

Request for proposals for Postdoctoral Research Fellows

UW-Madison College of Agricultural and Life Sciences

The Dairy Innovation Hub, which launched in 2019, is a \$7.8 million annual investment by the State of Wisconsin to build a world-class talent pool and enable bold discoveries to ensure that Wisconsin's dairy community is at the global forefront in producing nutritious dairy products in an economically, environmentally and socially sustainable manner.

The work of the Dairy Innovation Hub focuses on four priority areas (visit the [Hub website](#) for more information and example topic areas):

1. Steward Land and Water Resources
2. Enrich Human Health and Nutrition
3. Ensure Animal health and Welfare
4. Grow Farm Businesses and Communities

This RFP seeks proposals that will fund postdoctoral research fellows to work on innovative and impactful dairy-related research that will fit within at least one of the four priority areas of the Hub.

Highlighted differences from first Postdoctoral Fellowship RFP:

- Select 2 top priority areas
- Increased emphasis on justification of fit to priority area(s)
- Relative weight of review criteria listed in RFP
- New Hub PI status may be indicated
- Postdoctoral candidate does not have to be identified although inclusion of a top-candidate will strengthen the proposal
- Order of sections in project narrative

FY2020 Postdoctoral Fellowship Overview, Deadline and Funding:

The goal is to both attract top prospective graduate students to UW-Madison and fund novel research projects that will benefit Wisconsin's dairy industry. Research of both applied and basic nature will be considered with emphasis on scientific merit, novelty of approach, and innovation. If a prospective fellow has already been identified that candidate can be listed and their CV included within to strengthen the application, although this is not required. Grants will include postdoctoral fellowship salary, fringe (set at 16% for DIH funded personnel), and annual supply budget for 2 years (\$75,000 total per year). **Proposals are due by September 30, 2021** and award decisions will be announced by the end of December 2021. Funding

will be available beginning July 1, 2022 with the anticipation that postdoctoral fellows will start on or shortly after July 1, 2022.

Submission Deadline and Proposal Submission

Proposals must be submitted via WISPER. To be accepted, proposals must have all approvals (Chair/Administrator/Co-PIs) and include the full proposal as detailed below. The Short Title (WISPER) must be “UW Dairy Innovation Hub: Postdoctoral Research Fellowship” and a descriptive title included. Document type should be “grant” and the proposal should be routed to Maria Woldt. WISPER records must be submitted **by 5p.m. September 30, 2021**. Requests for time extensions will not be granted, and proposals received after the deadline will not be reviewed.

Application materials to be submitted (*upload as 1 pdf file*).

All page limits refer to single-spaced, standard 1-inch margins, size 12-point font.

- Cover page and 250-word non-technical summary ([Excel tab “cover page”](#)).
 - The Short Title (WISPER) must be “UW Dairy Innovation Hub: Postdoctoral Research Fellowship”; also include a descriptive title on the cover page.
 - Include names of PI, co-PIs, and participating faculty/staff/students, and select up to two Dairy Innovation Hub Priority area(s) the project addresses.
 - Indicate if PI is “new Hub PI” or an Assistant Professor. To qualify for “new Hub PI” status, PI cannot have received Hub funding prior to July 2021 (excludes faculty startup support). New Hub PI status is independent of career stage.
 - The non-technical summary should address the importance of the project, major objectives, the basic methods used to collect and produce data, and the ultimate goals, impacts, and tangible outcomes the project endeavors to achieve.
- Project narrative (5-page limit, exclusive of references) to include:
 - Background and justification: Provide sufficient literature review to explain the proposed research (what is known; what is not known) and describe why it is relevant. Specify the fit of the proposed work to one of the UW Dairy Innovation Hub priority areas and include how the project will impact the social, economic, or environmental sustainability of the dairy industry. The PIs bear the responsibility for convincing reviewers that their project should be funded. Explain how the research will advance scientific knowledge and public welfare, as well as how the goals will produce an outcome, defined as a measurable change of state in knowledge, action or condition.
 - Objectives/hypotheses: Provide clear, complete, and logically organized statements of the specific objectives to be pursued, or hypotheses to be tested.
 - Experimental/Methodological approach: Describe the working plans and methods to be used in pursuing each of the stated objectives. Methods should correspond to specific objectives and follow the same order. As appropriate to the discipline, provide clear

methodological approaches, experimental designs and appropriate statistical analyses for the data to be collected. This section should be written in language clear to a scientifically literate reviewer whose expertise is other than the proposed work. Location of the work and the facilities and equipment required should be indicated. Methods to avoid obvious pitfalls should also be noted. An explanation should be provided detailing how the appropriate audience will be informed of results, and, whether that audience is other scholars, extension agents, farmers, etc.

