

## BOARD GUIDE





## STRATEGY

# NORTH CENTRAL SOYBEAN RESEARCH PROGRAM (NCSR) STRATEGY

## **VISION:**

To support the accomplishment and communication of soybean research that will enhance grower productivity, profitability, and environmental stewardship across the North Central Region; including Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

## **MISSION:**

NCSR will serve as a bridge between state and national soybean organizations and will be the recognized leader in funding and communicating basic and applied soybean research programs that are highly collaborative and uniquely appropriate in addressing the needs of soybean growers across the North Central Region.



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## NCSRP GUIDING STATEMENTS:

- 1** NCSRP Executive Board will review overall program impact and success, and establish specific research priorities of regional importance, including existing challenges and emerging issues, on a five year cycle (e.g. key diseases, insects, production practices, etc.).
- 2** NCSRP funded programs and projects will not be redundant with current state (QSSB) or nationally (USB) funded programs but may complement and extend state or nationally funded projects when addressing the common interests and needs of North Central Region soybean growers.
  - NCSRP will maintain communication and collaborative connectivity with state QSSB's, other regional soybean checkoff organizations (e.g. Atlantic, South, and Mid-South), and with the USB in order to maintain awareness of state and national soybean research priorities and funding, and develop opportunities for broader collaboration.
  - Regional researchers submitting proposals for NCSRP funding must provide clear statements of research being funded by a QSSB, region, or the USB.
- 3** Multi-year research project or program proposals will be accepted for funding consideration, but annual renewal will be predicated on successful generation and communication of meaningful annual results.
- 4** NCSRP emphasizes the collection, compilation and dissemination of research results through appropriate peer reviewed scientific meeting abstracts and journals, Extension publications, farmer-focused bulletins, field guides and field days, appropriate websites (e.g. Soybean Research & Information Network ([www.soybeanresearchinfo.com](http://www.soybeanresearchinfo.com)) and databases (e.g. National Soybean Checkoff Research Database ([www.soybeanresearchdata.com](http://www.soybeanresearchdata.com))).

## **COLLABORATIVE SOYBEAN RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES:**

### **1 Soybean yield enhancement through genetic improvement and biotic and abiotic stress mitigation for the soybean maturity groups 00 – IV.**

- Classical and molecular soybean breeding efforts focused to the North Central Region that will enhance yield potential and yield stability via gene discovery and germplasm development, while maintaining or improving soybean composition and quality.
- Research that addresses the control of insects, diseases and abiotic stressors (defensive traits), including new and emerging threats, of consistent or potentially significant economic impact across the North Central Region.
- Research that addresses weed management and weed resistance to herbicides for species of common occurrence and threat across the North Central Region.
- Research (basic and applied) that addresses soybean response to water, nutrients, climate, soil, and environmental conditions unique to the North Central Region.

### **2 Soybean production practices that will increase yield and profitability in an environmentally sustainable manner, respond to current and future feed, fuel, food and fiber market needs for high and/or specific compositional quality, and address issues specific to the North Central Region.**

- Research that addresses the importance of best soybean production practices (e.g. rotations, row spacing, populations, input management, cover crops and trait stewardship)
- Research on the efficacy of various chemical and/or biological seed treatments, soil amendments and foliar applied products
- Research that proactively addresses new and emerging technologies or practices for soybean production in the North Central Region

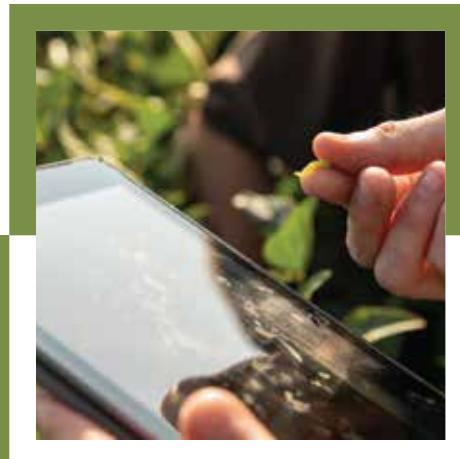
## **COLLABORATIVE SOYBEAN RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES:**

### **3 NCSRP: Farmer-led Organization**

The North Central Soybean Research Program (NCSRP) is recognized as a leader in multi-state collaborative research and outreach efforts to support soybean farmers and drive the soybean industry forward.

The focus of NCSRP is soybean production research and extension outreach. We invest soybean checkoff funds in university research and extension programs to better understand and manage plant stressors that reduce soybean yield and farmer profitability. NCSRP's emphasis on enhancing and protecting soybean yield through genetics and agronomic practices contributes to soybean farmer success today and tomorrow.

The Soybean Research and Information Network (SRIN) highlights results, provides resources, and promotes the importance of soybean research. SRIN is administered by NCSRP and is supported by United Soybean Board and other state and regional soybean boards.



## RESEARCH FUNDING CYCLE

# **NORTH CENTRAL SOYBEAN RESEARCH PROGRAM (NCSRP) RESEARCH FUNDING CYCLES & UNIVERSITY CONTRACT RESEARCH AGREEMENTS**

*(Updated 10-1-2015)*

*Pursuant to NCSRP Board discussions on the topic of research funding cycles and university contract research agreements, the NCSRP recently transitioned to an October 1 to September 30 funding cycle. The transition took place between 2014 and 2015 as follows:*

- Beginning in FY16 (Oct 1, 2015): the NCSRP Board will review its strategic plan and collaborative regional research priorities during the annual winter meeting (December, prior to the USB meeting in St Louis). The NCSRP Board will host in-person or recorded updates and review currently funded research projects during their February meeting (prior to Commodity Classic). Beginning in 2015, requests for proposals (RFPs) will be distributed in March. Research renewal requests and new project or program proposals will be received in mid- to late-May (first one in May, 2015). The Board will have at least one month to review proposals and technical review comments submitted by state staff and a consultant. The Board will discuss and award contract research funding during its summer meeting in late July or early August. Contract research project and program funding will commence on October 1 (Again, first one on Oct 1, 2015 for FY16).
- Funded researchers will be expected to submit semi-annual reports (to include a final report at the end of the project) within 30 days of the end of March and September of each year.
- Allowances can be made on start dates for applied projects with field work upon Board approval (e.g. April 1 start date). This can be done contractually in the agreement with the PI's institution.

