



U.S. Wheat & Barley Scab Initiative

FY03 USWBSI Recommended Funding Process

Summary of the Process Used by the USWBSI to Generate a Comprehensive Research Plan and Budget Recommendation for Federal Fiscal Year 2003 (FY03)

This year's pre-proposal review process was completed on December 7, immediately prior to the initial session of this year's Fusarium Head Blight Forum in Cincinnati. The composition of the Steering Committee (SC) is designed to give voice to all stakeholders in the operation of the USWBSI. As you know, the process involved a call for pre-proposals and review of the submitted pre-proposals by one of six Research Area Committees (RACs). In a very few instances, the nature of a pre-proposal dictated that it be reviewed by two RACs. We received 131 pre-proposals from 87 Principal Investigators (PIs) at 27 institutions including 25 Land Grant Universities, and the USDA-ARS and CIMMYT.

The entire process of requesting and reviewing pre-proposals is a product of deliberations overseen and approved by the USWBSI SC. The USWBSI's Networking and Facilitation Office (NFO) orchestrated this process in close consultation with the Executive Committee (EC) and the RAC Chairs. The EC has nine members and is charged with developing a draft of a comprehensive research plan and budget that is scientifically sound and avoids fatal imbalances among the tremendous range of geographical, commodity, institutional, business sector, and disciplinary interests held by the stakeholders who have made the USWBSI possible. Details of the review process are described in a document that can be viewed on the web at http://www.scabusa.org/pdfs/FY03_RFP_Rev-Guide.pdf.

In short, each RAC delivered to the EC a consensus summary review sheet that classified each pre-proposal into one of three categories: 1) recommended for funding within the "working cap", 2) recommended for funding but not in the working cap, and 3) not recommended for funding. The working caps were derived from a process that involved the entire SC. For the "in-cap" category, the RACs identified their highest priority pre-proposals and adjusted their individual award totals so their collective sum was equal to or less than the working cap. For the second category, the RACs identified pre-proposals they judged worthy of funding but none-the-less omitted from "in-cap" category. Pre-proposals in

that category were assigned unique rankings (1 to n) by the RACs. The RACs evaluated all pre-proposals in the context of the Research Priorities and Program Descriptions developed in the spring of 2002. Program Descriptions will be revisited annually in a web-based process that enables and welcomes input from all parties.

After consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of each RAC on December 6th, the EC constructed a comprehensive recommendation composed of 113 pre-proposals from 79 PIs. The EC plan included all of the pre-proposals that the RACs placed within the in-cap category. The EC was also able to recommend funding of several of the pre-proposals in the out-of-cap categories. In a few instances the EC also increased the level of funding recommended by the RACs. The sum of all recommended award amounts is exactly equal to the \$5,028,878 that is anticipated to be available to the ARS for collaborative scab research for FY03.

On the morning of December 7, the EC plan and budget was presented to the SC for its consideration. The SC was briefed on the details of the entire process and allowed to study the EC's draft of the comprehensive plan and budget. Subsequently, a motion to endorse the EC's draft plan was passed by unanimous vote of the SC. The draft plan consequently became the official USWBSI comprehensive research plan and budget recommendation for FY03. This plan must now be translated into USDA-ARS **Grant Applications**, which will be submitted en mass as the USWBSI's *recommendation* for how USDA-ARS could allocate the resources awarded it by the U.S. Congress.