

A PROPOSAL TO
NORTH CAROLINA SMALL GRAIN GROWERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

FOR RESEARCH OR EDUCATION ENTITLED
Small Grain Field Days and Whistle Stop Tours, 2023-24

COVERING THE PERIOD FROM **10/01/2023** TO **09/30/2024**

REQUESTING SUPPORT IN THE AMOUNT OF **\$12,000**

SUBMITTED BY:

Project Leader	Departmental Affiliation
Angela R. Post	Crop and Soil Sciences
Al Wood	NC Cooperative Extension Service
Brad Graham	NC Dept. of Agriculture & Consumer Services
Morgan Menaker	NC Cooperative Extension Service

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Note: This is a fundamental research or scholarly project and, as such, the University shall be free to publish or disseminate the results of this research or otherwise treat such results as in the public domain, and it will conduct the research in an open forum consistent with the University's mission of research, instruction and public service.

NCARS/NCCES Code: 24-03

OBJECTIVE(S):

1. Execute three Small Grains Field Days in North Carolina
2. Execute up to 15 Small Grain Whistle Stop Tours in North Carolina

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND RELEVANCE:

This proposal covers three small grain field days in 2024. These events will focus on presenting timely information to growers. Event outlines may change due to the characteristics of the growing season.

Below is a tentative outline for the three locations:

1) Northeast Region Ag EXPO (\$4,000)

- a. Northeast Ag Expo Agents led by Al Wood
- b. Location to be determined
- c. Second Tuesday in February Tentative Date
- d. OVT and special demonstration plots
- e. County agents will identify tests for their event
- f. Specialist will coordinate to have tests co-located
- g. Planting, Plot maintenance, and Harvest will be coordinated with Dr. Post

2) Central Piedmont Region Rowan County Site (\$4,000)

- a. Led by Brad Graham and local agents
- b. Located at the Piedmont Research Station, Salisbury NC
- c. Early to Mid-March tentative date
- d. OVT and special demonstration plots
- e. Demo plots representing on-station research and important management issues as requested by Small Grains and other Extension Specialists working in small grains
- f. Planting, Plot maintenance, and Harvest will be coordinated with Dr. Post

3) Southern Piedmont Region Union County Site (\$4,000)

- a. Led by Morgan Menaker
- b. Location to be determined
- c. Early or Mid-February Tentative Date
- d. OVT and special demonstration plots
- e. County agents will identify tests for their event
- f. Specialist will coordinate to have tests co-located
- g. Planting, Plot maintenance, and Harvest will be coordinated with Dr. Post

There will be three field days scheduled for spring 2024. They will be held early in the season and before topdressing timing if possible. In order to address the unique challenges of each growing season, presentation topics will change from year to year and location to location in order to provide growers with the best information. In 2023 we offered a “learning laboratory” at the lunch portion of the event with several booths to educate growers about wheat maturity, weed identification, soil and plant disease clinic sampling, and reading and interpreting a waste analysis. We will offer these at every field day in 2024 with differing topics based on local-need. One addition for 2024 will be a grain quality and grading demonstration.

Small Grains Whistle Stop Tour: (\$0)

We will continue with the approach initiated in 2017-18 to reach more growers and stakeholders that may not have a large field day local to their area. There will be a Small Grains Whistle Stop Tour during wheat grain fill. We will target dates in April and May to include topics important during wheat heading. The Small grains Extension team is asking agents in up to 15 counties to initiate a wheat variety demonstration or other production topic demo of interest in their county. Funding to travel to and host the events will be supported through the Small Grains Extension program. Ten of the events will be targeted for wheat and five will be open for other specialty

small grains. The schedule of events for this field tour will be available in early January and we will target two locations per day for a total of eight days traveling the state to educate wheat and other small grain producers. Dr. Post and will be in attendance at every event and other specialists will attend depending on the topic selected by the agent for their demonstration plots. For example, at variety demonstrations, we would invite Mr. Ryan Heiniger; for fungicide demonstrations we would invite Dr. Christina Cowger; and for weed control demonstrations we would invite Dr. Wes Everman, and so on.

Since 2018, we have held 41 whistle stop events in North Carolina. We hope to attract counties outside of the normal field day stops by hosting the whistle stops for more and better contact with growers in other parts of the state. For demo strips only, the county and/or the grower cooperator would be responsible for main oversight. For any tests that are replicated, the small grains extension team will support planting, maintenance and harvest activities as well.

IMPACT

Holding the small grain field days earlier in the year has greatly improved growers' ability to implement new and timelier management practices on-farm. In 2023-24 we will continue to train agents more in-depth at this time when they will be receiving lots of questions in small grains leading up to topdress.

We are still able to train producers on what to look for late season with regard to split nitrogen applications or foliar fungicide applications through the Small Grains Whistle Stop tour. At that time we can also look at the impact we have had in season with additional small grain management tests.

We have been successful at greatly reducing the per-person cost of these events over the last several seasons, utilizing Small Grains Assessment dollars wisely while educating as many producers and stakeholders as possible. We have also encouraged agents in each region to secure industry support to assist in funding these events.

As a program, we are open to new ideas about the field day and whistle stop tour program and changes in the coming seasons to retain and improve producer engagement.

FUNDS REQUESTED:

2023-24 \$12,000