



## **IR-4 Project: Facilitating pest management solutions for specialty crops growers**

The specialty crop community is asking Congress to increase financial support for the IR-4 Project in Fiscal Year 2025 from \$15.0 million to the Congressionally authorized \$25 million. Funding for the IR-4 Project is authorized by the Farm Bill 2018 and included in U.S. Department of Agriculture appropriations in the National Institute of Food and Agriculture Research and Education Section as line-item **Minor Crop Pest Management (IR4)**.

### **What is the IR-4 Project?**

The IR-4 Project was established in 1963 by the USDA and aids specialty crop agriculture by developing data needed to facilitate the registration of crop protection products for fruits, vegetables, herbs, spices, ornamental plants and other horticultural crops. Products supported by IR-4 reduce food waste while maximizing returns to the agriculture community.

Services provided by IR-4 are relevant to the specialty crop community because the private sector focuses their research and development resources into major crops/markets that provide adequate return on investment, such as corn and soybeans. Private sector research and field development focused on specialty crops is often non-existent or not prioritized.

### **Why does IR-4 need additional funding?**

The need for IR-4 Project services continues to increase while federal funding has increased modestly to \$15.0 million. Current funding limits the IR-4 Project's ability to meet the crop protection needs of farmers and food processors while affecting the ability of the specialty crop food chain to provide quality products. The IR-4 Project has had to reduce new research efforts with residue studies by over 20% over the past five years. In addition, over the past decade, the IR-4 has closed two labs which supported the analysis efforts and good laboratory practices required in submission of registration documents.

**To address the current and future availability of specialty crops, the specialty crop community recommend that federal funding for the IR-4 Project increase to \$25 million in FY 2025 for the following reasons:**

- Specialty crop growers need new, safe pest management products to fight the increasing number of invasive insects, diseases, weeds, and other pests that attack crops. They also need new products offset the loss of existing products due to mitigations required by EPA or consumer pressure to reduce their use.
- IR-4 helps producers to provide sustainable food. Products labeled for use through IR-4 include bio-based and safer chemistry, products focused on new or emerging pests, and products for organic and regenerative production.
- IR-4 Project efforts enhance U.S. grower access to international markets by eliminating trade barriers through harmonizing pesticide regulations with other countries.
- The IR-4 Project provides a great return on funding investment. Michigan State University reported that the IR-4 Project contributes \$8.9 billion to the annual U.S. GDP and supports more than 123,260 jobs.
- The IR-4 Project helps farmers reduce food waste while providing the public with vast amounts of quality fruits and vegetables at reasonable prices.

The IR-4 Project is critical to our nation's food security and helps the agriculture sector meet the demands for high-quality food now and into the future. It remains a sound public investment that produces significant, tangible results and is worthy of an increased investment in funding.

For further information, please contact Todd Scholz, VP Research & Member Services, USA Pulses, and Chair of the IR-4 Commodity Liaison Committee at [toddscholz@usapulses.org](mailto:toddscholz@usapulses.org)