
http://www.epa.gov/ozone/mbr/2011_nomination.html.
2. Describe the *stakeholder advisory group* consulted prior to development of project objectives and involved in project evaluation throughout life of the project.

A strong application for the MBT program area will

3. Focus on commercial/field scale (not exclusively small plot) research on short- to medium-term solutions
4. Be repeated for two or more research periods (years, crop cycles, etc).
5. Indicate preliminary data support for hypothesis.
6. Provide comprehensive economic analysis on the impact of alternatives on crop yields and profit margins. Almost all successful proposals involve an agricultural and/or extension economist.

A strong application for the MBT program area will:

6. Include a measurable, outcome-oriented plan for dissemination of project information. The best way to describe this plan is through the use of a LOGIC model.
7. INTEGRATE: research, extension, and education activities. Generally, no more than 2/3 of the project budget should be devoted to any one mission area (research, education, or extension).

A word about economic analysis

- Do not assume that panelists know the economics of your commodity.
- An ag-economist sits on the panel and will look carefully at whether a clear economic justification is given.
- An ag-economist on the panel will lead the discussion about whether the proposed research, education and extension project adequately addresses cost benefit analysis.

A word about letters of support:

- Sometimes represents the “margin of victory”
- Most often from:
 - Collaborating scientists/educators not named as a co-PI
 - Stakeholders
 - CUN user groups
 - Suppliers
 - Cooperators (grower, industry)
- Submit letters with the proposal package

Panel Process

How proposal reviews work

Review Process

- Panel Manager introduces proposal and reviewers.
- Primary reviewer goes first.
 - Sharing brief summary and insights on strengths and weaknesses of the proposal.
- Secondary reviewer shares any new perspectives.
 - Avoiding repeating comments already made.
- Tertiary reviewer adds comments.
- Discussion - others add comments.
- Tertiary reviewer (scribe) takes notes of discussion and forwards first draft of panel summary for edits and approval in PRS.
- Aims for 20 minutes of discussion (or less) per proposal.

