



Commodity Liaison Committee Update 2025-26

Food Use Workshop, Denver, CO, September 9, 2025

Pest Management Solutions for Specialty Crops and Specialty Uses

CLC Update



Todd Scholz Chair, Commodity Liaison Committee, IR-4

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CLC Update

- **What is CLC?**
- **Who are they?**
- **What do they do?**

What is Commodity Liaison Committee (CLC)?

Purpose: CLC Charter

- The CLC is the **link between IR-4 and those who grow specialty food and ornamental commodities** or their representatives.
- Therefore, the primary purpose of the CLC is to **provide guidance and advice to the IR-4 Project** Management Committee in ways in which the program can best serve the needs of producers of specialty crops.
- The CLC serves an important role in **communicating the mission of the IR-4 Project to the agricultural community and provides visibility at the grower level.**
- The CLC also **supports federal funding initiatives** for the IR-4 Program and advocates for funding to maintain viable food and ornamentals research and registration programs.



What is CLC?

- 31 Members
- Members include Exec Directors, Scientific and Crop Protection Specialists, Market Directors, and Farmers
- Longest serving—joined in 2001, 24 years.
 - (Only about half as long as Jerry Baron)
- Located in 23 states
- Ultimately, they represent all 50 states

What is CLC?



- *IR-4 sees stakeholders as equals.*
- *Not just an advisory committee.*
 - *Position on Board of Directors (PMC)*
 - *Weekly communication*
 - *Involved in hiring and evaluations.*

What is Commodity Liaison Committee?



- *31 Members*
- *Representing all 50 States.*
- *Representing specialty crops and horticulture.*

Who are Commodity Liaison Members?

- **Larry Elworth**, Executive Director, Pennsylvania Apple Commission
- **Jere Downing**, Executive Director, Cranberry Institute
- **Rocky Lundy**, Executive Director Mint Industry Research Council
- **Rich Bonano**, Owner, Pleasant Valley Gardens, MA (Present Director of Extension, NC State)
- **Michael Bledsoe**, VP Food Safety and Regulatory Affairs, Village Farms

Who are Commodity Liaison Members?

- **Todd Scholz**, USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council (Pulses), Chair
- **Keith Pitts**, Marrone Bio Innovations, Vice Chair
- **Mike Aerts**, Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association
- **Mark Arney**, National Watermelon Promotion Board
- **Pete Nelson**, Cherry Marketing Institute
- **Michael Bledsoe**, Village Farms L.P.
- **Jennifer Clarke**, California Leafy Greens Research
- **James Cranney**, California Citrus Quality Council
- **Maggie Eliot**, Hops Growers of America, WA Hops Commission
- **Bill Frantz**, The Cranberry Institute

Who are Commodity Liaison Members?

- **Michelle Grainger**, NC SweetPotato Commission
- **Bob Jones**, The Chef's Garden
- **Bob Kaldunski**, Ginseng Board of Wi
- **Michael Martin**, Horticulture Research Institute
- **Armando Monterosso, Brooks Tropicals, LLC**
- **Kam Quarles**, National Potato Council
- **Amy Plato Roberts**, Lallemand Plant Care
- **Rachel Roberts**, American Mushroom Institute
- **Steve Salisbury**, Mint Institute Research Council
- **Jonathan Sarager**, Western Growers
- **Alan Schreiber, Ag Development Group, Blueberry Commission**
- **Berry Tanner**, National Watermelon Association
- **Amy Upton**, MI Nursery & Landscape Association

Who are Commodity Liaison Members?

- **Lee VanWychen**, Weed Society of America
- **Herman Waguespack, Jr.**, American Sugar Cane League
- **Ryan Wysocki**, Michigan Blueberries
- **John Walt Boatwright**, American Farm Bureau
- **Michelle Starke**, CoverCress, Inc.
- **Laura Shumow**, American Spice Trade

—*To Be Approved.*

- **Atticus Finger**, American Sugar Cane League
- **Alyssa Houtby**, NA Blueberry Council
- Crop Life America—
- National Association of State Departments of Agriculture—

What activities are they doing?

