



Letter of Support

USDA SCRI Coordinated Agricultural Project

May 22, 2026

To the USDA SCRI Review Committee:

I am pleased to provide this letter of support for the proposed multi-state Specialty Crop Research Initiative Coordinated Agricultural Project, "Environmental Memory and Predictive Disease Management in Controlled-Environment Specialty Crops," led by Dr. Ankit K. Singh at the University of Maine.

Through my work with Upgrow Rwanda Ltd, I am focused on scalable, practical systems that improve performance, sustainability, and decision-making across food and agricultural environments. In emerging agricultural markets, greenhouse and controlled-environment growers need tools that do more than collect data. They need systems that translate environmental conditions into clear, timely, actionable guidance for farmers.

The proposed project addresses an important and highly practical problem: how early deviations in temperature, humidity, VPD, and other microclimate conditions can affect plant stress, disease risk, crop performance, and economic outcomes. This is especially relevant for growers who may not have continuous technical support but still need to know when greenhouse conditions are drifting out of range and what corrective actions are required.

I am particularly supportive of the project's emphasis on grower-usable outputs, including validated threshold tables, real-time risk scoring, ROI tools, and extension-ready training materials. These outputs are directly aligned with the types of decision-support tools needed to make controlled-environment agriculture more resilient, accessible, and scalable.

I would be pleased to participate as a member of the project's Stakeholder Advisory Board and provide perspective on farmer-facing deployment, sustainability, emerging-market greenhouse operations, and the practical requirements for tools that can be adopted beyond research settings.

This project has strong potential to generate knowledge and decision-support infrastructure that can benefit growers, improve disease management, and support more resilient specialty crop production systems.

Sincerely,

Bailey Flint

Chief Strategy Officer, Upgrow Rwanda Ltd