

# SEEDS: 10 Years Advancing Research and Partnerships for the Future

## SEEDS AND ITS ROOTS

SEEDS: The Research Enhancement Competitive Grants Program has reached 10 years of advancing research efforts to a new level. Established in 1996 and supported by an appropriation from the Ohio General Assembly to OARDC, SEEDS is an internal, competitive grants program unique among state-assisted universities in the country.

The first competition, held as a pilot program in the spring of 1996, had a total of \$250,000 available in funding. The initial objectives were to encourage partnerships with industry and other stakeholders and increase the competitiveness of scientists in extramural grant programs. At that time, the then OARDC Director, Dr. Tom Payne, appointed a Research Committee to oversee the competition and to make program and funding recommendations. The Research Committee was, and still is, comprised of one faculty member from each academic department and one interdisciplinary representative from the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences. In addition, two appointees from industry and one appointee from the Ohio Department of Agriculture complete the committee.

Since the first competition, SEEDS has grown to include seven objectives and six categories of competition: Industry Small Grants, Interdisciplinary Team, Matching, New Enterprise, Seed, and an Agency Match used to leverage extramural public funding. The program also offers a graduate and an undergraduate student competition. Nearly 800 applications for funding have been received since the program's inception; of those, 286 have been funded, and 180 projects have been completed. Moreover, available funding has increased to \$2 million a year.

For every OARDC dollar invested in the SEEDS program, \$5.52 has been returned as a result of matches and extramural funding.

## OBJECTIVES

- Increase the competitiveness of scientists in extramural grant programs.
- Encourage partnerships with industry and other stakeholders.
- Encourage the development of interdisciplinary teams.
- Encourage international collaborations.
- Support the exploration of enterprises that are potentially new to Ohio.
- Provide undergraduate students with research experience.
- Provide graduate students with the opportunity to take part in the grant-writing/review process.

## CHALLENGES

SEEDS dollars are used as “seed” money to establish ongoing research endeavors. The program continues to identify the most creative ideas, providing funds needed to initiate novel research programs that are attractive to industry and extramural sponsors and are consistent with the mission of OARDC.

## ACHIEVEMENTS

- SEEDS has invested \$329,548 in matching funds, which has generated \$2,169,174 in extramural funding.
- SEEDS has provided \$1,427,964 to researchers, while industry has matched these dollars with \$2,973,516.
- SEEDS has supported interdisciplinary teams in the amount of \$2,252,290. These teams have reported receiving \$7,721,019 in extramural funding.
- SEEDS scientists have collaborated with colleagues from Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, France, Norway, the Philippines, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.
- SEEDS has provided research experience to 21 undergraduate students.
- SEEDS has provided grant writing/reviewing experience to more than 173 graduate students in preparation for their professional careers.
- A series of one-page publications highlighting SEEDS-funded projects and other ongoing OARDC Research Programs has been developed and is distributed monthly to more than 1,000 stakeholders.

## THE FUTURE

By providing seed money to develop the necessary preliminary data for a strong grant application, or by matching funds to leverage external funding, SEEDS has proved to be a valuable program for scientists in the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences. The past 10 years are only the beginning—the SEEDS program is looking forward to continued success and new partnerships with industry and other collaborators in Ohio and beyond.



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