- Tell the IR-4 Story
- Work on Government Education
- Government Affairs Sub-Committee
- Friends of IR-4

CLC and IR-4 Story

- **Mission:**

To facilitate regulatory approval of sustainable pest management technology for specialty crops and specialty uses to promote public well-being.



Where did the Name Come From?

- **Why the odd name?**
 - Inter Regional Research Project 4 (IR-4)
 - There were a number of IR projects in 1963.
 - Renamed National Research Project System (NRSP)-4 (1998)
 - IR-4 Project Reputation—kept the name



IR-4 Story--Value by Specialty Crop*

- **Vegetables:** \$45.03 billion
- **Non-citrus orchards:** \$26.92 billion
- **Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture, and sod:** \$25.49 billion
- **Tree nut orchards:** \$20.73 billion
- **Berries:** \$10.10 billion
- **Pulse crops:** \$11.95 billion
- **Citrus orchards:** \$6.75 billion
- **Cultivated Christmas trees:** \$1.39 billion
- **Maple syrup:** \$0.92 billion

Total Value is \$115 Billion overall

*USDA Census of Agriculture, 2022

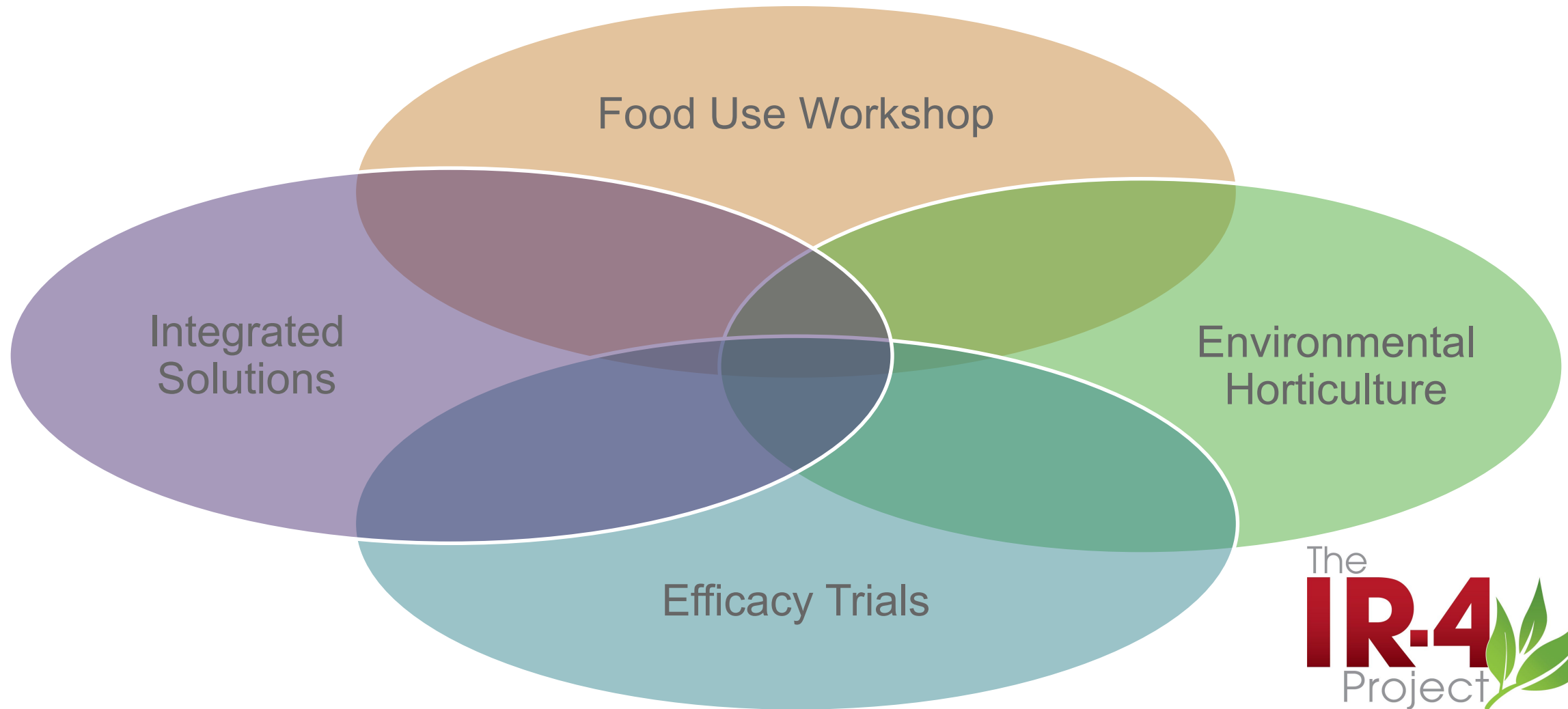


IR-4 Story

- **Economics-MSU Study**
 - Specialty Crops—healthy foods and environments, sustainable, underfunded
 - IR-4 Contributes \$8.97 Billion to Annual GDP
 - Specialty Crops Valued at \$65 Billion
 - IR-4 supports 111,470 jobs, worth \$5.34 Billion



IR-4 Story



IR-4 Story

- **History of Innovation and Leadership**
