

NERA Teleconference
August 30, 2018
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Roll Call: Jan Nyrop, Carol Thornber, Ted Andreadis, Brad Hillman, Cameron Faustman, Jon Wraith, Tom Vogelmann, Jason Hubbard, Adel Shirmohammadi, Eric Wommack, Gary Thompson, Rick Rhodes, David Leibovitz

1. Agenda:
 - a. Chair's interim actions and reflections (Jan)
 - b. MAC report (Fred, see attachments)
 - Approve peer reviewed multistate research projects
 - Approve peer reviewed coordinating committees and ERAs
 - Budget approval: NE9 and NE59
 - AA assignments
 - Modification of *Northeastern Supplement Guidelines for Multistate Research Activities*.
 - Informational items
 - c. National Impact Database update (Rick, see attachment)
 - d. Summer Meeting 2019 update (Jody)
 - e. Other business
 - f. **Agenda approved by acclamation. Jan suggested saving his interim actions and reflections until after the MAC Report.**
2. MAC report (Rick on behalf of Fred Servello, see attachments)
 - a. Approve peer reviewed multistate research projects
 - NE_TEMP1838 Development of a Weed Emergence Model (AA, Margaret Smith - Cornell)
 - No discussion
 - NE_TEMP9 Conservation and Utilization of Plant Resources (AA, Jan Nyrop – Cornell)
 - This project receives regional off-the-top funds; budget requires NERA's approval
 - Germplasms supported through NE9: grape, apple, cherry, ~4 vegetables
 - Personnel at the germplasm center are considered Cornell employees, but are fully supported on NE9 funds
 - Adel asked, does ARS support NE9 in any way?
 - Majority of the budget for the germplasm repositories comes from ARS (Facilities, technical help)
 - Brad asked, what does NE9 cost out of Cornell's pocket?
 - Relatively little; expenses come out of the indirect costs of managing employees

- NE_TEMP1836 Improving Quality and Reducing Losses in Specialty Fruit Crops through Storage Technologies (AA Chris Watkins – Cornell)
 - No discussion
 - **The MAC recommended approval of these three multistate projects, the recommendation was seconded by Ted Andreadis and unanimously approved.**
- b. Approve peer reviewed coordinating committees and ERAs
- NECC_TEMP1812 Northeast Coordinating Committee on Soil Testing (AA, Rick Rhodes – NERA)
 - Rick confirmed that this is a very active group and productive which requires little to no AA guidance.
 - NEERA_TEMP1806 Management of the Brown Marmorated Stink Bug (AA, Ted Andreadis – CTAES)
 - Ted Andreadis confirmed that this is an active group, strong project led by Ted since 2010. George Hamilton leads the technical team well.
 - The brown marmorated stink bug is moving on to different crops, still comes through in waves and is still a pertinent issue for the NE.
 - The ERA is generally an informational exchange and is worthwhile to continue.
 - NECC_TEMP29 Northeastern Corn Improvement Conference
 - No discussion on the NERA call.
 - **The MAC recommended approval of these three coordinating committees/ERAs, the recommendation was seconded by Jan Nyrop and unanimously approved.**
- c. Budget approval: NE59 and NE9
- NE59 Northeastern Regional Center for Rural Development (Penn State, Stephan Goetz)
 - \$40,788 budget request, identical to the past three years.
 - The NERCRD works on behalf of the entire region and has impacted multiple NERA institutions.
 - The budget leverages staff support for the NERCRD.
 - **The MAC recommends approval of the NE59 budget request. This was seconded by Brad Hillman and unanimously approved.**
 - NE9 Conservation and Utilization of Plant Resources (Cornell, Jan Nyrop)
 - Budget request increases from \$275,468 (FY18/19) to \$308,854 (FY22/23).
 - The budget supports field technicians, managers, laborers and a small amount of operating costs.

- Each region supports a germplasm center at about this budget level or slightly more.
 - Does NERA support this budget? Does NERA support an escalating budget over the next five years?
 - Jan Nyrop (NE9 AA) provided his reflections:
 - NERA needs to send a message: these are *critical* resources, but we need to reconsider the business model for the germplasm centers.
 - NERA can support the budget, but without an increase in Hatch dollars, the budget shouldn't increase.
 - Cameron Faustman echoed Jan's urgency to send a message, and offered that NERA's response should state that budgets should only increase relative to any increase in Hatch funding.
 - **Jan Nyrop introduced a motion to support NE9, and approve the budget for FY2018/19 (\$275,468). NERA would *not* approve the budgetary increases in years 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the project, and consideration of the budgetary increases would only occur with concomitant increases in Hatch resources across the region. NERA encourages the project to actively seek out alternate revenue sources, and NERA will conduct a mid-term review to re-examine the NE9 business model. The NERA Directors will partner with NE9 and ARS to assist in making changes to the business model, if needed.**
 - **The motion was seconded by Jon Wraith and unanimously approved.**
- d. AA assignments
- NE_TEMP1839: Development and Evaluation of Broccoli Adapted to the Eastern US, 10/2018 – 09/2023 [New project] Jan Nyrop – Cornell, willing to serve
 - **This AA assignment was approved by acclamation**
- e. Modification of *Northeastern Supplement to the Guidelines for Multistate Research Activities*.
- Rick Rhodes revised the NE Supplement.
 - The major change was to remove the two separate "timelines" for submitting both new and revision project proposals to NERA, and merge them into one timeline with hard, but not absolute deadlines.
 - **A motion to approve the changes to the guidelines was introduced by Jason Hubbart, seconded by Jon Wraith, and unanimously approved.**
- f. Informational items
- Amy Ouellette (UNH) has taken Dennis Calvin's (PSU, formerly NEED) place on the NE Multistate Activities Committee.

3. Chair's interim actions and reflections (Jan Nyrop)
 - a. NERA meeting in Lincoln, NE
 - 90 minutes for Regional business on Tuesday afternoon
 - The agenda will include the ED Evaluation; Jan Nyrop will conduct the NERA-wide review via email, and the NERA budget
 - Any other agenda item requests should be sent to David Leibovitz
 - b. Jan thanked the association for the approval of David Leibovitz's merit increase.
 - c. No NERA spring meeting in 2019. We anticipate a NERA teleconference in December 2018 and March 2019.
 - d. NIFA Relocation
 - Two important reasons for opposition: 1.) Washington is easily accessible for all national stakeholders, and 2.) This separates USDA-NIFA from other national research agency partners.
 - Should NERA sign on to an NC-FAR letter in opposition to the NIFA relocation?
 - Cornell gov't affairs office provided a note of caution: Stay low. AES directors don't have a lot of influence on the decision, and there is significant risk of creating ill will with USDA leadership if AES directors become vocal about these issues.
 - Jon Wraith reflected – no one will wage this war on the AES's behalf if we don't speak up.
 - Gary Thompson mentioned he thought the ESS has been represented well on the national stage, and a regional-specific voice won't do anything different from what's already come out of the BAA.
 - NERA will not be a signatory on letters that oppose NIFA relocation.
4. National Impact Database update (Rick Rhodes, see attachment)
 - a. Tabled for this call; this conversation will be conducted electronically.
5. The call adjourned at 12:10pm.