

SDC 335 – Response to Reviewer Comments

Writing team members were deeply appreciative of the many comments provided by reviewers of the project proposal. Each comment was considered carefully by the project review team, and follow-up consultation between the writing team chair and the reviewers occurred to make sure that suggestions offered by the reviewers were interpreted correctly by project writing team members. Input also was sought from leading organic farming researchers on how the proposal could be strengthened during the revision process.

A revised proposal was written that reflects suggestions made by reviewers and others familiar with the project being considered. The proposal was sent out to two additional scientists (Dr. Michelle Wander at the University of Illinois, and Dr. Charles Shapiro at the University of Nebraska), for their review. Their comments were incorporated into the final version that is being submitted.

The proposal has been revised extensively from previous versions, reflecting the comments offered by many leading organic farming and soil quality researchers. The final version reflects the desire for a project that invites participation by scientists representing various disciplines but with the common goal of determining soil health, food quality, and organic farming linkages. Recognition is given to on-going research that allows some of those linkages to be determined, or our understanding of them enhanced, by improving the coordination of activities in these research efforts. In addition, the project provides opportunities for participants to develop new inter-disciplinary research activities designed to discover previously unknown or poorly understood facets about organic farming, soil health, and food quality linkages.

This project is expected to stimulate new information about the impact of organic management systems on soil and food quality. No similar project exists with the same objectives. However, some goals of other projects (e.g., multi-state research coordinating committee and information exchange team NCERA059) complement those of our project, and information between projects will be exchange freely so that activities are not duplicative but rather complementary.