The Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems (CIAS) invites graduate student applications for our summer mini-grant program, which is made possible through a generous donation from the Single Step Foundation. These awards will provide up to $2,000 for graduate student research aligned with the CIAS mini-grant priority areas: perennial agriculture; climate change, agriculture and food systems; and local and regional food systems. See the next page for detailed descriptions of these priority areas. Undergraduate research is not eligible for funding through this program. Grant-funded work must be completed by August 30, 2015. Our 2014 awards are described at www.cias.wisc.edu/cias-mini-grants-support-graduate-student-research-in-sustainable-agriculture/

Funds may be used for student salary (up to a maximum of $500), travel required to conduct research, farmer honoraria and supplies. Funds cannot be used for travel to conferences and meetings. The applicant’s faculty advisor must currently be, or must be willing to become, a faculty associate of CIAS (www.cias.wisc.edu/category/faculty-associates/). Contact Mike Bell, CIAS Director, at michaelbell@wisc.edu for information about becoming a CIAS faculty associate.

Applications must include:

1) A one- to two-page project narrative including a project justification, work plan, and description of project alignment with the CIAS mini-grant priority areas
2) A detailed budget narrative explaining how the funds will be used. If salary is included, it may not exceed $500. If you are already on the UW payroll, please detail your appointment type and percent effort, department, and departmental administrative contact.
3) Your resume or CV
4) Your faculty advisor must send an email confirming project approval directly to Michelle Miller at upload.minigra.kw2omq2ha@u.box.com with the subject line “[applicant last name] support letter.” Alternatively, your advisor may submit a letter of support for your project directly to Michelle (mmmile6@wisc.edu). This should not be submitted with your application.

If your application is selected for funding, CIAS will disburse the funds in two payments. Up to 75 percent of the award will be available May 15, 2015 (any awarded salary will be paid through payroll). The final 25 percent of the award will be released upon successful completion of all post-award requirements. See the next page for details, and understand that submission of a grant proposal indicates that you agree to complete these post-award requirements.

All applicants who submit materials by March 30, 2015 are assured consideration. Please submit materials as a single PDF file (except for the email from your faculty advisor, which should be sent separately) to upload.minigra.kw2omq2ha@u.box.com with “[applicant last name] application” in the subject line. Electronic copies only, please.
Post-award requirements

All students receiving mini-grants will need to fulfill the following requirements:

- Attend a mandatory afternoon training on environmental leadership at the Aldo Leopold Foundation, date to be determined (likely sometime in May)
- Provide a high-resolution (300dpi) photo of yourself, preferably doing field work
- Submit a 1-2 page summary of your research at the end of the summer
- Give a 15 minute presentation to CIAS staff and faculty during the 2015 fall semester
- Write a thank-you letter to the Single Step Foundation. CIAS will provide guidelines for writing your thank-you letter.

CIAS mini-grant priority areas and goals

**Perennial agriculture:** This priority area encompasses grazing, cover crops, perennial fruit, nut and specialty crop production, perennials for conservation, and integration of perennial, annual and livestock farming systems. Goals in this area include:

- Research, demonstrate and communicate integrated livestock, annual and perennial cropping systems that contribute to resilient ecosystems, agriculture and communities.
- Apply a collaborative research framework to better understand the multiple economic, environmental and quality of life benefits—and challenges—of perennial crops in sustainable agricultural systems.

**Climate change, agriculture and food systems:** This priority area encompasses both sustainable agriculture as an adaptation mechanism for extreme weather events resulting from climate change, and a means to mitigate the effects of climate change. Goals in this area include:

- Engage diverse stakeholders in participatory research and outreach to increase understanding of climate change impacts on agriculture and food systems.
- Research strategies in agriculture and food systems that provide both climate change adaptation and mitigation through reduced fossil fuel dependence, resource conservation and other strategies.

**Local and regional food systems:** This priority area includes activities from farm to table at local and regional scales. CIAS works on both farm-to-consumer direct marketing strategies and efforts to “scale up” production, distribution and marketing of local food to schools, institutions, restaurants and other retail locations. Goals in this area include:

- Research labor issues on family farms, including farms that produce specialty crops for local and regional markets.
- Research domestic fair trade strategies and practices that support economic fairness in local and regional food systems, family farms and sustainable agriculture.
- Build on farm to school work by linking farms with institutions such as Wisconsin hospitals and workplaces, UW campuses and other venues.

Special priority will be given to projects that utilize the Wisconsin Integrated Cropping Systems Trials (WICST) research plots and data: www.wicst.wisc.edu.