



NUTRITION RESEARCH FUNDING PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Updated September 2021

I. INTRODUCTION

DAIRY FARMERS OF CANADA (DFC) is a non-profit organization, funded by dairy farmers across Canada. Dairy farmers in Canada have acknowledged the need and realize the importance for dairy research. While the areas funded are of interest to the dairy industry, the Nutrition Research Funding Program ("**Program**") advances fundamental knowledge in many fields of research and increases Canada's overall competitiveness.

DFC has adopted a peer-review system and a funding application process similar to major granting agencies (NSERC and CIHR).

II. RESEARCH PRIORITIES

The objective of the Program is to gain a better understanding of the specific role of dairy products in attaining and maintaining optimal health as well as their contribution in a sustainable diet. DFC considers proposals that have nutrition and health implications for Canadian dairy products and are relevant to Canadian dairy farmers.

Of specific interest to DFC are proposals which feature dairy products in their entirety (particularly milk, cheese and yogurt, including regular fat versions), demonstrate technological innovation and utilize a multidisciplinary approach, whenever possible, to address fundamental and applied research questions. Applied human randomized controlled trials and mechanistic studies in humans are of particular interest.

Please note that projects that refer to or involve the potential for a health claim should ensure compliance with Health Canada's Guidance Document for scientific substantiation of health claims. For more details, please consult Health Canada's website at: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/label-etiquet/claims-reclam/assess-evalu/index-eng.php>

Please refer to the Appendix for our latest research priorities.

III. ELIGIBILITY

Investigators proposing to undertake studies relevant to human nutrition and health addressing at least one of the research priorities and who hold an academic appointment in a Canadian university or affiliated institution (a "**Research Institution**") are eligible to apply to the Program.

The principal investigator (the "**Principal Investigator**") is responsible for the complete direction of the approved study (the "**Study**") and other activities associated with its efficient execution. The role of the co-investigator(s) in the Study must be clearly defined. Students and trainees are normally not eligible to act as co-investigators. Postdoctoral fellows may act as a co-investigator but their salary will not be eligible for payment by the grant in such a case.

A researcher cannot hold two grants simultaneously under this Program for which he/she is the Principal Investigator. However, the same researcher can be co-investigator of no more than one additional grant (as defined hereinafter).

DFC encourages submissions primarily from Canadian scientists. Non-Canadian scientists could be considered as co-investigators or collaborators.

IV. FUNDING PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

For new proposals, the submission of a Letter of Intent (the "**Letter of Intent**") is the first step of the funding application process for consideration of a grant ("**Grant**") starting **January 1st of the following year**. Please consult the [web page program](#) for all information about the Program.

The Letter of Intent will undergo peer review by the Nutrition Expert Scientific Advisory Committee, an independent body of researchers, who will evaluate the Letters of Intent. Principal Investigators, whose Letter of Intent is considered to have scientific merit, significance for the dairy sector and is within current DFC research priorities, will be invited to submit a Grant Proposal ("**Grant Proposal**").

A detailed review of the Grant Proposal will be undertaken by the Nutrition Expert Scientific Advisory Committee, in addition to being peer-reviewed externally. A final decision concerning the funding of the Study will usually be available by fall of each year.

Approval of the Letter of Intent and/or the Grant Proposal does not ensure Study funding per se. Approval is considered final upon signing of the Memorandum of Agreement (section VI).

When a deadline date falls on a weekend or holiday, the deadline date will be extended to the next business day. In certain instances, projects of interest to DFC, that fall outside the established time lines, may be considered.

V. FUNDING APPLICATION PROCESS

a) Letter of Intent

The Letter of Intent must be submitted on the Letter of Intent Form at dairyresearch@dfc-plc.ca by **December 1st**. The Form of the Letter of Intent can be found on the [web page program](#) at dairyfarmersofcanada.ca.

Please note: The same investigator can submit more than one Letter of Intent. However, regardless of how many Letters of Intent are approved, only one Grant Proposal per Principal Investigator can be submitted for final review. Switching the names of Principal Investigator and co-investigators is not appropriate and may exclude the Letter of Intent or the entire Grant Proposal from further consideration.

Letters of Intent will be considered according to their scientific merit, significance for the dairy sector and their alignment with DFC research priorities.

The PDF Form provided for the Letter of Intent is self-explanatory and specifically designed to eliminate the need for additional supporting material to transmit relevant information (i.e. appendices or cover letter). **Additional pages will be removed from the Letter of Intent Form.** Please also comply with the space and format limitations as presented in the Letter of Intent PDF Form. Do not use photo-reduced type. The **font size is Arial 11 points**.

b) Grant Proposal

Upon approval of the Letter of Intent, DFC will provide a Grant Proposal Form to be completed and submitted at dairyresearch@dfc-plc.ca by **April 1st**. Grant Proposals will be considered according to their scientific merit, available research facilities, expected outcomes/deliverables for the dairy sector, alignment with DFC research priorities and available budget.

Major change(s) from the Letter of Intent will not be permitted unless had been indicated by the scientific advisory committee. This could lead to the Grant Proposal not being reviewed.

