



Press Release, 14<sup>th</sup> of January 2026

## WHEAT RESEARCH AND THE POWER OF INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

(Berlin, 14<sup>th</sup> of January 2026) The Wheat Initiative, an international science partnership, is calling on governments and the private sector around the world to protect global investments in food security. Representing 14 nations, private sector leaders, and international organisations, the Initiative has grave concerns about new budgetary constraints that are threatening years of research and productive partnerships on wheat, especially at member organisation CIMMYT, an international food security research laboratory headquartered in Mexico.

The Wheat Initiative was created in 2011 to help improve global food security through strategic wheat research. And while there has been significant progress over the last 15 years, a growing world population, land degradation, and increasing climate variability are threatening wheat production and global food security. Further challenges are coming from regulatory barriers to collaboration and sharing of genetic resources, and declining support for agricultural research organisations focussed on research for development, through collaborative networks. Scientific research is a basic requirement for improving the yield and sustainability of wheat, this globally significant staple crop.

Wheat was one of the first crops in human history to be domesticated. From its centre of origin in the Middle East, wheat has become the most widely cultivated crop in the world, grown in over 90 countries. Moreover, non-wheat producers are frequently large wheat importers, such that wheat now accounts for over 20% of human carbohydrate and protein intake and is the most traded food source.

The story of wheat's rise to being a critical food for humanity is a story of collaboration and sharing. Global collaboration has led to dramatic yield gains through the introduction of new germplasm from breeding programs in distant regions and sharing improvements in cultivation techniques. CIMMYT has played an important role in this success.

CIMMYT fosters "improved quantity, quality, and dependability of production systems and basic cereals such as maize, wheat, triticale, sorghum, millets, and associated crops through applied agricultural science, particularly in the Global South, through building strong partnerships". Investment in wheat and agricultural research through organisations such as CIMMYT, has given an excellent return on investment. Although focussed on resource poor countries, CIMMYT's work has been critical to wheat production in all wheat producing countries and has been fundamental to addressing the challenges facing wheat farmers; CIMMYT's work will continue to be critical in addressing the new challenges.

The Wheat Initiative has always aimed to support the achievement of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 2 of zero hunger, and believes that international wheat science collaboration, with CIMMYT as a key hub for the global south, is necessary for meeting this goal. The Initiative will continue to take steps to raise awareness of the importance of international investment in wheat research.

The Wheat Initiative was established with the support of G20 agriculture ministers to help improve world food security. If you wish to find out more about the history and importance of wheat research, please visit [www.wheatinitiative.org](http://www.wheatinitiative.org) or contact us.

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