

**CSANR BIOAg Program announces mini-grants
for research, demonstration and education**

In the Spring of 2006, the Washington State Legislature provided seed funding of \$400k to WSU's Center for Sustaining Agriculture & Natural Resources (CSANR) for the BIOAg Program (Biological Intensive Agriculture and Organic Farming). This funding represents the first direct funding since CSANR was established by the legislature in 1991. One of the key elements of the BIOAg program is a mini-grant program to support strategic research, demonstration and education projects to improve the sustainability of Washington agriculture. In 2006, 13 projects were selected in 6 priority areas (livestock, nutrient management, alternative crops / bioenergy & bioproducts, food quality, economics, and demonstration farms). The criteria used to select projects included probable impact on sustainability, leverage potential, short-term outcomes / impact, geographical representation, and areas currently underserved by other CSANR efforts.

The following projects were selected for funding:

Project Title	Project Lead	\$\$
<i>Production of DHA Rich Algae biomass as Cattle Feed Supplement to Enhance Milk Quality</i>	Shulin Chen	20k
Organic wastes from agriculture, such as cull potatoes, can be used to produce an algae biomass rich in omega 3 fatty acids. The biomass can then be fed to livestock or fish to boost the nutritional quality of the meat and milk. This project will evaluate the potential of enriched algae to enhance milk quality from dairy cows.		
<i>Winter Canola as a Rotation Crop in the Winter Wheat – Summer Fallow Region</i>	Bill Schillinger	10k
Viable alternative crops for winter wheat are lacking for the expansive low-rainfall dryland farming region of Eastern Washington. The emerging interest in biodiesel in the state is creating the potential that winter canola may become a viable alternative crop for this region of the state. Some farmers have experienced a substantial yield improvements in wheat crops planted after canola. This project will analyze the impacts of adding canola to the wheat-fallow cropping system and determine the potential for canola production in this part of the state.		
<i>Demonstration and Outreach for Livestock Carcass Composting</i>	Lynne Carpenter-Boggs	8k
Disposal of large animal carcasses is becoming a serious concern throughout the country due to increased risks of disease. This project will demonstrate large animal carcass composting technologies.		
<i>Farming for Food Quality – Symposium and Seminars</i>	Carol Miles, David Granatstein	2k
Nutritional enhancement of foods through improved production practices and genetics is rapidly becoming a major area of research as nutrition-related diseases and health-care are having significant impacts on society. A one-day symposium on farming for food quality, , featuring regional and international experts on food quality, will be held in Vancouver, Washington on November 10 in conjunction with the annual Tilth Producer's Conference.		
<i>Legume Data Mining</i>	Bill Pan	22k

<p>Soaring costs for synthetic nitrogen fertilizers are creating hardships for Washington farmers. A substantial amount of research on biologically based nitrogen alternatives (ie. legumes, organic and biological sources of N) has been conducted in the region for the past few decades. Much of this research was never published because synthetic nitrogen was so inexpensive. This project will collect, review, synthesize and publish all of the available research in the region on biological nitrogen, and identify knowledge gaps and research needs.</p>		
<i>Nutrient Quality and Disease Prevention Benefits of Organic versus Conventional Tomatoes and their Products</i>	Preston Andrews, Davies	19.9k
<p>Many claims have been made about the nutritional advantages of organic / biological vs. conventional production systems. This project will compare nutritional qualities of organic and conventional tomatoes and tomato products – a keystone product for many fresh market producers.</p>		
<i>Strategies to Achieve Ecological and Economic Goals in the Transition Phase of Eastern Washington Organic Dryland Grain Production</i>	Rich Koenig	21k
<p>Organic grain production in the Palouse is usually perceived to be in conflict with soil conservation objectives. This project will complete a 5-year study of organic grain transition on the Boyd Farm near Pullman, which is evaluating the potential of organic grain production to be an economical and ecological alternative.</p>		
<i>Carbon Sequestration under Irrigated Switchgrass Production</i>	Hal Collins, Steve Franzen	20k
<p>Concerns about global energy supplies and climate change are creating interest in the potential for production of perennial grasses (like switchgrass) for energy products. Perennial grasses develop extensive root systems which enable them to use water and nutrients more efficiently than annual crops, while incorporating large amounts of carbon in the soil. This project will evaluate the carbon sequestration impacts of a long-term switchgrass trial under irrigation in Central Washington.</p>		
<i>Production and quality of winter grown organic vegetables in Washington</i>	Rich Koenig, Carol Miles	24k
<p>The nutritional value of fresh produce is widely recognized. This project will evaluate the potential and nutritional qualities of organic, winter greens in greenhouses.</p>		
<i>Dairy Roundtable</i>	TBD	5k
<p>Organic milk is one of the fastest growing sectors of the agricultural economy and organic dairies are the fastest growing segment of Washington's dairy industry. BIOAg will provide seed money for a project to be determined in a dairy roundtable held in the fall of 2006.</p>		
<i>Land EKG Workshop</i>	Don Nelson	7.5k
<p>The ability to evaluate the impact of livestock management practices on rangelands and pastures is a critical need for ranchers, land-owners, and agencies responsible for managing range leases. The Land EKG workshop is an intensive, 3-day workshop to teach ranchers and range managers to learn how to quantitatively monitor rangelands to create healthy rangeland ecosystems. BIOAg provided scholarships for ranchers and range managers who collectively manage more than 1 million acres of rangeland in Washington State in the summer of 2006.</p>		
<i>Listening Sessions</i>	BIOAg Mgmt Team	10k
<p>The development of the BIOAg program concept came from interactions between research and extension professionals and farmers and ranchers in the state. The BIOAg Management Team will continue to solicit input from producers about the goals, objectives, research and</p>		

education priorities for the BIOAg program.		
<i>Demonstration Farms</i>	BIOAg Demo Team	30k
Demonstrations are a proven “extension” methodology for facilitating the adoption of new technologies and improved farming practices. This project will provide resources for demonstration on both WSU and private farms at various locations throughout the state to give farmers and other stakeholders the opportunity to learn.		
<i>Economics of BIOAg research</i>	Kate Painter	17.5k
Economic evaluation, particularly enterprise level financial analysis, is often a missing piece of the puzzle with new technologies and practices. This project will provide critical economic evaluation capacity to many of the projects listed above.		