



NERA

Northeastern Regional Association
of
State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors Meeting

The Admiral Fell Inn
Historic Fell's Point, 888 South Broadway Street, Baltimore,
MD 21231

March 24-25, 2009

Minutes

Mike Vayda, Chair

In Attendance:

Michael Vayda (VT), Chair
Tom Brady (NH)
Tom Burr (NYG)
Cameron Hackney (WV)
Ian Hart (CTS)
Bradley Hillman (NJ)
Michael Hoffman (NYC)
David Gay (NRSP3)
Dan Kugler (CSREES)
Bruce McPheron (PA)
Daniel Rossi (NERA)
Fred Servello (ME)
Hunt Shipman (Cornerstone)
Kirby Stafford III (CTNH)
Jon Wraith (NH)
Gloria Wyche-Moore (DC)
Rubie Mize (NERA), Recorder

MAJOR DECISIONS

- Approved the draft agenda for this meeting as posted in url---
<http://www.nera.umd.edu/workshop/NERAAgendaMarch2009.htm>
- Approved the minutes of the NERA meeting held at Traverse City, MI on September 22, 2008, as posted in url---
<http://www.nera.umd.edu/workshop/NERAMinutesSept2008.html>
- Approved the MAC recommendations, posted in this url, and as follows:
<http://www.nera.umd.edu/workshop/MACReportMarch2009.html>
 1. Awarded the 2009 NERA Planning Grant to the following proposals:
 - [NE0901: Addressing Research and Extension Needs of the Emerging Cold-Climate Wine Industry in the Northeast and Upper Midwest](#)
 - [NE0905: Integrating Pest Management and Pollinator Protection in Insect-Pollinated Specialty Crops](#)
 - [NE0906: The Role of Cultural Specialty Crops in Providing Food Security and Entrepreneurship Opportunities for Refugee and Emerging Ethnic Farmer Populations in the Northeast](#)
 2. Approve the following proposals:
 - NE_TEMP1401: Plant-parasitic Nematode Management as a Component of Sustainable Soil Health Programs in Horticultural and Field Crop Production Systems (Replacement of NE1019) [10/2009-2016]
 - NE_TEMP1521 Wood Utilization Research : Biofuels, Bioproducts, Hybrid Biomaterials Composites Production, and Traditional Forest Products (Replacement of NE 506) [7/2009-2014]
 - NE_TEMP1522 Changing the Health Trajectory for Older Adults through Effective Diet and Activity Modifications (Replacement of NE 1023) [10/2009-2014]
 - NE_TEMP1601: Hydropedology: Genesis, Properties, and Distribution of Hydromorphic Soils (Replacement of NE 1021) [10/2009-2014]
 - NE_TEMP1581: Adaptive Management for Improved Nutrient Management (New) [4/2009-2014] (This project will be given a NEERA designation).
 3. Granted conditional approval pending satisfactory completion, and responses to issues raised by the Multistate Activities Committee:
 - NE_TEMP1561: Optimization of Poultry Welfare and Production Systems for the 21st Century (Replacement of NE 1022) [10/2009-2014]
 - NE_TEMP1541: Environmental Impacts of Equine Operations (New) [10/2009-2014]
 4. Approved an extraordinary one-year extension to end on 2010 for NE504: New England Center for Invasive Plants [8/2007-2010].
 5. Approved the following regional off-the-top funding for FY09-10:
 - Approved FY2009 regional off-the-top funding for NE-9 in the amount of \$208,000.
 - Approved FY2009 regional off-the-top funding for NE-59 in the amount of \$40,788.

