



U.S. Wheat & Barley
Scab Initiative

FY08 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 2008 (FY08)

This year's pre-proposal review process was completed on December 4, immediately following to the final session of this year's 2008 National Fusarium Head Blight Forum. The composition of the Steering Committee (SC) is designed to give voice to all stakeholders in the operation of the USWBSI. The process involved a call for pre-proposals and review of the submitted pre-proposals by one of ten Review Panels (RPs) and the Executive Committee (EC). In very few instances, the nature of a pre-proposal dictated that it be reviewed by an External Reviewer. We received 136 pre-proposals from 92 Principal Investigators (PIs) at 30 institutions including 27 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 EC and the RP 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.

In short, each RP delivered to the EC a consensus summary review 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 RPs 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 RPs 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 RPs. The RPs evaluated

all pre-proposals in the context of the Research Priorities and Program Descriptions developed in the summer of 2007. Program Descriptions are 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 RP on December 1st, the EC constructed a comprehensive recommendation composed of 114 pre-proposals from 80 PIs. The sum of all recommended award amounts is exactly equal to the \$5,107,090 that was anticipated to be available to USDA-ARS for collaborative scab research for FY08.

On the afternoon of December 4, 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 a unanimous vote of the SC. The draft plan consequently became the official USWBSI comprehensive research plan and budget recommendation for FY08. This plan is currently being translated into individual 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.