

Report and Recommendations
NORTHEAST MULTISTATE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE
MEETING

May 28, 2020
(11:00 am – 12:00 pm, Zoom teleconference)

Chair: Brad Hillman (Rutgers)

Members present: Matt Wilson (WVU), Eric Wommack (UD), Gary Thompson (PSU), and Pat Vittum (UMASS)

Approval of the agenda

- **The agenda was approved by acclamation**

Request to Approve Peer-Reviewed Multistate Research Project

1. NE_TEMP2001: *Harnessing Chemical Ecology to Address Agricultural Pest and Pollinator Priorities*, 10/2020 – 09/2025 [Renewal of NE1501, AA: Jan Nyrop, Cornell]
 - First renewal for this project; team was productive during period '15-'20.
 - Reviews were positive, one reviewer didn't understand the intent of the MRF.
 - No major issues with the proposal, requested modifications were addressed.
 - Chemical ecology group thinks in broad strokes, laying out big questions and having members contribute accordingly.
 - NERA should consider cultivating a NE pollinator-focused multistate research project. Currently there are two North Central projects focused on bees [NC1173: *Sustainable Solutions to Problems Affecting Bee Health*] and monarch butterfly [NC1205: *Monarch Butterfly Conservation*].
 - **Matt Wilson introduced a motion to recommend approval of NE_TEMP2001, the motion was seconded by Gary Thompson and approved unanimously.**

2. NECC_TEMP2001: *Sustainable Farm Energy Production and Use*, 10/2020 – 09/2025 [Renewal of NECC1501, AA: Gary Thompson, Penn State]
 - Coordinating committee (CC) mechanism is appropriate for this issue; the CC provides a platform for the group to engage.
 - Participation looks a bit lower than last year.
 - This CC examines sustainable energy production at the farm level and engages both research and extension,
 - The group is working to understand why farmers do and do not adopt new technologies.
 - The CC's Regional Energy Status and Outlook report will be a strong contribution to the NE.
 - Responses to reviewers addressed concerns with the education plan; reviews were quite positive.

- **Matt Wilson introduced a motion to recommend approval of NECC_TEMP2001, the motion was seconded by Pat Vittum and approved unanimously.**
3. NE_TEMP2045: *Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems: Assessing the Impact of Soil Variability and Climate Change*, 10/2020 – 09/2025 [NE1545, AA: Adel Shirmohammadi, Maryland]
- Technical team is integrated and led by University of Rhode Island scientists (George Loomis, Extension and Jose Amador, AES).
 - Onsite wastewater treatment laboratory is located at URI.
 - 25% of US households use onsite wastewater treatment systems, most of those systems are in suburban and rural communities.
 - Six reviews came in for this proposal, all were generally positive, and the technical team responded to reviewer comments.
 - Adel will continue as AA, as approved by UMD AES Director Puneet Srivastava.
 - **Matt Wilson introduced a motion to recommend approval of NE_TEMP2045, the motion was seconded by Eric Wommack and approved unanimously.**

Request to Approve Regional Off-the-Top Budget

1. NE59: Support for the Northeastern Regional Center for Rural Development (Director: Stephan Goetz. See memo of May 7, 2020, Gary Thompson to MAC, \$40,788)
 - Stephan Goetz has integrated research and extension to run a strong program at NERCRD.
 - While NERCRD has been encouraged to increase their budget request to NERA, the center has been successful in attracting other supplemental funds to support the operation. NERCRD has not sought an increase in off-the-top (OTT) funding in over 4 years.
 - Very impactful work comes out of the Center – this is OTT money well spent.
 - **Gary Thompson introduced a motion to recommend approval of the NE59 budget request. The motion was approved unanimously.**
2. NE9: Conservation and Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources (AA: Jan Nyrop, \$275,468 request approved for FY2021.)
 - NE9 renewed two years ago and NERA approved a 5-year level budget request at \$275,468 annually.
 - Each region supports a plant genetic resource center using OTT funding.

Administrative Adviser Assignment

1. NE1943: *Biology, Ecology & Management of Emerging Disease Vectors*, 10/2019 – 09/2024 [formerly Ted Andreadis] Mark Hutton – Maine, willing to serve
 - **This AA assignment will be recommended to NERA.**
2. NE1944: *Management of the Brown Marmorated Stink Bug*, 10/2019 – 09/2024 [formerly Ted Andreadis] Mark Hutton – Maine, willing to serve
 - **This AA assignment will be recommended to NERA.**

3. NE1727: *Influence of ovary, uterus, and embryo on pregnancy success in ruminants*, 10/2017 – 09/2022 [to replace Gary Thompson] Dave Townson – UVM, endorsed by the technical team to serve as AA.
 - Dave Townson has been a member of NE1727 for years as a faculty member working on this project.
 - While taking on the AA role after having been involved with the project for a long time should not add significant work, the decision to take on the additional or alternative responsibilities is the decision of Dr. Townson.
 - **Rick Rhodes will have a conversation with Dave Townson to discuss the roles and responsibilities of an AA. After the conversation, an AA assignment will be recommended to NERA.**

Discussion Items

1. ESS Excellence in Multistate Research Award: a strategy for selection of Northeast nominees
 - NERA needs to be persistent and consider re-nominating strong projects.
 - Need to clearly identify outputs and outcomes in the nomination.
 - Work with NE AAs to identify prospective nominees.
2. Multistate research projects recap.
 - Ensure that reviewers have familiarity with multistate research projects.
 - Include in requests to review a contextual statement so that reviewers understand the nature of multistate research project proposals.
 - Consider requiring draft proposals to include a list of prospective participants (pre-Appendix E.)