

Improving Pig Livability Project: Research Funding Proposal RFP

Proposal Submission DEADLINE: Friday, March 13, 2026 – 5:00 p.m. CST

Launched in 2018, the Improving Pig Survivability Project encompasses research, education and Extension efforts to identify factors contributing to swine mortality in commercial production and to develop strategies and information that can be used to reduce mortality and maximize pig survivability. The Project is supported by a consortium of subject matter experts from a variety of research fields and is guided by an advisory board consisting of representation across a wide spectrum of the US swine industry, including Iowa State University, Kansas State University and Purdue University. The Project is funded by the National Pork Board and has received previous funding from the Foundation for Food & Agriculture Research. Iowa State University manages the project and administers the RFP and grant awards.

An estimated 30 to 35% of commercial pigs die before reaching the market, creating significant economic losses for farmers and presenting a major challenge to animal wellbeing and sustainability. Historically, reducing mortality has been difficult to achieve due to insufficient knowledge of the underlying causes of death and lack of proven and effective adoption and implementation strategies to prevent these deaths. The Project seeks a full understanding of the biological mechanisms that limit pig and sow survivability, how they interact and how they can be effectively improved. It also includes the development and dissemination of strategies and information that can be used to maximize pig survivability. The Project's goal is to reduce overall mortality nationally by 1% or more per year over the five-year study. Increasing the wean-to-finish survival of animals by 1% would represent an estimated gain in productivity of approximately 1.2 million pigs a year for the nation's swine industry.

The Project advisory board is inviting proposal submissions from qualified researchers for funding consideration to improve sow, pre-wean and wean-to-finish mortality. A total of \$250,000 is available for this funding opportunity. To support multiple projects, individual project budgets ranging from \$25,000 to \$50,000 will be considered. Projects up to one year in length are eligible for funding.

Research Priorities: The Pig Livability Project advisory board has identified the following subject areas as high-priority topics to address producer needs in improving pig livability. While these have been identified as high-priority research areas, they are not the only swine research topics eligible for funding. Researchers must clearly explain how pork producers will benefit from the proposed research in relation to improving livability.

1. Sow

- a. Impact of pre-farrow antibiotic administration on sow mortality and retention
- b. Hemoglobin and bio-marker pre-farrow: Relation to delivery information
- c. FarUV lighting to reduce PRRSV pressure
- d. Impact of transition diets on reducing sow mortality

2. Pre-wean

- a. Pre-farrow sow management and nutrition focused on decreasing stillborns and increasing vigor/livability post-farrowing
- b. Optimizing piglet management protocols to improve the first 72-hour piglet livability
- c. Sow management and nutrition strategies applied pre-farrow that enhance transition to nursery and post-wean livability
- d. On-farm demonstration of practical and feasible best management practices on the effectiveness of reducing mortality
- e. Transition sow management and nutrition strategies to enhance pre-wean livability

3. Wean-to-finish

- a. Transport losses: Impact of better trailer sanitation and biosecurity practices on pathogen transmission (PEDV), transport-related morbidity and mortality, and the return on investment (ROI) of this enhanced sanitation protocols in commercial systems

- b. Late-Finish Mortality: Identification and characterization of whole-herd (biological, environmental, health, nutritional, and management) drivers of late-finish mortality (after 120 days on feed), including development of early warning indicators and targeted intervention strategies.
- c. Barn sanitation: Effectiveness of barn cleaning and disinfection strategies on reducing pathogen load, improving pig health and performance, and enhancing livability under commercial production conditions.

Budget Considerations

1. The Improving Pig Livability Project has a total of \$250,000 to allocate to this RFP for research projects. To support multiple projects, individual project budgets ranging from \$25,000 to \$50,000 will be considered.
2. Matching funds are not required for this opportunity; however, collaboration with industry partners and/or leveraging additional funds is highly encouraged and will be considered in the scoring of proposals.
3. Anticipated project dates are May 15, 2026 – March 30, 2027.
4. Funding of proposals is dependent on ISU receiving external grant funds. All approved proposals will be set up as sub-award contracts to Iowa State University.
5. Indirect costs (IDC) may be included. IDC cannot exceed 15% of the total direct costs. Total funding request (including IDC) must fall between \$25,000 and \$50,000. Note: Sponsor can reduce the IDC rate of the project/subaward to any rate below 15% provided that the IDC rate charged to matching funds is never lower than the IDC charged to sponsor funds.

Anticipated Proposal Timeline (subject to change)

1. January 26, 2026 – Improving Pig Livability Project RFP available
2. March 13, 2026 – Full proposals completed and submitted
3. April 17, 2026 – Applicant notification
4. May 15, 2026 – Institutional agreements in place
5. November 15, 2026 – Progress reports due
6. March 30, 2027 – Projects completed
7. April 30, 2027 – Final reports due to ISU

Proposals will be scored based on the following:

1. Major pig livability focus area is being addressed
 - Proposals in the range of \$25,000-\$50,000 will be considered
2. Study design is appropriate to answer the objectives
3. Timeline for completion fits within project goals
4. Cost of project is reasonable based on potential benefit
5. Research results would be easy to adopt by the swine industry
6. The improvement in pig livability can be documented
7. Return on investment to implementation can be documented
8. Additional collaboration or funding from other entities to support project
9. Ability to demonstrate return on investment and/or a project success statement

Please read the following descriptions and instructions completely. All proposals must be submitted to Stacie Matchan, sgould@iastate.edu by Friday, March 13, 2026, 5:00 pm CST. A confirmation email of receipt will be sent.