NCSRP Policy regarding joint or complementary research projects with USB:

The Farmer Boards of Directors, states' research staff, and Smith Bucklin consultants collectively make up and support both USB and NCSRP teams that are dedicated to directing check-off funded soybean research. Both NCSRP and USB are philosophically aligned and dedicated to practicing productive communication and



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coordination activities that will ensure the most relevant, contemporary, non-redundant, effective and state-of-the-art-extending funded research to advance soybean productivity and profitability in a sustainable fashion.

Soybean check-off-supported researchers must be funded for success and instilled with a sense of urgency and commitment to delivering maximum return on investment for soybean farmers. The USB and NCSRP requests for research proposals (RFPs) will continue to emphasize these expectations and the responsibility of researchers to clearly demonstrate complementary research strategies and funding sources, generation of meaningful research results, and the integration of research outcomes.

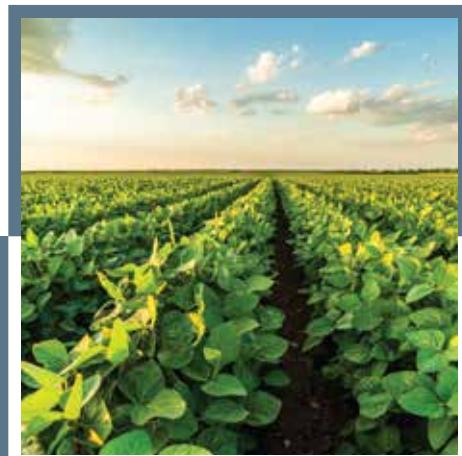
The entire soybean Industry will benefit through USB's and NCSRP's consistent two-way communication and coordination of check-off funded basic and applied research. Ensuring well-communicated and well-coordinated complementary research will continue to drive progress in the discovery, development and utilization of soybean genetics and production practices.

While communication, coordination and the publication of research results are critical, the administrative overhead associated with reviewing, awarding and executing co-dependent, joint research projects and programs between USB and NCSRP is challenging and sometimes prohibitive.

Therefore, the NCSRP will continue to solicit, fund and administer projects independent of the USB, while aligning its project request, proposal review, and funding cycle with USB. This alignment is anticipated to serve both organizations in maintaining on-going partnership, communication and coordination in order to ensure that all funded research complements and extends productivity, profitability and sustainability for farmers and for the entire soybean industry. With the alignment of NCSRP and USB proposal review and award cycles, it is hoped that, as in the past, some jointly supported projects and programs may be developed and funded by the USB and NCSRP farmer boards.



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## POLICIES & INFORMATION

# BOARD POLICIES

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NCSRP member state QSSBs will send one farmer per state to serve on the NCSRP Board. NCSRP encourages a minimum of one 3-year term.

Officers (President, Vice President and Secretary/Treasurer) are elected for one-year terms beginning with elections at the December/January meeting. Nominations and elections will be held by secret ballot.

Officers must be an official representative of one of the participating states.

The Board President retains his/her right to vote on all issues that come before the board.

Dickinson, Bradshaw, Fowler & Hagen, P.C. serves as legal counsel for NCSRP.

The fiscal year of the NCSRP is October 1 through September 30. The Board may change this if deemed necessary or appropriate.

The bank account held in the name of NCSRP at West Bank with the Iowa Soybean Association CEO, Director of Human Resources & Administration, Executive Assistant, Director of Operations, and Research Program Coordinator as authorized signatures on the account with two signatures required for any transaction over \$5,000. The NCSRP Treasurer approves all invoices prior to payment being issued.

The ISA accounting procedures will be followed for the operating project budget. ISA will provide quarterly summaries to NCSRP of the operating expenses and detail will accompany all bills to the NCSRP.

The NCSRP does not fund overhead or indirect costs for research programs or projects. It is not normal board policy to fund durable equipment, but if they are determinate of the ability to carry out a project, they must be submitted as a separate budget and attachment to the proposal.

Establish a minimum investment level of \$50,000 for a QSSB voting member to be eligible for a directorship in the NCSRP.



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The NCSRP operations and administrative budget is developed by the NCSRP Executive Director and the ISA staff, and reviewed and approved by the Board each year at their annual summer meeting. In the event operations and administrative expenses are to be paid under a contract with USB, these expenses will be reimbursed to the coordinating state. If USB does not agree to cover operations and administrative expenses, the operations and administrative expenses of NCSRP will be paid to the coordinating state on a monthly basis from committed dollars. In either case, if the operations and administrative expenses exceed the committed dollars, each participating state will be billed for these expenses based on percent of budget commitments.

The NCSRP will fund projects one year at a time with a semi-annual report and a final report each year. Two and three-year projects will have annual proposals submitted for Board review and approval for continued funding.

Proposals should not include any tenured or tenure-track faculty salaries or benefits, or international travel by anyone participating on the contract research.

The ISA CFO may conduct telephone transfers between NCSRP accounts and make deposits.

Only reasonable and normal expenses related to NCSRP board meetings will be accepted. Normal expenses are travel (air tickets and/or vehicle mileage), food and beverage, and lodging. All other reimbursable travel must be approved in advance by the NCSRP Treasurer with documentation of approval submitted with the expense voucher. When other expenses are incurred, identify the purpose of the travel on the expense voucher, provide a brief explanation and receipts. If receipts are unavailable, provide a detailed explanation. When other individuals are involved, list name(s) and organization(s). If combined with other travel, submit only the expenses that would have been incurred exclusively for NCSRP. No expenses covered by another entity will be reimbursed by NCSRP. No spouse expenses will be reimbursed, except for food and beverages when large NCSRP banquets are hosted and spouses are invited.

Alcohol will be reimbursed only with a meal and limited to 2 alcoholic drinks.

Encourage additional QSSB directors and state staff to attend with expenses incurred by the QSSB. University, company and farmer organization representatives, farmers and others are invited to attend open NCSRP Board meetings at their own expense.



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If a NCSRP board meeting is held during Commodity Classic room and meal costs for two nights will be paid by NCSRP for the director only. NCSRP does not pay for registration to the Commodity Classic.

Expense reimbursement deadline is sixty (60) days from the time a reimbursable expense has been incurred.

A receipt is required for all expenses. Actual food and beverage expenses will be reimbursed up to a maximum of two hundred dollars (\$200) per day including tips. When a meal is provided as a part of a NCSRP board function, individual meal expenses away from the function will not be reimbursed.

Domestic travel will be at the round trip “coach” rate for the most economical fare available reserved at least seven (7) days in advance. (Exceptions should be approved by the NCSRP Treasurer.) Include a copy of the air ticket costs, including itinerary, when requesting reimbursement.

