

## WHEAT YIELD NETWORK COMMUNIQUE

We, funders and research organizations from 16 countries, met in Mexico City on November 13, 2012 to advance a Wheat Yield Network (WYN) aimed at raising the genetic yield potential of wheat by up to 50% over the next 20 years. The meeting was hosted by SAGARPA, BBSRC, USAID and CIMMYT and convened to focus on the goal of establishing a global consortium with the specific purpose of improving wheat yield potential. The WYN would be aligned with the vision, policy and scientific activities of the global Wheat Initiative<sup>1</sup> established following G20 meetings in 2011 and reaffirmed in 2012.

We recognize that plateauing yields, global population growth, price instability, changing diets and climatic changes mandate an urgent and strategic need for research to improve the yield potential of wheat. To tackle global problems such as this, collaboration and coordination at the international level will be required between governmental, non-governmental and private sector organisations. This will need to be coupled with a willingness of funding organisations to take new and flexible approaches to supporting research, in terms of the funding models employed, the types of research included within large multinational programmes, and the integration of complementary initiatives.

We acknowledge the important groundwork and scientific vision outlined by a Wheat Yield Consortium<sup>2</sup> led by CIMMYT under the CGIAR WHEAT research programme, and the support that has already been provided to this effort by the government agencies of China, Mexico, UK and USA as well as by the CGIAR Fund. The Wheat Yield Network should build upon this effort, expanding upon the original vision by incorporating competitively funded grants, and a core breeding platform led by CIMMYT. The WYN should actively coordinate these research efforts and link to other relevant programs to ensure rapid and efficient progress towards adoption of higher yielding wheat varieties in farmers' fields.

We deliberated the structure and scope of the proposed Wheat Yield Network, including the scientific breadth, the role of the private sector, and the overall governance and management. Several immediate steps should be taken to advance the WYN, including:

Establish a working group of funders and research organization representatives to deliver the following:

1. Outline the structure, functioning and governance of the WYN
2. Convene a small committee of qualified experts to:
  - a. Define the scientific scope for the WYN
  - b. Complete a global mapping exercise of existing research efforts contributing to wheat yield potential
  - c. Provide recommendations to the funders on required research activities and the appropriate funding model, including which components should be competitively funded
3. Continue to engage the private sector and determine their contributions and involvement

We are committed to supporting a coordinated and strategic approach to increasing wheat yield potential and intend to establish the Wheat Yield Network for this purpose. We acknowledge that the

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<sup>1</sup> Wheat Initiative: [www.wheatinitiative.org](http://www.wheatinitiative.org)

<sup>2</sup> Achieving yield gains in wheat (October 2012). Reynolds et al., Plant, Cell & Environment, Volume 35, Issue 10, pages 1799–1823.

WYN should be supported through multiple avenues, including competitive and core funding from cash contributions and some in-kind participation.

We intend to work towards the establishment of the Wheat Yield Network as a matter of urgency, delivering a scientific plan, a management and governance structure and a timeline for competitive calls by the next meeting of the Wheat Yield Network in March 2013.

The following organizations were represented at this first meeting of the Wheat Yield Network and approved this communiqué:

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), Canada  
Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), Australia  
Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC), United Kingdom  
Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS), China  
Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), International  
Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas (CONICET), Argentina  
Department for International Development (DFID), United Kingdom  
Empresa Brasileira de Pesquisa Agropecuária (EMBRAPA), Brazil  
General Directorate of Agricultural Research (GDAR), Turkey  
Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Germany  
Grains Research & Development Corporation (GRDC), Australia  
Home Grown Cereals Authority (HGCA), United Kingdom  
Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), India  
Instituto Nacional de Investigaciones Forestales y Agropecuarias/ La Secretaría de Agricultura,  
Ganadería, Desarrollo Rural, Pesca y Alimentación (INIFAP/ SAGARPA), Mexico  
Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique (INRA), France  
Japan International Research Center for Agricultural Sciences (JIRCAS), Japan  
National Research Council Canada (NRC), Canada  
Syngenta Foundation, Switzerland  
The Agriculture and Food Development Authority (TEAGASC), Ireland  
United States Department of Agriculture - Agricultural Research Service (USDA ARS), USA  
United States Agency for International Development (USAID), USA