



CFCRA
CANADIAN FIELD CROP
RESEARCH ALLIANCE

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ALLIANCE DE RECHERCHE SUR LES
CULTURES COMMERCIALES DU CANADA

2028-2033 – Field Crop Research Cluster*

* Field Crops: Corn, Oats, Soybean, Eastern Canadian Barley, Eastern Canadian Wheat

Call for Letters of Intent (LOI)

Deadline*: Friday, November 13, 2026

LOIs involving [any AAFC researchers, even as collaborators, must undergo internal AAFC review \(a new AAFC requirement\)](#). This review must be initiated by [October 21, 2026](#) as the process take [16 business days](#) to complete.

Background

The Canadian Field Crop Research Alliance (CFCRA) is a not-for-profit entity founded in 2010 with an interest in advancing the economic and environmental sustainability of field crops in Canada, particularly soybean, corn, wheat, barley, and oat. The CFCRA is comprised of provincial farm organizations and industry partners, including Atlantic Grains Council; Producteurs de grains du Québec; Grain Farmers of Ontario; Manitoba Crop Alliance; Manitoba Pulse & Soybean Growers; Saskatchewan Pulse Growers; Prairie Oat Growers Association; SeCan Association; and FP Genetics.

Since 2023, the CFCRA has been managing a \$10.5 million Cropping Systems Cluster under the *Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (SCAP)* AgriScience Program, focused on Canada-wide corn, oat, and soybean research to support diverse crop rotations. The CFCRA is also involved in the eastern Canadian components of the Canadian National Wheat Cluster and the National Barley Cluster, led by the Canadian Wheat Research Coalition (CWRC), and the Canadian Barley Research Coalition (CBRC), respectively. Together, these research initiatives have supported the development and adoption of enhanced genetics, breeding tools, new agronomic practices, and other technologies that have improved productivity, profitability, resilience and sustainability across the Canadian field crop sector.

With the SCAP framework ending in March 2028, the CFCRA is preparing for the development of a new AgriScience Cluster application under Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's (AAFC) Next Policy Framework (NPF), expected to run from 2028-2033.

LOI Request

The CFCRA is requesting **Letters of Intent (LOIs)** from researchers to identify research projects that could form part of the next CFCRA Cluster application to AAFC. Proposed research projects should directly address CFCRA research priorities, while also responding to the priorities and focus areas identified by Canada's agriculture ministers in [The Halifax Statement](#).

Alignment with CFCRA Research Priorities

The CFCRA has established a defined list of research priorities that it would like to see addressed through AAFC AgriScience Programming for the 2028-2033 period. These research priorities, developed with input from industry and other stakeholders, identify specific challenges and opportunities identified by the CFCRA for Canadian field crop production. They include priorities



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related to genetic improvement, disease and pest resistance, abiotic stress tolerance, crop quality, nutrient use efficiency, crop production systems, surveillance and diagnostics, and emerging market opportunities.

The complete list of CFCRA research priorities is provided in *Appendix A – 2026 CFCRA Research Priorities for AgriScience Programming*. LOIs must identify the CFCRA research priority(ies) being addressed by the proposed project and explain how the research will contribute to the priority(ies).

Please note: the CFCRA research priorities represent a strategic and targeted subset of research priorities identified specifically to guide CFCRA research investments through AAFC AgriScience Programming. They are not intended to represent a comprehensive list of research priorities or research needs for the crops covered.

Alignment with The Halifax Statement

While the final details for the AAFC NPF research funding programming are still in development, [The Halifax Statement](#), released in July 2026, provides the strategic direction for federal NPF investments in agriculture and agri-food with a vision for a “world-leading agriculture, agri-food and agri-based products sector that is competitive, innovative, resilient, and drives economic growth”.

Under The Halifax Statement, driving economic growth and competitiveness, diversifying markets and increasing trade, advancing science, research and innovation, and enhancing sector resilience are identified as key priorities.