Mileage will be reimbursed at the current Federal reimbursement mileage rate for the most direct route to and from a NCSRP function. When flying to meetings, mileage will be reimbursed to and from the most economical commercial airport. If electing to travel by car total reimbursement for mileage, meals, and lodging shall not exceed two days travel each way (one night lodging each way) and cannot exceed price of airline ticket for same trip.

Reimbursement is limited to the standard room rate for one individual. Reimbursement is limited to the hotel’s authorized group room rate for one individual. Include lodging bills when requesting reimbursement.

No entertainment expenses will be reimbursed. NCSRP will consider on a case-by-case basis any out of the ordinary expenses that are incurred when a Board member is conducting NCSRP business. A detailed explanation must be attached to the expense voucher.

Sign and mail completed voucher and receipts directly to the Iowa Soybean Association office. If an exception has been approved, documentation must be included with expense voucher. The NCSRP Treasurer has the authority to deny any expense voucher or may postpone any expense reimbursement until the voucher has been reviewed and/or acted upon by the NCSRP Executive Committee and/or full board.

NCSRP does not fund state trade shows.

Approved March 2025



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# BYLAWS OF NORTH CENTRAL SOYBEAN RESEARCH PROGRAM (NCSR)

(revised 3-1-2025)

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## ARTICLE I BOARD OF DIRECTORS NUMBER - APPOINTMENT - TERM

- 1. Board of Directors:** The number of Directors of this corporation shall be not less than two (2) or more than thirty (30). One soybean producer shall be appointed Director for each fiscal year by and from each Qualified State Soybean Board (QSSB) (hereinafter "Contributor") which has pledged to the corporation by October 1 of that fiscal year the minimum contribution established by the Board of Directors.
- 2. Appointment and Term of Office:** The director appointed by the contributor of this corporation shall assume the office of Director upon certification to the President by the Secretary-Treasurer that the contributor making the appointment has timely pledged the required contribution to the corporation.

Each Director of this corporation shall hold office for a term of one (1) year or until that Director's successor is elected and qualified. There shall be no limit on the number of successive terms served.

- 3. Board Meetings:** The Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors shall be held before December 31 of each fiscal year at the place designated by the President. The Board shall adopt a budget before or during its Annual Meeting each year. In addition to the Annual Meeting, the board shall hold at least two (2) additional regular meetings each year. The President shall designate the date, time, and place for the holding of these additional regular meetings.

Special Meetings of the Board of Directors may be called by or at the request of the President or by 50% of the Directors. The person or persons authorized to call the special meeting of the Board of Directors may fix the meeting place, including teleconference and virtual or video meetings.



Notice of any special meeting of the Board of Directors shall be given at least five (5) days previous thereto verbally, by telephone or in writing electronically or in hard copy. If mailed, such notice shall be deemed to be delivered when deposited in the United States mail so addressed with ordinary mail postage thereon prepaid. Any Director may waive notice of any meeting. The attendance of a Director at a meeting shall constitute a waiver of notice of such meeting, except where a Director attends a meeting for the express purpose of objecting to the transaction of any business because the meeting is not lawfully called or convened. Neither the business to be transacted nor the purpose of any regular or special meeting of the Board of Directors need to be specified in the notice of such a meeting.

4. **Quorum:** A quorum for any meeting of the Board of Directors shall consist of a majority of the Directors. Any and all business of the corporation may be transacted when a quorum is present.
5. **Manner of Acting:** The act of a majority of the Directors present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Board of Directors.
6. **Telephonic or Virtual Participation:** Members of the Board of Directors or any committee may participate in a meeting by conference telephone or other digital tools and platforms, if all persons participating in a meeting pursuant to this provision shall constitute presence in person at the meeting. Minutes of the meeting shall be kept as required by law.
7. **Informal Action by Directors:** Any action required to be taken at a meeting of Directors, may be taken without a meeting if consent in writing, setting forth the action so taken, shall be signed by all Directors entitled to vote with respect to the subject matter thereof.
8. **Removal of Directors:** No Director may be removed prior to expiration of the term to which appointed except by the Contributor making the appointment.
9. **Vacancies:** Any vacancy occurring in the Board of Directors may be filled by the Contributor which appointed the Director to the position now vacant.



- 10. Expense of the Board Members:** Board Members shall serve without compensation. However, they may be paid for food, lodging, and travel expenses actually incurred in attending Board meetings or on trips authorized by the Board. When calculating motor vehicle mileage expense, the current Internal Revenue Service rate shall be employed.
- 11. Optional Stipulation:** A Director may recommend that funds contributed by the Contributor appointing that Director be earmarked for specific research projects or research topics. A Director also may recommend board support for funding off-cycle or new and emerging research to agilely address important challenges or opportunities.

## **ARTICLE II**

### **MEMBERS**

The corporation shall have no members.

## **ARTICLE III**

### **OFFICERS**

- 1. Number:** The officers of the Corporation shall be a President, Vice-President, and a Secretary-Treasurer, each of whom shall be elected by the Board of Directors at its Winter Meeting.
- 2. Election and Term of Office:** Each officer shall be elected by the Board of Directors. Each officer shall hold office for a term of one (1) year or until his or her successor shall have been duly elected and qualified, or until he or she resign or shall have been removed by the Board of Directors. No person shall serve more than three (3) years in succession in the same office.
- 3. Removal:** Any officer elected by the Board of Directors may be removed by the Board of Directors whenever in its judgment or the best interests of the corporation would be served thereby.



