

Appendix: Survey Questions

Introduction: Defining Sustainable Agriculture

Thank you for participating in our anonymous survey! The survey will take about 15-20 minutes to complete. Please answer all questions as honestly and completely as possible. Answers will be kept completely anonymous and confidential. Questions are not mandatory, so if a question does not apply to your experience, please feel free to leave it blank. Answers will be recorded after the completion of each section.

This survey is intended for researchers or other professionals with an advanced degree (Master's or Ph.D.) and with academic or professional experience that is relevant to sustainable agricultural systems.

The goal of this survey is to collect information from researchers on their experiences securing funding and conducting research broadly related to a more sustainable agricultural system. The survey contains three sets of questions, related to:

- 1) securing funding for this type of work
- 2) researchers' satisfaction with different aspects of sustainable agriculture research and outreach; and
- 3) institutional challenges to sustainable agriculture research and outreach

If you have questions about the survey or its use, please contact Tali Robbins at trobbs@ucsusa.org.

1. How do you define sustainable agriculture? Your answer may be brief – a few sentences, phrases, or less. We will use your definition to understand how definitions vary and to provide greater context for your responses to the following questions.

Part 1 of 3: Funding

2. In your current position, on average, how many sustainable agriculture research funding proposals do you write per year? If you have been in your position for more than five years, please just focus on the previous five years.

- 1-3
- 4-7
- 8-10
- >10

3. In your current position, please estimate what percentage of your working time is spent writing research proposals for sustainable agriculture. If you have been in your position for more than five years, please focus just on the previous five years.

- <10%
- 10-25%
- 25-50%
- 50-75%
- >75%

4. For each agency listed below, **please indicate whether you have submitted at least one research proposal related to sustainable agriculture** (relevant to your current position, as either Principal or Co-Investigator) and whether it was fully funded, partially funded, and/or did not receive funding, within the last five years.

	Principal Investigator			Co-Principal Investigator		
	Fully funded	Partially funded	Submitted, not funded	Fully funded	Partially funded	Submitted, not funded
NSF						
USDA – SARE						
USDA - AFRI						
USDA - other						
EPA						
DOE						
Industry – private companies						
Industry – commodity organizations						
Foundations						
Non-profits						
State Department of Agriculture						
State Department of Natural Resources						

Other (please specify):

5. Are there any funding programs that you have applied to in the past but have abandoned due to the low funding rates or apparent research direction of the funding program?

- Yes
- Unsure
- No

If applicable, please add examples.

6. Over the course of your career, acquiring funding for sustainable agriculture research has become:

- Much easier
- Easier
- About the same
- Harder
- Much harder

7. Regarding USDA research grants, how important is it for Requests for Applications (RFAs) to explicitly reference the following topics related to the broader field of sustainable agriculture? Please consider both existing and potential future RFAs.

	Not important	Slightly important	Fairly important	Important	Very important
Agroecology					
Agroforestry					
Broader public impacts (e.g. ecosystem services)					
Crop rotation					
Economics					
Human dimensions/decisionmaking					
Improved grazing systems					
Integrated pest management					
Interdisciplinary					
Organic production systems					
Perennial crops					
Pollinator health					
Racial equity					
Social justice					

Other (please specify):

8. Aside from changing RFA language, how important are the following changes to **USDA research grant programs** to better support sustainable agriculture research?

	Not important	Slightly important	Fairly important	Important	Very important
Increasing the duration of research grants					
Increasing maximum funding amount per grant					

Other (Please specify):

9. Regarding non-USDA research grants, how important is it for RFAs to explicitly reference the following topics related to the broader field of sustainable agriculture?

	Not important	Slightly important	Fairly important	Important	Very important
Agroecology					
Agroforestry					
Broader public impacts (e.g. ecosystem services)					
Crop rotation					
Economics					
Human dimensions/decisionmaking					
Improved grazing systems					
Integrated pest management					
Interdisciplinary					
Organic production systems					
Perennial crops					
Pollinator health					
Racial equity					
Social justice					

Other (please specify):

10. Aside from changing Request for Applications (RFA) language, how important are the following changes to non-USDA research grant programs?

	Not important	Slightly important	Fairly important	Important	Very important
Increasing the duration of research grants					
Increasing maximum funding amount per grant					

Other (please specify):

Part 2 of 3: Research & Outreach

11. In your overall research experience working on sustainable agriculture research, please rate your level of satisfaction with each of the following areas:

	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied
Support from your institution					
Support from colleagues at your institution					
Interest from your disciplinary research community					
Interest from students and/or others seeking mentorship					
Positive relationships with local producers					
Positive relationships with local/regional community members					
Level of interdisciplinary research you are able to conduct					
Amount of on-farm (participatory farmer) research you are able to conduct					
Opportunities for community-based research-stakeholder engagement					
Opportunities for media attention or public communication					
Opportunities to engage with policymakers					

12. Regarding your experience with **interdisciplinary research**, please rate your satisfaction with the following elements of your work and the work of your institution:

	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied
Number of colleagues willing to participate					
Number of students willing to participate					

Support from your institution					
Institutional commitment to hiring interdisciplinary scientists					
Amount of funding available					
Ease of managing funds between collaborators					
Amount of time investment required to win grants for this type of research, as compared to your other research					
Amount of time you have for this type of research					
Amount of training you have for this type of research					
Opportunities for media attention or public communication					
Institutional rewards/promotion/recognition for this type of research					

13. Please add any comments regarding the **amount of interdisciplinary research** you conduct.

14. Please add any comments regarding your satisfaction with your **institution’s commitment to interdisciplinary research**.

