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ARS Agreement #: *New*

Research Category: EC-HQ

Duration of Award: 1 Year

Project Title: U.S. Wheat & Barley Scab Initiative's Networking & Facilitation Office and Website.

PROJECT 1 ABSTRACT

(1 Page Limit)

The mission of the U.S. Wheat and Barley Scab Initiative is to enhance food safety and supply by reducing the impact of Fusarium Head Blight (scab) on wheat and barley. The organizational structure of the USWBSI is comprised of various administrative and research-based committees, and the Networking & Facilitation Office. The composition of all committees is designed to ensure balanced input from all commodities, regions, disciplines, and institutions engaged in the battle against scab in the development of the annual recommended research plan and budget. Development of the annual recommended research plan and budget is a complex process. The Initiative's Networking and Facilitation Office (NFO), currently based at Michigan State University, facilitates and coordinates this process. As "headquarters" of the Initiative, the Networking & Facilitation Office (NFO) is the liaison between the USWBSI's Administration and Researchers, and USDA-ARS-NPS administration.

This project is a key component of the Networking & Facilitation Office (NFO) which operates under the direction of Ruth Dill-Macky, Executive Director of the NFO, and in cooperation with Dave Van Sanford at the University of Kentucky. The primary activity of this project is to employ and house the Director of Operations (DOO) of the NFO, Sue Canty. This project also provides additional resources for the DOO to carry out the activities of the NFO, although the financial support for carrying out the majority of the NFO's activities will be funded by the NFO project funded by a grant agreement with the University of Kentucky. The title of Dr. Van Sanford's project is the "U.S. Wheat and Barley Scab Initiative's Networking & Facilitation Office and Website", funded ARS Agreement number 59-0206-6-001. The Director of Operations also interacts closely with the System Administrator (Dave Hane) who is responsible for maintaining the Initiative's web presence. The System Administrator is based in Newark, CA, and is funded through the grant at University of Kentucky. The DOO also interacts closely with the Research Technical Specialist (Amber Hoffstetter) who provides support to the NFO and the Executive Committee on all research related activities/projects.

A fundamental approach to achieving the primary objectives listed below is the ongoing collaboration among the staff of the Networking & Facilitation Office. The objectives of this project are: 1) Maintain and enhance the Resource Management/Accountability Center; 2) Facilitate and enhance communication within the Initiative and with its stakeholders; 3) Administer the process of developing the Initiative's annual recommended research plan and budget; and 4) Manage and implement all meetings and conferences.

The NFO is also responsible for facilitation of the Annual Research Plan & Budget (RPB), creating and implementing the annual performance reporting process, coordination of the annual FHB Forum, all committee meetings, and the dispersal and storage of information. These activities are critical to helping the Initiative reach its goals of developing effective control measures that decrease the threat of Fusarium head blight to the producers, processors, and consumers of wheat and barley. The NFO promotes communication among the varied parties interested in scab, and represents the Initiative's only 'fixed' asset. The NFO is continuing to develop methods that provide all stakeholders and interested parties with dynamic documentation of the Initiative's activities in order to minimize the gaps in knowledge and to provide a means of achieving a high level of accountability.