

## **NRBP Monthly Report September 7, 2001**

### **Funding Opportunities Announced**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture requests proposals for the National Research Initiative (NRI) Competitive Grants Program. The NRI focuses high priority research in agriculture, forestry, and related environmental sciences. Areas of interest include but are not limited to: Natural Resources and the Environment; Markets, Trade, and Rural Development; and Enhancing Value and Use of Agricultural and Forest Products. Proposal deadlines and funding amounts vary by research areas, ranging from 11/15/01 to 2/15/02. For more info, contact NRI at (202) 401-5022.

The W. Alton Jones Foundation's "Sustainable World Grants" develop new sources of energy that reduce global climate change impacts. The Foundation supports projects that: promote a hydrogen economy; implement energy-efficient solutions for urban transportation in the United States, China, Mexico and Brazil; and support multinational efforts to protect the global climate. Grant amounts range from \$25K to \$400K. For more info, go to: <http://www.wajones.org>.

### **New England States Set Environmental Agenda**

As reported by the Wall Street Journal August 22, 2001, the New England Governors have said that they will try to persuade federal environment regulators and Congress to exempt New England from federal clean-air regulations that will require them to put ethanol in their gasoline. Earlier this month (August), the governors made a promise to ban another fuel additive, MTBE, amid concerns it contaminates drinking water supplies. However, if they succeed in preventing MTBE being added to gasoline, they may be forced to use ethanol to meet the federal reformulated gasoline standards for the heavily-polluted New England states. The New England states will try collectively to persuade Congress to exempt them from the Clean Air Act and to find other additives. The state of California, which has banned the use of MTBE as of December 2002, recently failed to win exemption from using ethanol, first from the EPA in June and then from Congress last month.

New England Governors and eastern Canadian Premiers agreed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in their region. The governors and premiers adopted a Climate Change Action Plan that includes measures to increase energy efficiency in the region, increase the use of renewable energy, and decrease the impact of transportation. It also sets the groundwork for exploring a regional system of trading emissions credits for greenhouse gases. The agreement was adopted at the annual Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers. The Climate Change Action Plan sets a short-term goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2010, and sets a midterm goal of reducing the emissions to at least 10 percent below 1990 levels by 2020. The plan's long-term goal is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 75 to 85 percent below current levels.

## **Pennsylvania Agriculture Workshops Draw Large Attendance**

Two workshops sponsored by the DOE Office of Fuels Development and the Western and Northeast Regional Biomass Energy Programs attracted over 200 in Pennsylvania on August 28, in Mars, PA and August 30, in Grantville, PA. The target audience for the workshops was Pennsylvania farmers, agriculture organizations, feed producers, and anyone interested in learning more about ethanol. The workshops were intended to increase the awareness of the current market for ethanol and the potential for ethanol production in Pennsylvania. The Grantville session was opened with an inspirational welcome by Sam Hayes, Pennsylvania Secretary of Agriculture. The Secretary told the group that for ethanol to succeed in the state, all parties must be winners in the process. Topics covered at the workshops included:

- An introduction to ethanol - basics and history, how ethanol fits in the national fuel picture, and how it has arrived at this point in time;
- Economics of marketing ethanol in Pennsylvania and the Northeast Region;
- Crop production data in Pennsylvania;
- Feasibility studies and how to get started with ethanol production;
- Utilizing the high protein distillers grains co-product for livestock rations;
- Ethanol from cellulosic biomass - opportunities in Pennsylvania;
- New production technologies for value-added processing of corn for dry mill ethanol;
- Marketing and utilizing high octane fuel; and
- State & federal public policy - what policies will provide market push, market pull.

A concluding panel representing Pennsylvania farm groups respond to the workshop presentations and answered the question - Where can agriculture go from here? On Friday, August 31, all workshop attendees were invited to a tour of the USDA/ARS, Eastern Regional Research Center in Wyndmoor, Pa. The Center's ethanol and biodiesel research labs were opened for tours and attendees had the opportunity to meet the researchers who are working on new ethanol and biodiesel projects.

## **New Jersey Holds Working Group Meeting**

New Jersey held its first meeting of the Biomass Technical Working Group in June. New Jersey as part of its state restructuring law has established interim standards for the state's renewable portfolio standards (RPS). The biomass working group is developing guidance for final rules for biomass power to be included in the state's RPS. The agenda for the meeting included:

- Review of the definition of biomass;
- Discussion of biomass conversion technologies;
- Sustainability criteria; and
- Eligibility criteria.

The working group is comprised of representatives from state agencies, utilities, power marketers, power generators, and biomass industry.

## **New York To Host Energy and Environment Exposition**

The Empire Energy & Environmental Exposition will be held Tuesday, November 6th and Wednesday, November 7th, 2001, at the Empire State Plaza Convention Center in Albany, New York. The Exposition will showcase businesses that manufacture, sell, install, and consult in alternate energy, energy efficiency and conservation, environmental remediation, alternative fuel, green building products, and pollution prevention and recycling equipment.

The Expo will be held at the Empire State Plaza Convention Center in downtown Albany. This is a 2-day Business-to-Business and Business-to-Policymaker exposition, focusing on available, demonstrable and purchasable energy and environmental equipment, products and services. This event will leverage the business community's awareness of energy and environmental challenges to help them act in their own interests and, in so doing, improve their operating economics and New York's economic and environmental climate in the process.

For Exhibitor information please contact Walt Darbin at (518) 432-6400 x227 or email to "walt@eba-nys.org". For Sponsorship information please contact Donna Way at (518) 432-6400 x224 or email to "donna@eba-nys.org".

## **NRBP to Assist Connecticut in Evaluation of Energy Potential from Agricultural Wastes**

The Connecticut Academy of Science and Engineering has partnered with the Connecticut Economic Resource Center, the Department of Agriculture, and the Connecticut Agriculture Industry Cluster, to conduct a study of the feasibility for using agriculture biomass to generate electricity and simultaneously lowering farm operating costs. The multi-phase project is being funded by the state. Under the first phase of the project the study team will complete two tasks; to develop an inventory of the multiple agricultural byproduct streams in Connecticut by type, quantity and location while the second will focus on developing estimates both for total energy from agricultural biomass as well as total electric demand from the agricultural sector. The study team will also assess the energy production processes, analyzing technology options and recommending 1-3 possible best approaches. The team will also assess the environmental and socioeconomic impacts. The final phase will involve an economic impact analysis of the estimated potential return based on both reduced cost of energy to the agricultural sector and the avoidance of costs associated with the soon-to-be mandated construction of containment systems to control animal waste. In seeking sources of related information, the study team will rely on data compiled by the Northeast Regional Biomass Program. The study team believes the NRBP's data and assistance with the project will be of great utility for the study. The NRBP will provide the following information:

- Data and equations for estimating animal-waste daily output per animal;
- Data on the moisture, BTU content and chemical make-up of manures for Connecticut-type farm animals and other farm byproducts such as ag-residues; and
- Data on the performance of various technologies as being applied in Vermont, New York, and other states for converting agricultural waste to electricity and economic data on the use of such technologies.

The NRBP has access to the data because of its unique links to other state and national projects dealing with animal waste and energy production. The NRBP's assistance will result in considerable cost savings and improved reliability of the Connecticut work.