

**Minnesota Wheat Research and Promotion Council**  
**FULL RESEARCH PROPOSAL TEMPLATE**  
**For Crop Year 2026 (01/01/2026 to 12/31/2026)**  
(Maximum Two Pages, Plus Itemized Budget)

Project Title: Minnesota Small Grains Pest Survey 2026

Principle Investigator (PI): Dr. Anthony Hanson, Regional Educator & Assistant Extension Professor

Organization: University of Minnesota Extension – Integrated Pest Management

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Additional Investigator(s): Dr. Angie Peltier and Dr. Jochum Wiersma

Organization: University of Minnesota Extension

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Project Period: January 1, 2026 – December 31, 2026

Estimated cost: \$26,545

**Abstract**

Spring wheat is a major crop for producers in northwest Minnesota and has had increasing interest from producers across southern MN. Disease and insect pests have long been detrimental to the quantity and quality of the crop.

One of the key elements to successful wheat production centers on correct and timely identification of these disease and insect problems so appropriate and timely management strategies can be implemented, especially as conditions for pest favorability vary year-by-year. Cereal leaf beetle (*Oulema melanopus*) was found for the first time in 2023 and at economically damaging levels in NW MN during the 2023-24 MN Small Grains Pest Surveys and at somewhat reduced populations in 2025. Continued surveying in 2026 is needed to determine the extent and severity of this new pest in the region. The survey also gives a first alert for the presence of new diseases such as *Cephalosporium* stripe of wheat.

The expected outcomes of this pest survey are timely alerts for small grain producers throughout the growing season so that sound economic control options can be implemented. We will continue to integrate this survey with efforts coordinated by NDSU's IPM Survey to improve efficiency and reach of this program.

**Describe the background for your proposed project and the importance of this project to the profitability of wheat production in MN:**

This project will continue the successful U of M scouting program that has been conducted in previous years in coordination with the NDSU IPM survey since 2011. Given the current economic climate for Minnesota wheat producers and global wheat markets, scouting and research-based pest management continues to be *critical* to maximize farm profitability related to pest management. Scouting information collected during the field season is key to allow producers to make informed management decisions. The small grains pest survey in combination with existing weather-based disease risk models provide important pest-management information in a timely manner, giving producers a “heads-up” about arising pest issues with sound management recommendations.

Cereal leaf beetle (CLB) is a non-native insect initially found in Marshall, Pennington, Clay, Norman, Mahnomen, Otter Tail and Grant counties in 2023-24 with no new counties found in the 2025 survey. CLB can cause economic damage at only three larvae per plant during vegetative growth stages (the threshold decreases to one larva per plant on the flag leaf). Wheat stem sawfly is not new to the region, but instead is native to the northern plains of the United States and Canada, including the Red River Valley. Survey efforts will continue to help monitor the spread and impact of these species to assess management needs.

**Research methods:**

Similar to the 2025 season, a call will go out to wheat growers during January winter meetings and through early May to submit field coordinates online for the small grains disease and pest survey for scouts to visit throughout the growing season. The goal is to have approximately 100 fields that are evenly distributed across the wheat acreage in Minnesota. Three field scouts will sample these fields weekly, collect samples if needed for identification. When suspected new diseases are found, they will be sent to the UMN Plant Disease Clinic for verification. Data will be shared with the NDSU IPM program to produce the regional IPM maps. Small grains disease and pest updates will be published weekly during the scouting season on the Minnesota Crop News blog (<https://blog-crop-news.extension.umn.edu>), and presented at other venues such as radio, online webinars, and at in-person field days during the summer. This year, the scouts will also place insect traps along their routes provided in-kind by the Minnesota Dept. of Ag.

**Outline the timeline for completion:**

Jan - March - Recruit and hire scouts.

Jan- May - Solicit online submission of possible fields for scouting effort.

May - Train scouts (in cooperation of NDSU IPM program) and begin weekly scouting.

June and July - Weekly scouting continues. Data summaries are compiled with commentary and published to the Minnesota Crop News blog and on the disease forecasting websites.

