

Center for Produce Safety Announces Call for Research Proposals

\$3M in funds available to answer produce food safety questions

Davis, California, February 1, 2013 - The Center for Produce Safety at the University of California, Davis, today announced its 2013 request for food safety research proposals. The center and its public and industry research partners are making \$3 million available to fund general and commodity-specific research aimed at addressing the fresh produce industry's food safety research needs.

The Request for Proposals' (RFP) general research priorities were identified in industry risk assessments and prioritized by the CPS Technical Committee, an independent advisory board that includes experts from industry, academia, government and nongovernmental organizations. "This request for proposals builds upon the portfolio of research projects already funded by CPS as we seek to extend our understanding of food safety across the produce industry," said Dr. Bob Whitaker, chief science and technology officer, Produce Marketing Association, and chair of the CPS Technical Committee. "I am particularly encouraged by the diverse collection of partners that have chosen to participate in this year's request and look forward to working with them as we review proposals for funding."

The 2013 RFP seeks to fund both general produce food safety questions and commodity-specific questions. Core (produce-general) research priorities endeavor to better understand risk potential and to develop more effective food safety management tools in the following areas:

- Compost, Soil Amendment Fertilizer Use, and Cultivation Practices
- Buffer Zones from Domestic Animals to Fruit and Vegetable Production
- Co-management of Food Safety and the Environment
- Agricultural Water
- Climate, Environment, and Production Practices
- Harvest and Cooling Practices
- Pathogen Transfer from Water during Postharvest Handling and Processing.
- Pathogen Survival in the Postharvest Distribution Chain

CPS and its partners sponsor research projects designed to fill basic knowledge gaps in specific areas of food safety practices for fruit, vegetable, and tree nut production, as well as harvest and post-harvest handling. New partners include the National Mango Board, Australian produce industry, and the Western Center for Food Safety (an FDA Center of Excellence). William Watson, executive director, National Mango Board stated, "The Center for Produce Safety has been a great partner when it comes to mango food safety. We look forward to a long term relationship with CPS." To date, CPS has compiled an impressive four-year body of work, awarding nearly \$10.6 million and funding 69 one and two-year research projects at 22 universities.

To view the full RFP, visit the CPS website at www.cps.ucdavis.edu. Proposals are due by March 28, 2013 and should be submitted through the CPS Grant System website at <http://ucanr.org/cpsgrants/>. All qualified research professionals are eligible to apply for CPS funding.

2013 RFP Partners

California Department of Food and Agriculture - The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) serves the citizens of California by promoting and protecting a safe, healthy food supply, and enhancing local and global agricultural trade, through efficient management, innovation and sound science, with a commitment to environmental stewardship. www.cdfa.ca.gov

The **Washington State Department of Agriculture** serves the people of Washington by supporting the agricultural community and promoting consumer and environmental protection. Its staff carries out a broad spectrum of activities that support the producers, distributors, and consumers of Washington's food and agricultural products. <http://agr.wa.gov>

The **Australian produce industry** has initiated a partnership with the Center for Produce Safety (CPS) at UC Davis to drive research that will build on the substantial output from CPS and provide appropriate research solutions that will benefit and service the Australian fresh food produce industry. The partnership has been established through a project using voluntary funds from the Faculty of Agriculture and Environment at the University of Sydney and the PMA-ANZ, with matched funding from the Australian Government through Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL). Longer term, the project will develop a collaborative research model utilizing existing research and information, as well as encourage collaboration between international experts, representatives of government, industry associations, growers, packers, processors, wholesalers, retailers, food safety trainers and practitioners. The partnership will focus on filling the knowledge gaps in produce food safety in Australia and New Zealand to protect and enhance food quality and safety in fresh produce. www.freshproducesafety-anz.com

The **California Cantaloupe Advisory Board** was formed in 1988 by cantaloupe shippers, largely to control the quality of marketed cantaloupes. The board, composed of seven shippers and a public member, works to develop research-backed safety standards for growing and shipping cantaloupes, as well as mandating a trace-back system for the protection of the consumer. www.cmrb.org

The **California Leafy Greens Research Program** funds university and USDA research projects in the areas of genetics, pest management, water quality, and food safety. The program also provides opportunities for researchers to interact with leafy greens handlers and growers. This helps producers to stay on top of the latest research findings and helps researchers in identifying objectives that will contribute to the continued success of the leafy greens industry in California. www.calgreens.org

The **California Melon Research Board** was formed in 1972 by melon growers to provide research with respect to varietal development, production, harvesting and transportation from field to processing points on all varieties of melons, with the exception of watermelons. www.cmrb.org

The **California Pistachio Research Program** is a California State Marketing Order, authorized by a grower referendum in December 2007 and operating under the oversight of the California Department of Food and Agriculture. Mandatory assessments paid by pistachio producers are used to fund research on pistachio propagation, production, harvesting, handling and preparation for market as well as provide educational opportunities and materials for pistachio growers. www.calpistachioresearch.org

The **National Mango Board** marketing program targets consumers along with retailers, foodservice, nutritionists and other key audiences with information about selection, ripening, cutting, varieties and nutrition, along with great recipes. The research program helps the entire mango supply chain deliver a quality product to the U.S.

consumer; doing research to help educate growers, shippers, packers, importers, retailers and others. The NMB research program also investigates the phytonutrient properties of mangos and conducts studies about mango's potential health benefits. Finally, the industry relations program reaches out to the mango industry to share the NMB's results and resources and to learn more about what the industry needs. www.mango.org

The **Washington Tree Fruit Research Commission** was established to promote and carry on research and administer specific industry service programs which benefit the planting, production, harvesting, handling, processing or shipment of tree fruit from the state. <http://www.treefruitresearch.com>

The **Western Center for Food Safety at UC Davis**, a Food and Drug Administration Center of Excellence, conducts research at the interface between production agriculture and food safety, identifies real-world solutions to food safety challenges in these systems, and communicates new knowledge through outreach and education. <http://wcfs.ucdavis.edu>