 - Crop Groups
 - International Harmonization
 - Minor Crop Foundation (At CODEX CPR right now)
 - Bio-Pesticides and Integrated Solutions
 - Solutions for Horticulture Pests and Diseases



IR-4 Story

- **Incentives to Registrants-PRIA**
 - Wave registration fees
 - Develop residue data
 - Extend data protection
 - Reduced impact pesticides

IR-4 Story

- **Funding Challenges**

- Support from USDA-ARS—retirements, funding
- Backlog of Lab Samples
- Funding for NIFA Research Programs



IR-4 Story

- **Challenges for Future**
 - Farm Bill Schedule/ Appropriation actions
 - ESA Considerations
 - Effective Integrated Pest Management Solutions
 - Appearance of new pests or new crops

IR-4 Story

- **Make America Healthy Again–**
 - Pesticides
 - Childhood Nutrition



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The
IR-4
Project 

CLC Government Education



CLC GASC

- **Government Affairs Sub-Committee (GASC)**
 - Jonathan Sarager, Chair
 - Meet every two months
 - Keeps the CLC Connected and working together
 - All CLC Members are invited

CLC --Friends of IR-4



- **Friends of IR-4**
 - DC Legislative and Regulatory Services (DCLRS)
 - **David Beaudreau**, SR Vice President (Ag Policy)
 - Currently 28 organization members, 2 individual members
 - Provides on the ground coordination, with committees, key personnel, and champions.
 - Advice and guidance for IR-4 policy goals.



