



DATE: September 12th, 2025

TO: Research Community

FROM: Chris Zanobini
Executive Director and Interim Research Coordinator
California Cherry Board

RE: CALL FOR SWEET CHERRY RESEARCH GRANT PROPOSALS

INTRODUCTION TO THE CALIFORNIA CHERRY BOARD (CCB)

The California Cherry Board (CCB) is soliciting proposals for research found to be of highest priority by the industry. The CCB – a marketing order operating under sanction of the State of California – was established by California sweet cherry growers and packers/shippers to – in addition to other industry efforts – fund research found to be of greatest likelihood to significantly benefit the production and post-harvest handling practices of sweet cherry in California.

INDUSTRY SUPPORT FOR INVESTIGATORS

Operating as a committee to the Board of Directors (BOD), the CCB Research Committee is composed of appointed industry leaders purposed with orchestrating research program activities as well as developing annual research funding recommendations for presentation to the BOD for formal approval. The Research Committee and/or associated subcommittees are tasked with providing industry support to investigative teams from the development of a proposal through to the successful completion of any project. To inquire any industry-specific information when developing a full proposal in alignment with the research priorities discussed below, please contact the committee's UC liaison, Mohammad Yaghmour, mayaghmour@ucanr.edu.

PRODUCTION RESEARCH PRIORITIES

For the 2026-2027 fiscal year (FY), the California sweet cherry industry identified the following production-related challenges of greatest priority for addressment through intentionally designed research:

- Pest Management with emphasis on management of spotted wing drosophila (SWD)
 - New chemistry
 - Timing of application
- Tree Health with emphasis on pre- and postharvest disease biology and management, soilborne and canker diseases, and orchard replant diseases with emphasis on nematode management and alternatives to fumigations.
- Variety and Rootstock Development and Evaluation
 - Evaluation of New Cherry Rootstocks
- Dormancy
 - New chemistry

- Pre and Post-Harvest Fruit Quality
 - Firmness
 - Heat stress
 - New chemistry to improve and maintain fruit quality
- Irrigation
 - Evapotranspiration
 - Efficient water usage as water supply costs increase in CA
 - Right amount/timing
 - New technology
- Weed Management
 - Pre and Post-Harvest Herbicide Application with emphasis on new technology
- Invertebrate Control
 - Gophers
 - Ground squirrels

POST HARVEST RESEARCH PRIORITIES

For the 2026-2027 fiscal year (FY), the California sweet cherry industry identified the following post-harvest-related challenges of greatest priority for addressment through intentionally designed research:

- Marketing/Sales
 - Implications of grocery store purchases on applications (i.e. pick-up) instead of in-store
 - Consumer buying practices
 - Storage and handling in-store
 - Promotion of nutritional value
- Consumer Preferences and quality including minimizing Defects, fruit quality attributes such as Brix, Acid content.
- Minimum Maturity and Grade Standards
- Crop management to match market demands.
- Stem retention
- Nutrition
 - Human health benefits

FULL PROPOSAL GRANT APPLICATION GUIDELINES AND REVIEWAL PROCESSES

By no later than **October 27th, 2025**. Please send any full proposal grant applications to Leslie Alfonso, CCB Research Director, by email to lesliea@berkeley.edu.

Please use the attached “**RESEARCH GRANT PROPOSAL TEMPLATE**” to properly format your proposal. Full proposals require a statement of the problem to be addressed with proper literature review, intended objectives, plans and procedures, expected outcomes, stated deliverables and a detailed budget with budget justification for each line item.

As discussed above, you are encouraged to interact with industry members when developing your proposal. Please contact the committee’s UC liaison, Mohammad Yaghmour, mayaghmour@ucanr.edu.

New research proposals will be submitted to the CA Cherry Research Advisory Committee and comments will be provided back to the principal investigator in a timely manner.

Those who submit a new and/or continuing full proposal will be required to provide a proposal overview in Microsoft PowerPoint format to the CCB Research Committee in early January. If needed, industry/researcher subcommittees can form to assist in project guidance.

The operations of the CCB are entirely funded through grower assessments; therefore, as a commodity board, the CCB does not permit the allocation or use of awarded funds towards “indirect” or administrative costs.

EXPECTED PROJECT DELIVERABLES FOR BOTH NEW AND CONTINUING PROJECTS

Written Report(s)

1. A written project update must be submitted to Leslie Alfonso via email, lesliea@berkeley.edu, no later than July 2026.
2. A written, annual report consisting of an executive summary, literature review, accomplished objectives, materials and methods, results and discussion, stated deliverables, and references, must be submitted to Leslie Alfonso via email, lesliea@berkeley.edu by approximately January 2027. Date subject to change due to scheduling related to the 2027 California Cherry Research Review (CCRR).
3. The PI responsible for the funded project must provide a presentation at the following winter CCRR event, typically in January, for each year that the project is funded. For more information on this, please see the subheading below, California Cherry Research review.
4. Regarding multi-year projects: grant applications must be submitted for each year of the project.
5. Further deliverables include publications, presentations at grower meetings/field days, extension articles, etc.

California Cherry Research Review

The CCB hosts an annual California Cherry Research Review (CCRR) event where research is disseminated to industry by creating an interface between investigators and the sweet cherry industry. The CCRR will take place in January of 2027. The principal investigator(s) and/or project collaborator(s) would be expected to provide a presentation on the annual findings and/or project conclusions at this event or equivalent