

**2017 DAIRY DIGESTER RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (Q&A)
MAY 19, 2017**

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Is "Attachment 6: Additional Permitting Documents" only scored in the Project Readiness?
Yes, additional permitting documents will be scored as part of the project's readiness. Reference page 27 of the Request for Grant Applications (RGA) "Appendix E: Detailed Scoring Criteria."

2. How does the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) handle confidential financial information and who has access?
CDFA will determine what information provided by applicants is confidential under the California Public Records Act (Governmental Code 6250, et seq.) and related statutes definition of "confidential or proprietary information." The RGA Appendix C: Confidential Information directs applicants to clearly mark, on each page "confidential/proprietary information" on those documents they feel contain confidential or proprietary information. However, marking documents as "confidential/proprietary information" will not necessarily result in their being treated as confidential if they are not exempt from disclosure under the California Public Records Act.

CDFA treats the applicant's financial documentation as confidential and restricts access (e.g. password protected files) to specific authorized individuals, such as Certified Public Accountants in the CDFA Audit Office in order to conduct the Financial Soundness Review.

3. Are applicants required to comply with the computer system recommendations for using the FAAST system?
While not explicitly required, CDFA strongly encourages all applicants to comply with the FAAST computer system recommendations to ensure applications and attachments are submitted successfully. Reference page 11 of the RGA "How to Apply" for the FAAST computer system recommendations.

4. Does completion of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) satisfy the requirements for the Community Impact?
The Community Impact criteria must be addressed by applicants prior to submission of applications. If the above requirements were fulfilled during the process for demonstration of CEQA compliance for the project, applicants must provide supporting documentation referencing page numbers as applicable. Reference page 14 of the RGA "Community Impact" for more information.

5. Can there be two digesters located within a short distance of each other?
The DDRDP does not restrict projects by location. Please note that the "Community Impact" specifications/guidelines will need to be addressed for each project.

6. Can applicants include more than three letters of support?
Page 14 of the RGA "Community Impact" requests that applicants submit "up to three letters of support..." with their application. Applicants may submit more than three letters of support but they will not receive additional points in the scoring criteria.

7. Is the DDRDP grant solicitation highly competitive?

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CDFA anticipates that the grant solicitation will be highly competitive. During the 2015 DDRDP solicitation only half of the applicants that submitted applications received a grant award.

8. If interconnection happens after September 30, 2019 due to utility delays, will the recipient still receive reimbursement? Are there clawback provisions?
DDRDP funds must be encumbered by June 30, 2018 and fully liquidated by June 30, 2020. CDFA may review and consider grant extensions on a case-by-case basis.

CDFA does not have specific “clawback” provisions but will withhold 10% of the grant funds until a Critical Project Review Report, Final Performance Report, Final Invoice, and resolution of any project concerns are completed.

9. Can the grant funds be used as down payment toward a bank loan?
If awarded funds, recipients will be reimbursed for actual, allowable project costs on a quarterly basis. While reimbursement of project costs would not appear to constitute a down payment toward a bank loan, applicants should contract their financial institutions with any questions regarding loans and/or down payments.
10. If applicants decide to resubmit a proposal that did not receive funding during the 2015 DDRDP, what is required for community outreach, letters of support or similar materials?
The “Community Impact” section is a new requirement, per legislation SB 859 (2016). SB 859 states:

“A project cannot receive funding unless the applicant has (1) demonstrated to CDFA that the applicant has conducted outreach in areas that will potentially be adversely impacted by the project; (2) Determined potential adverse impacts of the project, and (3) committed to measures to mitigate impacts.”

If the above requirements were fulfilled during the process for demonstration of CEQA compliance for the project, applicants must provide supporting documentation referencing page numbers as applicable. Refer to page 14 of the RGA “Community Impact” and page 29 “Detailed Scoring Criteria” for more information.

11. Where can applicants find a list of required permits?
Permits will vary depending on the scope and the location of your project. Applicants are responsible for obtaining all necessary permits for the proposed project. Reference page 18 of the RGA “Additional Guidance and Resources” for more information.

TECHNICAL QUESTIONS

1. What is meant by “dry weight?”
Dry weight refers to only the volatile solids fraction of the manure, not including liquids such as urine or flush water. At least 80% of the dry weight of the feedstock for anaerobic digestion must be manure from dairy livestock. Other substrates such as dairy processing wastes include whey, or other agricultural waste, can be added to the feedstock up to 20% dry weight. Reference page 7 of the RGA “Program Requirements” section for more information.