4. **Vacancies:** The vacancy in any office, because of death, resignation, removal, dis-qualification or otherwise may be filled by the Board of Directors from those eligible, for the unexpired portion of the term.
5. **President:** The president shall be the principal executive officer of the corporation and, subject to the control of the Board of Directors, shall in general supervise and control all of the business and affairs of the corporation. The President shall when present, preside at all meetings of the Board of Directors. He or she shall, in general, perform all duties incident to the office of the President and such other duties as may be prescribed by the Bylaws or by the Board of Directors from time to time. The President shall be authorized to delegate and supervise the Staff Coordinator and consultants in the conduct of the day-to-day affairs of the corporation.
6. **Vice President:** In the absence of the President or in the event of his or her death, inability or refusal to act, the Vice President shall perform the duties of the President, and when so acting, shall have all of the powers of and be subject to all the restrictions upon the President; and in addition thereto, shall perform such other duties as may be assigned by the President or by the Board of Directors or prescribed by the Bylaws.
7. **Secretary-Treasurer:** The Secretary-Treasurer shall keep minutes of the Board of Directors' meetings in one or more books provided for that purpose, shall see that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of these Bylaws or as required by law, and be custodian of the corporate records and keep a register of the contact information for each member.  
The Secretary-Treasurer shall have charge and custody of and be responsible for all funds and securities of the corporation; receive and give receipts for monies due and payable to the corporation from any source whatsoever, and deposit all such monies in the name of the corporation in such bank or trust companies designated by the Board of Directors, and in general perform all the duties as may from time to time be assigned to him or her by the President or by the Board of Directors. The Secretary-Treasurer may, if required by the Board of Directors, be required to give bond in an amount set by the Board of Directors, at Board expense.  
The Secretary-Treasurer shall before September 1 of each year submit to the current President a proposed Budget for the upcoming fiscal year. This budget



will include the operations and administration budget, and need not specify individual research projects to be funded with specific research funding decisions to be made later by the Board.

The Secretary-Treasurer shall be authorized to delegate to the Staff Coordinator the above functions conducted under the Secretary-Treasurer's supervision.

## **ARTICLE IV**

### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

The corporation shall have an Executive Committee consisting of the President, Vice President, and Secretary-Treasurer. Meeting as the Executive Committee, the Vice President, and Secretary-Treasurer shall assist the President in planning the future activities of the Corporation.

## **ARTICLE V**

### **GENERAL PROVISIONS**

- 1. General Powers:** This corporation shall have all the powers and privileges that a corporation not for pecuniary profit may have under the law of the state of Iowa, as now exists or as may hereafter be granted, and may acquire and dispose of such property as by its duly authorized officers is considered necessary for the transaction of corporation business.
- 2. Bank Account; Signatories:** The board shall establish one or more accounts at such bank or trust companies as is designated by the Board. The board shall authorize official bank signatories via board policy.
- 3. Consultants:** The Board of Directors is authorized to retain consultants or contractors. Such contracting shall be conducted only by the Board of Directors at a regular or special meeting. Any consultant or contractor retained, shall report to the Staff Coordinator.
- 4. Staff Coordinator:** The board of Directors is authorized to retain a Staff Coordinator. The Staff Coordinator shall be appointed from staff of the Qualified State Soybean Board which is responsible for administering the NCSR. The Staff Coordinator shall report directly to the President.



5. **Committees:** Committees shall be created and terminated by the Board. Appointees to Committees positions shall be nominated by the President only by action of the President; but appointed by the Board.
6. **Liability:** Except as otherwise provided by law, the Directors of this corporation and its officers shall not be personally liable for the debts or obligations of the corporation. A Director, Officer or other Volunteer is not personally liable in that capacity for a claim based upon an act or omission of the person performed in the discharge of the person's duties, except for a breach of the duty of loyalty to the corporation, for acts or omissions not in good faith or which involve intentional misconduct or knowing violation of the law, or for a transaction from which the person derives an improper personal benefit.
7. **Prohibition Against Influencing Legislation:** Except as permitted in the Soybean Promotion, Research, and Consumer Information Act, no funds of this corporation shall be used in any manner for the purposes of influencing legislation or governmental action or policy.

## **ARTICLE VI** **FISCAL YEAR**

The fiscal year of the corporation shall begin October 1 and end September 30.



## **ARTICLE VII**

### **AMENDMENT**

These bylaws may be amended at any meeting of the Board of Directors by a vote of two-thirds of the Directors voting, a quorum being present, provided the notice of the substance of the proposed amendment has been provided to each Director at least five (5) days prior to the date of the meeting. These bylaws shall be reviewed by the Board of Directors every three (3) to five (5) years.

These bylaws as revised by the NCSRP Board of Directors at a meeting held March 1, 2025, proper notice having been given and a quorum being present.

Signed by:

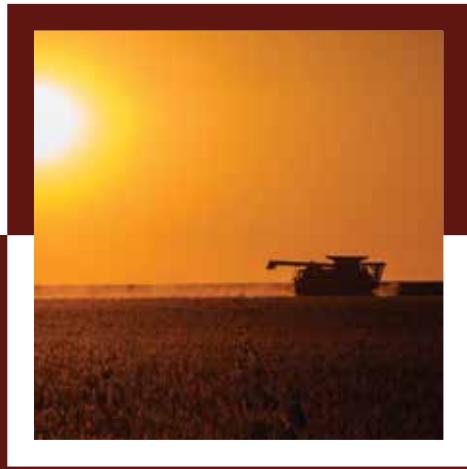
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Secretary

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Date





# RESEARCH PORTFOLIO

# UPDATES TO THE RESEARCH PORTFOLIO FOR THE NORTH CENTRAL SOYBEAN RESEARCH PROGRAM

## (NCSRP) 3-15-2024

### Background comments regarding the NCSRP research portfolio:

- There is some concern among NCSRP farmer board members and staff with the sustained commitment to large long-term research programs (several of the programs are 9 years now and have become very large). Farmers and staff see a need to develop tactics for beginning, supporting, sustaining, and sun-setting programs, as appropriate.
- NCSRP's programmatic approach, vs. smaller more independent or individual projects, is still supported by farmers and staff, and the collective successes of the more holistic programs have demonstrated positive ROI through on-going innovation and research progress. However, some of these programs have become very large, expensive, and difficult to manage and financially support with only checkoff funding.
  - The rule of thumb for NCSRP has been to fund projects/programs with at least 4 member states. This should continue.
  - The exception for smaller, more individual- or small group-researcher projects has been in the areas of "discovery or proof-of-concept". This too will likely continue.
- In short, the larger, more holistic, and more integrated programs have delivered great innovation and results. However, some of these have become so large that the scope and budgets, while relevant and justified, threaten to outstrip the NCSRP budget each year. NCSRP farmer board members desire to have better vision and clarity regarding the size, scope, and duration of funded projects and programs.
- NCSRP's focus on "production research" i.e. basic and applied work on genetic gain/yield improvement, yield preservation (from diseases, insects, weeds, and abiotic stressors), agronomic/cropping systems, new technologies/AI/precision ag, and strong communications and outreach (Extension) will continue.
  - There is strong support for integrated programs in breeding, soilborne and foliar pathogens, insect pests, weed management, abiotic stressors, agronomics, SCN, and new technologies.



