

**The Ceres Trust**  
**Organic Research Initiative**

Request for Applications

2010 Graduate Student Organic Research Grants

Introduction

The Ceres Trust, a privately-administered charitable trust based in the Midwest, has as its main focus the support and promotion of organic and sustainable agriculture. This Request for Applications is provided for the 2010 Graduate Student Organic Research Grants Program announced in January. This is the first time The Ceres Trust has offered this competitive grants program.

Program Description

Up to 10 one-year grants of up to \$10,000 each will be made early this summer to support organic research by full-time graduate students (Masters and Ph.D.) enrolled at accredited colleges and universities in the North Central Region. The grant supports research conducted during the year ending June 30, 2011. The 12 states in the region are Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. Successful applicants will be eligible to apply and compete for a second year of funding.

Application Deadline

The deadline for applications is May 1, 2010. The grant awards will be announced in June and funds made available a short time later.

Proposal Format

Proposals containing no more than 14 numbered pages of 12-point type that is double-spaced on one side of each 8 ½ by 11 inch page will be accepted. This includes a title page that 1) identifies the applicant and major professor and includes the mailing address, phone numbers, and electronic contact information for both, and 2) the name, title, and contact information for the sponsoring institution's Contract and Grants Office." The limit of 14 pages includes the required Curriculum Vitae of one or two pages for the applicant and major professor and any endorsement letters.

Proposal Content Categories

Applicants should respond fully to each of the following content categories, which reflect The Ceres Trust priorities for organic research. The maximum points that can be scored in each of the nine categories is in parenthesis at the end of each content category description.

Statement of the Problem. Provide a one-half page abstract that summarizes the proposed project and includes a brief concise statement of the problem being addressed, the measurable outcomes anticipated, and the project's relevance to organic agriculture. (10 points)

Significance of Proposed Research to Organic Agriculture. The proposal should demonstrate the significance of the project to organic agriculture and explain why there is a need for the research proposed. The applicant should show how the research proposed will help achieve one or more of the following objectives: 1) improve organic farming systems, 2) facilitate the transition of conventional farms to organic methods, or 3) help make existing organic farms more productive and profitable. (15 points)

Literature Review. The applicant must provide evidence of the originality of the research proposed and its future contribution to the body of knowledge related to organic agriculture, its practices, and its adoption. The review should demonstrate that the applicant is familiar with research underway elsewhere and that the research proposed will build on, rather than duplicate, the efforts of others. (10 points)

Applicant's Qualifications to Conduct the Research Proposed. A statement briefly describing the applicant's special interest in organic agriculture and the academic preparation that qualifies the applicant to conduct the research proposed. The applicant also must identify the major professor or other faculty adviser who will advise the applicant on project research, budget, and related issues. (10 points)

Project Method and Materials. Applicants must provide detailed information on the methodology of the proposed research project. This includes information on experimental design, materials, treatments, and measurements. (15 points)

Project Work Plan, Including Timelines. A work plan that includes project milestones and realistic timelines for each project activity must be provided. (10 points)

Organic Farmer Involvement. Applicants should describe involvement of organic farmers in the design and implementation of the project proposed. Projects should be carried out on working organic farms or on certified organic land where applicable. Both the certification status and the identity of the certifier should be provided when certified land is involved. The project budget should include stipends for farmers contributing time or providing land or other project inputs. (10 points)

Scholarly and Educational Products to be Produced. The applicant should list targeted publications, including peer-reviewed journals, as well as websites and fact sheets and other educational products that would help disseminate to organic farmers and others the new knowledge generated by the research proposed. (10 points)

Budget Narrative/Justification. The applicant must propose and describe a well-justified budget that is appropriate and provides the funds needed to carry out the work proposed. The budget also must be in compliance with The Ceres Trust budget guidelines provided in the general budget information section below. (10 points)

Overall Research Initiative Limitations

The Ceres Trust will not fund organic and conventional farming yield comparison studies, research that attempts to identify or assess organic food safety or nutritional benefits, or research relating to the development of organic markets.

#### Reporting Requirements

Successful applicants will be required to submit 1) a report on the research conducted and 2) a financial report showing how the grant funds were spent. The reports are due June 30, 2011. The final \$2,000 of the grant will be disbursed when The Ceres Trust has received and approved the reports.

#### General Budget Information

The Ceres Trust funds may be used only for expenses directly related to the research project proposed. Grants awarded may not be used for international travel or for renovating or refurbishing research space, purchasing or installing fixed equipment in research space, or building or facility repairs. Funds also may not be used for purchase of classroom books, payment of tuition, or reimbursement for indirect or overhead costs. Allowed expenses include hourly labor for documented work on the project, rental of equipment necessary to the project, supplies needed for the project, stipends for farmer cooperators, and mileage for field travel.

#### Where to Send Proposals

Applicants must mail three copies of their proposal to: Michael R. Smith, The Ceres Trust, P.O. Box 2965, Milwaukee, WI 53201-2965. They must be postmarked on or before May 1, 2010, to be accepted.