

R023-A: Application of Agricultural Byproducts for Energy Systems
Submitted by Woodshed Renewables
Principal Investigator: David Fiebelkorn
Request for \$237,093; Total Project Costs \$638,232

Technical Advisor Comments

- Two reviewers recommended fund, one recommended funding may be considered.
- The 63% match comes from the applicant (\$172,400 – cash, \$228,739 – in-kind).
- All 3 reviewers felt the objectives were clear and likely achievable.
 - 1 reviewer stated that while the customer segment has been identified, the applicant should take it a step further and identify why the potential customers would want to purchase pellets derived from ag biomass.
 - Applicant has stated that a preliminary economic analysis will be conducted immediately after receiving the notice to proceed to gauge the commercial viability of the proposed enterprise.
- All 3 reviewers felt that the methodology was adequate.
- All 3 reviewers felt that the project team members were well qualified.
- Regarding the project management plan, 1 reviewer would have liked more information regarding how information would be disseminated.
 - The applicant has stated that the IC will be able to put the information in the public domain, and NDSU will be able to disclose findings through technical bulletins or extension activities.
- Regarding the budget, 1 reviewer had concerns about the charging of approximately 1/3 of the proposed budget (grant request) for indirect costs by a state funded university to a state funded research program.
- 1 reviewer commented that transportation costs for moving feedstocks to the facility in Finley would be a key factor and that it is important to identify sources near Finley.
 - The applicant has agreed and stated that the economic analysis will address this issue.
- 1 reviewer stated, “...You reference a 5% margin as a conservative number – that’s very thin and not very attractive.”

Technical Advisor Recommendations

Fund. If successful, this project will increase the economic activity in a rural area. Growers will receive payments for crop residues, and more jobs may be added to the community by Woodshed Renewables. The proposal is strengthened by partnering a North Dakota business with a North Dakota university.

Suggested Contingencies If Funded

- Reduce the indirect expense to no more than 10% of the total project direct costs.
- Economic analysis must be conducted before any other project activities occur.