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- As part of a recent survey, the farmers suggested approximate percentages of the annual budget to go toward key production research areas. These are approximations, will serve as guides, and will be subject to annual review and modification based on priorities and proposals.
- Going forward, alignment and complementarity with other states, regions and the USB will continue to be important and an area for ongoing staff focus.
  - Great progress has been made in establishing trust and good working relationships with other checkoff organizations.
  - Staff will continue to communicate and look for opportunities to partner, complement, and extend inter-state, inter-regional, and national efforts in basic and applied research.
  - NCSRP is committed to open and honest communication and dialogue with all researchers. Sharing priorities, goals, and approaches will make NCSRP and the overall soybean checkoff stronger.
  - These efforts must be combined with work to better cooperate with, and leverage public and private funding.
- Getting new faculty researchers engaged on NCSRP research projects and programs is always a positive. Juxtaposed to this, of course, is the reality that funding from any checkoff organization is limited, and managing large collaborations can be challenging. It is necessary to coordinate carefully for the right teams, right projects/programs, and the right funding sources.
  - It may be necessary to limit program sizes and scope – research PIs are not required to include everyone if that makes the program too large and too expensive.
  - Staff and researchers should work together to aggressively seek other sources of public and private funding to complement and extend the checkoff investments. These sources are to be shared with the NCSRP on research proposals and as entries into the National Soybean Checkoff Research Database. This information helps soybean farmers to see the increased potential ROI on their soybean checkoff investments.
- For the NCSRP FY25 RFP, staff will be working hard to develop and distribute clearer priorities and direction for researchers. Much of that effort is reflected in this document. Along with this, staff will work to communicate more in-person with researchers and offer assistance in developing solid proposals or proposal concepts for NCSRP, USB, other regions, QSSBs, and the public and private sectors wherever appropriate.



**Guidance for FY25 as the RFP is prepared and distributed (please read all bullets for broad insights beyond your area of expertise):**

- Before preparing and submitting a proposal to the NCSRP, researchers are asked to carefully consider the following:
  - The NCSRP will continue to accept up to 3-year research proposal concepts.
  - For all new (first year) proposals, PIs and collaborators must emphasize first year research concepts, justification, rationale, objectives, desired or expected outcomes, deliverables, and budget, while also describing second- and third-year research AND budgets. The template for three-year budget proposals must be filled out completely.
  - The NCSRP staff and board will review and consider three-year proposals and budgets in their entirety. Funding decisions for the first year will be determined by research relevance and influenced by longer-term investment considerations. The Board will anticipate that renewals for years 2 and 3 will be at the budget levels proposed in the first-year proposal.
  - Renewal requests (years 2 and 3) must contain brief statements of progress and deliverables from the previous year, as well as more detailed plans for the new fiscal year. Budget requests should be identical to what was provided in the original proposal for years 2 and 3. Only in extenuating and justifiable circumstances, should the renewal proposal and budget deviate from the information presented for years 2 and 3 in the first-year proposal. For example, if the original proposal requested \$100,000 for year one, \$125,000 for year two, and \$98,000 for year three, the renewal budget requests for years 2 and 3 should be \$125,000 and \$98,000, respectively.
  - NCSRP will continue to support long-term programs that innovate, evolve, and deliver documented progress, success, and advances for farmers and the industry. However, PIs and collaborators are encouraged to aggressively pursue and document for NCSRP additional funding sources to complement, extend, and perhaps eventually reduce NCSRP soybean checkoff support.
    - Beginning in FY25 and going forward, NCSRP-funded breeding programs/projects led by the same PI and composed of primarily the same team will have expected funding durations of up to four 3-year cycles (12 years).



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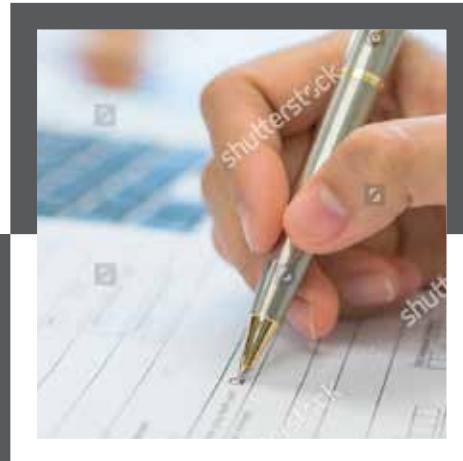
- Beginning in FY25 and going forward, programs addressing diseases, insect pests, abiotic stressors, weeds, agronomics and cropping systems, and SCN topics led by the same PI and composed primarily of the same team will have expected funding periods of up to three 3-year funding cycles (9 years).
- Beginning in FY25 and going forward, new innovations projects or programs led by the same PI and composed primarily of the same team will have expected funding periods of one 3-year cycle.
- Researchers should consider and state from the outset (first year proposals) how their work will bring short- and long-term value to soybean farmers and to the soybean industry, how their programs are innovating, evolving, remaining relevant to soybean farmers' priorities, and how they intend to pursue and leverage other funding sources for complementing, extending, and continuing their checkoff funded research beyond the expected NCSRP funding periods and budgets. Renewal requests should continue to briefly state progress and any long-term goals for the programs.
- The annual NCSRP budget for the recent past has been between approximately \$3.2M and \$4.2M, depending on state contributions (farmer investments in regional research that depend on each state's soybean acreage, soybean yield, and soybean price, as well as each state's research priorities and the value they see in NCSRP-funded research) and any unspent funding from the previous year. We'll use \$3.7M as a reference example here.
  - Operations, administration, and communication expenses represent approximately 5%-6% of the budget each year (e.g. ~\$225,000). Some of these funds are provided by the USB as part of their Research Coordination budget.
  - Soybean Breeding for genetic gain and improved quality (with partnership and complementarity across other yield preservation, agronomics, and new innovations categories):
    - The board guidepost (subject to board review and modification) for funding in this category in FY25 is approximately 20% of the NCSRP budget, e.g. \$740,000. Project and program proposals may include basic and applied work, discovery and development, and similar for things like:
      - e.g. germplasm development, gene discovery and development, native traits, biotech traits, new breeding tools and technologies, trait introgression, testing, and advancement into the public and private seed pipelines for yield, quality, and stress tolerance

