# WGRF Member Update: For Distribution

**WGRF Vision:** Profitable and sustainable western Canadian grain farmers.
**Mission:** Producers directing investments into crop research to benefit western Canadian grain farmers.

## New Strategic Plan

WGRF released its new strategic plan in 2019. We will continue to be a farmer directed organization focusing on funding crop research to benefit western Canadian grain farmers. Based on input from stakeholders' significant changes in funding policy were implemented:

- **Expansion of Crop Specific Funding to Include Barley, Canola, Lentil, Pea and Wheat**
  - There are now 15 crops eligible for funding targeted to crop specific issues. They are barley, canaryseed, canola, chickpea, corn, fababean, flax, lentil, mustard, oats, pea, soybean, sunflower, wheat and winter cereals;
- **Transformation of the Endowment Fund to a Research Fund**
  - WGRF will increase expenditures out of the Research Fund when it exceeds a minimum target value of $100 million, as is currently the case ($147 million as of November 2019);
- **Consolidation of Priority Funding Areas to Variety Development and Production (Agronomy).**
  - Post-harvest research is no longer eligible for WGRF funding
- **Invest WGRF's Residual Wheat and Barley Funds**
  - To reflect the transfer of WGRF's wheat and barley variety development responsibilities to the Wheat and Barley Commissions/Associations, WGRF is planning to draw down the remaining funds with key investments into wheat and barley research over time.

## Canadian Agriculture Partnership Clusters

WGRF is providing $6.4 million for five clusters (Integrated Crop Agronomy, Barley, Wheat, Diversified Field Crops and Organic) with a total value of over $80 million.

## Increased Funding of Graduate Student Scholarships

WGRF is increasing its graduate scholarship funding from $100,000 to $300,000 per year. Since 2011, WGRF has invested $700,000 towards Graduate Student Scholarships. The Scholarships have been administered on a rotating basis between the Universities of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Each university received $100,000 every three years and could choose to fund one Ph.D. student at rate of $33,000 per year for three years, or two Masters students at $25,000 per year for two years.

## Genome Canada's (2019-23) LSARP Competition Awarded

Two New Genomics Projects funded by WGRF were approved in Genome Canada's (2019-23) LSARP Competition. The first project is '4D Wheat: Diversity, Domestication, Discovery and Delivery' led by Curtis Pozniak (U of S) and Sylvie Cloutier (AAFC Ottawa). The 2nd project approved is 'Enhancing the Value of Lentil Variation for Ecosystem Survival' (EVOLVES) led by Kirsten Bett and Bert Vandenberg from the U of S. The total WGRF contribution for these two projects is $1, 675,000.

**Field Hero's Awarded Canadian Agricultural Marketing (CAMA) Social Media Award**

The Beneficial Insect campaign Field Heroes has been successful in making farmers and agronomists more aware of the presence and value of beneficial insects. The campaign encourages farmers (and their advisors) to consider beneficial insect populations when making spraying decisions through a website platform from which entomologists can share their research and engage with growers.

**New Prairie Pest Monitoring Network Website**

WGRF has been working with the Prairie Pest Monitoring Network to develop a new comprehensive website. The new website **Prairiepestmonitor.ca**, will launch in the spring of 2020.

**Midge Tolerant Wheat is Celebrating 10 years of stewardship**

WGRF has been managing and funding Midge Tolerant Wheat (MTW) communications since 2008. The industry has done an excellent job of protecting this important varietal technology by following stewardship principles.

**2020 Budget Approved**

On November 14th, the WGRF Board approved a 2020 expenditure budget of $15,603,786. With more than 172 current research projects currently being funded by WGRF, we are the largest producer funder of crop research in Canada.

**New Research Funding Commitments**

The WGRF Board approved up to $8 million for new 32 research proposals received through the provincial funding calls. More details will be available following discussions with co-funders and completion of contracts with the research institutions.

**$20 Million Phase 2 Capacity**

In recent years, the agricultural community has expressed concerns about the status of capacity for crop-related research in Western Canada. WGRF has made it a priority to increase capacity through targeted Phase 1 and Phase 2 capacity-building initiatives. With Phase 1 nearing completion, we launched Phase 2 in April 2019. It is a $20 million commitment to expand the capacity (infrastructure and tangible assets) necessary to accelerate crop research for the benefit of crop producers in Western Canada. We are currently accepting applications and expect to make funding announcements in 2020.

**Member Outreach**

WGRF welcomes the opportunity to meet with the Boards of Member Organizations to share our plan. We plan to attend as many Member Organization AGM's as possible. If you would like WGRF to present at an upcoming Board Meeting, please contact MikeEspeseth@westerngrains.com.

## Your support and membership in WGRF are greatly appreciated.