

October 24, 2019

Dear North Central Development Committee:

The purpose of this letter is to express my strong support for the approval of the proposed multistate project NC-16976 entitled **"Frontiers in On-Farm Experimentation"**, being submitted by David Bullock from the University of Illinois Urbana - Champaign, Laila Puntel from the University of Nebraska - Lincoln and other colleagues. My view is that on-farm precision experimentation (OFPE) is soon going to revolutionize agronomic research. I am convinced that OFPEs are needed to generate the amount of data required to bring digital agriculture from where it is today to something with the potential to radically change real-world farming. However, for OFPEs to be successful it is crucial to be organized and conducted by multidisciplinary research groups. A team of crop scientists, soil scientists, engineers, computer scientists, and economists are crucial for this effort to be successful. This required multidisciplinary approach is the main reason why creating NC-16976 is a must. To my knowledge there are no other research groups where researchers from multiple disciplines interested in this area can have robust discussions and have a platform to exchange ideas.

The multidisciplinary research team assembled by Bullock and Puntel is comprised of highly qualified researchers from across the nation, some of whom have already achieved success collaborating on OFPE research in a USDA-NIFA funded project. I foresee an enormous social payoff from providing this team, and other researchers that eventually will join the project, with an extraordinary opportunity to meet face-to-face on an annual basis to discuss the progress of their work while envisioning and building the necessary OFPE research and outreach infrastructure.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for further information.

Sincerely,


Héctor L. Santiago-Anadón, Ph.D.
Assistant Dean and Director