National Barley Cluster 2028-2033

Calls for Letters of Intent

Deadline: November 16th, 2026 (11:59 pm CDT)

The Canadian Barley Research Coalition (CBRC) is a national not-for-profit organization dedicated to improving the profitability and competitiveness of Canadian barley through strategic, long-term investments in research.

The CBRC is preparing for a new National Barley Cluster (2028–2033) under AAFC's Next Policy Framework (NPF). This will be the sector's fourth Barley Cluster and the second to be led by the CBRC. The Cluster is intended to support and advance a broad range of barley research across Canada, addressing key industry and government priorities, delivering meaningful benefits to producers and the broader value chain, and strengthening the productivity, sustainability, and competitiveness of the Canadian barley sector.

The current Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (SCAP) Barley Cluster represents a $9.6 million investment in barley research over five years (2023–2028). The Cluster helps to support barley research in Canada and brings together funding from producer organizations, industry, and the Government of Canada.

The CBRC is now requesting Letters of Intent (LOIs) for the next Barley Cluster. The LOI process is intended to identify research proposals that demonstrate strong scientific merit, clear industry relevance, and the potential to generate meaningful and measurable outcomes and contribute to the competitiveness, sustainable growth and profitability of Canada's barley sector. Proposed research should align with industry-driven research themes and priorities (Section A), as well as the research priorities of the NPF (Section B).

Submission requirements and deadline:

LOIs are to be prepared using the **2028-33 National Barley Cluster LOI — Template**. LOIs should be concise and focused on the information required to assess the strategic relevance and potential impact of the proposed research.

Additional information may be provided at a later date as further details become available from AAFC regarding the NPF and its implications for the AgriScience Program.

Please note that the CBRC would prefer a stand-alone application that is not dependent on or linked to other funding applications.

In the interest of administrative efficiency, the CBRC reserves the right to share LOIs with other appropriate funding organizations.

Please submit your LOI on or before Monday November 16th, 2026, by 11:59pm CDT to Shelley Lagassé, Program Manager, CBRC, by email at slagasse@barleyresearch.ca. Late submissions may not be considered. All submitted LOIs will receive an email confirming receipt within 3 business days.

Tentative timelines for building the next Cluster:

September 23, 2026	Call for LOIs open
November 16, 2026	Deadline for submission of LOIs
January 2027	Successful applicants will be notified and invited to submit a full proposal
March 2027	Deadline for submission of full proposal
April – July 2027	Full proposals will undergo peer review prior to final selection by the funders. *Revisions to proposals may be requested following receipt and consideration of the peer review comments.*
August 2027	Final selection of full proposals will be made by the funders, with notifications subsequently sent to researchers. *Selected proposals will be included in a Cluster application to be submitted by the CBRC to Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada in 2027.*

SECTION A:

Producer- and Industry-Generated Research Priorities for the next Barley Cluster

These research priorities are aligned with and represent a subset of the priorities identified in the National Barley Research Strategy. They will serve as the focus of research funding for the next Barley Cluster. If you would like to discuss your proposed research ahead of your submission, please contact Shelley Lagassé at slagasse@barleyresearch.ca or at 204-688-8399, or a funder listed in Section C: Current Barley Cluster Funding Partners.

