NEXT POLICY FRAMEWORK – CLUSTER RESEARCH PRIORITIES 2026

Ranked from highest priority to lowest priority:

1. **Pest and disease management**
   - Spotted Lanternfly
   - Identification, Transmission and Mitigation of Grapevine Viruses (Leafroll, Red Blotch)"
     - Virus transmission pathways and vector identification, including soil-associated vectors
     - Soil-borne vector persistence and potential disease transmission following vineyard removal and replanting
     - Rootstock susceptibility, tolerance and resistance to virus infection and associated vectors
     - Cover crop management (for beneficial insect/vector management)
     - Short- and Long-Term Effects of Viruses on Plant Performance
   - Crown Gall
   - MALB (Replacements for Synthetic Pyrethroids)
   - Quality Improvement (Canopy Management, Powdery Mildew, Black Rot, Fruit Fly, Brown Marmorated Stink Bug, botrytis, downy mildew, earwig management, etc)
   - Spotted Wing Drosophila (SWD), Sour Rot
   - Spray Programs Strategies (Rotation, Feedback Mechanism)
     - Alternatives to delisted sprays
   - How to remove/mitigate botrytis taint

2. **Variety Evaluation and Development**
   - Vitis Certification (Local Vine Propagation & Supply)
   - Clonal and Sub-Clonal Stability (Assessing Trueness to Type)
   - New adaptative grapevine varieties
   - Clonal Sensory Evaluation
   - Forecast of "Winning" Varieties and Style of Wine

3. **Agronomy**
   - Soil Health and Management
   - Winter Injury and Mitigation Technologies
   - Quality Improvement (Canopy Management)
   - Extreme weather events recovery and strategy
   - Post-frost picking strategy and must handling in the winery
   - Crop Level vs. Quality in light of climate change and weather patterns (i.e. Color, Tannin Development)
   - Operations of Winery (i.e. Filtration, Yeast, Nutrients)
   - Site Selection (Terroir)
   - How to determine optimal picking times
   - Sparkling Wine, Icewine, Late Harvest

4. **Sustainability**
    - Soil Health and Regenerative Vineyard Practices
    - Cover crop management (ecosystem services and reduced pest pressure)
    - Extreme weather events recovery and strategy
    - Spray program strategies (alternatives to delisted sprays)
    - Vitis Certification (Local Vine Propagation Supply, reduced reliance on imports)

5. **Technology**
    - Advancements in technology & AI (Ex. Drones, lasers, scouting, etc.)
    - Winter Injury and Mitigation Technologies
    - Spray program feedback mechanisms
    - Winery process optimization (filtration, yeast, nutrient management)
    - Economic production of dealcoholized or low-alcohol wine in Ontario

6. **Consumer and Market Research**
    - Consumer Science (consumption and purchasing trends)
    - Sensory Science
    - Sparkling Wine Profiles
    - Export/Market Development
    - Promoting local
    - Economic feasibility of low- and dealcoholized wines