- Diseases, insect pests, and abiotic stressors (with partnership and complementarity among breeders, agronomists, and Extension experts for various program elements and outreach to farmers):
  - The board guidepost (subject to board review and modification) for funding in this broad category in FY25 is approximately 20% of the NCSRP budget, e.g. \$740,000. This will represent a potentially significant reduction in support across some of NCSRP's strong and long-standing programs for disease and insect pest management (historically funded at approximately 35% of the annual budget). While there may be some flex when the board meets, researchers are encouraged to carefully consider possible smaller collaborations with very focused high-priority objectives for key basic and applied research on the most significant regionally important pathogens, pests, and abiotic stressors. In addition, it will be beneficial to work with other state, regional, and national staff and research groups to consider where other checkoff, public, and private funding sources might be pursued to support the large, diverse, integrated, holistic, and complementary programs.
- Agronomics and cropping systems (with partnership opportunities like those described above):
  - The board guidepost (subject to board review and modification) for funding in this broad category in FY25 is approximately 15% of the NCSRP budget, e.g. \$555,000. This is roughly equivalent to the level the board has funded this area in the past. Proposals should address the highest priority plot and on-farm research and outreach, and technology innovations for enhancing regional farmer efforts to produce the highest yielding, highest quality, most sustainable, and most profitable soybeans through improved and optimized use of genetics, inputs, equipment, technologies, and practices. In this category, as much or more than the others, researchers may have significant opportunities to impact the immediate / short-term needs and opportunities facing farmers "in the field", while continuing to provide data and insights for long-term success. Like all NCSRP-funded research, these proposals should describe complementarity with other similar efforts at state, regional and national levels. Partnerships with and/or novelty that distinguishes checkoff funded work compared with the private sector will be important to demonstrate relevance and ROI potential.



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- Soybean Cyst Nematode (SCN):
  - The board guidepost (subject to board review and modification) for funding in this broad category in FY25 is approximately 15% of the NCSRP budget, e.g. \$555,000. Because NCSRP's long-term investment in both basic and applied aspects of SCN has been approximately 25% of the annual budget, this illustrates a potentially significant reduction in the size and scope of both program areas. PIs and their collaborators are encouraged to reconsider the size and scope of the NCSRP-funded portions of their important programs and consider other complementary funding sources.
- Weed management:
  - Historically, NCSRP has relied on USB and QSSBs to support important weed science and weed management projects and programs. With the increased and on-going concerns about weed management broadly and herbicide-resistant weeds, in particular, the NCSRP has recently decided to allocate approximately 15% of its research budget (e.g. \$555,000) to this important area. Like all NCSRP funded research and outreach, PIs are asked to clearly demonstrate awareness, partnerships, and complementarity with the others and their work in the areas of basic and applied research to manage soybean weeds across the Midwest and beyond. Other public and private partnerships to complement and extend checkoff funding are strongly encouraged.
- New Innovations, across biotechnologies, discovery research, engineering, computational biology, artificial intelligence, precision agriculture, biology, molecular genetics, and similar:
  - The NCSRP has always expected, appreciated, and relied on the innovative and creative researchers funded in other NCSRP topic areas to continuously conduct both discovery and development research for new tools and technologies that will bring short- and long-term benefits to soybean farmers, the soybean industry, to the broader science community, and to the public. Recently, the NCSRP board chose to develop a specific funding area, allocating approximately 10%, e.g. \$370,000, of the annual budget to projects in any of these higher risk, higher potential impact areas as stand-alone projects.



## FORMS

# TRAVEL EXPENSES AND RECEIPTS GUIDELINES 2025-2026

*(Updated January 2026)*

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The travel expense must be compliant with the policies and bylaws of the NCSRP. Expenses not in compliance to the guidelines below will result in no reimbursement. When submitting backup, any billed expense over the amount of \$25 must have a detailed receipt.

The following are specific requirements for various types of backup:

## **Airfare —**

- Domestic air travel **must be a coach fare.**
- Fees for Early Bird check-in are reimbursable for Southwest and other carriers that do not offer advance seat assignments.
- Fees to board early strictly as a convenience and fees or upgrades to a row with more legroom or to a higher class of service are considered a personal expense and not reimbursable.
- International travel must be purchased at least 14 days **in advance** of travel.
- No First Class tickets or upgrades will be reimbursed under ordinary circumstances. Business Class is allowed for **international** flights that are in excess of 8 hours.
- Ticket change fees must be accompanied by an explanation as to why the change was deemed necessary and in some cases, approval up front.

## **Ground Transportation Mileage —**

When calculating mileage, always use the current IRS rate or lower. Include to/from destinations so miles can be verified. **The current mileage rate is: \$0.725 (as of 1/26).**

## **Hotel —**

Reimbursement for lodging should be reasonable and should be at rates comparable to a standard, single occupancy room at a national business-class hotel chain. **If a meal is listed on a hotel receipt, you must provide the detailed receipt if it is over \$25.** Any time a lounge or bar purchase is listed on a hotel receipt, the alcoholic beverage purchase must be part of a meal. We need the detailed receipt regardless of the amount.

Items not allowable include:

- Mini bar purchases, bar/lounge purchases without a meal



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- Movies, games, spa or gym expenses
- Laundry will not be allowed unless you are traveling for at least 5 consecutive days for NCSRP business purposes, and then at a \$100 maximum.

#### **Meals —**

**Are not on a per diem basis but rather a maximum per day basis, which is currently \$200. Tax and tip amounts are included in the maximum amount per day.**

- A meal receipt must be a dated and detailed receipt showing payment and not just a credit card receipt.
- If there is more than one person on your ticket, you must provide a list of who attended and how they are affiliated with NCSRP. We do not pay for spouses, other family members, or friends.
- If there are multiple people in attendance, the meal total should be equally split in order to determine each person's total, i.e. a \$400 meal between 10 people would be \$40 for each person towards their daily maximum. Tips should be included in this calculation.
- Alcohol is allowed with a meal, however, we ask that you use the utmost discretion when purchasing. Our rule is two drinks per person maximum, with a meal.

**Car Rentals —** If renting a car is the least expensive, most viable, or only means of transportation, look for a competitive rental car rate with a nationally known company.

**Car Services —** When using a car service such as Uber or Lyft, **choose the basic level car when possible.**

- When submitting your receipt from the app, choose the most consolidated version especially if multiple rides are being billed.

#### **International Travel —**

FAS notification of travel should be submitted at least 10 days prior to travel and be included with your invoice submission. Include something that shows us how you calculated any foreign currency exchange rates and translation of receipts if necessary.

**Submit Completed Expense Report and Receipts to:**

David Kurth, [dkurth@iasoybeans.com](mailto:dkurth@iasoybeans.com).