Research Priorities for the Next Barley Cluster 2028-33

Barley Breeding, Variety Advancement, Disease & Pathology

Feed & Forage (2&6-row) and Malting Barley (2-row)	• Increased yield potential, better than the best check – maximizing yield potential and quality in alignment with regional conditions • Yield stability (environmental and regionally) – single stress performance vs multiple stress performance and a loss – Abiotic stress tolerance (i.e. drought tolerance, frost resilience, low temperature germination) • Advanced breeding strategies and field-based phenotyping to accelerate genetic gain and reduce time to producer adoption • Increased disease resistance targeting the PRCOB priority 1 diseases • Monitor emerging and established barley diseases to identify changes in pathogen populations and support effective disease management and durable resistance • Stem strength & lodging resistance • Portion of available varieties containing semi-dwarf characteristic • Increased plump and improved consistency in kernel size • Develop barley for eastern Canada: Refer to CFCRA Research Priorities for AgriScience Programming — Eastern Canadian Barley Research Priorities
Feed & Forage Barley (2&6-row)	• Maintain or improve feed and forage quality with other breeding targets listed above and including smooth awns and/or hooded (forage), improved fiber digestibility (forage), improved palatability, wider harvest window and increased disease resistance to ergot: Refer to the Canadian Beef Industry Research Strategy. Forage & Feed Production
Malting Barley (2-row)	• Maintain or improve malt quality with other breeding targets: Refer to BMBRI's Strategic Goals and Targets for Malting Barley Breeding and Research

Calls for Letters of Intent (LOI)

Agronomy, Production, Disease & Pathology

Feed & Forage (2&6-row), Malting (2-row), and Food Barley	• Economically address agronomic practices to leverage G x E x M interaction in Western Canada's different agro-ecological zones to optimize yield and quality • Barley management practices to reduce weeds (i.e. herbicide resistant wild oats and kochia), disease and insect pests • Develop a modern, efficient, coordinated surveillance system to monitor and diagnose current, emerging, and new-to-Canada barley pathogens • Economic assessment and practical application of digital agriculture tools for improved on-farm decision making • Address inclusion of barley within rotation to maximize farm profitability, soil health and reduce the soil-seedbank for weeds, disease, pathogen and insect loads
Feed & Forage Barley (2&6-row)	• Identify cost-effective agronomic strategies to increase energy yield or biomass yield per acre for specific end uses (i.e. forage, silage, grain, feed) • Investigate forage barley as part of a cropping system, including in mixtures, blends, intercrops, with livestock and cover crops, to identify optimal systems for maximizing output, economics, and risks
Malting Barley (2-row)	• Investigate agronomic and management factors that will improve the likelihood of selection for malting barley, including sustainable crop management practices to reduce emissions and improve carbon sequestration: Refer to BMBRI's Strategic Goals and Targets for Malting Barley Breeding and Research
Food Barley	• Crop management practices to maximize β-glucan and reduce pre-harvest sprouting, staining, microbial contaminants, DON and alkaloids • Improved germination of hulless barley in various agro-ecological zones

Diversified End Uses & Markets

Feed & Forage (2&6-row), Malting (2-row), and Food Barley	• Technologies to remove, inactivate, bind, or mitigate the effects of ergot and other mycotoxins including deoxynivalenol (DON)
Feed & Forage Barley (2&6-row)	• Technologies to improve barley processing and enhance the consistency of starch availability • Technologies to strengthen and quantify animal health benefits of barley-based feed rations • Prediction models and diagnostic methods to determine feed value and characterize starch availability, including applications for variable-quality or blended barley and support for ration formulation
Malting Barley (2-row)	• Innovative technology to improve malting and brewing process efficiency: Refer to BMBRI's Strategic Goals and Targets for Malting Barley Breeding and Research
Food Barley	• Improved palatability of barley food products • Development of technologies aimed at reducing the rancidity of food barley products • Innovative extraction and processing for healthy barley products from milling fractionations

SECTION B:

Focus Areas for AAFC's Next Policy Framework

It is expected that AgriScience will contribute towards all four of the Halifax Statement priorities, and the overarching goal of building a competitive, innovative and resilient agriculture and agri-food sector.

- ✓ Driving Economic Growth and Competitiveness
- ✓ Diversifying Markets and Increasing Trade
- ✓ Advancing Science, Research and Innovation
- ✓ Enhancing Sector Resilience

SECTION C:

Current Barley Cluster Funding Partners

Alberta Grains (AG)

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Manitoba Crop Alliance (MCA)

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Atlantic Grains Council (AGC)

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Producteurs de grains du Québec (PGQ)

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Commission (SaskBarley)

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Beef Cattle Research Council (BCRC)

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Institute (BMBRI)

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