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**Project ID:** FY20-DI-001

**ARS Agreement #:** 58-0206-9-178

**Research Category:** EC-HQ

**Duration of Award:** 1 Year

**Project Title:** US Wheat & Barley Scab Initiative's Networking & Facilitation Office and Website

## PROJECT 1 ABSTRACT

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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) facilitates and coordinates this process. As the "headquarters" of the Initiative, the Networking & Facilitation Office (NFO) is the liaison between the USWBSI's Administration and Researchers, and USDA-ARS-NPS administration, ARS Budget Office and Grants and Agreements Managements Branch (GAMB).

The USWBSI currently has 93 researchers working on 150 projects at 33 different institutions including USDA-ARS across 31 states. A fundamental approach to achieving the primary objectives listed below is the operation of an administrative unit consisting of the Executive Director (Ruth Dill-Macky), the Director of Operations (Sue Canty), 75% time System Administrator (David Hane) and ~67% time Research Technical Specialist (Amber Hoffstetter).

The FY20-21 objectives of the NFO 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 data and 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.