15. Regarding your experience with **on-farm or farmer-participatory research**, please rate your level of satisfaction with the following elements of your work and the work of your institution:

	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied
Number of colleagues willing to participate					
Number of students willing to participate					
Support from your institution					
Institutional commitment to hiring interdisciplinary scientists					
Amount of funding available					
Ease of managing funds between collaborators					
Amount of time investment required to win grants for this type of research,					

as compared to your other research					
Amount of time you have for this type of research					
Amount of training you have for this type of research					
Institutional rewards/promotion/recognition for this type of research					

16. Please add any additional comments regarding your satisfaction with your experience with **on-farm or farmer-participatory research**.

17. Regarding your experience with **community-based research** (i.e., research topics developed with stakeholders in the community), please rate your level of satisfaction with:

	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied
Number of colleagues willing to participate					
Number of students willing to participate					
Support from your institution					
Amount of funding available					
Ease of managing funds between collaborators					
Amount of time investment required to win grants for this type of research, as compared to your other research					
Amount of time you have for this type of research					
Amount of training you have for this type of research					
Institutional rewards/promotion/recognition for this type of research					

18. Please add any additional comments regarding your level of satisfaction with your experiences with **community-based research**.

19. In your experience with **media and public outreach**, please rate your level of satisfaction with:

	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied
Support from your colleagues					
Support from your institution					
Amount of time you have for these activities					
Amount of training you have for these activities					
Institutional rewards/promotion/recognition					
Your research community's rewards/recognition for these activities					

20. Please add any additional comments regarding your level of satisfaction with **media and public outreach opportunities**.

21. Please indicate the degree to which **policy engagement** is a part of your job.

- Policy engagement is not part of my job, and should be avoided
- Policy engagement is not part of my job, but can be appropriate
- Policy engagement is not part of my job, but it is important
- Policy engagement is part of my job, but I prefer to avoid it
- Policy engagement is part of my job, and it is important

22. In your experience with **policy engagement** on the topic of sustainable agriculture, please rate your level of satisfaction with:

	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied
Number of colleagues also interested in policy engagement					
Number of students also interested in policy engagement					
Support from colleagues					
Support from your institution					
Amount of time you have for engagement with policy organizations and policymakers					
Amount of training you have for this type of work					
Your employer's rewards/recognition for this type of work					

Your research community's rewards/recognition for this type of work					
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23. Please add any additional comments you have regarding your level of satisfaction with your **policy engagement experience**.

Part 3 of 3: Obstacles to Research

24. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements regarding obstacles you may have faced through your sustainable agriculture research.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
My institution discourages sustainable agriculture research					
My colleagues discourage sustainable agriculture research					
There is a lack of support from my broader community (friends, family, or other members of the local community) for sustainable agriculture research					
Sustainable agriculture research entails challenging relationships with agricultural stakeholders					
I have experienced pressure to modify research results					
I have experienced pressure not to publicize research results					
I have been discouraged from speaking with the media about my research					
I have been discouraged from engaging with policymakers related to my research					
I have experienced pressure from institutional leadership to change research direction					
I have experienced pressure from funders to change research direction					
I have experienced challenging relationships with funders of my research					
I have experienced pressure from outside groups (local government, businesses, farmer organizations, etc.) to change research direction					

25. Please add any additional comments you may have regarding these challenges.

26. In your opinion, how important are the following obstacles to sustainable agriculture research?

	Not important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Important	Very important
Political partisanship					
Entrenched financial interests					
Lack of research funding					
Lack of career stability					
Conflicts of interest related to private sector funding					
Duration of public research programs					
Lack of public interest					
Lack of institutional support					
Lack of scalability of sustainable agriculture practices					

Other (please specify):

27. If you could share a story with decision makers (e.g. policymakers or agency leadership) on the need for more funding for sustainable agriculture, what would you say?

28. Do you have any other comments regarding sustainable agriculture funding or other obstacles to sustainable agriculture research that you would like to share?

Conclusion: Background Information

29. Which best describes your title? Check all that apply.

- Assistant Professor
- Associate Professor
- Professor
- Adjunct Professor
- Department Chair
- Dean or other administrative role
- Researcher/Research Associate
- Post-doctoral Fellow/Researcher
- Program/Project Manager
- Policy Coordinator
- Development Coordinator

- Outreach Coordinator
- Other (please specify)

30. What is the highest education level you have completed?

- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Ph.D.
- Non-U.S. degree/ other (please specify)

At which type of institution do you currently work? Check all that apply.

- Land Grant University
- Other (Non-Land Grant) Public University
- Private University
- Community college
- Federal government
- State or local government
- Non-profit organization
- Private industry
- Other (please specify)

32. What is your area of expertise (i.e. current department or graduate major)?

- Primary field of expertise:
- Secondary field of expertise:

33. For how many years have you been working in your current position?

- < 1
- 1-3
- 4-5
- 6-10
- 11-20
- > 20

34. For how many years have you been working in your current field of study (excluding graduate school)?

- < 1
- 1-3
- 4-5
- 6-10
- 11-20
- > 20

35. In what region of the U.S. are you currently based?

- N/A- outside of the U.S.
- Southwest (including CA)
- Pacific Northwest (including AK)
- Northern Plains
- Southern Plains
- Midwest
- Southeast
- Northeast

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey! Your anonymous responses will strengthen the case for increased public investment in sustainable agriculture research. If you would like to receive a summary report of the survey findings, [please leave your email address here](#).

Interested in staying connected with UCS? [Please join the UCS Science Network](#), an online community of more than 20,000 scientists, engineers, economists, public health specialists, and other experts around the country working to educate the public and inform decisions critical to our health, safety, and environment. Membership in the Science Network includes timely alerts and information about ways to get involved in advocacy, a free quarterly webinar series focused on strengthening communication and advocacy skills, and networking events.

Please share this survey widely with your colleagues!