

St. Paul, MN - February 2nd, 2018

Dear Colleagues and Friends in the “Oat Community”:

Approximately three years ago a large group of us came together to envision how to develop a game-changing initiative to address the challenges posed to our crop by crown and stem rusts. Over three annual meetings and with many efforts from many scientists and stakeholders, the Oat Rust initiative was born. At the same time the organization on behalf of which I am writing, Oat Global, was formed and took the responsibility to fundraise for the ORI with a target of \$15 million over a ten-year period.

The purpose of my letter is to confirm that we are continuing to work aggressively in this direction although so far we have not secured the necessary funding. On behalf of Oat Global, I want to thank all of you for participating in Oat Rust Forums and working in between meetings to build the project plans and compelling technical strategies that are part of the ORI roadmap. Everyone in Oat Global recognizes the tremendous effort that this has taken and deeply values your dedication and leadership.

As Oat Global, especially with the leadership provided by Prof. Bradeen and Ms. Hansen of the Stakman-Borlaug Center at University of Minnesota, we have been promoting the initiative with various funding agencies.

First of all a major grant request was submitted to FFAR (Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research) for the first five years of funding. Despite nearly 18 months of coordinated work with FFAR, our proposal was not successful primarily due to low financial commitment by the industry in matching funds. This is an ongoing challenge that we are all addressing within our companies in order to build compelling business cases for supply chain resilience that hopefully will unlock private investments.

On a second front, the North American Millers’ Association has been advocating with members of the United States Congress to secure funding for oat research in the next Farm Bill. This is progressing in the right direction to date but it is not a guarantee until the bill is signed into law and funds oat research.

Third, some of our colleagues in the academia, AAFC, and ARS have secured funding for individual projects in oat rust that are building foundational knowledge as envisioned in the ORI roadmap. These efforts are bringing us all forward towards our vision and we would like to extend our appreciation and gratitude to those scientists who have secured and deployed those resources.

We as Oat Global directors need more time to secure the funding that this community needs for the ORI. Meanwhile we want to be respectful of everyone's time and academic priorities, their "day job" so to speak. Therefore, we shall put a temporary hold on other time-demanding Oat Rust Forums while we succeed in fundraising.

Looking forward to come back to you all with good news soon.

Sincerely,



Gabe Gusmini - Oat Global Chair