- Approved the following nominations:
 - Dr. Tom Brady (NH) as NERA Representative to the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development Board of Directors
 - Dr. Michael Vayda (VT) as MAC Chair and NERA Representative to the NRSP Review Committee
 - Dr. Jon Wraith (NH) as MAC Member
 - Dr. Fred Servello (ME) as Advisor to NE1026: Weed Management Strategies for Sustainable Cropping Systems [10/2006-2011]
 - Dr. Brad Hillman (NJ) as Advisor to NE1033: Biological Improvement of Chestnut through Technologies that Address Management of the Species, its Pathogens and Pests [10/2008-2013]
 - Dr. Margaret Smith (NYI) as Advisor to NEERA1000: Northeast Pasture Consortium [10/2006-2011]
 - Dr. Tom Burr (NYG) as Advisor to NRSP8: National Animal Genome Research Program [10/2008-2013]

THE JOB JAR
(Work Assignments for the Executive Director)

- Inform USDA-CSREES on actions taken by the NERA Directors.
- Inform ESCOP of NERA actions on the FY2010 off-the-top requests.
- Assist in the planning for the 2009 Northeast Summer Joint Session to be held at Portland, ME on July 12-14.
- Facilitate meetings of the Northeast Functional Foods Initiative [Members: Mike Vayda, Tom Brady, Ian Hart, Brad Hillman, Fred Servello and Dan Rossi]
- Assist the Nominations Committee to fill the following positions:
 - NERA Representative to the Budget and Legislative Committee
 - Advisor to NE1022 (New NE_temp1561- 10/2009-2014): Poultry Production Systems: Optimization of Production and Welfare Using Physiological, Behavioral and Physical Assessments
 - Advisor to NE1027: Ovarian Influences on Embryonic Survival in Ruminants [10/2007-2012]

Tuesday, March 24, 2009

1. Call to Order - Chair Mike Vayda

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 am. Brief introductions were made around the table.

2. Agenda Modification (Additions/Deletions) and Approval - Chair Mike Vayda

The motion made to approve the draft agenda as posted, was seconded and approved.

<http://www.nera.umd.edu/workshop/NERAAGendaMarch2009.htm>

3. Approval of the September 22, 2008 Meeting Minutes - Chair Mike Vayda

The motion made to accept the minutes posted was seconded and approved.

<http://www.nera.umd.edu/workshop/NERAMinutesSept2008.html>

4. Interim Actions by the Chair and NERA Executive Committee Report - Chair Mike Vayda

[Actions Taken by NERA Chair](#)

5. Multistate Activities Committee Report distributed for consideration on March 24, 2009 - Tom Burr

<http://www.nera.umd.edu/workshop/MACReportMarch2009.html>

The MAC report and recommendations were distributed so the directors can review them before the discussion tomorrow.

6. Discussion of Planning Grant Recommendations – Dan Rossi

<http://www.nera.umd.edu/March2009Meeting/2009MACRecommendations.pdf>

Three of the six proposals received were recommended for funding. Details to be discussed as part of the MAC Report tomorrow.

7. ESCOP Report - Bruce McPheron and Mike Vayda

<http://www.nera.umd.edu/March2009Meeting/ESCOPReport.doc>

Budget and Advocacy Committee Working Document -

<http://www.nera.umd.edu/March2009Meeting/BudgetThemesFeb172009.doc>

ESCOP Science and Technology Committee Report -

<http://www.nera.umd.edu/March2009Meeting/ESCOPSciTechReport.doc>

System Communication and Marketing Implementation Committee [Podesta 2009 Plan]-

<http://www.nera.umd.edu/March2009Meeting/SecondYearPlan.pdf>

Marketing Campaign First Year Metrics Report -

<http://www.nera.umd.edu/March2009Meeting/FirstYearMetricsReport.pdf>

Themes and initiatives were used, instead of budget lines/items, to develop the budget for FY2010. These are common themes shared with USDA, and what we want to accomplish with NIFA.

On the Marketing Committee -- Podesta will contact NERA stations to arrange for congressional visits to home districts. This is crucial particularly for members of the Ag. Committee [NJ, NY and ME]. We should suggest for Podesta to increase the number of e-newsletters, maybe 12 per year. Stories should be provided to them to make this work. The EDs were asked to follow up with their respective stations. Dr. McPheron also noted that we should support Podesta on the second year of their 3-year contract.

On the Science Roadmap -- The Science and Technology Committee will conduct a Delphi survey to identify the priorities. Each director will be asked to identify five faculty who could participate in this survey. ESCOP had approved the process, and Cornell will implement and analyze the survey.

