



*U.S. Canola Association  
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March 11, 2020

Dr. J. Scott Angle, USDA-NIFA Administrator  
305-A Jamie Lee Whitten Bldg.  
12<sup>th</sup> St. & Jefferson Ave.  
Washington D.C.

Dear Dr. Angle:

At the U.S. Canola Association Spring Board Meeting, March 10-11, 2020 in Washington, D.C., we had the pleasure of hosting Tom Bewick from your agency. We are grateful that Dr. Bewick accepted the role of administering the Supplemental and Alternative Crops Competitive Grants Program (SAC), which has been a crucial program for fostering canola acreage and production increases across the U.S. For FY2019, this program funded integrated canola research and extension proposals across the three main U.S. growing regions (Northern Plains, Pacific Northwest, and Great Plains). Each project received **one-year funding** of approximately \$290,000.

Dr. Bewick provided the board an overview of his plan for administering the FY2020 request for applications (RFA), which included reviewing research conducted in previous years as well as previous stakeholder surveys about the research needs of the canola industry, which we very much appreciate. However, we are concerned that the planting season is quickly approaching, and critical decisions will need to be made about canola research in the field. The RFA provides the framework for implementing this research across multiple institutions in the U.S. and so it is imperative the RFA be released as soon as possible.

We request the RFA maintains the regionally-based approach implemented in FY2019. We saw this as a benefit to the researchers in the three major growing regions. As we continue to grow this relatively new crop, we discover that the climatic differences and critical research needs of these areas are vastly different. In addition to the regional approach, it is important to maintain an opportunity to fund smaller projects (\$100,000) addressing canola acreage expansion outside of the major growing regions, as we continue to see various areas where interest in growing the crop is strong.

Furthermore, we would request a two-year cycle for funding these projects. Each project would be awarded the first year's funding, with the second year's funding awarded based on the first year's performance, submission of a continuation request, and Congress appropriates the funds. The benefit to NIFA is that there would be fewer proposals to administer, especially considering the recent staff shortages and transition to Kansas City. It would also benefit the universities as they would be able to avoid hiring graduate students based on a yearly funding model.

Again, we thank you for the opportunity to visit with Dr. Bewick and we look forward to working with you at NIFA.

Sincerely,

Pat Murphy  
President, U.S. Canola Association

cc: Dr. Tom Bewick