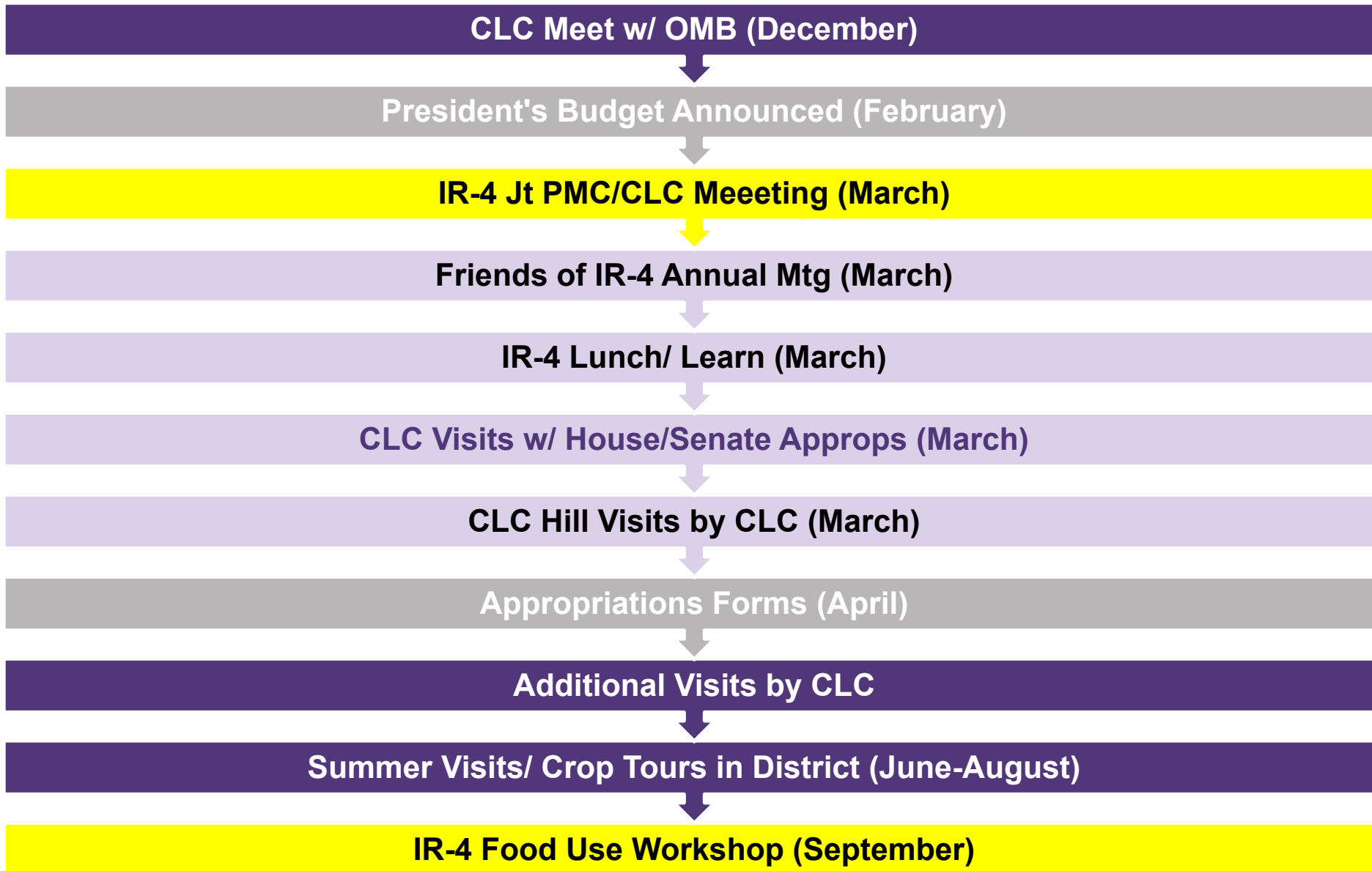
CLC Government Education

- **Activities/ Methods**
 - Meetings with Committee Staffs
 - Zoom Meeting with OMB
 - Direct meetings during March Fly-in
 - Letters to Member
 - Member Letters
 - Lunch and Learn/ Reception
 - Meet with Members in District
 - Allies—Minor Crop Farmer Alliance (MCFA), Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance, National Association of State Departments of Ag (NASDA), Farm Bureau



Lunch and Learn Participants, March, 2023

CLC Cycle of Events



CLC Government Education

- **Annual Appropriations Process-(Completed Oct 1)**
 - Administration
 - Office of Management and Budget (OMB)
 - NIFA Leadership
 - ARS Leadership
 - Congress
 - House Ag Appropriations
 - House Ag Committee
 - Senate Ag Appropriations
 - Senate Ag Committee
 - Individual Members

CLC Government Education

- Appropriations Goal--\$25 Million for IR-4
- Difficult to see Congress to move—Debt Limit, Appropriations, Farm Bill
- Ag Committees have moved forward.

Current Status-Appropriations

- October 1 is beginning of FY—requires a Continuing Resolution
- Ag Committees have been working to provide Bill.
- Some talk of moving “easy” packages forward.
- Congress must pass Debt Limit authorization, Appropriations package before end of September.

CLC Government Education



- **Farm Bill 2023 (Every 5 Years) (Maybe 6 or 7)**
 - Extended to 2025
 - House Ag Committee
 - Senate Ag Committee
 - ***Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance- \$25 Million Mandatory***

**Normally Bi-Partisan—Nutrition programs /Farm Programs
May be more difficult to build alliance.**

CLC Government Education

- **Status for 2024**

- Farm Bill

- Extended till December 31, Frameworks in Senate, Committee action in House
 - IR-4 has allies for \$50 Million, No version released yet.

- Appropriations 2024

- No changes, Surprise from ARS.

- Appropriations 2025

- House at \$15.75 Million, Senate at \$15.0 Million
 - ARS is unclear.