Guidelines for completing Grant Proposals:

- Please comply with the space and format limitations as presented in the Grant Proposal Form. Do not use photo-reduced type. The **font size is Arial 11 points**.
- **The body of the Grant Proposal Form is self-contained and must not include additional pages and/or attachments other than tables and figures. Up to three manuscripts can be appended to the Grant Proposal and must be relevant to the current proposed Study.**
- **CV for the Principal Investigator and Co-Investigators**
A complete Curriculum Vitae for the Principal Investigator and each Co-Investigator, in the Canadian Common CV (CCV) format (CIHR or NSERC) or on the DFC CV Form (available upon request), must be appended to the Grant Proposal.
- **Title of Study**
The title of the Study should reflect the specific objective of the proposal. The title may be modified upon mutual agreement between DFC and the Principal Investigator.
- **Study Details**
In the Grant Proposal Form, detailed information is required regarding background information; experimental approach; significance of the proposal and potential benefits and economic impact for the dairy sector; team expertise and training of highly qualified personnel; milestones; and knowledge translation and transfer activities. Please refer the Grant Proposal Form.

c) Budget Information

The funding under the Program is for a maximum of 2 years. DFC supports Studies in the range of \$50,000 - \$70,000 per year. For projects that require > \$70,000 per year, it is strongly recommended that other sources be identified.

Detailed information about the financial requirements for the Study is to be provided as outlined below.

- **Personnel**

There are four categories of individuals who may be paid from the Grant:

1. Research personnel whose skills are required to conduct the Study;
2. Technicians who are formally classified as such by their research institutions;
3. Research trainees who are full-time students in a registered MSc or PhD program. Trainees should be Canadian citizens or permanent residents of Canada. Under special circumstances, consideration will be given to registered foreign students; or
4. Post-doctoral fellows who hold a MD, DDS, DVM or PhD (unless they are co-investigators).

Budget justification for personnel is to be included. DFC reserves the right to request further information regarding fringe benefits. Salaries for Principal Investigator and co-investigators are not eligible under the Program.

- **Major Equipment**

DFC does not provide equipment grants. However, in special cases where equipment is shown to be essential to the Study, DFC may, at its entire discretion, contribute to the purchase of major equipment upon request in writing from the Research Institution and/or Principal Investigator to such effect. Major equipment is considered a single item for which the price exceeds \$10,000.

- **Supplies**

Expenditures include expendable materials, such as experimental animals and feed, chemicals, glassware and supplies for existing equipment and routine maintenance of existing equipment. Expenditures in excess of \$500 per article are to be itemized.

- **Publication and Publication Costs**

Publication of research results in a reputable, peer-reviewed scientific journal is encouraged. Primary consideration should be given to reputable Canadian or international journals with extensive readership in Canada. Publication costs **should not** be included in the budget.

Note: The invoice from the journal for costs related to the publication of a manuscript, should be sent to DFC, to the attention of the Program Coordinator, no more than 18 months after the end of the Study (DFC does not usually pay for open-access). Subject always to the provisions of the Memorandum of Agreement (as defined in section VI), a copy of manuscripts and/or abstracts which includes DFC funded Study should be sent to the Program Coordinator, prior to submitting for publication or presentation.

- **Travel**

Travel to scientific meetings within Canada or pertinent meetings outside Canada to present research data obtained from the funded Study is encouraged. Travel costs may be either \$2,000 per annum or 10% of amount of the Grant, whichever is less.

The use of the Grant in excess of the above-noted amount for travel cannot be made without the prior written approval from DFC.

- **Other Expenses**

Computer costs related to data analyses, reimbursement to Study subjects and other routine expenses incurred, as part of the funded Study are eligible. Expenditures in excess of \$500 per item are to be itemized.

- **Overhead Charges or Indirect Costs**

There will be no overhead charges paid on DFC funded Study from DFC to the Research Institution, the Principal Investigator and/or the Co-investigator(s), as the case may be.

- **Unauthorized Expenses**

Consultant fees are not eligible unless prior written approval is given by DFC.

d) **Matching Funding/Other Sources of Funding**

DFC encourages the Principal Investigator to get matching funds from federal funding agencies and/or from other sources. The funds that will be requested must be described in the Budget Section of the PDF Forms as well as the objectives/parts of the Study that will be funded by other sources. **Principal Investigators must have verified with the funding agencies if the Study complies with the research priorities and guidelines of the agency.**

VI. MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

The Grant is to be used entirely for specific activities supervised by the Principal Investigator. Prior to initiation of the Study, a Memorandum of Agreement (available to view upon request) is entered into by and between the Principal Investigator, the Research Institution and DFC.

The Memorandum of Agreement defines the rights and obligations of the Principal Investigator, Research Institution and DFC, including without limitation:

Principal Investigator and Research Institution's responsibilities in the conduct of the Study;
Financial responsibilities of the parties with respect to the Study;
Publication of the Study;
Commercial use of the Study results; and
Confidentiality.

