



U.S. Wheat & Barley
Scab Initiative

For Immediate Release

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USWBSI Seeks New PIs with Transformational Science Pre-Proposals for FY22 Funding Cycle

June 11, 2021 – The U.S. Wheat and Barley Scab Initiative (USWBSI) is pleased to announce a new category for its [FY22 Request for Pre-Proposals](#) with a focus on Transformational Science. The USWBSI initiated this new option this past year in an effort to identify new PIs to enrich its portfolio.

“We have a substantial solution-discovery engine in place, with an incredibly engaged community of PIs from our core disciplines working on Fusarium Head Blight,” noted Ruth Dill-Macky, USWBSI Executive Director and Research Co-Chair. “Building on this valuable network, we see so much potential to collaborate with researchers from new disciplines and leverage our funding for novel approaches to meet our mission.”

For the first time this past year, an initial pilot program funded six new projects in areas from identifying the potential of the microbiome as a selectable trait in breeding programs, to determining the efficacy of a sophisticated ground-based phenotyping rover, as well as using exome capture sequences to develop a genome selection tool, utilizing CRISPR/Cas9 to move quantitative trait loci conferring FHB resistance from wheat into barley, and utilizing RNAi technology to facilitate an “on-farm” RNAi system along with using lipid-based spherical nucleic acids for targeting pathogenicity genes and host susceptibility genes.

“The initial concepts that were submitted through this pilot are really impressive,” said Richard Magnusson, USWBSI Co-Chair. “We are looking forward to seeing their results and welcome all these new PIs into the USWBSI. By adding this opportunity to our FY22 RFP, we anticipate reaching an even broader range of innovative researchers; who see the potential of applying their concepts in an effort to reduce the impact of scab on wheat and barley.”

For researchers interested in considering this new opportunity, the first step is submitting a Letter of Intent using the online submission process. Letters of Intent are now being accepted and are due by July 1 for consideration; visit the [USWBSI Category 4 – Transformational Science](#) section of the website for full details. The full suite of USWBSI Project Category funding options can be accessed on the [USWBSI FY22 RFP](#) website.

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 more than \$8.6 million annual budget comes from Federal funds appropriated through the USDA-ARS.

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For more information about submitting a pre-proposal for this new Transformational Science Research Category, please contact the USWBSI Networking & Facilitation Office (NFO) Incoming Director of Operations, Michelle Bjerkness, at 612.990.5032 or nfo@scabusa.org

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