Considering The Halifax Statement, LOIs should demonstrate how the proposed research can contribute to these priorities, for example, through productivity gains, improved competitiveness, increased domestic processing and value-added opportunities, and greater resilience through sustainable production systems. Of particular importance is the ability to demonstrate a clear pathway from research to farmer adoption and measurable impact, rather than focusing solely on the generation of research outputs.

The next Cluster is expected to place strong emphasis on coordinated action and partnerships, including collaboration across research organizations, industry, government and other relevant partners, as well as opportunities to leverage new and emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and digital technologies, where they can meaningfully advance research outcomes. Applicants should therefore consider not only the scientific merit of their proposed research, but also its potential for commercialization, adoption and practical application, its contribution to economic growth, productivity and resilience, and how collaboration with other organizations can expand the scope and impact of the research.

Overall, research projects should be designed with a clear pathway to adoption and impact. Projects should demonstrate how research results, technologies, tools, genetics, practices, or other outputs can provide measurable benefits to Canadian farmers and the broader field crop sector.



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AAFC Collaboration and Review (*NEW REQUIREMENT*)

Any LOI involving any AAFC researchers must go through an internal AAFC management review process to ensure science alignment, resource appropriateness, and team capacity (*a new process required by AAFC*). *This AAFC review process applies even to those LOIs with non-AAFC leads, where AAFC plays a secondary, supporting role in the research.* The AAFC LOI screening process requires 16 business days to complete. AAFC researchers on an LOI will be aware of how to submit the LOI for internal AAFC review. Please allow sufficient lead time for the internal AAFC review to take place. LOIs involving any AAFC researchers should be submitted for internal AAFC review by **Wednesday, October 21, 2026**. If an LOI does not involve AAFC scientists, the AAFC internal review is not required.

Wheat & Barley

The CFCRA has an interest in research supporting eastern Canadian barley and eastern Canadian wheat, and will be coordinating with the Canadian Wheat Research Coalition (CWRC) and the Canadian Barley Research Coalition (CBRC) in the development of future national wheat and barley Clusters.

It is expected that research pertaining to eastern Canadian wheat and eastern Canadian barley will be submitted through this CFCRA Call for LOIs, with integration into national wheat and national barley Cluster development processes, likely to be coordinated by CWRC and CBRC, respectively, at a later date.

Letter of Intent Application Guidelines:

Purpose of Letter of Intent

The purpose of the LOI process is:

1. To provide researchers with an opportunity to express interest in participating in a new CFCRA Cluster
2. To identify research projects best aligned with CFCRA research priorities

The CFCRA will evaluate LOIs based on:

- Relevance to CFCRA research priorities;
- Potential benefit to Canadian farmers and the field crop sector;
- Scientific merit; and
- Potential for adoption and practical application

Following a review of the LOIs, researchers may be invited to submit a full proposal. However, invitation to submit a full proposal does not guarantee that the research proposal will be funded.

Applicant Eligibility

- Eligible applicants include any researchers in Canadian academic institutions, not-for-profit research institutions, federal and provincial government research organizations, and private sector organizations.



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- All applicants must demonstrate the capacity to conduct sound research. Applicants must also be able to explain how they will address CFCRA commercialization principles, including transparent, non-exclusive and broad-based distribution of research results and technologies, with the goal of maximizing economic benefit to Canadian farmers and the broader value chain.

Collaboration

- Collaboration among researchers and organizations with complementary expertise is encouraged.
- Applicants should consider opportunities to
 - Combine complementary scientific expertise
 - Coordinate research across regions and institutions, where relevant and possible
- For variety development activities, field testing collaborations between non-AAFC and AAFC researchers are encouraged to be conducted through mutual exchange of field trials among breeders rather than through cash transactions.
- Please only list collaborators who have been approached and have agreed to participate directly in a project.
- In the interest of improved funding efficiency and in the spirit of collaboration, the CFCRA reserves the right to share LOIs with other relevant stakeholders deemed to be prospective industry funders.

