

LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR  
GRAND FARM  
(Greg Tehven)

**SUGGESTED MOTION:** Move to authorize the Chair to sign a letter of support for Grand Farm Research and Education Initiative's application to the 2021 Autonomous Agriculture Matching Grant Program.



January 18, 2022

## Board of County Commissioners

**Chad M. Peterson**  
Fargo, North Dakota

**Rick Steen**  
Fargo, North Dakota

**Jim Kapitan**  
Fargo, North Dakota

**Duane Breitling**  
West Fargo, North Dakota

**Mary Scherling**  
Stanley Township,  
North Dakota

Shayden Akason  
North Dakota Department of Commerce  
1600 E. Century Avenue, Suite 2  
Bismarck, North Dakota, 58503

Re: 2021 Autonomous Agriculture Matching Grant Program

The Cass County Commission strongly supports Grand Farm Research and Education Initiative's ("Grand Farm") application to 2021 Autonomous Agriculture Matching Grant Program. Grand Farm's proposal for an Innovation Facility would be highly additive to the current infrastructure existing in the region. This Innovation Facility will: (A) Advance automation in agriculture and precision agriculture; (B) Lead to advancements in implements and tools in agriculture; (C) Integrate existing aerial infrastructure; (D) Have a positive impact on North Dakota farming; (E) Engage early state companies; and (F) Attract businesses to the state of North Dakota.

The Cass County Commission believes Grand Farm's Innovation Facility will drive positive outcomes for our county and region – helping to solidify Cass County, the Red River Valley, and North Dakota as the geographical center of agriculture technology innovation. Grand Farm was designed to build on the strengths of the assets already existing within our community. Since launch, Grand Farm has continued to be additive to these assets, finding unique ways to amplify and multiply their contributions.

For these reasons, Cass County Commission strongly supports Grand Farm's application to the 2021 Autonomous Agriculture Matching Grant Program.

Sincerely,

Rick Steen, Chairman  
Cass County Commission

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211 Ninth Street South  
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## **2021 Autonomous Agriculture Matching Grant Program**

### Request for Proposal

The North Dakota Department of Commerce is requesting proposals for up to \$10 million to fund a 1:1 match for the advancement of autonomous agriculture in the state. Match requirements will be considered from any source other than state funding. The intent of the grant is to fund the best proposal that advances autonomous farming through the deployment of an innovation facility (constructed, purchased or rented), project management for complex and North Dakota based as well as global autonomous agricultural concepts; and working with industry to upskill the autonomous agriculture workforce to ensure advanced farming techniques are staffed by qualified professionals. This autonomous agriculture proving ground will advance and accelerate cutting edge research and commercialization of new farming concepts. Proposals are due by January 10, 2022 and must include the concept, likely sources for matching revenue as well as a timeline for deployment. Funding must be expended by June 30, 2023.

Funding will likely be distributed in five tranches:

1. Project Management, up to \$1,000,000
2. Engineering and Architectural Design, up to \$500,000
3. Land Acquisition, up to \$1,500,000
4. Construction Phase I, up to \$5,000,000
5. Construction Phase II, up to \$2,000,000

Funding will be released upon approved plan, 1:1 match verification and will be reimbursed via a receipts-based approach following completion of the tranches.

Evaluation Factors:

1. Automation in agriculture- How well does the proposal for agricultural automation help streamline the crop production cycle, making farming more efficient? How well does this proposal demonstrate automation? 15 pts
2. Precision agriculture- How well does the proposal demonstrate observation, yield, and measurement for the production cycle? 15 pts
3. Advancements in implements and tools- How well does the proposal advance the commercialization of automated farm implements through demonstration, tools and supporting infrastructure, e.g. the ability to automate end-to-end activities in production as well as product to market. 15 pts
4. Aerial integration- How well does this proposal tie into other statewide efforts such as the use of unmanned systems to enhance agricultural activity? 10 pts

5. Impact on North Dakota farming- How well does this demonstrate the improvement of crops that are grown in North Dakota? 15 pts
6. Engagement of Early State Companies- How well does this proposal support agribusiness ecosystem, e.g. startups and accelerated growth concepts. 15 pts
7. Business Attraction to the State- How well does this proposal attract new agricultural companies to the state? 15 pts

Your Proposal:

Your proposal will be no longer than 10 pages and will address each of the evaluation criteria embedded in this announcement. The 10 pages do not include a cover page or letters of recommendation and/ or partnership; or proof of funding commitments. Your proposal will address the advancement of autonomous farming concepts in accordance with the state's needs as well as position North Dakota to become a global leader in autonomous agriculture.

Point of Contact: Please submit your proposal no later than 5:00 CST on January 10, 2022 to Shayden Akason, [sakason@nd.gov](mailto:sakason@nd.gov). Any questions may be submitted to Mr. Akason as well.

Evaluation Team

1. Commissioner of Agriculture or designee
2. Commissioner of Commerce or designee
3. NDSU VP for Agriculture or designee
4. Commerce Value-Added Ag Manager
5. BND