

**State University System
Education and General
2018-2019 Legislative Budget Request
Form I**

University(s):	Florida A&M University
Issue Title:	Agriculture Research, Education and Training in Support of Florida's Agricultural Industry
Priority Number	
Recurring Funds Requested:	\$ 100,000.00
Non-Recurring Funds Requested:	\$1,146,072.00
Total Funds Requested:	\$1,246,072.00
Please check the issue type below:	
Shared Services/System-Wide Issue	<input type="checkbox"/>
2018-2019 Non-Recurring Issue	<input type="checkbox"/>
New Issue for 2018-2019	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

I. Description

In September 2015, the U.S. Department of Agriculture – Agricultural Research Service (USDA-ARS) transferred 3,800 acres of farmland, including 21 facilities, in Brooksville, Florida to Florida A&M University; one of the largest transfers of its kind. FAMU is requesting \$1.24 million in start-up funding for the Brooksville site to support and enhance agriculture research and technology transfer of new farming techniques to small farmers in the local community and around the state. This investment will help contribute to the State's workforce and innovation goals, and support enhancement to the agriculture industry. The land transfer includes 19 buildings, containing 2,830 square feet of laboratories, 3,600 square feet of office space, and a variety of other support structures, constructed between 1932 and 1987. From this land transfer, FAMU has created the Brooksville Agricultural and Environmental Research Station (BAERS).

This transfer did not include associated start-up/operational costs, but offers an opportunity to enhance Florida's agricultural industry and strengthen its environmental preservation efforts. By accepting the land transfer, FAMU agreed to the following in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the USDA:

1. Assist beginning farmers and ranchers to meet the nation's agricultural needs for coming generations and the incorporation of new and beginning farmers and ranchers through research, education, and extension of knowledge;
2. Support the USDA's strategic goals to include (a) assisting rural communities to create prosperity so they are self-sustaining, repopulating, and economically thriving; (b) ensure our national forests and private working lands are conserved, restored, and made more resilient to climate change, while enhancing our water resources; (c) help America promote agricultural production and biotechnology exports as America works to increase food security; (d) ensure that all of America's children have access to safe, nutritious, and balanced meals; and (e) support the USDA's commitment to assist beginning farmers and ranchers; and
3. Implement a Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Program for a period of at least five (5) years.

Additionally, FAMU further agreed that the property shall be used for agricultural and natural resources research for a period of not less than twenty-five (25) years. FAMU's commitment is reflected in its institutional investment of \$193,837 for start-up funding. This investment was utilized for office furniture and equipment (\$30,000); renovations to the administration building (\$44,564); and telecommunications and security (\$119,273).

While FAMU is committed to maintaining its financial commitment, notwithstanding the limited resources available, we look forward to partnering with the state to help us successfully fulfill and execute this MOU. To accomplish this, additional resources are needed to support our efforts in Brooksville, which will benefit the state from an economic empowerment perspective, as well as help us continue our mission to enhance the lives of constituents through innovative research, engaging cooperative extension, and public service.

The activities and services that will be provided to meet the intended purpose of these funds include natural resource research, education and training activities and programs for small farmers, new and beginning farmers and ranchers, veterans, Native American Indians, women and other minorities. Areas of service and activities include precision agriculture, hay production, grazing systems research, organic farming, livestock production and management, aquaculture, aquaponics, renewable energy, bioprocessing and product development research, and entrepreneurship development.

The requested funds are needed to enhance FAMU's capacity and ability to conduct essential research that will lead to new discoveries and the development of new economic crops and

livestock that will empower our stakeholders to farm more efficiently. It will be used to assist FAMU in the verification and validation of new production technologies such as precision agriculture, best management practices, and special demonstrations that will attract top national agriculturalists and researchers. Specifically, the Brooksville Agricultural and Environmental Research Station will be used to:

- Enhance agricultural and natural resource research capacity that will benefit state, local, national, and international communities;
- Create a system of support for small farmers, beginning farmers and ranchers, veterans, women, and minorities;
- Collaborate with the Florida Black Farmers and Agriculturalist Association
- Protect natural resources through conservation of the Bell Flower, the Sandhill Crane and the Osceola Turkey found uniquely at this Brooksville (BEARS) location.
- Create land-based economic opportunities that will enable the Brooksville/Hernando areas to be economically viable and self-sustaining;
- Develop training programs focused on promoting sustainable agriculture;
- Educate, train, and engage students, and provide clinical experiences to enhance the transferability of learning;
- Develop innovative solutions to the world's food production, food safety, and food security problems;
- Provide opportunities for FAMU faculty and other 1890 and 1862 land grant university faculty to participate in the Brooksville Station that will lead to enhanced research productivity and academic excellence.