Dr. McPheron encourage the directors to continue to influence the CSREES transition to NIFA. NIFA has until Sept. 2009 to develop their Roadmap. Series of questions will be sent out for comments through the Federal Register. We will need a single coordinated response from the region.

Enrollment for the next LEAD 21 is completed, but additional enrollment can still be accommodated. For 2010, focus will be for mid-career administrators. The course will help them think how their career will unfold. The tuition is \$8500, but worth it.

8. **NE Center for Rural Development Review Report - Bruce McPheron**

The 2008 NERCRD Report is on its way via mail. The Center underwent a comprehensive review and the result was positive. Of the four regional centers, the Northeast set the standard for research in rural development issues. The Northeast Center had done a remarkable job in outreach. They have partnered with SARE to co-fund projects. There is funding available, so search will be opened soon for an additional assistant director.

NERA will co-sponsor with NERCRD the Local Food Systems Conference to be held on May 19-20 at the Hudson Valley Resort in Kerhonkson, NY.

9. **Report from Cornerstone, Budgets FY09-10-11 and Farm Bill Implementation Update - Hunt Shipman, Cornerstone**

http://www.nasulgc-bac.com/documents/FY2009/BAC_Final.xls

Budget themes for FY2010 will be finalized in April 2009. FY2009 was deemed successful as we have obtained an increase in formula fund and restored the use of unrecovered indirect costs as match for the AFRI-specialty crops initiative.

10. **Discussion of NIFA Restructuring, Federal Budgets, Stimulus Package - All**

Discussion centered on the poor support for agricultural research in the stimulus package.

Comments were:

- "Research in agriculture is important to the nation, but the message does not get across. There is a need to be creative in how we sell agricultural research. We need a completely different strategy. Not seen as cutting edge."
- "There is fundamental disconnect in USDA perception, maybe NIFA is the answer."
- "USDA is not seen as a research agency. It is a provider of commodity support program".
- "AMA supports NIH, not USDA."
- "What is our role in solving nutrition problems? Do cutting-edge research that complements the Administration's and the constituents/consumers' interests."
- "Reach out to AMA and initiate dialog with environmental groups."
- "Bring in non-traditional partners, engage them or attend their meetings." The forthcoming local food systems conference in NY is a step towards this direction.
- "Use biotechnology councils and address common issues, even those that we may not agree with."

11. **Discussion of the REEO Questions for Stakeholders - All**

<http://www.nera.umd.edu/workshop/REEOQuestions.doc>

<http://www.nera.umd.edu/workshop/NERAREEOResponse.doc>

The members were divided into two groups. The first group under Dr. Servello answered questions #..to.., and the second group under Dr. Brad Hillman tackled questions #... to#...

1. ***What types of current and future critical issues (including those affecting citizens, communities and natural resources) does Agriculture face that no USDA entity could address individually?***

1. Local vs. non local food production and distribution
2. Farmland preservation (science behind this, engineering, economics)

3. Climate change – how do individual components interface?
4. Invasive species
5. Food, nutrition & health interface
6. Bioenergy
7. Water
8. All of these as global issues
 - Demands on agriculture as population increases
 - Unintended consequences – critical issues of what we’re doing. What are the implications of technology?
 - In 50 years, are we going to be self-sufficient or be net importer?

2. ***What criteria should USDA use to prioritize science (i.e., research, education and extension) investments to address these issues?***

1. Ability to leverage with other agencies and organizations
2. Predicted impact
3. Sustainability and intended consequences
4. Supports/informs sound policy decisions
5. Best science – ensure to continue to encourage good investigative science
6. Addressing critical issues that leads to new applications

(What are we using to prioritize science now, in government’s perspective? NSF sets up advisory committees that decide where investments are made.)