**What methods, if any, will be used to disseminate your research findings out to the greater public, beyond the final report due to Minnesota Wheat Research and Promotion Council:**

The collected data and interpretations are disseminated to the greater public through the following channels:

- Minnesota Crop News.
- Minnesota Field Crop Trials bulletin
- Invited talks and presentations
- University of Minnesota Extension small grains programs.

**List potential collaborators or co-investigators you may consider inviting to participate:**

Co- PIs: Angie Peltier – UMN Extension regional educator – field crops and Dr. Jochum Wiersma, UMN Extension small grains specialist. Collaborators: Jan Knodel – NSDU IPM program for multi-state maps; Michelle Grabwoski and Angie Ambourn - Minnesota Dept. of Ag for providing traps and invasive species identification.

**Budget requirements:**

Costs consist primarily of expenses related to student labor and travel expenses associated with scouting small grains throughout the state. Minimum planned student or temp/casual (8.0% fringe) pay is \$16/hr up to \$20/hr based on qualifications (8 wks at 32 hrs./week). Scout vehicles are rented from University of Minnesota Morris Fleet Services. Historically, up to 12,000 miles have been covered by the three scouts for wheat fields over a summer (currently budgeted at \$0.2/mile and \$1,126/car/month). Supplies for students include limited use field items such as sweep nets, clipboards, bug repellent, sun screen, rubber boots, mud scrapers, collection vials, rubbing alcohol, hand sanitizer and collection bags. To address challenges with filling all scout positions in previous years, \$500 is included to assist with position advertising both in this proposal and in the soybean scouting proposal supporting these scouts with the Minnesota Soybean Research and Promotion Council.

**List sources and amounts of additional funding for this project, and indicate if they have committed to provide funding or if you have requested funding:**

Funding will be sought from the Minnesota Soybean Research & Promotion Council to include soybean scouting in western MN. The field scouts are shared between the two projects, thereby allowing the scouts to have a summer-season long employment opportunity and decreasing costs for both check-off-funded councils. This in turn helps us to recruit more qualified candidates.

Submit full proposal (max. 2 pages) and itemized budget to [bsorenson@mnwheat.com](mailto:bsorenson@mnwheat.com) by 11:59 PM, 11/15/25

## Minnesota Wheat Research and Promotion Council RESEARCH PROJECT ITEMIZED PROPOSAL BUDGET

<b>Project Title:</b> Minnesota Small Grains Pest Survey 2026			
<b>Principal Investigator(s) / Project Director(s)</b> Dr. Anthony Hanson Dr. Angie Peltier Dr. Jochum Wiersma	<b>Funds Requested For</b>		
	Year 1 (2025)	Year 2 (2026)	Year 3 (2027)
<b>A. Salaries and Wages</b>	<b>\$15,360</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
1. Co-principal Investigator(s)			
2. Senior Associates			
3. Research Associates – Post Doctorate			
4. Other Professionals			
5. Graduate Students			
6. Prebaccalaureate Students (3) (or temp/casual) 8 wks x 32 hrs / wk = 768 hours @ up to \$20.00 / hr	\$15,360		
7. Secretarial - Clerical			
8. Technical, Shop and Other			
<b>B. Fringe Benefits - 8.0% (temp/casual only)</b>	<b>\$1,229</b>		
<b>C. Consulting and Professional Services</b>			
<b>D. Supplies and Services - \$300 scout supplies, \$500 for scout advertising</b>	<b>\$800</b>		
<b>E. Travel (12,000 miles @ \$0.20/mile)</b>	<b>\$2,400</b>		
<b>F. Sub-Contracts</b>			
<b>G. Repairs &amp; Maintenance</b>			
<b>H. Rentals &amp; Lease (\$1,126 per month per vehicle)</b>	<b>\$6,756</b>		
<b>I. Other Expenses</b>			
<b>TOTAL AMOUNT OF THIS REQUEST (per year)</b>	<b>\$ 26,545</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>