

April 10, 2026

**Christina Hamilton**

Assistant Director & NIMSS System Administrator  
agInnovation North Central  
1450 Linden Drive  
Madison, WI 53706

Dear Chris and the Selection Committee:

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed new Hatch Multistate project establishing a Corn Diseases Working Group within the agInnovation North Central and NIMSS framework.

Corn production remains a foundational component of U.S. agriculture and of the North Central region's agricultural economy. Disease pressures affecting corn systems are becoming increasingly complex due to evolving pathogen populations, changing environmental and climatic conditions, intensification of production systems, and rising concerns related to fungicide resistance. These challenges are regional in scope and cannot be effectively addressed by individual states acting independently.

The proposed Corn Diseases Working Group is well aligned with the objectives of the Hatch Multistate Research Program, particularly its emphasis on addressing regionally significant agricultural problems through coordinated research and Extension activities across land-grant institutions. Establishing this project as a formal multistate Hatch group will provide an essential framework for shared problem definition, collaboration among complementary research and diagnostic programs, and alignment of Extension priorities across participating states.

As a new Hatch Multistate project, the Corn Diseases Working Group is positioned to generate clear and reportable outcomes consistent with 2025–26 Hatch guidance. Anticipated outputs include coordinated research efforts, enhanced regional disease monitoring and diagnostic insight, development of science-based disease management recommendations, and integration of research results into Extension and outreach programming. These outputs directly support the Hatch Program's purpose of leveraging public investment to deliver applied, stakeholder-relevant solutions that improve agricultural productivity, sustainability, and resilience.

The Purdue University College of Agriculture strongly supports the initiation of this new multistate Hatch project and values the role of agInnovation North Central and the NIMSS system in facilitating multistate coordination, documentation, and accountability. I fully support approval of this new Hatch Multistate Corn Diseases Working Group project.

Sincerely,



**Ronald F. Turco, Ph.D.**

Associate Dean for Research, Graduate Education & Faculty Affairs  
College of Agriculture, Purdue University