3. ***How might USDA better coordinate science among its various agencies and with its partners?***

1. Establish research priorities as themes that are coordinated across the various subunits within USDA and applicable to partner needs

4. ***Provide examples where agricultural sciences are successfully coordinated for maximum benefit. Why are they successful?***

1. At the field level, successful coordination occurs when PI’s see mutual benefits for collaborative work
2. Without coordination built into the system at the Washington level those opportunities only arise when PI’s from different units find mutual opportunities at the same time or in the same location
3. It then requires leadership to bridge existing subunit barriers
4. Characteristics of effective coordination:
 - Need to be headed towards the same direction
 - Mutual benefits from working together
 - Good leadership
5. Successful grassroots partnerships:
 - Need a commitment for partnership and an agreement to make it work
 - Need to have a champion
 - All parties should mutually benefit equally.
6. Examples are multistate projects – good venue for coordination and structure to attract participation
7. ARS scientists work well with station scientists; higher levels do not encourage or are necessarily involved. It’s from the bottom up.

5. ***Provide examples where agricultural sciences are not coordinated effectively. Why is coordination lacking? What are the barriers?***
 1. There is not a structure at the USDA level to encourage and coordinate research among units. Agencies within USDA are simply advocating for themselves.
 2. There are two different levels of coordination: between the agencies and within USDA.

6. ***What else might USDA do to improve coordination of science; enhance its ability to identify issues and prioritize investments; and elevate its role in science implementation and coordination?***
 1. High profile director with science and good political skills
 2. Specific partnerships with other agencies i.e., genomics
 3. Appropriate budget requests (what is actual cost?)
 4. Isolate funding for science-based component of USDA (identifiable independent entity)
 5. Set USDA-specific goals (actual achievable goals): i.e., obesity reduction; ag-based plastic use

The responses will be shared by Dr. Rossi with the other regional Executive Directors at the National Multistate Activities Committee Meeting on April 21-22, in Washington, DC.

12. **NRSP-3 Report - David Gay**
[NRSP3 - National Atmospheric Deposition Program Report \[PPT Presentation in PDF\]](#)

13. **OED Report - Dan Rossi**
<http://www.nera.umd.edu/March2009Meeting/OEDReport.doc>
 National Water Quality Conference Report -
<http://www.nera.umd.edu/March2009Meeting/NatWaterConf.doc>
 USDA-REE Energy Summit Report -
<http://www.nera.umd.edu/March2009Meeting/USDAREEEnergySummit.doc>

14. **Proposed NERA Budget for FY09-10 - Mike Vayda, Chair**
 A motion was made to approve the budget as presented, except for the salary lines for the NERA staff. Decision will be made based on the Rutgers University Administration's policy regarding staff salaries for FY09-10. The motion was seconded and approved.
 There is no change proposed for the stations' assessments to NERA for FY09-10.

15. **Comments from the Members (States/stations Updates) - Mike Vayda, Chair**
 Majority of the stations reported serious budget cuts due to the recession.

16. **Best Practices: Budget Reduction and Overall Restructuring Strategies**
<http://www.nera.umd.edu/March2009Meeting/BudgetReductionStrategies3.doc>

17. **Final comments and adjournment for the day's meeting - Mike Vayda, Chair**
 The meeting was adjourned for the day at 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday, March 25, 2009

18. **Multistate Activities Committee Report - Tom Burr**
<http://www.nera.umd.edu/workshop/MACReportMarch2009.html>

A motion was made to accept the following MAC recommendations. The motion was seconded and passed.

1. Award the 2009 NERA Planning Grant to the following proposals:
 - [NE0901: Addressing Research and Extension Needs of the Emerging Cold-Climate Wine Industry in the Northeast and Upper Midwest](#)
 - [NE0905: Integrating Pest Management and Pollinator Protection in Insect-Pollinated Specialty Crops](#)
 - [NE0906: The Role of Cultural Specialty Crops in Providing Food Security and Entrepreneurship Opportunities for Refugee and Emerging Ethnic Farmer Populations in the Northeast](#)
2. Approve the following proposals:
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 - NE_TEMP1601: Hydropedology: Genesis, Properties, and Distribution of Hydromorphic Soils (Replacement of NE 1021) [10/2009-2014]
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4. Approve an extraordinary one-year extension to end on 2010 for NE504: New England Center for Invasive Plants [8/2007-2010].
5. Approve the following regional off-the-top funding for FY09-10:
 - Approve FY2009 regional off-the-top funding for NE-9 in the amount of \$208,000.
 - Approve FY2009 regional off-the-top funding for NE-59 in the amount of \$40,788.

