



CY 2026 agInnovation Budget Explanation

Budget Notes:

Approval of the attached budget, as presented at the agInnovation Business Meeting on September 18 in St. Louis, MO, and amended as suggested, will require two votes. The first vote will be a referendum on the assessment. The [agInnovation Rules of Operation](#) require that decisions made on assessments be completed by a referendum. A two-thirds (2/3) majority of those voting is required for adoption of an assessment referendum. Should the assessment referendum pass, a simple majority is required for budget approval.

If the assessment referendum fails, the budget would not be approved as presented. If this occurs, an electronic meeting of agInnovation would be convened, and an alternative assessment and budget would be discussed. If an alternative assessment was suggested, a second referendum would be held along with a vote on the budget.

As a reminder, the Rules of Operation allow the Chair of agInnovation to authorize the expenditure of assessed funds up to \$5,000 per request (up to \$20,000 over a calendar year) with approval by a simple majority of the agInnovation Executive Committee.

CY2025 Approved and CY2025 Actual/Encumbered: As a grounding and comparison exercise, we've included on the budget sheet columns that show the CY 2025 approved budget and CY 2025 actual expenditures/encumbrances.

CY 2026 Income

With an assessment to the Section of \$100,000 (identical to the assessment of CY 2025), cash carryover of \$100,000, and \$24,000 in income from the TD Wealth account, the CY2026 budget will have a total of \$224,000 in income.

- *Previous CY Carryover:* While the fiscal year has not yet been closed out, we're estimating a cash carryover of approximately \$100,000.
- *agInnovation Assessment:* The budget includes a \$100,000 assessment to agInnovation to be invoiced through the APLU. Assessment payments will be due by June 30, 2026.
- *Other:* We plan to withdraw \$24,000 from agInnovation's TD Wealth account, per the guidance of the agInnovation directors who approved a 4% annual draw.

CY 2026 Expenses

Below is a line-by-line explanation of each anticipated expenses totaling \$193,840.

Eliminated Budget Lines

- *Strategic Advocacy—Facilitator*: This line in CY2025 was intended to support additional facilitation for the “Research Roadmap” initiative.
- *Roundtables with Stakeholders*: The roundtables effort was to be used to direct and ensure impact of the “Research Roadmap” initiative. Once the initiative was adopted as a multi-sectional effort (Cooperative Extension, Academic Programs, and agInnovation), this exercise was no longer needed.
- *AG-ENGINE*: CY2025 marked the third and last year of support of AG-ENGINE, Agriculture National Graduate Institutional Name Exchange, hosted by the University of Florida.

Unchanged Budget Lines

- *NCFAR Membership*: agInnovation has been a long-time member of the National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research (NCFAR) and seeks renewal of the NCFAR membership (\$1,000). NCFAR is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, consensus-based, and customer-led coalition that brings together food, agriculture, nutrition, conservation, and natural resource stakeholders to serve as a forum and unified voice supporting increased federal investment in USDA Research, Education, and Economics (USDA REE).
- *NRSP Stakeholder (travel)*: agInnovation budgets \$1,500 to reimburse the stakeholder member of the NRSP Review Committee for travel expenses to attend the annual face-to-face meeting of the committee, typically held in the late spring.
- *agInnovation 501(c)(3)*: This line at \$3,000 provides support for annual legal and accounting expenses associated with the agInnovation 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.
- *Communications and Advocacy*: This line seeks \$50,000 to complete the communications efforts of the “Research Roadmap”, an initiative started in CY2024. The Section has currently engaged an external consultant, Adaptive Roots (in collaboration with Extension), to draft a plan for strategic communications per the CY2025 budget. This funding line anticipates ancillary and ongoing expense to complete and implement the strategic communications strategy.

Funding Line Increases

- *agInnovation Committee Meetings*: This budget item (\$10,000) assists with defraying meeting costs (e.g., meeting rooms, A/V, food and beverage, etc.) and some travel for standing agInnovation committee members to meet face-to-face. While these meetings are typically associated with the annual agInnovation meeting, the standing committees are invited to meet when it is convenient for committee members.
- *Meeting Support (Annual Meeting)*: \$20,000, an increase from \$15,000 in CY2025, is requested to provide direct support to the agInnovation annual meeting as a means to offset escalating registration fees.