Questions can be sent to Stacie Matchan, Improving Pig Livability Project Coordinator, sgould@iastate.edu.

Improving Pig Livability Project 2026 Research Proposal

Proposal Cover Page

Project Title:			
Requested Funding Amount:		Project Duration:	

Principal Investigator and Title:			
Institution:			
Address:			
City, ST ZIP			
Phone:		FAX:	
Email:			

Co-Investigator(s)	Institution, City, State	Email address
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Grantee Press Contact Name:					
Title		Phone		Email	

Contracts/Grants Administrator name: <i>(person to receive contracts, if funded)</i>					
Title		Organization			
Street Address					
City		State		Zip	
Phone		Fax		E-Mail	

☐ I (Principal Investigator) certify that the Grants and Contracts Administrator has reviewed this proposal prior to its submission to Iowa State University for possible funding.

Format & Required Sections

All proposals submitted should include the sections described below. Each section should be clearly marked with subheads.

1. Proposal Summary (1-page max)
2. Budget (2-page max)
3. Project Description (3-page max)
 - a. Project Objectives
 - b. Method to Achieve Objectives
 - c. Proposed Timeline
 - d. Value of Proposed Project
 - e. Dissemination Plan
4. Certification
5. Abridged Curriculum Vitae (1-page max, each investigator)
6. Letters of Cooperation (1-page max for each; no limits on number of letters)

Please note:

- Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF format is preferred. Single spaced, 12-point font.
- Please include all materials in one document. This includes all sections, letters of cooperation, and curriculum vitae.
- File name format: PI Last Name_{Insert brief project title}
- Length requirements are specified for each section.

Proposal Summary *Length: one page max, single-spaced.*

The Improving Pig Livability Project advisory board members (including pork producers and industry stakeholders) will review the summary to judge the proposal and assign industry priority.

The summary should answer the following questions.

1. Describe the objectives of the proposed Improving Pig Livability Project.
 - a. What deliverables will this project provide to the industry?
 - b. List or describe the intended outcomes of the project.
 - c. What metrics will be used to define success? Explain any measurables (key performance indicators, milestones, completed plans, enrollments, etc.)
2. Describe how the proposed project aligns with at least one of the Improving Pig Livability Project priorities.
3. Describe any multi-state, multi-institutional, and/or multi-partner components associated with this proposal.
4. Describe why the Improving Pig Livability Project should fund this proposal.
 - a. For example, how does this proposal benefit the industry? How does it improve the competitive advantage of the U.S. pork industry? What other descriptions or reasons are there for pork producers to highly prioritize this project?

Budget *Length: two pages maximum*

Budget Format

- Please create a project budget using the template provided below. Single space required.
- Budget must be indicated in a 3-column format that itemizes costs for the Improving Pig Livability Project grant vs external support plus the sum of both.
- Other funding requested or anticipated in support of this project must be indicated in an additional budget column.

Budget Justification

- Please provide justification of all requested budget items.
- Graduate student support, student and other hourly labor, and post-doctoral support is allowed.
- Partial support for a principal investigator (PI) on less than a 12-month salaried appointment will be allowed if a detailed budget narrative addressing the amount of requested support in relation to the PI project time commitment

- justifies the expense.
- Equipment, except for disposable equipment such as test tubes, etc., is not allowed.
- Indirect costs (IDC) may be included. IDC cannot exceed 15% of the total direct costs. Total funding request (including IDC) must fall between \$25,000 and \$50,000. Note: Sponsor can reduce the IDC rate of the project/subaward to any rate below 15% provided that the IDC rate charged to matching funds is never lower than the IDC charged to sponsor funds. If grantee is classified as a State Cooperative Institution, it is not allowed to receive IDC reimbursement or tuition remission.

Project Description *Length: items 1-5 below must fit within three pages total*

1. Project Objectives

Clearly explain the objectives to be addressed by the proposed project. List multiple objectives separately.

2. Methods to Achieve Objectives

Include the details of the proposed effort.

3. Proposed Timeline

Include a schedule for the proposed project.

4. Value of Proposed

Describe the value of the proposed project to the swine industry and its relevance.

5. Dissemination Plan

Include a brief description of the plan to disseminate project outcomes and successful results to appropriate audiences and/or suggested methods for replication in additional states or regions.

Certification *Length: three pages maximum.*

Due to turn around time, this RFP requires institution approval of proposals before submission. Please indicate this step has been completed by supplying the names, titles, e-mail addresses, and phone numbers of the personnel from the grants/finance office and the department who have approved your proposal for submission on the cover page. A signature of authority (1-page max) and statement of work (2-page max) is required. ***Proposals may be rejected if this information is not included.***

Abridged Curriculum Vitae *Length: One page maximum for each individual.*

Include curriculum vitae for the primary investigator and each co-investigator.

Letters of Cooperation (optional) *Length: One page maximum for each letter.*

Include letters of cooperation from industry, state pork associations or others that will provide support for the project.

Budget (add lines as required):

Category	Description (if needed)	This RFP	Other Support	Total
1) Personnel (include name where appropriate)				
2) Contracted Services (diagnostic fees, computer access, etc.)				
3) Assay and Testing Fees ("per sample" costs not included under Supplies)				
4) Travel				
5) Equipment (non-disposable items, not to exceed \$5,000)				
6) Supplies (disposable items and reagents)				
7) Animal Cost (list only net cost if animals will be salvaged)				
8) Animal Care (per diem care, housing, and feed)				
9) Shipping, Handling, Mailing Expenses				
10) Other expenses (list)				
11) Indirect Cost Recovery will not be covered by these funds.				
12) TOTAL				
Explanation (if requested):				