



## FY 2027 agInnovation Budget Explanation

### Budget Notes:

The attached budget will be presented at the agInnovation Business Meeting on September 24 in Grand Junction, CO. Approval of the budget 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 will be convened, and an alternative assessment and budget would be discussed. If an alternative assessment is 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.

**FY 2026 Approved and FY 2026 Actual/Encumbered:** As a grounding and comparison exercise, we've included on the budget sheet columns that show the FY 2026 approved budget and FY 2026 actual expenditures/encumbrances.

### FY 2027 Income

With an assessment to the Section of \$100,000 (identical to the assessment of FY 2026), estimated cash carryover of \$120,000, and \$27,000 in income from the JP Morgan investment account, the FY2027 budget will have a total of \$247,000 in income.

- *Previous FY Carryover:* While the fiscal year has not yet closed out, we're estimating a cash carryover of approximately \$120,000.
- *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, 2027.
- *Other:* We plan to withdraw \$27,000 from agInnovation's JP Morgan investment account, per the guidance of the agInnovation directors who approved a 4% annual draw.

## **FY 2027 Expenses**

Below is a line-by-line explanation of each anticipated expenses totaling \$247,000.

### ***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).
- *Operating*: \$1,500 is proposed to support agInnovation operations (e.g., Google listservs, Fathom, etc.).
- *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.
- *Meeting Support (Annual Meeting)*: \$20,000 is requested to provide direct support to the agInnovation annual meeting as a means to offset escalating registration fees.

### ***Funding Line Increases***

- *Communications and Advocacy*: This line seeks \$63,000 to support an enhanced strategic communications effort (\$38,000) plus create a new Science Advocacy Academy (\$25,000) to expand visibility and reach of agInnovation. The \$38,000 for the proposed communications effort is to expand the agInnovation website contract. This initiative would entail targeted audience growth and strategic network expansion to enhance national visibility. The focus will be a content program that speaks meaningfully to audiences well beyond the university, people who have a stake in agricultural research, even if they don't yet know it. Stories will be intentionally framed for each audience segment: substantive enough for insiders, accessible enough for the public, compelling enough for funders and policymakers. Distribution channels and strategies will match each audience, so the right story reaches the right person at the right time. In addition to establishing an agInnovation LinkedIn page to share blog posts and create a hub for resharing content, strategic LinkedIn engagement will include analytics reviews to determine what's performing, who's reading, and content optimization recommendations for growing agInnovation's visibility in relevant communities. Media outreach will target agriculture, science, policy, and general interest publications. Press releases and media pitches will be tied to research milestones and agInnovation story highlights. The Science Advocacy Academy will enlist scientists throughout agInnovation to train and gain experience as advocates. The program will include a partnership with NCFAR to give the science advocates an opportunity to make Hill visits with staff members who sit on committees involved with agricultural and food research. The Hill visits will culminate with a showcase and reception (total estimated cost of \$25,000) for congressional delegates, staffers, and federal agency personnel.

- *Promotion (chair travel, initiatives, etc.):* This coming calendar year, we propose \$40,000 to support the development of all collateral materials (brochures, fact sheets, infographics, email campaigns, videos, press kits, merchandise, etc.) to be deployed during FY 2027. Also included in this budget line is support for the travel of the agInnovation chair and the chair's initiatives. The agInnovation chair anticipates significant travel to engage with various stakeholders who may support the chair initiatives.
- *agInnovation Awards:* This line, \$30,000, reflects cash awards, travel reimbursements, plaque charges, and anticipated inflationary costs of non-cash awards. Per the recommendation of the Science and Technology Committee, award expenses include presentation of three \$500 national research awards (\$1,500: early career, mid-career, and full career); and fifteen regional awards (\$15,000: early career, mid-career, and full career). The balance of this line, \$13,500, will be dedicated to offset plaque and engraving costs, miscellaneous award costs, and reimbursement of travel expenses of the national award winners as well as regional award winners who are not celebrated at a regional meeting. (In 2027, we anticipate presenting 24 awards: 1 Multistate Research award, 5 Leadership awards, and 18 Agricultural Research Innovation awards.)

#### ***Funding Line Decreases***

- *Professional Development:* The proposed budget includes \$20,000 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.
- *Website (agInnovation and ESCOP):* This line requests \$12,500 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. As a follow-on to the FY 2026 website updating, we propose renewing the contract with our consultant to continue monthly blogs and assess the reach of the website (\$10,000).
- *agInnovation Committee Meetings:* This budget item had been used to assist with defraying meeting costs (e.g., meeting rooms, A/V, food and beverage, etc.) and some travel for standing or ad hoc agInnovation committee members to meet face-to-face. None of the committees have requested to utilize this budget line in FY26. However, this line item was not eliminated in case committees request financial support in the future.
- *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. This committee has begun to meet virtually whenever possible and FY27 is no exception. However, the line was not eliminated as a reminder that there may be a need for an in-person meeting in the future.