- *agInnovation Awards*: This line was amended upon the recommendation of the Science and Technology Committee (see STC Report 2025 in [agInnovation Business Meeting Slides](#)) and covers the projected awards costs, \$21,840. Award expenses include presentation of three \$500 national research awards (\$1,500: early career, mid-career, and full career); and fifteen \$500 regional awards (\$7,500: early career, mid-career, and full career). The balance of this line, \$12,840, will be dedicated to offset plaque and engraving costs, miscellaneous award costs, and reimbursement of travel expenses of the national award winners. (In 2026 we will present 24 awards: 1 Multistate Research award, 5 Leadership awards, and 18 Research Innovation awards.)
- *Website (agInnovation and ESCOP)*: This line requests \$25,000 to support maintenance of the two websites of the Section including the [ESCOP website](#) (hosted by Clemson University), the Section's inward-facing digital archive, and the [agInnovation website](#), our outwardly-facing, promotional, digital gateway. In CY2025, the Section approved \$20,000 for website updating, an exercise currently underway. As a follow-on to the website updating, we propose recruiting an external consultant to assess the reach of the website and awareness of the "agInnovation brand". A goal of the agInnovation website is to serve as a hub where people can explore, engage, and connect with the community of agricultural experiment stations and research units.
- *Promotion (meeting travel, printing, etc.)*: This coming calendar year, we propose dedicating \$30,000 to support the travel of the agInnovation chair and assist in the implementation of his initiatives. The chair expects to travel to Washington, DC on a regular basis to support the best interests of the Section to the APLU, Federal agency partners, NGO partners, decision makers, and other influencers. Also included in this budget line is support for the development of all collateral materials (brochures, fact sheets, infographics, email campaigns, videos, press kits, merchandise, etc.) to be deployed during CY 2026.
- *Professional Development*: The proposed budget includes \$30,000 (up from \$15,000) to support professional development opportunities for all station/research directors. This includes bringing in external speakers. Typically, the minimal cost to bring in an outside professional speaker is \$5,000 plus travel expenses (\$2,000). Likewise, providing travel (\$2,000) and a modest honorarium (\$1,000) to internal speakers is a minimum of \$3,000 each.

New Funding Lines

- *Operating*: \$1,500 is proposed to support agInnovation operations (e.g., Google listservs, Fathom, etc.)

TOTAL EXPENSES CY 2026

- The budget for CY 2026 estimates \$193,840 in expenses.

PROJECTED BALANCE-END OF CY 2026

- A carry forward of \$30,160 is estimated for CY 2026.



Proposed Calendar Year 2026 Budget

		CY26 Proposed	CY25 Approved	CY25 Actual/Encum
INCOME				
	Previous CY Carryover (estimate)	\$100,000	\$149,223	\$114,126
	agInnovation Assessment	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
	Other	\$24,000	\$24,000	\$24,000
	TOTAL INCOME	\$224,000	\$273,223	\$238,126
EXPENSES				
Eliminated Budget Lines	Strategic Advocacy--Facilitator	\$0	\$2,500	\$0
	Roundtables with Stakeholders	\$0	\$35,000	\$0
	AG-NGINE	\$0	\$50,000	\$50,000
Unchanged Budget Lines	NCFAR Membership	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
	NRSP RC Stakeholder (travel)	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$540
	agInnovation 501(c)(3)	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$2,339
	Communications and Advocacy	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$57,250
Funding Line Increases	agInnovation Committee Meetings	\$10,000	\$5,000	\$6,293
	Meeting Support (Annual Meeting)	\$20,000	\$15,000	\$8,149
	agInnovation Awards	\$21,840	\$20,000	\$5,316
	Website (agInnovation and ESCOP)	\$25,000	\$20,000	\$5,770
	Promotion (chair travel, printing, promo)	\$30,000	\$20,000	\$610
New Funding Line	Professional Development	\$30,000	\$15,000	\$3,920
	Operating	\$1,500	\$0	\$590
	TOTAL EXPENSES	\$193,840	\$238,000	\$141,777
	PROJECTED BALANCE-END OF CY	\$30,160	\$35,223	\$100,000