



U.S. Wheat & Barley
Scab Initiative

For Immediate Release

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U.S. Wheat & Barley Scab Initiative Selects Andrew Friskop as Researcher Co-Chair

St. Paul, MN, January 6, 2026 — The U.S. Wheat & Barley Scab Initiative (USWBSI) is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Andrew Friskop, extension plant pathologist and associate professor in the Department of Plant Pathology at North Dakota State University, as its new Researcher Co-Chair, effective January 1, 2026. In this key leadership position, Dr. Friskop will provide scientific and strategic guidance for advancing USWBSI's national efforts to reduce the impacts of Fusarium Head Blight (FHB) on wheat and barley.

"Dr. Friskop's deep understanding of Fusarium Head Blight, combined with his ability to connect research with real-world application, made him an outstanding choice for this role," said Richard Magnusson, USWBSI Grower Co-Chair. "He brings a collaborative leadership style, strong communication skills, and a clear commitment to serving growers, researchers, and stakeholders across the wheat and barley value chain. The Executive Committee is confident he will build on our strong foundation and guide USWBSI forward."

In his role as Researcher Co-Chair, Dr. Friskop will work closely with the Grower Co-Chair, Executive and Steering Committees, and the Networking & Facilitation Office to help guide research priorities, engage stakeholders, and foster collaboration across the FHB research community.

"I have a strong passion for building relationships and communicating research that is meaningful and actionable to all agricultural communities," said Friskop. "I am honored to serve as Researcher Co-Chair and look forward to supporting the collaborative research and outreach efforts that are central to USWBSI's mission."

At NDSU, Dr. Friskop's work focuses on developing and communicating practical disease management solutions for cereal crops, with a strong emphasis on Fusarium Head Blight and associated mycotoxins. Over the course of his career, Dr. Friskop's applied research program has resulted in an impressive number of impactful presentations and peer-reviewed publications. Additionally, he brings extensive leadership experience within USWBSI where he has served on the Steering Committee, as well as chair of the FHB Management Committee and the Durum Coordinated Project Committee, and as a member of the Forum Organizing Committee. He has also gained experience in significant leadership roles he has held with a variety of regional and national commodity and disease management organizations.

USWBSI also extends its sincere appreciation to Dr. Ruth Dill-Macky, who concludes eight years of exemplary service as Researcher Co-Chair. Her leadership strengthened collaboration across disciplines, elevated national awareness of FHB research, and helped guide the Initiative through periods of significant challenges.

For more information about USWBSI and its leadership, visit www.scabusa.org.

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The USWBSI is a national multi-disciplinary and multi-institutional research consortium whose goal is to develop effective control measures that minimize the threat of Fusarium Head Blight (scab), including the production of mycotoxins, for producers, processors and consumers of wheat and barley. The USWBSI's annual budget comes from Federal funds appropriated through the USDA-ARS.

U.S. Wheat & Barley Scab Initiative Networking & Facilitation Office

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