



# Goals and Strategies 2009 - 2013

Michigan Apple Research Subcommittee  
Winter – Spring 2009

## The Role of Research in the Mission of the Michigan Apple Committee

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In the fall of 2007, the Michigan Apple Committee Board of Directors stated the following as its mission:

- ▶ *On behalf of the Michigan apple industry, the Michigan Apple Committee engages in market development, research and education to enhance the reputation, improve target market share and ensure production sustainability of Michigan apples.*

In keeping with the spirit of the Apple Committee's mission, the Michigan Apple Research Subcommittee (MARS), established the following as its charter in early 2009:

- ▶ *To help the Michigan Apple Committee realize its mission by ensuring that it invests wisely in research and development, provides recommendations to the board of directors that are consistent with the organization's goals and strategies and gets the optimal return on that investment.*

With its charter in mind, the Research Subcommittee set about establishing long term goals for the research it will fund as well as guidelines and plans for ensuring those goals are achieved.

## Goals of the Research Subcommittee

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MARS set six goals to help define the desired outcomes of research projects. By design, these goals are broad based and not specific. Likewise, they focus on the impact of the research and not on specific results for research projects.

The goals are:

1. Increase demand
2. Improve quality and consistency
3. Reduce production costs
4. Introduce new or improved varieties
5. Prove health benefits
6. Improve packaging



## MARS Goals – Further Explanation

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To ensure consistent understanding of the goals and the path the Subcommittee was pursuing, the following descriptions and examples were developed:

### **1. Increase demand**

To conduct consumer related research that will help sell Michigan Apples more profitably.

- ▶ Market research
- ▶ Value – convenience, apples versus snack foods
- ▶ Consistency (product quality)
- ▶ Word of mouth & technologies/methods

### **2. Improve quality and consistency**

To demonstrate how to improve Michigan Apples in terms such as variety, size, taste, and appearance.

- ▶ Growth regulators/thinners
- ▶ Storage Improvements
- ▶ Varieties
- ▶ Enhance varietal traits and attributes
- ▶ Thinning models
- ▶ Packaging
- ▶ Michigan “Select” or “Premiere” product

## MARS Goals – Further Explanation

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### **3. Reduce production costs**

To help increase grower profitability by improving production efficiency.

- ▶ Improve packaging efficiency
- ▶ Mechanization
- ▶ Technology
- ▶ Enhance varietal traits and attributes
- ▶ Consistent cropping
- ▶ Reducing pesticide delivery costs
- ▶ Increase yields
- ▶ Farm management practices

### **4. Introduce new or improved varieties**

To identify and develop new or improved varieties that can be grown profitably in Michigan.

- ▶ Michigan “Select” or “Premiere” varieties
- ▶ Heritage varieties
- ▶ Compatibility of varieties with Michigan’s growing conditions



## MARS Goals – Further Explanation

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### **5. Prove health benefits**

To research, publish, and support scientific claims regarding the health and nutrition benefits of apples.

- ▶ Proof of effect on health conditions or prevention
- ▶ Summaries of other research

### **6. Improve packaging**

To demonstrate benefits in terms of cost-effectiveness in packaging that has strong consumer appeal and is packer friendly.

- ▶ Cost effectiveness
- ▶ Consumer/Packer friendly
- ▶ Reduce bruising
- ▶ Consumer appeal
- ▶ Lengthens shelf life



## Funding Guidelines

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The following guidelines were established to help determine what gets funded:

### **What we will fund....**

- ▶ Applied research
- ▶ Variety issues – new or improvements on heirloom varieties
- ▶ Growing practices
- ▶ Research that will help achieve multiple goals
- ▶ Marketing research
- ▶ Research that measures the impact on sales
- ▶ Improvements of varietal attributes and traits
- ▶ Nutritional benefits
- ▶ Collaborative research – apple application only
- ▶ Best practices
- ▶ Research on reusable/sustainable applications
- ▶ Environmentally friendly research

### **What we won't fund...**

- ▶ Basic Research– defined as something a researcher is interested in but doesn't have any specific benefit to the industry.
- ▶ Research being done already in other states
- ▶ Full funding will not be granted for pesticide product applications



# Requesting and Evaluating Proposals

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## **Requesting Proposals**

The Research Subcommittee will prepare an annual request for proposal (RFP) that describes the broad range of research issues and projects it is willing to fund. Likewise, MARS may put out an RFP at any time should there be a specific need or opportunity.

Institutions will be identified based on their areas of expertise as well as their capacity and interest in working with the Michigan Apple Committee.

## **Evaluating Proposals**

The Research Subcommittee will meet to review proposals. Beginning in 2010 a revised worksheet will be used to help guide the process.



# Key Production Issues for Michigan Apple Industry

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(Not ranked in priority order.)

- ▶ **Insects**
  - ▶ Pest Management, IPM Technologies, Organic Options
  
- ▶ **Diseases**
  - ▶ Disease Management inc. Scab and Fire Blight
  
- ▶ **Physiological Issues**
  - ▶ Thinning and Yield Enhancements, Storage, New Variety Evaluation, MCP Applications and Storage Technology, Biennial Bearing, Irrigation Impacts, Carbon Sequestration and Carbon Footprint, Conservation and Sustainability

