

FY 2026 Request for Pre-Proposals: Human Nutrition Research

The National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA), a contractor of the Beef Checkoff, is soliciting research proposals in Human Nutrition Research for FY 2026. Beef farmers and ranchers are interested in expanding nutrition research efforts to advance our understanding of beef’s nutritional qualities and its role in healthy, sustainable diets that nourish and optimize health at every life stage. Beef farmer- and rancher-supported research helps fill gaps to ensure the body of nutrition knowledge for beef continues to grow -- particularly as applied research funding opportunities become more limited -- and provides evidence-based information to help consumers make informed choices about what they eat and to enjoy beef as part of a healthy dietary pattern.

All submissions will be considered, with more attention given to research pre-proposals that consider one or more of the following topics:

ORIGINAL SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH TOPICS

- Evaluate beef’s role in optimal human health and well-being (physical, emotional, mental/cognitive, social) across the life stages (e.g., growth and development, longevity, vitality).
- Evaluate beef-rich healthy dietary patterns for reducing diet-related chronic disease risk and improving metabolic health through population-based or clinical research.

NCBA, as a contractor of the Beef Checkoff, is interested in improving the understanding of the whole food beef matrix, independently or as part of a healthy dietary pattern. The current working definition for the beef matrix is “the collective nutritive and non-nutritive components of the beef food structure and their unique chemical and physical interactions that may be important for human health and are distinguishable from those of the single components in isolation (Klurfeld 2024)”. See [Klurfeld 2024](#) for examples of beef matrix research questions of interest.

IMPORTANT DATES FOR ORIGINAL SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH:

- Pre-proposal Submission Date: **May 30, 2025**
- Funding Notifications: **Late Fall**
- Budget: Funded projects usually range from \$50,000 to \$300,000, but could be higher if appropriate, necessary, and well justified.
- Project timeline should be 24 months or less
- Project Start Date: As early as January 2026
- Project Completion Date: no later than May 31, 2028

EXPLORATORY RESEARCH ASSESSMENTS (E.G., SECONDARY DATA ANALYSIS, FOOD PATTERN MODELING/SIMULATION, SHORT-TERM PILOT PROJECTS)

- Beef's role in healthy, affordable, accessible, and nutrient-dense diets and association with biomarkers of health
- Nutritional life cycle assessment of beef in healthy dietary pattern(s)
- Role of beef in adherence to healthy eating and/or minimize plate waste
- Assess protein equivalency including nutrient efficiency and/or bioavailability of beef and other protein foods
- Emerging research topics

IMPORTANT DATES FOR EXPLORATORY RESEARCH ASSESSMENTS:

- Pre-Proposal Submission Date: **May 30, 2025**
- Funding Notifications: **Late Fall**
- Budget Limit: \$100,000, but could be higher if appropriate, necessary, and well justified.
- Project timeline should be 12 months or less
- Project Start Date: As early as January 2026

EVIDENCE REVIEWS (SYSTEMATIC REVIEWS AND/OR META-ANALYSES ENCOURAGED)

- Comparison of existing nutritional life cycle assessments of beef
- Types of dietary fats from beef and health outcomes
- Exploration of best practice methods to evaluate beef's nutrient matrix
- Emerging research topics

IMPORTANT DATES AND DETAILS FOR EVIDENCE REVIEWS:

- Pre-Proposal Submission Date: **May 30, 2025**
- Funding Notifications: **Late Fall**
- Budget: Depending on type of review, \$10,000 to \$50,000 with justification
- Project timeline should be 12 months or less
- Project Start Date: As early as January 2026

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS:

PRE-PROPOSALS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY **May 30th**, 2025 at 11:59pm MDT via the BeefGrants system.

National Cattlemen's Beef Association, a contractor to the Beef Checkoff, utilizes an online portal, BeefGrants, to manage the grants process and facilitate the submission and review of grant materials. All portal users will need to set up an account. Please visit https://ncba.BeefGrants.com/s_Login.jsp to register and apply for a grant.

(For more information on using BeefGrants, please visit <https://www.beefresearch.org/researchhub/beefgrants>)

PRE-PROPOSAL SUBMISSION PROCESS:

The Human Nutrition Research Program follows a two-part application process, including the submission of a pre-proposal. Pre-proposals are intended to be a brief overview of the proposed project. Preproposals must meet the submission deadline and follow the guidelines in the RFP to be considered. Preproposals should clearly state their relevance to the beef industry. Principal Investigators (PIs) may submit more than one pre-proposal. A CV is not required.