Please call 515-334-1033 (direct) with any questions.



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## **NORTH CENTRAL SOYBEAN RESEARCH PROGRAM**

# TRAVEL EXPENSE REPORT

## PURPOSE

## PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing Address:**

**City, State, Zip:**

This information will be used for payment information and mailing reimbursement.

## TRANSPORTATION EXPENSES

Date	Description	Expense Amount
<b>Transportation Total</b>		<b>\$</b>

## OTHER TRAVEL EXPENSES

**FINAL TOTAL** \$



# TRAVEL EXPENSE REPORT

## PURPOSE

<b>PERSONAL INFORMATION</b>	
<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Mailing Address:</b>	
<b>City, State, Zip:</b>	
This information will be used for payment information and mailing reimbursement.	

TRANSPORTATION EXPENSES		
Date	Description	Expense Amount
Transportation Total		\$

**FINAL TOTAL** \$

# **NORTH CENTRAL SOYBEAN RESEARCH PROGRAM CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY**

*(as revised 12-10-2019)*

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Conflicts of interest can arise in many different situations, the primary two being a transaction between NCSR and the Director or a family member, or a transaction between NCSR and an entity in which the Director has a personal interest. A conflict of interest exists when a Director has a personal interest in the outcome of the Boards action, or where the Boards action will give the interested Director a direct or indirect business advantage or pecuniary benefit not available to other North Central Soybean Research Program members.

For purposes of this policy statement, a Director shall have a personal interest in a contract or other action of the Board if any of the following class of persons would derive from the proposed action a direct or indirect business advantage or pecuniary benefit not available to other North Central Soybean Research Program members, in an amount different from that accruing to producers generally:

- A. The Director
- B. An entity in which the Director is a shareholder
- C. An entity in which the Director is a Board member
- D. A member of the Director's immediate family. Immediate family shall mean the Director's spouse, child or child's spouse, siblings and parents.

Directors shall act in the best interests of the NCSR while serving as a Director. A Director shall place the interest of the NCSR ahead of his or her personal interests.

Proper administration of all NCSR resources is important to the continued success of the association. As such, Directors shall avoid any situation where there is a potential conflict of interest or an appearance of impropriety. Contracts or other actions where a Director has a personal interest are strongly discouraged.

If, however, the Board wishes to discuss a contract or other proposed action involving a Director or entity in which the Director has a personal interest, the Board shall strictly adhere to the following policy:

- A. The interested Director must fully disclose to the Board the Director's personal interest in the proposal



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- B. The interested Director may explain the benefits of the proposal to the Board and participate in some discussion of the proposal. However, the Director must then leave the meeting to allow the remaining Directors to discuss the proposal without the presence of the interested Director
- C. The interested Director shall not be eligible to vote in regard to any aspect of the proposal
- D. The Board must consider whether the proposal is fair and reasonable to the NCSRP, and must consider the proposed relationship objectively, as if the interested Director would not benefit from the relationship. The Board shall avoid all appearances of impropriety.

An Ex Officio Director who is representing a state entity shall have a personal interest in a proposed contract or other proposed action if the state entity, which the Director is representing, shall benefit from the relationship. Ex Officio Directors must follow the above policy.

#### **ANNUAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE STATEMENT FOR DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS OF THE NORTH CENTRAL SOYBEAN RESEARCH PROGRAM**

I the undersigned Director or Officer of the North Central Soybean Research Program, hereby state to the best of my knowledge except as noted below:

1. I do not have a position with or significant ownership interest (10% or more) in any corporation, partnership, or other legal entity that transacts business with the North Central Soybean Research Program.
2. I, as an individual, do not transact any business with the North Central Soybean Research Program.
3. No member of my family within the first degree of consanguinity is an employee of the North Central Soybean Research Program or would come within the meaning of Assertion No. 1 or No. 2 above.
4. I certify that I market 250 bushels or more of soybeans per year.

List here any exceptions to the above statements:

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I agree that if any situation arises that in any way contradicts the above statements, I will immediately notify the President of the North Central Soybean Research Program of any conflict, real or potential, and make full disclosure thereof. I have read and understand the North Central Soybean Research Program Conflict of Interest Policy.

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NCSRP Director

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Date



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## BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES

## NCSRP RESPONSIBILITIES

Aligned with NCSRP's mission, emphasizing collaboration with 13 state organizations to enhance soybean production in the North Central U.S., the responsibilities of the NCSRP Board of Directors are pivotal in advancing the goals of the organization. The board focuses on leveraging the soybean checkoff program to invest in research, market development, and education and communication programs, all aimed at enhancing the profitability and sustainability of soybean producers in the region. This collaborative effort, addressing challenges, promoting sustainability, and boosting yields, contributes significantly to the success of soybean farming in the North Central U.S. through innovative research and partnerships.

Board member activities, including organizational planning, financial stewardship, communication, and outreach, play a crucial role in steering NCSRP's initiatives towards success. Regular attendance at meetings, held three times per year, is paramount. These meetings provide an opportunity for board members to gain insights into NCSRP's operations, funding mechanisms, ongoing research projects, and outreach efforts. Active participation in these gatherings ensures a comprehensive understanding of NCSRP's strategies and initiatives, enabling board members to make informed decisions that advance the organization's mission and benefit soybean producers in the North Central region.

# RESPONSIBILITIES

## ALL BOARD MEMBERS SHOULD:

Actively participating in overall strategic planning to determine and monitor the effectiveness and efficiency of all research funding to be allocated from NCSRP on an annual basis. Key to this program development is recommendations that maximize the profitability of soybean producers.

Provide financial oversight to ensure segregation of checkoff and non-checkoff funds and implementing clearly defined financial systems for checkoff and non-checkoff funded activities to ensure adherence to the Act & Order.

Reviewing financial statements that accurately and thoroughly reflect the fiscal status of NCSRP, including budgets, income and expense statements, fund balances and an annual audit.

Communicate with others ensuring that producers are fully informed regarding the activities of the association and the investment of their checkoff and non-checkoff funds. Coordinating efforts to enhance the organization's public standing and clearly articulate its mission, accomplishments, and goals to a broader audience. Additionally, each board member is requested to allocate one hour for a personal meeting with the Executive Director of NCSRP. These one-on-one interactions provide a valuable platform for discussing specific concerns, exchanging ideas, and aligning individual efforts with the broader objectives of NCSRP, further enhancing the collective impact of the board.