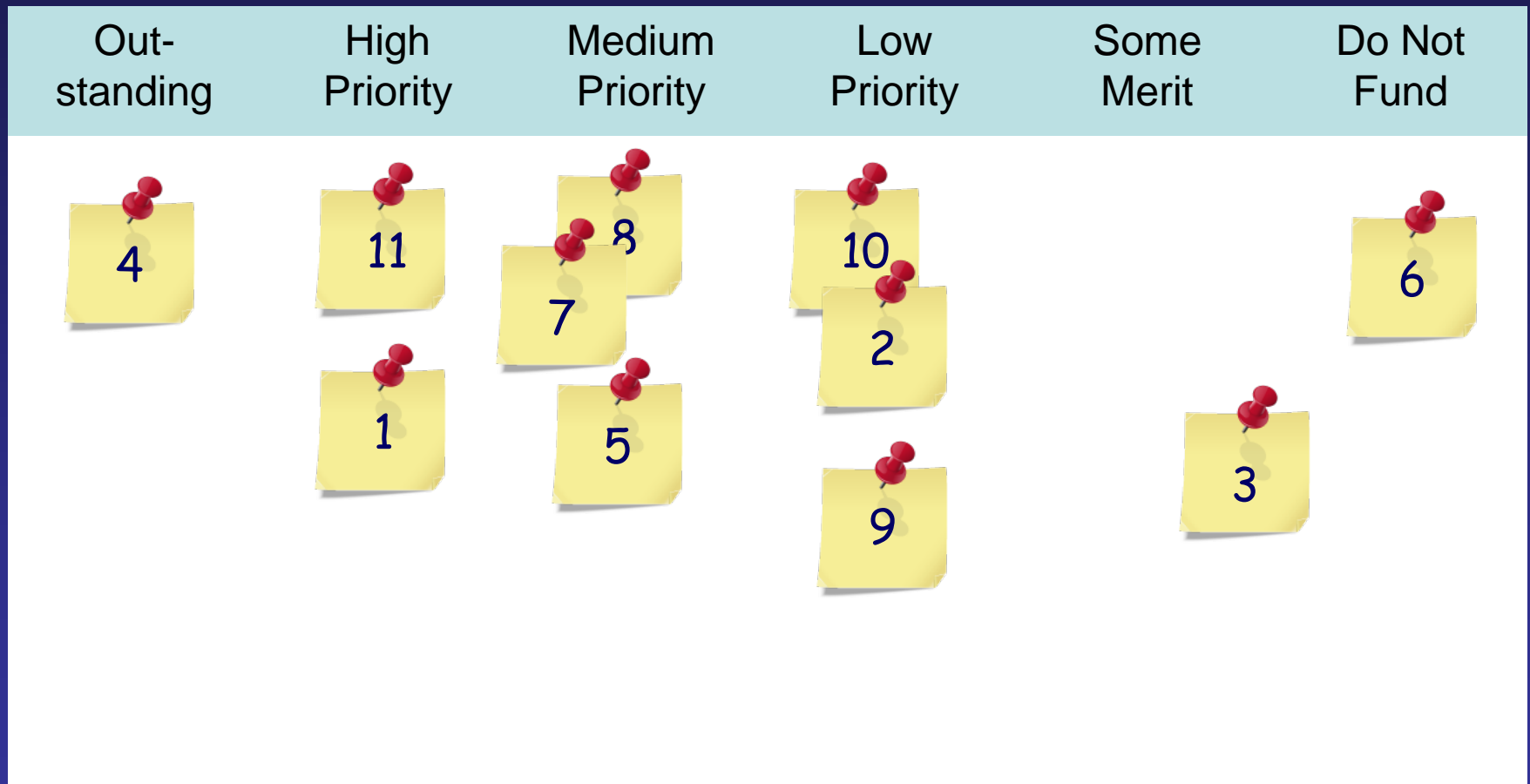
Ranking Proposals

- Primary reviewer makes initial recommendation for ranking proposal.
- Secondary and tertiary reviewers then share their recommendations.
- Final ranking is determined by consensus of all panel members, excluding COIs.
- Categories for ranking proposals:
 - Outstanding, High Priority, Medium Priority, Low Priority, Do Not Fund

Scoring Details

- Individual Rating
 - Excellent
 - Very Good
 - Good
 - Fair
 - Poor
- What does the panelist think in isolation?
- Panel Ranking
 - Outstanding
 - High Priority
 - Medium Priority
 - Low Priority
 - Do Not Fund
- Panel consensus?
- Ranking relative to nearest neighbors?

Panel Board – Program Merit



Rankings

- OUTSTANDING (Must Fund)
- HIGH PRIORITY (Should Fund)
- MEDIUM PRIORITY (Maybe Fund)
- LOW PRIORITY (Could Fund)
- DO NOT FUND

Rankings

- **OUTSTANDING (Must Fund)**

- Merit is strong.
- PD(s) well qualified.
- Relevant to program priorities.
- Clearly stated objectives and clearly demonstrated feasibility with strong preliminary data.
- Exciting, Innovative, or high impact project (scientifically or economically).
- No major flaws or problems.
- Work plan is realistic.

Rankings

- **HIGH PRIORITY (Should Fund)**

- Merit is generally strong.
- PD(s) well qualified.
- Relevant to program priorities.
- Clearly stated objectives and somewhat clearly demonstrated feasibility, but preliminary data may be slightly less supportive.
- Project may be less exciting, innovative, or have less potential impact.
- One or two minor flaws, i.e. work plan may have some minor problems, an objective may have minor problems or the work plan is too ambitious.

Rankings

- **MEDIUM PRIORITY (Maybe Fund)***
 - Merit is less strong, e.g. Much less innovative or novel, or less potential for economic or societal impact.
 - PD(s) less qualified than above – e.g. marginal experience with program area as reflected in publication record.
 - Marginally relevant to program priorities – fits program only peripherally.
 - Proposal lacks preliminary data to demonstrate feasibility or preliminary data does not support objectives.
 - More significant flaws than above, i.e. ideas ineffectively communicated.

Rankings

- **LOW PRIORITY (Could Fund)***
 - Marginal merit, not sufficiently innovative or novel, or low potential for economic or societal impact.
 - PD(s) marginal experience in program area as reflected in publication record.
 - Marginally relevant to program priorities – does not fit program.
 - Proposal lacks preliminary data.
 - Poorly conceived or not sufficiently well thought out. Pitfalls not addressed.

Rankings

- **DO NOT FUND***
 - Does not fit the grant program.
 - Very little (or no) merit.
 - PD(s) not qualified.
 - No relevance - does not fit program priorities.
 - Major conceptual and/or experimental flaws or poorly written/communicated.

Economist comments

- Does not quantify the value of the industry to illustrate the magnitude of the pest of concern in this study
- How exactly are they going to quantify the benefits and costs?
- No figures to show the loss to the industry or the destructiveness of the pest
- Did not provide any data on the size of the industry impacted by the pests.
- Methodology is not provided on how the economic analysis will be conducted.
- Did not provide a cost benefit analysis or highlight the potential costs.

Status of current projects

- 12 – number of 2011 progress reports due
- 3 – number of 2010 progress reports due
- 8 – number of grants with remaining funds that are about to be de-obligated

If you have had a grant with NIFA since 2007, please see me during this meeting!

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