Research Area Eligibility

- LOIs must:
 - Align with one or more of the research priorities described in *Appendix A - 2026 CFCRA Research Priorities for AgriScience Programming*
 - Clearly identify the problem or opportunity being addressed;
 - Describe the proposed research approach, anticipated deliverables, and the impact the deliverables will have on farmers and the broader Canadian and agri-food sector; and
 - Identify how the research advances the current state of knowledge or technology in the proposed research area.
- Please note: For projects that fall within the plant genetic improvement space, the LOI should include research activities only up to and including the **Variety Development** pillar identified in *Appendix B - Plant Genetic Improvement Continuum*. Activities falling within **Pre-Market Evaluation or any subsequent pillar** (e.g. adaptation testing of lines for registration and commercialization requirements, candidate variety testing in registration trials, merit testing, and performance testing) are expected to be ineligible for funding through the AgriScience Program and should not be included in the LOI.

Additional Funding

- Researchers are strongly encouraged to include additional outside funding sources (confirmed or pending) in their LOIs. Additional funding sources may include provincial



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government funding, other industry partner funding beyond the core CFCRA member organizations, or other relevant sources.

Expected Timeline for the Full Application Process (*subject to change*)

- The development of a new CFCRA Cluster will take place in two stages:
 - Letter of Intent stage
 - Full Proposal stage
- **October 21, 2026** – Any LOI involving any AAFC researchers must be submitted for internal AAFC review (via the AAFC lead or collaborator). This process takes 16 business days to complete.
- **November 13, 2026** – LOI submission deadline to the CFCRA.
- **Mid-February 2027** – LOI decisions communicated to researchers. Successful applicants will be invited to prepare full proposals.
- **April 2027** – Full proposal submission deadline (*any full proposals involving AAFC researchers will need to complete the internal AAFC review process again, prior to this date*).
- **July 2027** – Full proposal decisions communicated with researchers.
- **August 2027** – Proposal refinement based on peer review and funder feedback.
- **December 2027** – Cluster application package submitted to AAFC for funding consideration.
- Decisions made by the CFCRA regarding the selection of projects for inclusion in a Cluster application will be final.

Submission Details

Letter of Intent submission deadline: Friday, November 13, 2026.

LOIs involving any AAFC researchers must undergo internal AAFC review. This review must be initiated by **October 21, 2026**, as the process takes **16 business days** to complete.

Completed LOIs should be submitted in **Microsoft Word** format using the 'CFCRA LOI Template' by email to **Matthew Czerwinski, Project Manager, CFCRA** at mczerwinski@gfo.ca

All submitted Letters of Intent will receive an email confirming receipt within 2 business days.

Funding Organizations' Contact Information

If you are unsure whether your research idea would fit within the parameters of a new CFCRA Cluster, please contact the most relevant funding partner research contact, below. For any other inquiries, please contact Matthew Czerwinski at mczerwinski@gfo.ca, or 519-830-5492.

Organization	Contact	Email	Phone
Atlantic Grains Council	Heather Russell	heather@atlanticgrainscouncil.ca	506-381-5404
Producteurs de grains du Québec	Salah Zoghلامي	szoghلامي@pgq.ca	450-679-0540 x8635



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Grain Farmers of Ontario	Josh Cowan	joshcowan@gfo.ca	519-993-7692
Manitoba Crop Alliance	Carlie Johnston	carlie@mbcropalliance.ca	204-724-6170
Manitoba Pulse & Soybean Growers	Cassandra Tkachuk	cassandra@manitobapulse.ca	204-293-4424
Saskatchewan Pulse Growers	Allison Fletcher	afletcher@saskpulse.com	306-668-0591
Prairie Oat Growers Association	Shawna Mathieson	smathieson@poga.ca	306-530-8545
SeCan Association	Jeff Reid	jreid@secan.com	613-552-2835
FP Genetics Inc.	Michelle Beaith	mbeaith@fpgenetics.ca	639-571-9383