



California Pistachio Research Board

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 1, 2025
TO: All interested parties
FROM: Stephen Vasquez, Executive Director
SUBJECT: 2026 Request for proposals: Pistachio Production

The California Pistachio Research Board mission is to fund and support production research that's focused on solving pistachio industry production issues that improve quality and yield, enhance sustainability and information dissemination that improves grower knowledge.

The California Pistachio Research Board (CPRB) is requesting proposals for the 2026 season that begins March 2026. CPRB has an annual research budget of approximately \$1.5-2.0 million. Past research projects have averaged between \$50-75K, annually. CPRB funds multi-year projects but proposals get evaluated by the Board each funding cycle. Please note that CPRB does not cover overhead/indirect costs.

Research Categories

Proposals should focus on commercial production, with the following areas of particular interest to the pistachio industry:

- **Genetics:** New cultivars (males and females) and rootstocks that improve yield, nut quality (e.g. size, taste), have synchronous bloom, pests and disease resistance, climate resilience (e.g. reduced chill requirements), improved genetic mapping of current varieties and those from the USDA repository. Also important is the preservation of repository pistachio specimens through new plantings throughout the state with grower-cooperators and at the USDA repository
- **Entomology:** Biology, ecology and management of insect pests (e.g. navel orangeworm, Gill's mealybug, leaf-footed bug and invasive pests like *Carpophilus* beetle), insecticide resistance, biopesticide(s) efficacy, spray technology, orchard sanitation, and new variety evaluation for pest tolerance/resistance
- **Plant Pathology:** Biology, ecology and management of diseases (*Alternaria* spp., *Aspergillus* spp., *Phytophthora* spp., etc.), fungicide resistance, biopesticide efficacy, spray technology, and new variety evaluation for disease tolerance/resistance. A comprehensive review of mycotoxin research that impacts pistachio quality



Research Categories *continued*

- **Plant Physiology:** Improved understanding of carbohydrate dynamics (see Special Research Focus below), climate stresses (e.g. heat, water and soil quality), flowering and pollination mechanisms (e.g. timing, pollen health), root systems, alternate bearing (e.g. bud health, abscission), and blanking (e.g. embryo abortion, parthenocarpy)
- **General Production:** Irrigation, plant nutrition, tree training, weed management, nematode management or other production categories relevant to pistachio production
- **Other considerations:** Organic and/or regenerative production, harvest optimization and advanced technologies (e.g. AI, IoT, robotics and/or mechanization), orchard establishment
- **Special Research Focus: Carbohydrate dynamics and seasonal survey**
In 2026, the CPRB seeks to deepen its understanding of seasonal trends in non-structural carbohydrates, spanning from dormancy through post-harvest leaf drop. Research proposals should incorporate variables such as orchard location, age, variety, and rootstock, as well as seasonal inputs like fertilizer and irrigation. Proposals must also include traditional laboratory analyses (e.g. water, soil, tissue) and account for seasonal stressors—such as water availability, pest pressure, yield and quality fluctuations, climate conditions, and other factors that may influence carbohydrate status and its impact on nut quality and yield

Projects should be conducted across multiple sites, with an emphasis on high-performing orchards (i.e. yielding above the industry average). The project must be led by a Principal Investigator (PI) and/or Co-PIs with complementary expertise, ensuring the development of actionable data that supports grower decision-making to enhance both yield and quality

Beginning in year three of the carbohydrate survey, the project should deliver results that enable growers to interpret orchard-specific data—such as lab analyses, yield metrics, and carbohydrate profiles—and make informed decisions aimed at optimizing carbohydrate reserves for the following season

Researchers submitting proposals are encouraged to use the proposal format below. Include a **completed** CPRB cover page form with your proposal. The CPRB cover page gives the Board a summary of the proposal, the total funds requested, and the financial contact information that CPRB needs for correspondence with your financial department should your proposal get funded



Proposal Format

Proposals should not exceed **six** pages at ≥ 11 font and should include the following sections:

1. Project Title
2. Principal Investigator(s) and Cooperator(s)
3. Key words
4. Objectives of proposed research
5. Justification of proposed research
6. Procedures to accomplish objectives
7. Projected results or results (if year 2+)
8. Potential economic value to the pistachio industry (i.e. ROI)
9. Education and Outreach plans
10. References (i.e. previous research)
11. Budget (include: salary, benefits, equipment, supplies, travel, other)

Submitting Proposals to Multiple Funding Agencies

Researchers are encouraged to obtain and carefully review the current Requests for Proposals (RFPs) from each funding agency prior to submission. When project objectives have the potential to benefit multiple industries, submitting proposals for co-funding is recommended. In such cases, researchers must clearly disclose the specific costs requested from each agency to ensure transparency. Additionally, proposals should include a contingency plan outlining how the project will proceed if full funding is not secured or if agencies do not align on project objectives.

RFP TIMELINE

2025

- Oct. 1, 2025 CPRB Request for Proposal released
- Dec. 1, 2025 Executive Summary due for CPRB 2025 funded projects
- Dec. 15, 2025 2026 Proposals Due to CPRB (**late proposals will not be accepted**)
- Dec. 31, 2025 Final and Full Reports due for all 2023-2024 projects and 2025 projects



RFP TIMELINE *continued*

2026

- Jan. 21, 2026 PPT slide deck to be emailed to Cindy Dean | admin@acpistachios.org
- Feb. 4-5, 2026 Researcher proposal defense in Kingsburg CA (PPT presentation)
- Feb. 9, 2026 CPRB BOD decides funding of 2026 proposals (**CPRB members only**)
- Feb 16-20, 2026 Researchers contacted regarding their proposal and funding

RESEARCH FUNDING

- Mar. 2026 CPRB Research Project payment #1 – 50% mailed out
- Aug. 2026 CPRB Research Project payment #2 – 25% mailed out
- Dec. 2026 *CPRB Research Project final payment - 25% mailed out

The final payment gets released when the final, full research report is received by CPRB.

***Note: Final payment will be paid when the final report has been submitted. The CPRB will not accept proposals from researchers who have any late progress and/or final reports.**

Proposal Review

Proposals will be reviewed by the CPRB Board members as well as by the University of California Pistachio Liaison Committee prior to February 4-5, 2025. Researchers will present an overview of their project, recent and/or previous research results that are 2+ years or older. Additional instructions will be emailed to researchers as the meeting nears.

Research projects selected for funding will be based on a combination of scientific merit and relevance to industry priorities. **Researchers are encouraged to work in teams that include a variety of disciplines (e.g. plant physiology and entomology) to solve grower production problems when appropriate.**

Submit proposals to California Pistachio Research Board, Cindy Dean, Office Manager, admin@acpistachios.org and Stephen Vasquez, Executive Director, stephenv@acpistachios.org

Thank you for your interest in working with the California Pistachio Research Board. Please address any questions to Stephen Vasquez | stephenv@acpistachios.org | 559 255 6480 |