- References:
 - Provide a complete citation for each of the references cited in the proposal.
- Curriculum Vitae:
 - A two-page CV for each investigator, focusing on employment history, professional training, honors, awards, and key publications, should be provided.
 - If the prospective postdoctoral fellow has already been identified, a similar CV can be included.
- Mentoring and management plan (1-page limit):
 - The mentoring plan for the postdoctoral fellow should include, but not be limited to: plan for productive and interactive mentoring, appropriate and impactful training and career development activities, a description of how the fellowship will aid the applicant in reaching their career goals, and a plan for evaluation.
- Budget justification (1-page limit):
 - This RFP includes salary and fringe (16%) rate for postdoctoral fellows and an annual supply and expense budget for up to a total of \$75,000 per year.
 - In lieu of a budget worksheet, provide a budget justification that includes postdoctoral fellow salary, associated fringe, and a description of anticipated research supplies and travel expenses. If the proposed salary exceeds the [NIH published postdoctoral salary rate](#), provide justification of a published departmental or programmatic rate. If the total project costs exceed those allowable under the budget guidelines, an explanation regarding the source of complementary funding must be included.
- Future Research Goals (1-page limit):
 - The PI should clearly describe the future goals of the project. This should include expected publications and related products, planned or submitted extramural proposals, and benefits to the postdoctoral fellow. If supplemental or matching funds are available to support the proposal, this should also be noted. A description of how this project will positively impact the Wisconsin Dairy Industry must also be provided. The burden of convincing the reviewers that the proposed project fits the priority area(s) is on the PI and postdoctoral applicant.
- Previous Results and Fit to Program (1-page limit per PI and co-PI):
 - If PI or co-PI has received previous DIH funding, evidence of prior productivity and results should be listed. If a new DIH PI, this can be omitted.

- If this project leverages a DIH-funded capital equipment purchase, please specify the use of that equipment within this proposed project.
- If this project complements or leverages current funding, include synergies and novel aspects of this proposal relative to other funding.

Requirements and outcomes:

- The PI must be a tenure-track faculty in CALS.
- Co-PIs or collaborators from outside of CALS can be included in the proposal.
- Faculty may only be PI on one postdoctoral fellowship grant application to this RFP.
- Receiving a Hub postdoctoral fellowship grant in 2020 does not preclude a PI from applying to this call.

Proposal Review Process

Proposals will be reviewed by a group comprised of Hub steering committee members and ad-hoc reviewers. Additionally, external stakeholder members of the DIH advisory council will review the 250-word summary to provide input on potential research impact in the dairy industry.

Proposals will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

1. Justification for fit to Dairy Innovation Hub Priority area and future goals (20%)
2. Scientific merit; novelty and innovation of research aims (60%)
3. Recruiting and mentoring plan; qualifications of post-doctoral candidate, if identified (10%)
4. Meets “New Hub PI” or assistant professor criteria (10%)

Scores will not be provided back to PIs; however, synthesis feedback on proposal will be provided with decision letter.

If you have questions regarding appropriateness or fit of a proposed item to this RFP, please contact Heather White (heather.white@wisc.edu). Questions regarding the application or general RFP can be directed to Maria Woldt (maria.woldt@wisc.edu) after June 1, or Heather White prior to that date. Questions regarding the budget, allowable expenses, or justification can be directed to Alex Nelson (alex.nelson@wisc.edu).

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What expenses are allowable in the budget?

A: The annual supply and expense budget can be used for research (lab, field, farm) supplies or consumables, undergraduate hourly expenses, travel to farm or research station, travel to conferences where research will be presented, publication fees, or technology and computing (hardware or software) needs that are specific to the project. Expenses should be justified within the budget justification.

Q: What should be included as post-doctoral fellow salary and fringe?

A: We suggest using the [NIH published post-doctoral fellowship salary](#) (\$53,760 as of April 2021), unless there is another published precedent in the program or department. Fringe must be included at 16%.

Q: How will the funds be dispersed?

A: An account will be set up for use by the PI and salary and supply/expense funds will be dispersed for each fiscal year. Funds should be used within the fiscal year of allocation.

Q: Are there expectations that come with this funding?

A: As with all funding, there are reporting expectations. The Hub has to report financial and research outcomes on a fiscal year basis. Researchers will be asked to complete an online submission form twice per year. The form is brief and very similar to Hatch reporting to minimize administrative burden on the PI. You or a collaborator on the project may be asked to participate in the Dairy Summit which is anticipated to be an annual event (in Wisconsin) which will include opportunities to present research.

There is also an expectation that you will agree to peer-review proposals submitted to future RFPs to aid in having a peer-reviewed decision making process.

Q: What if the postdoctoral fellow candidate that is selected cannot start on July 1, 2022 or takes a different position after the proposal is funded?

A: If the selected postdoctoral fellow cannot start within 60 days of July 1, 2022, inform the faculty director (Heather White) of the anticipated start date and justification of the deviation for approval. If the postdoctoral fellow leaves the position after the start of the proposal, notify the program manager and faculty director. Decisions regarding remaining funds will be made based on how long is left on the grant and if an alternative post-doctoral fellow is available. In most cases, a different postdoctoral fellow can be hired to finish the project. Funds cannot be used to support a different type of researcher approval.

If you have remaining questions, please contact Maria Woldt (maria.woldt@wisc.edu) or Heather White (heather.white@wisc.edu).