MICHIGAN BLUEBERRY COMMISSION CALL FOR RESEARCH PROPOSALS

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS – 2027

Michigan Blueberry Commission (MBC) was formed on May 31, 2017, under Public Act 232 of 1965. The MBC functions like other commodity check-off programs in Michigan. The MBC's main charge is funding critically needed, industry driven research, by utilizing grower dollars, and leveraged funding. The MBC will be funding research projects, or would entertain partnerships in projects, that help address the needs of Michigan blueberry growers.

INDUSTRY PRIORITIES

1. **Develop management programs for native and invasive pests**
    a. Blueberry Stem Gall Wasp, Spotted Wing Drosophila, nematodes, thrips
    b. Fungal and viral pathogens, that affect blueberry bush health and fruit quality (e.g. anthracnose, fruit rot, stem blights and viral diseases)
    c. Weeds, especially milkweed, horse nettle, hemp dogbane and perennial vines, timing of post emergence herbicides in fall for perennial weeds
    d. Study effects of field applied sanitizers, skin thickeners, and feeding stimulants on fruit quality, disease control and insect control
    e. Surfactants/adjuvants, best application practices with herbicides, fungicides, insecticides, and plant growth regulators
    f. Development of non-chemical approaches (e.g. biologicals)
2. **Enhance blueberry yields and quality**
    a. Best practices for removal of low yielding fields, site preparation strategies and field establishment techniques
    b. Better understanding of methods to increase fruit set, fruit size, and fruit quality including planting design, pollination, pruning, nutrition and water management, soil and foliar applied bio-stimulants

c. Breeding program to enhance selection for both plant hardiness and fruit quality
    i. Growth regulator uses to increase quality and yields and de-fruiting young plantings
d. Post-harvest efficiency

3. **Variety Testing for Michigan viability**
    a. Hardiness
    b. Size/quality/yield
    c. Insect resistance
    d. Disease resistance
4. **Improving Farm Resiliency and Sustainability**
    a. Climate Change
    b. Precision Agriculture
    c. Crop production Inputs
    d. Water use efficiency
    e. Alternate production strategies and management systems
5. **Food Safety**
    a. Production and Harvest Practices
    b. FSMA and GAP education to grower

TIMELINE

November 13, 2026– Call for Proposals
December 18, 2026 – Proposals due
January 2027 – Notifications of Awards
April 1, 2027 – Availability of Funds
December 2027 – Project progress and/or final reports due at the December MBC meeting

Proposals for consideration are not to exceed $15,000.

PROPOSAL OUTLINE (Please limit your proposal to no more than 6 pages, including the cover page)

Cover page (please include the following)

1. Project Title
2. Principal Investigator
3. Collaborators
4. Principal Investigator mailing address
5. Principal investigator email address
6. Project summary (limit to 250 words)

Problem statement (relate to industry priorities, why is it important & timely)
Objectives
Methods and Procedures
Anticipated Results and Impact
Timeline
Budget

a) Personnel wages, including associated fringe
b) Non-expendable equipment, provide an explanation
c) Materials, supplies and publications
d) Travel
e) Other direct costs, provide an explanation

EVALUATION CRITERIA

- Aligns with the MBC industry driven priorities (25 points)
- Extent and demonstration of partnering with and potential impact on Michigan's Blueberry Industry (20 points)
- Mechanism to deliver information to Michigan blueberry industry (20 points)
- Scientific soundness, appropriateness of methodology, completion feasibility, project scope, previous research connection (25 points)
- Team composition and investigator qualifications are aligned with project (10 points)
- TOTAL: 100 points

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Non-MSU proposals should be submitted electronically to Michigan Blueberry Commission by emailing Nancy Nyquist at nnyquis@michfb.com by 5pm EST December 18, 2026. MSU researchers should submit proposals electronically thru MSU's KR system. They must be fully routed by 5pm EST on December 18, 2026. Please contact Sara Haller at bolessar@msu.edu with any questions.

PROPOSAL REVIEW

- All proposals are subject to review/scoring by the Michigan Blueberry Commission at their January 2027 Commission Meeting

FUND ALLOCATION

- Funds will be allocated in one lump sum

- Extensions of funding could be considered, at the discretion of the MBC

PROJECT COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS

- Projects are one year in duration
- Reporting should happen ½ way through project (interim report due by September 1), as well as year-end (the MBC December meeting) for final report
- Interim report- if applicable, in person, at the MBC meeting
- Final report – 5 page maximum
- Request the mention of MBC as the funding source during presentations, on publications, etc.