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2. Within the Financial Assistance Application Submittal Tool (FAAST) system under “Digester Project Plan and Long-Term Viability” and on the Air Resource Board (ARB) GHG Reduction Calculator, what should applicants use for the herd size?
Applicants should provide the average number of lactating cows housed in freestalls and in open lot corrals, dry cows, replacement calves, replacement heifers, and any other livestock in operation.
3. How can a dairy with a small herd size be competitive with a large dairy that can generate more methane reductions?
Dairies with a smaller herd size can be competitive with larger dairies because the ARB GHG Reduction Calculator accounts for each project’s GHG Emission Reductions per kg of energy-correct milk production and per grant dollar requested by the applicant. Reference page 13 of the [“Greenhouse Gas Quantification Methodology for CDFA Dairy Digester Research Development Program”](#) for more information.
4. Does the ARB GHG Reduction Calculator account for NO₂?
No. The ARB GHG Reduction Calculator accounts only for carbon dioxide and methane.
5. Is a project eligible for Biomat?
An electric generation project can participate in the Biomat process to get a power purchase agreement with their local utility.
6. Can a biogas upgrading technology that is used to upgrade biogas from other sources (not dairy) or outside of California be deemed commercially available in California?
Please refer to the definition of “commercially available technology” on page 25 of the RGA. With respect to biogas upgrading technology, please submit documentation with your application that the technology being proposed meets the definition of “commercially available technology” (i.e., that the system has proven operating history, that there are established design/installation procedures, that professional service providers, equipment and spare parts are available).
7. A farm has a digester system that is currently operating, but which is planned to be decommissioned when a new digester system is built. The new digester system will employ different digester technology from the previous system. Would the new digester system be eligible for a grant since the old one will be decommissioned?
Reference page 6 of the RGA, upgrades to existing functional dairy digesters to boost emission reductions and energy production are not eligible for DDRDP funds.
8. A farm has an operating digester system. Due to farm expansions, the digester system is now undersized. A second digester, with different digester technology, is planned to accommodate the additional dairy waste. Would the new digester system be eligible for a grant since it would treat waste that cannot be utilized in the first digester?
The 2017 DDRDP funds are for new or additional methane reductions, applicants will estimate baseline emissions with the ARB GHG Reduction Calculator and must include the GHG reductions already achieved from the existing digester.

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BUDGET QUESTIONS

1. Are lease payments from a developer to a dairy operation an allowable cost?
No, expenditures for leasing land or buildings are unallowable. Reference page 10 of the RGA for more information.
2. If a project is selected for funding, are there limitations in moving funds identified on the Budget Worksheet between cost categories?
There is no threshold for moving costs from one allowable cost category to another, however, grant recipients will be required to notify CDFA in advance and obtain prior approval before moving costs between allowable cost categories. (e.g., Personnel Costs to Equipment Costs). Please note: Design and Engineering costs cannot exceed five percent of the total amount requested for DDRDP. Reference page 9 of the RGA for more information on allowable costs.
3. Is a bank loan a form of Matching Funds?
Yes, funds that have been secured in a bank loan are an acceptable form of matching funds.
4. What are examples of "Other" funds on the Budget Worksheet?
The "Other" category is a form of matching funds that does not fall into any of the other cost categories. For instance, funds from a utility district or local government may be classified as "Other."
5. CDFA is requiring a 50% cost share, does this mean that the maximum project budget cannot exceed \$6 million (i.e., \$3 million grant and \$3 million match)?
No, CDFA does not limit the total project budget but requires a minimum 50% match; applicants can provide additional matching funds. Reference page 5 of the RGA "Funding and Duration" for more information.
6. Can you provide information about the details of the financial soundness review?
CDFA's Audit Office is comprised of Certified Public Accountants who conduct the financial soundness review. They evaluate whether applicants have provided the requested information as required in the RGA, the level of completeness and validity of the documents being submitted, and identify concerns regarding the financial strength of the dairy and/or the project developer. Additionally, they evaluate the organization's ability to pay for up-front project costs while waiting for reimbursement from CDFA and the ability to fund the project beyond the grant term. Please see page 28 of the RGA "Detail Scoring Criteria" for more information.