On the National Multistate Research Award: The project to be submitted from the Northeast is NE1028- Mastitis Resistance to Enhance Dairy Food Safety. Drs. Ian Hart and Dan Rossi will work with the technical committee to submit the nomination.

NERA recommendations for the NRSP FY2010 Off-the-top funding requests:

[Summary of NRSP requests](#)

- NRSP-1 - [\[Budget Request\]](#)\$356,427 [Approved. Corrected for FY2010 level]
- NRSP-3 - [\[Budget Request\]](#)\$50,000 [Approved]
- NRSP-4 - [\[Budget Request\]](#)\$481,182 [Approved]

- NRSP-5 - Note: No budget request submitted. NRSP5 will terminate on Sept. 30, 2009
- NRSP-6 - [\[Budget Request\]](#)\$150,000 [Approved]
- NRSP-7 - [\[Budget Request\]](#)\$325,000 [A motion was made, seconded and passed that off-the-top funding is guaranteed up to \$325,000, with the budget to be reviewed annually, and will include any special grant received.]
- NRSP-8 - [\[Budget Request\]](#) [No action]

Discussion of the NRSP proposals:

Approve NRSP_temp3 The National Atmospheric Deposition Program

A motion was made, seconded and passed, to approve the 5-year proposal. The off-the-top funding of \$50,000 will keep the system involved in directing the program. The project is important to agriculture and addresses climate change issues.

Defer decision for NRSP_temp7: National Program for Minor Use Animal Drugs

The proposal is incomplete. It is not clear as to how long off-the-top funding will be needed.

Deny approval of NRSP_temp161: National Animal Nutrition Program

The project seems to propose development of databases of nutritional requirements for livestock species and of nutrient compositions for various feeds. Many such databases exist, of course; if there is a problem it is that too many exist (at least for dairy where they are used most often). The problems are (1) supporting arguments use here would apply equally well to most research disciplines such as reproduction, genetics, animal behavior, management, etc. There is nothing especially unique here; do we need/can we afford NRSP's for all areas?, and (2) the cost is massively out of line with what they plan to deliver over and above what one or more coordinating committees could contribute to a coordinated national research effort in animal nutrition. Do not recommend approval.

Deny approval of NRSP_temp201: Specialty Crop Regulatory Assistance Program

IR-4 is already in place. The directors recommend that they work with IR-4.

This one seems to fit as an NRSP if one accepts the argument that research is being significantly impeded by the complexity and cost of securing regulatory approval of (and perhaps consumer confidence in) the end result. This is basically the same objective of NRSP 4 and 7 without proposing to actually do the research which supports regulatory approval. There is the danger of benefits accruing to individuals and private companies rather than to the public domain as with NRSP 4 and 7 but we have lived with that possibility in the past. The proposal makes an excellent case for need and opportunity for impact. However, the obvious downsides are the percentage of costs covered by MRF funding and the fact that this project has no obvious end point. Do not recommend approval.

19. Partnership Leadership Management Dashboard - Bill Bristow, CSREES

Bill Bristow gave a brief presentation on the new USDA Leadership Management Dashboard [LMD]. It can be found in the REEIS website at <http://www.reeis.usda.gov/lmd>. Version 3 of LMD is scheduled for release in early April. Plan of Work users can use their POW user ID and password to enter the system. CSREES is currently working with NIMSS to allow integration of NIMSS data into their system. NIMSS Programmer Judy Sun is building the Web Service that will enable CSREES to download the NIMSS database.

