

Sustainable Agriculture Funding for North America Mint Farmers
ADVANCEMINT Program Description and Application Instructions

PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

Mars Wrigley Confectionery (MWC) uses mint oil from peppermint and spearmint grown in the United States and Canada in two thirds of its mint and gum finished good products. We are dedicated to promoting sustainable agricultural practices within mint farming communities and are seeking applicants who are mint farmers in the United States or Canada to receive funding to evaluate such practices. The Mint Industry Research Council (MIRC) has agreed to administer the sustainable agriculture funding on MWC's behalf.

This program will fund projects that are focused on new and innovative practices or technologies that advance sustainable mint production. Projects focused solely on implementing existing practices that have already been adopted by other growers are not eligible; the intent here is to advance mint production by providing financial assistance for growers to explore new and innovative practices and technologies that are not yet normal practice. In other words, the funding should be used to take risks that growers might not normally take, using farm-based research and observations to inform future use across the mint industry. Practices and technologies should focus on those that optimize mint production and resiliency while protecting the surrounding environment. Examples include but are not limited to: reduced risk integrated pest management, use of new technologies such as remote-sensing drones to monitor crop status and input use, practices that conserve soil or monitor and improve soil health, and practices and technologies that conserve water or improve water quality. These potential project areas are not exclusive – creativity is encouraged.

In addition to carrying out the exploratory work described above, funded project participants will be expected to help document and communicate the process, outcomes, successes, and challenges to the mint industry such that other growers can learn from the efforts. These expectations are described in more detail below.

Project requirements

Selected projects will be required to:

- Focus on new and innovative practices and technologies that have not been widely adopted in mint production.
 - Optimize mint production and/or enhance sustainability in documentable ways.
 - Include practices and technologies that could be adopted by other growers.
 - Document project progress and outcomes in tangible ways and be willing to share them with the MIRC and the mint industry. These could include photos, simple videos, collected data or other materials that document the process and project outcomes.
 - Complete the project within one year (2024).
 - Participate in three grower interviews with an outreach specialist selected by MIRC: mid-project, at the end of the project, and during the growing season following the project. These short interviews will focus on learning outcomes (project process, successes, and challenges) that can be communicated to other growers via the MIRC newsletters, annual meetings and other communications.
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ELIGIBILITY

All of the following foundational criteria must be met in order to be eligible to receive funding:

1. Be a mint farmer or farm that grows a minimum of 100 acres of peppermint or spearmint annually.
2. Have grown mint for commercial oil production over the last 3 years.
3. Own or operate a farm located in the United States or Canada.
4. Be a member in good standing of a state/provincial mint association the United States or Canada.
5. Agree to allow MWC or MIRC to share your name, funding amount and sustainable agricultural practice publicly.
6. Answer all questions in the application.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES. All individuals or organizations may apply up to 11:59 PM Pacific Standard Time on December 15, 2023. Any application electronically submitted after that time will not be accepted. Limited to two (2) requests for funding per eligible individual or

organization; however, only one project per individual or organization could be selected for funding.

B. WHERE AND HOW TO APPLY. Please answer each question in the proposal application template, using a maximum of 5 single spaced pages for the full application. Submit the completed application in MS Word or PDF file format.

All applications must be submitted via email to Bryan Ostlund, Mint Industry Research Council (bryan@ostlund.com) and must be received during the submission period to be considered.

APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

Four reviewers (two representatives from Mars Wrigley Confectionery, the sitting MIRC chairman and a representative from FieldRise) will evaluate each eligible application. The review will be conducted in two parts. First, the reviewers will evaluate whether the applicants meet the eligibility criteria and all other requirements set forth herein. Second, the reviewers will then evaluate each complete and eligible application based on the following criteria:

1. **Potential production, environmental, social or economic impact.** The extent to which the project will optimize mint production and/or advance sustainability. Examples of impacts include but are not limited to reduced pesticide use, enhanced soil conservation and soil health, and reduced water use. (up to 25 points)
2. **Innovation.** Whether the entry clearly explores practices and technologies that would be new in mint production. (up to 25 points)
3. **Adoption.** Ability of practice to be adoptable by other farmers. (up to 25 points)
4. **Leadership and Inspiration.** Whether the entry provides sound methods for executing its activity and achieving tangible results for its mint crops. Also, whether the project leader, collaborators and partners have the capacity and commitment to see the project through to completion. (up to 25 points)

After reviewing the applications, the reviewers will tally the scores and rank the applicants based on their scores. The top scoring applicants will be eligible to each receive a maximum of \$25,000 award. In the event of a tie, the organization with the highest point value in each category listed above will be selected as a potential award recipient. Award recipients will be announced in January 2024. All award recipients will be required to complete the Award Documentation (defined below). The MIRC will contact the representative of the selected organization. Failure on the part of the representative to respond within 3 business days or to return the Award Documentation within fifteen (15) business days may result in disqualification of the application and the selection of an alternate potential award recipient. If a selected award recipient declines the award, an alternate potential award recipient will be selected.

V. AWARD INFORMATION

A. AWARD. Mars Wrigley Confectionery will award up to a maximum of \$135,000. These awards shall be used to fund programs that are selected by the reviewers, as described above. Checks will be made payable in the name of the individual or organization set forth in the application. Following completion of the award documentation, 75% of the total award amount will be distributed to the funded individual or organization. The remaining 25% of the award will be distributed upon successful completion of the project end interview by the end of the funding year (2024). The award is not transferable and may not be substituted. The award is subject to all federal, state, and local taxes and recipient will be responsible for such taxes.

B. PERMISSIBLE USES. Award recipients may use the funds in connection with their organizations and to support their efforts. Examples of permissible ways to use the funds include, but are not limited to:

- Printing, postage and supplies, including software
- Equipment purchases, and equipment rental
- Labor services needed to implement sustainable agriculture practice (i.e., construction, educational, engineering, etc.)

C. IMPERMISSIBLE USES. Award recipients may not use the award for the following impermissible purposes:

- International travel
- Full or partial meals that are not working meals
- Paying off debts
- Costs incurred before the award date are not reimbursable
- Purchase of passenger carrying vehicles

Use of the award in connection with an Impermissible Use may result in a breach of contract and MWC, in its sole discretion may request a full return of the funds awarded. Award recipients are required to submit an annual financial report to MWC to confirm appropriate use of the funds.