### ***New Funding Lines***

- *Capacity Building Engagement*: \$50,000 is proposed to coincide with the communications effort. Currently, agInnovation tells a strong story about what Land-grant research delivers. What's missing is the specific ask that turns a reader, policymaker, or funder from interested to engaged. Thus, the plan is to develop a surveyed and prioritized set of private capacity-building funding opportunities aligned to advocacy, outreach, and public education. Moreover, the 501(c)(3) opens funding channels that were previously closed. Private foundations, family offices, and corporate philanthropy programs that fund advocacy, public education, and capacity building can now directly support agInnovation. What we don't know is which funders to approach first or how to position our network within their priorities. We propose that a firm be hired to conduct a focused review of the funding landscape, covering capacity-building grants, advocacy-focused philanthropy, food and agriculture funder collaboratives, and rural-development funders with aligned interests. The deliverable is a prioritized prospect list of fifteen to twenty-five funders with an alignment rationale, indicative grant size, application cadence, and recommended approach for each. Following identification and prioritization, depending on complexity, three to five proposals will be submitted to appropriate prospects.
- *Science Communications Survey*: \$6,000 annually for each of the next four years to survey members of the public regarding their perceptions of science in agriculture and natural resources to help improve our communication with the public, policymakers, and other key stakeholders.

### **TOTAL EXPENSES FY 2027**

- The budget for FY 2027 estimates \$247,000 in expenses.

### **PROJECTED BALANCE-END OF FY 2027**

- We are estimating a balanced budget for FY 2027.



## Proposed Fiscal Year 2027 Budget

|                         |                                            | FY27 Proposed    | FY26 Approved    | FY26 Actual/Encum |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| INCOME                  |                                            |                  |                  |                   |
|                         | Previous FY Carryover (estimate)           | \$120,000        | \$100,000        | \$120,000         |
|                         | agInnovation Assessment                    | \$100,000        | \$100,000        | \$100,000         |
|                         | Other                                      | \$27,000         | \$24,000         | \$24,000          |
|                         | <b>TOTAL INCOME</b>                        | <b>\$247,000</b> | <b>\$224,000</b> | <b>\$244,000</b>  |
| EXPENSES                |                                            |                  |                  |                   |
| Eliminated Budget Lines | None                                       | \$0              | \$0              | \$0               |
| Unchanged Budget Lines  | NCFAR Membership                           | \$1,000          | \$1,000          | \$1,000           |
|                         | Operating                                  | \$1,500          | \$1,500          | \$1,400           |
|                         | agInnovation 501(c)(3)                     | \$3,000          | \$3,000          | \$1,200           |
|                         | Meeting Support (Annual Meeting)           | \$20,000         | \$20,000         | \$12,000          |
| Funding Line Increases  |                                            |                  |                  |                   |
|                         | Communications and Advocacy                | \$63,000         | \$50,000         | \$12,000          |
|                         | Promotion (chair travel, initiatives, etc) | \$40,000         | \$30,000         | \$28,000          |
|                         | agInnovation Awards                        | \$30,000         | \$21,840         | \$22,000          |
| Funding Line Decreases  |                                            |                  |                  |                   |
|                         | Professional Development                   | \$20,000         | \$30,000         | \$25,295          |
|                         | Website (agInnovation and ESCOP)           | \$12,500         | \$25,000         | \$2,500           |
|                         | agInnovation Committee Meetings            | \$0              | \$10,000         | \$0               |
|                         | NRSP RC Stakeholder (travel)               | \$0              | \$1,500          | \$0               |
|                         |                                            |                  |                  |                   |
|                         |                                            |                  |                  |                   |
|                         |                                            |                  |                  |                   |
| New Funding Lines       | Capacity Building Engagement               | \$50,000         | \$0              | \$0               |
|                         | Science Communications Survey              | \$6,000          | \$0              | \$0               |
|                         |                                            |                  |                  |                   |
|                         | <b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>                      | <b>\$247,000</b> | <b>\$193,840</b> | <b>\$105,395</b>  |
|                         | <b>PROJECTED BALANCE-END OF FY</b>         | <b>\$0</b>       | <b>\$30,160</b>  | <b>\$138,605</b>  |