



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS: IMPACTS AND ECONOMICS OF COVER CROPS

September 12, 2013

The National Wildlife Federation is inviting proposals for a number of research topics and outreach tools on cover crops, particularly in the Mississippi River Basin.

Proposals should not generally exceed \$5,000. However, complex, field-based research proposals may request up to \$10,000. Administrative overhead will not be funded through this grant. Contracts will be finalized by November 30, 2013. Preliminary results must be available by November 2014 with final results available by January 2015.

Proposals shall be submitted in electronic form to Trisha White at whitep@nwf.org by midnight on October 25, 2013. Questions prior to the deadline should be submitted in writing to the same address.

When submitting a proposal, respondents will be required to provide the following information:

- A cover letter summarizing your proposal
- Detailed description of your approach to address one or more of the topic areas
- Descriptions should describe the specific approach, data, and experience the bidder will utilize to successfully and fully address the issue
- Proposed project budget
- Proposed project timeline
- Proposal not to exceed 5 pages

We will use the following criteria to evaluate proposals:

- Proposed research and methodology
- Qualifications and experience of the respondent and key personnel
- Prior experience completing similar consulting services, research and analysis
- Cost and ability to meet project timeline
- Evidence of providing unbiased and objective research and peer reviewed science based information

Proposed Scope of Work

Subject 1: Research on quantifiable direct impacts of cover crops to wildlife

The purpose of this research is to assess and interpret the wildlife habitat values of cover crops, including topics such as:

1. Nesting numbers and success
2. Incidence of trap habitat where cover crops result in nest losses due to providing habitat that is subsequently destroyed for planting of commodity crops
3. Forage availability and impact on various wildlife and avian populations
4. Impacts on pollinator health and populations

The analysis should include a discussion (and critique where appropriate) of current science on the wildlife habitat values of cover crops and possibly other agricultural practices.

Subject 2: Information on risk mitigation value of cover crops

The purpose of this research is to assess and interpret the value of cover crops to mitigate risks to commodity crop production including topics such as:

1. Impact of cover crops on crop insurance indemnities, both frequency of indemnity and severity of crop loss
2. Impact of cover crops on frequency of prevented planting declarations
3. Deciphering the impact of delayed termination on subsequent commodity crop yields. Is it poor spring weather that impacts yields or the actual delayed termination? Comparison of the impact of delayed cover crop termination to delayed weed management or nutrient application.

The analysis should include a discussion (and critique where appropriate) of current science on the risks and risk mitigation of cover crops.

Subject 3: Economic analysis of cover cropping: impacts on local, regional and national economies

The purpose of this research is to assess and interpret the economic impacts of cover crops including topics such as:

1. Economic impacts on the individual farm scale, accounting for costs and benefits under various commodity and cover crop rotations. Analysis based on current status and projected impact of reaching a national goal of 100 million acres of cover crops.
2. Macro-economic analysis including the numerous benefits (and reduced costs) of water quality, outdoor recreation through improved wildlife populations, and local economic development through seed sales.