Represent the organization at various NCSRP functions and within other industry organizations. Serving as public spokespersons for the organization and participating in efforts to garner support for NCSRP and its membership activities.



## PARTNERS



## Weaving Together Soybean Research Resources

There is strength in numbers when it comes to collaboration within the soybean research community. The **North Central Soybean Research Program (NCSRP)**, the **National Soybean Checkoff Research Database** and the **Soybean Research & Information Network (SRIN)** intertwine efforts to create an efficient, checkoff-funded mix of resources to help soybean farmers improve their profitability.

### CONDUCTING THE RESEARCH (NCSRP)

NCSRP fosters partnerships for collaborative research to improve soybean quality and management methods for a farmer's solid return on investment. In addition to practical advice within the region, NCSRP magnifies proof-of-concept and preliminary research into practices farmers can use for improved productivity.

- Channels funds from 13 state checkoff boards into research covering agronomics, genetic gain, seed quality, pests, diseases and more.
- Impacts 400,000 farmers and 85% of soybean production.
- Prioritizes, monitors and communicates progress and results.

[www.ncsrp.com](http://www.ncsrp.com)

### POPULATING THE DATABASE (National Database)

The National Soybean Checkoff Research Database is the centralized, comprehensive repository for research data, results and benefits from more than 7,000 soybean research projects nationwide. Findings are cataloged and tracked efficiently and then evaluated over the long term.

- NCSRP, state and regional checkoff research projects are included in the database.
- The National Database continues to expand into areas such as biodiesel, animal health and nutrition, and soil health.
- Information is organized for users to search by keyword, researcher name and state or regional organization to find specific results.

[www.SoybeanResearchData.com](http://www.SoybeanResearchData.com)

### SHARING THE RESULTS (Soybean Research & Information Network)

SRIN takes research findings from the National Database and presents them in a practical, user-friendly website tailored specifically for farmers. SRIN covers all the bases for farmers to easily access research resources in a variety of formats.

- Read summaries and highlights of the latest research on targeted topics
- Explore research publications with links to the National Database
- Check out informative videos and social media updates
- Get monthly e-newsletters
- Investigate #SoySnippets tips
- Benefit from collaborator expertise including Science for Success, GROW and Crop Protection Network
- Watch farmer Q&A videos

[www.SoybeanResearchInfo.com](http://www.SoybeanResearchInfo.com)

# **Soybean Research & Information Network**

## **Contacts:**

Katherine Drake Stowe, [kdrakestowe@unitedsoybean.org](mailto:kdrakestowe@unitedsoybean.org)  
Carol Brown, [carol.l.brown81@outlook.com](mailto:carol.l.brown81@outlook.com)  
Laura Temple, [laura\\_temple@comcast.net](mailto:laura_temple@comcast.net)

**Members:** USB, QSSBs and regional soy organizations, NCSRP, farmers, researchers

**Website:** [www.SoybeanResearchInfo.com](http://www.SoybeanResearchInfo.com)

## **Social Media Handles:**

Facebook: @SoybeanResearchInformationNetwork  
X: @SoyResearchInfo  
YouTube: @soybeanresearchinformation5889

## **Primary Funding Sources:**

Operational Funds: NCSRP, USB  
Research Funds: NA

## **Goal/ Mission:**

1. Communication Hub: Serve as a central hub for soybean farmers, ensuring easy access to the latest research findings, innovations and practical resources, including comprehensive information on pests and diseases.
2. Innovation Promotion: Actively promote farmer innovation by providing practical solutions and encouraging the adoption of cutting-edge agricultural technologies communicated through research, specifically addressing pest and disease management.
3. Resource Accessibility: Maintain a user-friendly, online platform ([www.SoybeanResearchInfo.com](http://www.SoybeanResearchInfo.com)) as an information hub, offering real-world solutions, best practices and data-driven insights, with a focus on effective pest and disease management.
4. Collaborative Partnerships: Forge partnerships with entities such as Science for Success, Crop Protection Network, GROW and others to enhance platform content, delivering diverse expertise and valuable information to soybean farmers, especially in the realm of pest and disease management.
5. Empowerment: Empower soybean farmers across all states by facilitating informed decision-making, positively impacting crop yields, and supporting sustainable and prosperous farming practices through effective communication of research, particularly in the realm of pest and disease management.

## **Strengths of SRIN:**

1. Research Communication Hub: SRIN serves as a centralized platform for effectively communicating cutting-edge research, serving as a go-to resource for soybean farmers seeking the latest insights and innovations.
2. Comprehensive Information Center: The platform acts as a comprehensive center to provide farmers with a one-stop site for real-world solutions, best practices and data-driven insights, fostering informed decision making. Analytical tracking is conducted to ensure information is aligned with audiences.

3. Collaborative Partnerships: SRIN's strength lies in forging collaborative partnerships with entities such as Science for Success, enhancing the diversity and depth of expertise available to soybean farmers through enriched platform content.
4. Practical Resources: SRIN empowers farmers with practical resources, including information on pest and disease management, fostering innovation and enabling farmers to proactively address challenges in their soybean cultivation.

### **Impact of SRIN:**

1. Informed Decision Making: SRIN's impact is evident in empowering soybean farmers to make informed decisions, positively influencing crop yields and contributing to sustainable and prosperous farming practices.
2. Innovation Promotion: The platform actively promotes farmer innovation by providing practical solutions and encouraging the adoption of cutting-edge agricultural technologies, resulting in a tangible impact for farming practices.
3. Knowledge Transfer: SRIN facilitates the transfer of knowledge by effectively communicating research findings, enabling farmers to stay ahead of industry trends and make strategic choices in their soybean farming operations.
4. Community Building: SRIN's impact extends to fostering a sense of community among soybean farmers, creating an environment where shared experiences and expertise contribute to a resilient and collaborative farming community.

### **Audience of SRIN:**

1. Soybean Farmers: The primary audience of SRIN is soybean farmers across all soybean producing states, providing them with essential resources to enhance their agricultural practices.
2. Extension Agents: SRIN engages extension agents, ensuring they have the necessary information and tools to support and promote SRIN's initiatives among farmers.
3. Agricultural Professionals: The platform caters to a broader audience of agricultural professionals, offering insights and innovations relevant to the soybean farming industry.
4. Industry Stakeholders: SRIN's audience includes stakeholders such as Science for Success and other collaborative partners, fostering a network of expertise and knowledge exchange to benefit soybean farmers.