CLC Action



- Delay of RFP and Funds from NIFA
- Action of Friends of IR-4 and CLC
- Good news, but still tense.



CLC Update-Summary

- We have a good story—over 60 years of success!
- IR-4 is about healthy food, a healthy environment, and ***representing the needs of stakeholders.***
- Future challenges need future funding, and the ag sector supports those increases.
- CLC is energetic, passionate and the IR-4 is a great organization.

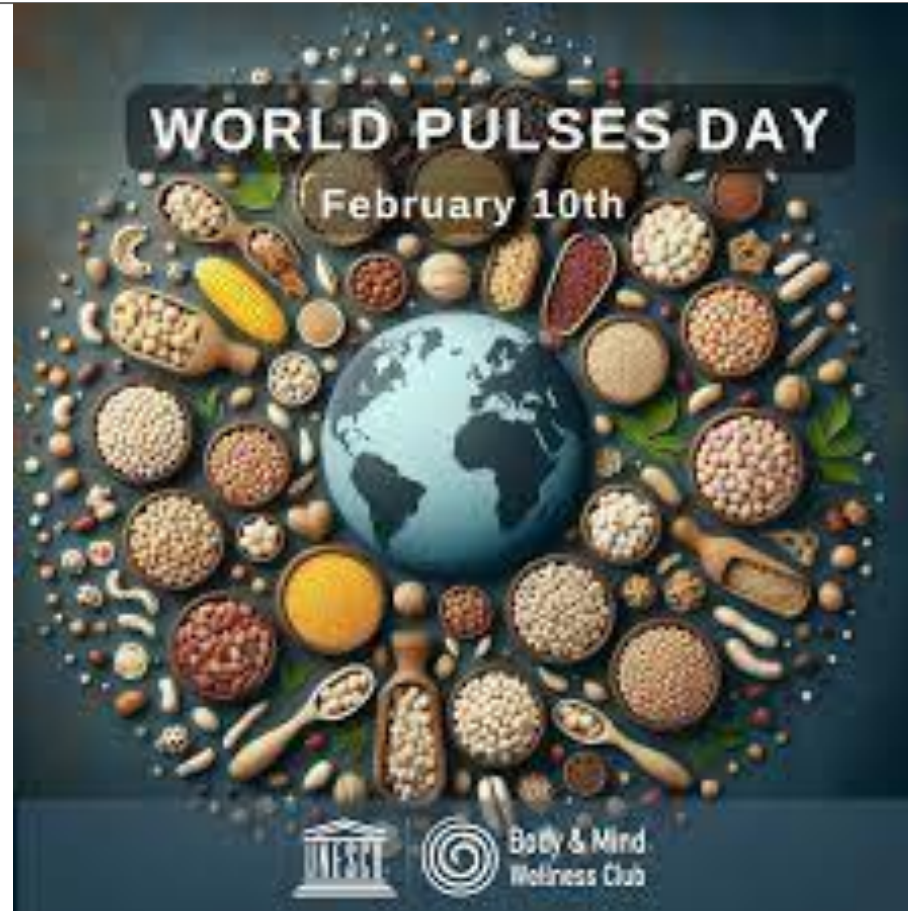


Officer Elections

2024-2026		2026-2028	
Office	Name	Office	Name
Chair	Todd Scholz	Chair	
Vice Chair	Keith Pitts	Vice Chair	

International Year of Pulses-2016

- Keep the Celebration Going! 63 years



Thank you!

Todd Scholz

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IR-4 is 62 years old!



- **1965**

- One Director and Secretary

- **2023**

- Headquarters and 4 Regions
- Partnerships including ARS, Land Grant Universities, Registrants, Regulators and Producers
- Reputation is International and National



IR-4 is 62 years old!



- Aerial Application 1960's



- Precision applications 2023



Pest Management Solutions for Specialty Crops and Specialty Uses



IR-4 is 62 years old

- \$25,000 Budget



- \$15.0 Million Budget



Pest Management Solutions for Specialty Crops and Specialty Uses



The
IR-4
Project

Three stylized green leaves with white veins, arranged in a fan-like pattern to the right of the text.

#60YearsofIR4