In accordance with the provisions of the Memorandum of Agreement, Principal Investigator and Research Institution may acquire intellectual property rights from the Study results, which rights are subject to a right of first offer and a right of first refusal in favour of DFC. In addition to its rights under the applicable Memorandum of Agreement, DFC has an expressed interest in any collaboration with the Research Institution for licensing of the technology and/or invention by the Research Institution office of technology transfer. DFC may be able to help the research institution(s) in such efforts by bringing Canadian dairy industrial partners to the table.

VII. FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

a) **Payment of the Grant**

Disbursement of the Grant will be made according to the payment and report schedule included in the Memorandum of Agreement (section VI). The first installment of the Grant will be contingent upon receipt of a fully signed Memorandum of Agreement between the Principal Investigator, Research Institution and DFC.

b) **Transfer of Funds between Budget Categories**

Expenditures which exceed budgeted items are permitted provided the total annual budget does not change. Budget transfers in excess of 10% of budget category require the prior written approval from DFC.

VIII. REPORTS

All reports are to be submitted on a standard form provided by DFC and shall be to the satisfaction of DFC.

a) **Progress Report**

The Progress Report is required from the Principal Investigator on or before October 1st (or at the end of ninth months from the Study initiation) of the first year of the Study.

b) **Final Report**

Research Institution and the Principal Investigator will provide DFC with a Final Report to be submitted within ninety (90) days following the term of the Grant. It is possible to get an extension, subject to the approval of DFC. The Principal Investigator undertakes to inform DFC of any delay which may occur in the delivery of the Final Report.

IX. PUBLICATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

a) **Publications**

Subject to the provisions of the Memorandum of Agreement (section VI), a copy of all manuscripts and/or abstracts related to the funded Study shall be provided to DFC before

submitting for publication or presentation.

The choice of the journal for publishing results rests with the Principal Investigator. Primary consideration should be given to reputable Canadian or international journals with extensive readership in Canada.

Publications resulting from DFC's support should be acknowledged using the following statement :

This study is supported by Dairy Farmers of Canada. As per the research agreement, DFC had no role in the design and conduct of the study, data collection, and analysis or interpretation of the results as well as the decision to publish the findings.

Once published, a PDF copy of the final article shall be forwarded to DFC.

b) Other Communications of Research Results

The Principal Investigator should advise DFC of forthcoming public communications of research results at conferences, symposia, media events, or the like. The Principal Investigator should acknowledge the contribution of DFC to the Study. If required by DFC, the DFC logo has to be incorporated in such presentations for easier identification. To do so, a request must be addressed to the Program Coordinator.

X. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Failure to complete and submit the Letter of Intent or the Grant Proposal in the manner outlined in these guidelines may delay or preclude review by the Nutrition Expert Scientific Advisory Committee for funding by DFC. Deviations from the above guidelines will be allowed only if approved by DFC.

All inquiries for additional information pertaining to any of the above points should be directed to Annik L'Espérance, Program Coordinator, annik.lesperance@dfc-plc.ca.

APPENDIX RESEARCH PRIORITIES

DFC considers those applications that have nutrition and health implications for Canadian dairy products and are relevant to Canadian dairy farmers. Of specific interest to DFC are research proposals which feature milk products in their entirety (particularly milk, cheese and yogurt, including regular fat versions), demonstrate technological innovation and utilize a multidisciplinary approach, whenever possible, to address fundamental and applied research questions. Applied human randomized, controlled trials and mechanistic studies in humans are of particular interest. Our current research priorities and areas of interest are as follows:

Targeted outcome: The contribution of dairy products as whole and unique foods in optimal health and wellness across the human lifespan is strengthened

Key research objectives:

- Improve the understanding of the impact of dairy products on optimal growth and development in children and adolescents.
- Reinforce the benefits of dairy products in musculoskeletal health.
- Identify the effects of dairy products on healthy aging (particularly on preserving mobility, cognition and nutrient adequacy) in older age.
- Further define the role of dairy products in supporting healthy weight and body composition (including supporting satiety).
- Investigate the role of dairy products and milk components, amongst others A2 beta-casein, in a healthy gut, including intestinal integrity and digestibility, and on the microbiome.

Targeted outcome: The role of dairy products as whole and unique foods (particularly full fat milk, yogurt and cheese) in chronic disease prevention and management is reinforced

Key research objectives:

- Identify the specific impact of including dairy products in healthy plant-based dietary patterns on various health outcomes.
- Further support the role of dairy products in cardiometabolic disease (CVD, hypertension, Type 2 diabetes) prevention and management.
- Contribute to build convincing evidence for the role of dairy products in colorectal cancer prevention.
- Expand the understanding of the role of dairy products in breast cancer prevention.

Targeted outcome: The value of dairy products as whole and unique foods within healthy sustainable diets in a Canadian context is recognized

Key research objectives:

- Identify the differential health effects and nutritional attributes of dairy products in relation to plant-based alternatives.
- Determine the value of dairy products within healthy sustainable diets in supporting nutrient adequacy, considering nutrient bioavailability and protein quality.
- Assess the effects of dairy products within healthy sustainable diets in a Canadian context taking into consideration the four key dimensions of healthy sustainable diets (human health and wellbeing, environmental impact, affordability, and cultural acceptability).