PRE-PROPOSAL CATEGORIES:

FY-26 Original Scientific Research:

- May include proposals for research trials. Funded projects usually range from \$50,000 to \$300,000, but could be higher if appropriate, necessary, and well justified.
- Can begin on or after January 1, 2026, with a project timeline of up to two years and must be completed by May 31, 2028.

FY-26 Exploratory Research Assessments:

- May include proposals for projects with timelines of up to one year, with funding limited to \$100,000/proposal, unless budget is well justified.
- Can begin on or after January 1, 2026, with a project timeline of up to one year and must be completed by May 31, 2027.

FY-26 Evidence Review:

- May include proposals for systematic or narrative literature reviews and/or meta-analyses with funding limited to \$50,000/proposal with justification.
- Can begin on or after January 1, 2026, with a project timeline of up to one year and must be completed by May 31, 2027.

The following fields will be required in BeefGrants (word counts may apply for some fields).

APPLICANT INFORMATION:

- Organization & Researcher Information
- Institution Grant Administration Contact Details

PRE-PROPOSAL OUTLINE:

- Scientific Project Title
- Lay Project Title
- Program Area of Proposed Work (please list if applicable)
- Project Timeline
- Specific Objectives
- Hypothesis
- Proposed Methodology and Design
- Expected outcomes: scientific knowledge & technical capability delivered as a result of the project
- Deliverables (for example, pilot data or manuscript development)
- Brief Budget Description (for example, personnel, supplies, materials, sample analysis, presentations, dissemination, travel and miscellaneous)
- References (if applicable)

REVIEW CRITERIA:

Pre-proposals will be reviewed by a panel of independent experts and will be evaluated for: scientific merit, clearly defined research question, sound methods, appropriateness of the budget, uniqueness and relevance to better understand the role of beef and beef's nutrients in a healthy diet to nourish and optimize Americans' health at every life stage.

Select applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal by June 20, 2025. Full proposals will be reviewed by recognized third-party content experts using a scoring criteria similar to that used by the NIH.

ADDITIONAL DETAILS:

Leveraged funding through collaborations with government agencies (e.g., USDA, NIH), foundations, industry or other sources that have matching funds is encouraged. In addition, multidisciplinary collaborations with other researchers are encouraged where appropriate.

PIs should review completed Human Nutrition projects to avoid submitting an idea that already has been covered. Completed project summaries are available at https://www.beefresearch.org/Media/BeefResearch/Docs/beef_checkoff_nutr_research_in_the_field_feb2025arms-022025-05-final.pdf

We understand that PIs do not know the nature of ongoing research projects. However, a list of ongoing projects cannot be made available due to contracting sensitivity. Please understand this limitation and use your best judgment to submit proposals that are both novel and relevant. If you have questions, please feel free to reach out.

PROJECT DELIVERABLES:

Project deliverables will include, at a minimum, a final technical report with a full listing of research results and implications, and an abbreviated executive summary highlighting key points from the full technical report. Final technical reports must follow a standard outline and be thorough and interpretive in nature. Deliverables will also include a final statement outlining all project expenditures from the institution's business office. *Funds cannot be spent beyond the project end date established in the project contract.* Deliverables will be due on or before the project end date established in the contract. Additional details on deliverables can be found at <https://www.beefresearch.org/research-hub/awardee-information>

DISCLAIMER:

We are aware that academic institutions have financial obligations for administering the research grants awarded to their faculty members. However, overhead costs, principal investigator salaries, tuition and equipment purchases will not be considered as part of the funds made available for this research.

Publication of all research is expected regardless of outcome, however financial support for manuscript publication is considered separate from research contracts. After the research project is completed and final report is submitted, please reach out to NCBA staff to receive more information on the new publishing guidance.

Questions related to this RFP should be directed to Clara Lau, PhD
(beefnutritionrfp@beef.org).

Please share this RFP with interested colleagues.

The 2021-2025 Beef Checkoff Human Nutrition Research Roadmap can be found at:
<https://www.beefresearch.org/research-hub>. For additional information on the checkoff-funded Human Nutrition Research program, visit <https://www.beefresearch.org/programs/human-nutrition>.