

Michigan Wheat Program 2026-27 Request for Proposals

The Michigan Wheat Program (MWP) Board of Directors is requesting research proposals be submitted for funding to assist growers in keeping wheat a profitable and high-quality crop in the state of Michigan.

Background:

The Michigan Wheat Program is the state wheat check-off program, voted in by the state's wheat farmers in July 2011, and again in January 2016, March 2021 and March 2026. Assessment collection for the program began May 1, 2012. Strategic planning was held in December 2012, and again in January 2018, both of which outlined the importance of research.

Research Focus:

Michigan wheat farmers need answers to both the yield and quality issues they face. Research projects are being sought that will address the many aspects of production that can help optimize yields including rotation, cover crops, nutrients, inputs, pests and disease. As projects are developed, collaboration between researchers and growers through on-farm research is very important. See the attached Project GREEN list for additional areas of interest for Michigan wheat growers.

Delivering the highest quality product to the market is a key goal of the MWP. Research programs that assist growers in delivering high-quality wheat and keeping wheat production economically viable will be considered for support.

Marketing of Michigan's wheat crop is also vital to growers. Projects analyzing past, current and future markets, their maturity, as well as the flow of wheat to markets and new market opportunities will be considered.

Innovation is very important to Michigan's wheat farmers and they are looking for projects that illustrate out of the box thinking and ideas that could provide new markets for them, increase yields or provide new production techniques.

Other requests that will further the wheat industry and provide additional options for farmers will be considered. Any project that has a funding match will be viewed favorably, as will collaborative projects with multi-researchers, multi-partners, multi-commodities and multi-farmers through on-farm research projects. Projects that leverage both collaboration in researchers, farmers and funding will receive additional consideration above those projects that do not. In all cases, research that can produce measurable results, as well as leverage wheat farmer dollars through collaboration will be viewed most favorably. As part of the research process, it is also imperative that the research results be shared. That should be considered as the project is being developed.

The evaluation criteria utilized by the board includes their rating of whether or not projects are effective in the following categories:

1. Improve yield?
2. Improve quality?
3. Appropriate level of funding requested for the project scope being proposed?
4. Cutting Edge? New Ideas? Out of the box thinking?
5. Reproducible/high standards/strong science?
6. On target with current wheat research priorities?
7. Does this project include matching funding?
8. Does the proposal entail internal or external collaborators?
9. What is the plan for getting results to farmers?

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Submission Timeline:

Proposals for research must be submitted no later than COB on Friday, August 21, 2026, prior to the September 1-2, 2026, Board meeting, so Board members and staff have the chance to review proposals prior to their presentation to the board by the lead project researcher. Once proposals are received and reviewed, researchers will be scheduled to present their proposal to the full board during their 2-day research meeting. However, not all proposals may progress to the presentation phase. Researchers will be given 10 minutes to present their proposal and 5 minutes for questions. The Michigan Wheat Program Board of Directors is paperless, so both the presentation to the Board and the written proposal will be shared electronically. Please submit an electronic copy of the proposal and share a copy of the presentation at the conclusion of your presentation.

TO ALL Michigan State University RESEARCHERS: Effective March 1, 2019, all submissions through MSU must be created thru the KC system and fully routed by the sponsor deadline. As well, all budgets will be reviewed by OSP. Please work with your department budget officer to achieve this as no exceptions will be made.

Format:

Please submit your proposal utilizing the attached template which includes a cover page outlining the names of investigators, research entity/institution, project title, project number if this is a continuation project, number of years of proposed project, which year of the project this request is for, total budget request, and other project partners. Please outline the project in the next 4 to 5 pages. Include your hypothesis, methods of research, university, farmer or other collaborators, previous work done on this project including anything already patented, the details of how the project results can be used, how project results will be shared and how this project will/could affect farmers in economic terms and how it will/could affect either yield, quality or market opportunity. If this project could fall along the lines of resulting IP, provide a quick overview of the freedom to operate for this technology. Also, please complete and submit the budget page and make sure you include any pending or secured leveraged funding as it may make a difference in how your request is viewed and whether or not it is funded. **If you are a researcher at Michigan State University, you must meet the deadlines by your department to get your proposal entered into the KC system prior to submitting your proposal to the MWP.**

Funding & Reporting:

After projects are funded, researchers will be notified. Research agreements will be drafted by the Michigan Wheat Program and sent to MSU AgBioResearch along with the researcher for their signature and routing. After the research agreement is signed and returned, the first 25% of the funding will be released. An interim presentation will be required at the August/September 2027 Board meeting and after its acceptance an additional payment of 25% will be released. At the December 31, 2027, conclusion of the project a final written report, utilizing the template that includes a report synopsis, graphs and charts, and a final budget accounting matching the categories of the original budget are required. After these have been completed and accepted, the final payment of up to 50% will be released, projects will be reimbursed for their actual expenses. ***Projects are funded one year at a time, even for multi-year projects.***

Timeline:

Proposals are due via email to executive director Jody Pollok-Newsom at jody@miwheat.org by 5 p.m. on Friday, August 21, 2026. ****MSU researchers must submit their full proposal via the KC system as well as submit a copy of the full proposal to Jody Pollok-Newsom via email.** Proposals will be reviewed and researchers may be asked to present their proposal to the board. Funding decisions will be made after the presentations on Tuesday and Wednesday, September 1 & 2 and after the Board has time to do any needed additional investigation. The project start date is the day the MWP Board approves funding of the project,

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Timeline cont'd.:

regardless of when the paperwork is completed. Interim reports via presentations will be made to the board at their August/September 2027 board meeting. The deadline for project completion including the submission of the final written report will be December 31, 2027, unless there is a justified reason to change that date. Researchers will be notified as soon as possible about funding decisions.

Budget:

Please note that no overhead expenses are paid by the Michigan Wheat Program, as it is a non-profit, farmer-funded organization. Please provide a budget on the budget form for the project and if it is a multi-year project, please provide a budget for each year of the project. If an additional budget page is necessary, please feel free to add another page to show projected costs for future years of the project. List any additional funding you have secured or that is pending for this project. Please state if other funds are incumbent upon securing funds from the MWP.

Questions:

Contact Jody Pollok-Newsom, Michigan Wheat Program Executive Director via email at jody@miwheat.org or via cell phone at 517-490-0280.

Any questions related to the MSU process should be directed to Sara Haller at 517-353-1328 or via email at bolessar@msu.edu.