Scheduled for deployment on April 1st, this latest release, LMD 3.0, introduces several new features and enhancements including:

1. 2007 Accomplishment Reports from the Plan of Work system, with key measures (Grants, Expenditures, State Contributions, Contributions from Other Sources, and FTEs) through:
 - Strategic Plan Perspective: Goal, Objective and Knowledge Area
 - Geographic Perspective: Region, State and Institution Type
 - Portfolio Management Perspective: Portfolio and Knowledge Area
 - Knowledge Area Perspective: KA Topic, KA Category, and KA
 - Funding Source Perspective: Funding Source and Activity Type
 - Institution Report Perspective: Institution, Planned Programs and Knowledge Area (with links to documents at the Planned Program level)
2. 2009 Portfolio Crosswalks with revisions to all portfolio-related analysis and views.
3. Enhancements to the “Workload” tab (applicable only to CSREES employees):
 - New groupings of project assignments by the following funding categories:
 - Formula
 - Non-Formula
 - Special Grants
 - The ability to drill down to a listing of projects within each cell, and then further drill down to detail for any individual project.

20. **CSREES Update - Dan Kugler, CSREES**

<http://www.nera.umd.edu/march2009meeting/CSREESReportMarch2009.pdf>

21. **Discussion of National Energy Initiatives - Mike Hoffman**

- BioCentury Initiative - <http://www.nera.umd.edu/March2009Meeting/BioCenturyInitiativeFeb32009.doc>
- Brookings “Energy Discovery Innovation Institutes - http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2009/0209_energy_innovation_muro.aspx

22. **Discussion of Specific Potential Research Collaborations**

The discussion for a collaborative regional activity started at the New England Deans/Directors Meeting. A group was formed to initiate an activity on Northeast functional foods. Dr. Rossi will serve as the facilitator. Members are Dr. Mike Vayda (VT), Dr. Ian Hart (CTS), Dr. Brad Hillman (NJ), Dr. Fred Servello (ME) and Tom Brady (NH). [Note: Dr. Rod Bushway (ME) was added after the meeting.]

23. **Discussion of 2009 Summer Joint Session Meeting Program – Fred Servello**

Draft Agenda -

<http://www.nera.umd.edu/March2009Meeting/2009NEJointSessionDraftAgendaV5.doc>

The members endorsed the draft agenda and are looking forward to a productive summer meeting. Inviting the regional center directors would contribute greatly to the discussion and could increase the potential for future collaborations. There will also be an update from the 2008 Urban Initiative Working Group that was formed to follow-up on actions from the 2008 Summer Joint Session.

24. **Nominations Committee Report - Chair Vayda**

Names were put forward for the following positions:

- Dr. Michael Vayda (VT) as MAC Chair and NERA Representative to the NRSP Review Committee
- Dr. Jon Wraith (NH) as MAC Member
- Dr. Fred Servello (ME) as Advisor to NE1026: Weed Management Strategies for Sustainable Cropping Systems [10/2006-2011]
- Dr. Brad Hillman (NJ) as Advisor to NE1033: Biological Improvement of Chestnut through Technologies that Address Management of the Species, its Pathogens and Pests [10/2008-2013]
- Dr. Margaret Smith (NYI) as Advisor to NEERA1000: Northeast Pasture Consortium [10/2006-2011]
- Dr. Tom Burr (NYG) as Advisor to NRSP8: National Animal Genome Research Program [10/2008-2013]

The motion made to accept the above nominations was seconded and approved.

25. Resolutions Committee Report – Tom Burr

The following resolution was read:

Resolution of Appreciation to Brenda McComb

WHEREAS, Dr. Brenda McComb served as Associate Director of the Massachusetts Agricultural Experiment Station from April, 2008 to March, 2009,

WHEREAS, Dr. McComb participated and provided significant contributions to deliberations at the NERA Meetings, and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Northeastern Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors' Meeting in Baltimore, Maryland, on March 24-25, 2009, express sincere appreciation to Dr. McComb, and wish her much success in her new role as a member of the faculty at Oregon State University.

Signed March 25, 2009

Michael Vayda, Chair

Northeastern Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors

A motion was made to approve the resolution. It was seconded and passed.

26. Future Meetings:

- Summer Meeting – July 12-14, 2009 at the Holiday Inn By the Bay in Portland, Maine
- ESS/SAES/ARD Workshop and NERA Fall Meeting – September 14-17, 2009 at Sheraton Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Chair Mike Vayda thanked everyone for the lively and fruitful discussions, and wished them safe travel.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.



[Back to Workroom](#)
