



REQUEST FOR PRE-PROPOSALS

Please Copy and Distribute to All Interested Parties

The USDA-NIFA Southern Regional Aquaculture Center solicits a response from qualified multi-state teams interested in participating in the regional project:

Development of Training Videos for Regulatory and Certification Compliance on Animal Care, Biosecurity, and Food Safety

SRAC's Board of Directors has authorized up to \$150,000 for a 2-year project on *Development of Training Videos for Regulatory and Certification Compliance on Animal Care, Biosecurity, and Food Safety*. This project will be developed using the "comprehensive method" where a team of multi-state scientists having demonstrated records of expertise in the subject complete a single pre-proposal that addresses all project objectives. One proposal will be selected for funding based on review by a committee of scientists not involved in any of the proposals that are submitted.

Background

Aquaculture operations are increasingly targeted by animal rights and welfare activists. It is vital and pertinent that producers are aware and prepared. Proper preparation starts with training employees. Farms that are certified under various third-party certification programs are required to train their employees on proper animal handling, care, and biosecurity considerations during day-to-day operations. It is important to have training videos that provide sufficient information on proper animal care, handling, biosecurity, and food safety topics for aquaculture industries such as foodfish and baitfish.

There is widespread interest by catfish processors in applying for USDA - Agricultural Marketing Service - Process Verified Program certification for sustainability. However, the program would require several training requirements for employees. The current biosecurity training video developed many years ago to support the Arkansas Baitfish Certification Program was not done professionally and needs updating. Preparedness and training of employees are needed, even on highly efficient farms. The availability of videos on topics such as proper animal care, handling, biosecurity, and food safety topics will provide a one-stop avenue for various types of certifications. Properly developed videos of professional quality and substance can help producers achieve certification and regulatory compliance on pertinent topics of regulatory importance, thus reducing time, effort, and compliance costs.

Objectives

1. Develop a training video for catfish farmers who supply catfish to processors approved to participate in the USDA-AMS-PVP U.S. Farm-Raised Catfish Environmental Sustainability Certification Program. The video would provide training on the USDA-approved standard for this program and would include compliance and record-keeping requirements for farmers.
2. Develop a new, updated training video for baitfish farmers who participate in the Arkansas Baitfish Certification Program. The video would be narrated in both English and Spanish to provide training on the farm-level biosecurity measures prescribed for the program by the Arkansas Department of Agriculture.
3. Develop a training video for aquatic animal producers on proper animal care and handling. The video would be developed to be applicable to a variety of commercially important farmed species in the Southern region.

Experimental Approach

Videos will be provided in both English and Spanish making it easier for farms and processors to comply. Videos will be fully Accessibility compliant. Scientifically sound yet, easily understandable language and scripts will be used in the videos for broader application. University Extension specialists who are working closely with aquaculture sectors will be the video narrators. Contents will be developed in cooperation with important industry organizations such as the Catfish Farmers of America, Arkansas Baitfish Growers Association, and National Aquaculture Association. The SRAC Publications Committee Chair would aid in meeting SRAC publication requirements.

How to Respond

Pre-proposals must address all objectives. Preference will be given to pre-proposals that show a high degree of collaboration and coordination among participants. To meet the criterion for a regional project, the pre-proposal must include collaboration from scientists in two or more states or territories in the Southern Region (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Virginia).

The pre-proposal must include a one-page vita for each participant and a proposed budget for each participating institution or organization. Pre-proposals, vitae, and budgets that are not in the proper format will not be considered. (See “Guidelines for Writing a SRAC Pre-Proposal (Comprehensive)” file attached or contact Kristen Walters with the SRAC office at 662-686-3269.)

Send an electronic copy of the pre-proposal in Word format to Jimmy Avery, SRAC Director as an email attachment (jimmy.avery@msstate.edu) by **August 15, 2022**. Proposals received after that date will not be considered.