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## USDA NIFA Announces Funding Awards through the International Wheat Yield Partnership Research Program

The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) has just announced that 7 research grants have been awarded in coordination with the International Wheat Yield Partnership (IWYP). The awards are the outcome of the Request for Applications initiated in December 2015. The appropriated amount available for NIFA to support this program in FY 2017 is US\$3.4 million with anticipated US\$12 million continuation through 2019 provided appropriations are available for this purpose.

This competitive Call for Research Proposals sought applications for research leading to breakthroughs for cereal (*Triticeae* species) breeding using new technologies, and also discoveries that lead to significantly greater grain size, set and grain filling duration following embryo formation, in diverse environments, without compromising grain protein concentration.

Through this RFA, NIFA and IWYP continue to support the G20 nations' Wheat Initiative which is committed to coordinate wheat research in the areas of genetics, genomics, physiology, breeding and agronomy internationally. One of the Wheat Initiative's key aims, increasing the genetic component of wheat yield and developing new wheat varieties adapted to different geographical regions, is being led by IWYP and its partners.

### Research Program Description

The research from the awarded grants will focus on 2 priority areas: 6 Standard grants that target the use of new technologies to enable breakthroughs for cereal breeding and; 1 Coordinated Agricultural Project (CAP) grant for breakthrough discoveries that lead to significantly greater grain size, set and grain filling duration following embryo formation, in diverse environments, without compromising grain protein concentration in *Triticeae* species.

For details on the awards and research projects, see the NIFA press release at this link: <https://nifa.usda.gov/announcement/usda-awards-34-million-research-increase-wheat-yields-0>

### Comments

Dr. Jeff Gwyn, IWYP Program Director states: "The partnership with USDA NIFA enables IWYP to further augment its Science Program. Our mission of addressing future global food and nutritional security is an urgent one and we are coordinating our international research partners as a focused team, who together, can attain our goals and objectives. The high level of scientific excellence that NIFA demands and the project management approach that it employs perfectly match IWYP. The alignment of IWYP with NIFA is another important milestone in the international funding and research partnership that IWYP is based upon."

### Ends

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## About IWYP

Globally, wheat is the most important staple crop, providing 20% of daily calories and protein. Due to population growth and changing diets, wheat demand is expected to increase by 60% by 2050. To meet this demand, annual wheat yield increases must grow from the current level of below 1% to at least 1.7%. These urgent global needs have provided the motivation for the formation of IWYP by major agricultural research funding organizations in many countries with the goal of raising the genetic yield potential of wheat by up to 50% over the coming 20 years.

IWYP is an independent research activity which also responds to a major priority of the G20 sponsored Wheat Initiative. It will help the Wheat Initiative to fulfil its mission to “coordinate wheat research and contribute to global food security. All partners are committed to transparency, collaboration, open communication of results, data sharing as well as improved coordination to maximize global impact and eliminate duplication of effort.

IWYP represents a long-term global endeavour that utilizes a collaborative approach to bring together funding from public and private research organisations from a large number of countries. Currently, this includes the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council of the United Kingdom (BBSRC), Grains Research and Development Corporation of Australia (GRDC), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), Department of Biotechnology of India (DBT), International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center, in Spanish, Centro Internacional de Mejoramiento de Maíz y Trigo (CIMMYT), Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique of France (INRA), Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture (SFSA) and Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food of Mexico (SAGARPA). Over the first five years, the growing list of partners aims to invest up to US\$100 million.

Further details can be found at <http://iwyp.org>.

## References

<http://www.wheatinitiative.org/news-media/wheat-initiative/wheat-initiative-strategic-research-agenda>

<http://ccaafs.cgiar.org/bigfacts/#theme=food-security>

<http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/publications/topic/future-bread.aspx>