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Politics & Government

8:34 AM FRI OCTOBER 4, 2013

Federal government shutdown threatens pollination study at Michigan State University

By [STEVE CARMODY](#) (/PEOPLE/STEVE-CARMODY)

The federal government shutdown

<http://michiganradio.org/post/heres-how-your-legislator-congress-voted-and-what-they-said-shutdown-battle>) is threatening a project at Michigan State University that could be critical to the future of agriculture in the U.S.

It's one of many university research projects affected by the shutdown.

MSU researchers are working with counterparts at other universities and private industry groups to look for [new ways to pollinate crops](#)

<http://www.goodfruit.com/Good-Fruit-Grower/March-15th-2013/Integrated-Crop-Pollination/>.

[Declining bee populations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colony_collapse) (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colony_collapse) in the U.S. make this kind of research critical.

But the Congress's [failure to pass a Farm Bill](http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/27/us-usa-agriculture-farm-bill-analysis-idUSBRE98Q19P20130927) (<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/27/us-usa-agriculture-farm-bill-analysis-idUSBRE98Q19P20130927>) this year, and now the government shutdown, have left the project short of funds.

"Are there other sources of funding we could find? Perhaps. But nothing is likely to match the scale of the federal government and (The United States Department of Agriculture) are able to provide to be able to do a project of this magnitude," says Rufus Isaacs, the project's director.

Isaacs says it will be very difficult to restart the research once the shutdown ends. That's because many researchers are already looking for new jobs and because MSU's research partners are looking at shifting resources to other projects with more stable funding.



http://www.michiganradio.com/files/2013/10/msubeeelab100313_009.JPG

Credit [Steve Carmody/Michigan Radio](#)
Rufus Isaacs in his lab on the MSU campus. He heads the Integrated Crop Pollination project.

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