The Brooksville Agricultural and Environmental Research Station is designed not only for the benefits of scientists, extension specialists, industry partners, farmers, and local communities but also for the scientific, educational, and recreational needs of students at all levels - from K-12 and college. In addition to the research laboratories, FAMU will set up a living laboratory – a *Terrestrial and Biological Station* for the protection, conservation and management of our natural and biological resources. It will function as an arboretum and repository for economically important plants, including medicinal plants and Florida's native plants. FAMU's students, as well as all other students from the Pasco-Hernando Community College and schools, will have access to this invaluable resource for their research, educational and recreational needs. The Brooksville Agricultural and Environmental Research Station as a center of learning will continue to provide a venue for summer camps, astronomy/star-gazing nights, survey of endangered plant species such as the Brooksville Bellflower for high-school and middle-school students in the area, and annual bird watching and survey of migratory birds by members of the Hernando Audubon Society. Additionally, the forested and woodland areas of the Brooksville Agricultural and Environmental Research Station can serve as a Long Term Ecological and /or Agricultural Site where studies can be conducted by visiting scientists from through the nation and the world (China, India, Europe, Africa, The Caribbean and Latin America).

FAMU is therefore requesting \$100,000 in recurring funds and \$1,246,072 in non-recurring funds for the following purposes:

- Hire appropriate personnel;
- Renovate existing buildings (barns, sheds and storage areas);
- Purchase farm and landscaping machinery and equipment; and
- Contingency

Additional investment from the state is critical for FAMU to: fulfill its obligations to the USDA, and assist in meeting agricultural and natural resources demands; provide support via education and training for new and beginning farmers and ranchers; and stimulate economic development.

Non-Recurring:

Building Renovations **(\$355,436)**

Infrastructure such as office space, conference rooms, barns sheds, and storage areas are critical to organizing and delivering agricultural and natural resources research and training programs. FAMU invested \$44,564 in renovations to the BAERS office space and \$355,436 is being requested to complete renovations (mechanical; electrical; plumbing, fire alarms; flooring, interior and exterior painting, asbestos survey; replacement of windows and locks; exterior pressure washing; and wood rot treatment) to the existing buildings, including barns, sheds and storage areas. These structures will be utilized as administrative space, classrooms, and as storage for hay, farm and research machinery and equipment and landscaping.

Non-Recurring:

Farm, Research, and Landscaping Machinery and Equipment **(\$790,636)**

Farm machinery and equipment, tools and supplies for maintenance of agricultural machinery, and equipment and landscaping maintenance equipment are needed for land preparation for crop production; hay production and harvesting; conducting agricultural and natural resources research; demonstration activities related to training beginning farmers and ranchers; and maintaining the landscape and aesthetics of the BAERS property. FAMU is requesting \$790,636 in start-up funding for eight (4) tractors for \$460,366 and \$276,270 for farm loaders, bale spears, wheel rakes, trailers, disc harrows water tanks and balers to be used in crop and hay production and harvesting. In addition, bush hogs and augurs to be used in landscape maintenance, mowing and fencing (\$39,000) are needed, as well as \$15,000 for tools and supplies to maintain the above-mentioned machinery.

Recurring:

Funding for appropriate personnel **(\$100,000)**

Appropriate personnel are needed to successfully manage the BAERS; conduct agricultural and natural resources research; and implement educational programs. Proposed personnel and salaries include the following:

- Farm Technician 1 at \$50,000/year
- Farm Technician 1 at \$50,000/year

II. Return on Investment

Enhanced agricultural and natural resources research and training capabilities contribute to the state's workforce and innovation goals by providing opportunities for specialized populations,

such as minority farmers, small farmers, veterans, Native Americans, women, and beginning farmers and ranchers, interested in farming and agricultural sciences. Additional returns include the following:

- Natural resources research capacity that will benefit state, local, national, and international communities;
- A system of support for new and beginning farmers and ranchers, veterans, minorities and women;
- Land-based economic opportunities that will enable the Brooksville/Hernando areas to be economically viable and self-sustaining;
- Farmer education and training, student engagement, and clinical experiences to enhance the transferability of learning;
- Innovative solutions to the world's food production, food safety, and food security problems;
- Smart and sustainable agriculture demonstrations where best management practices combine with next generation technologies to optimize yield and economic value in the face of environmental variability; and
- Public partnerships and linkages that will enhance the quality and reach of the University.

***Updated: 6/29/2017**