



As the summer winds down and the delta variant proliferates, the lambda variant emerges, and vaccination rates slow; it all bodes for a continuing level of uncertainty. Like it or not, we live in interesting times. We're buoyed by the prospect that science and data will drive decision making in these uncertain times. If ever there was a time that we need to engage as scientists...

There are several action items that you'll find interesting. Read on!

"In such researches as these, let us all in our several departments cheerfully engage..." – John Adams (1791) from a dissertation on Canon and Feudal Law and archived by John Adams and Charles Francis Adams (ed.), *The Works of John Adams* (1851), Vol. 3, p. 462, Little, Brown and Company, Boston, AM.

Action items:

- The NERA Executive Committee has proposed changes to NERA's Rules of Operation. The changes will be forwarded to you tomorrow, consistent with the requirement that rule changes are shared with the Association at least 30 days prior to a vote by the Association. Be on the look-out for the email tomorrow.
- In a rather stunning turn of events, multistate projects submitted in NIMSS will no longer require NIFA approval. ([The correspondence from Mike Fitzner through Parag Chitnis and signed by Carrie Castille, August 6, 2021](#), is posted on the NERA website.) You'll recollect that prior to NIFA moving to Kansas City, approval of multistate projects by NIFA took up to 60 days. More importantly, the NIFA approval was duplicative of the reviews of our multistate projects by peers, by the Multistate Activities Committee (MAC) and by the Association. This places key decision making on multistate projects in the hands of the regions, where it belongs. To that end, NERA's MAC is seeking a new member to replace Eric Wommack, the new chair of NERA, come September 29. Do we have a volunteer?
- The Diversity Catalyst Committee of ESCOP will be issuing a "Call to Action" which seeks input from directors on actions that you are taking toward meeting the four challenge areas (recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce; strengthening partnerships among the 1862/1890/1994 institutions; addressing funding disparities across the three LGU systems; and working with underserved populations) identified during the 2020 ESS Meeting. Watch for the email from the Diversity Catalyst Committee Chair, Henry Fadamiro.
- With the fall approaching, we are again seeking new pictures from your station to be shown on our scrolling banner on the NERA website. Please send those to [Dave](#).

Reminders/Updates:

- A NERA communications subcommittee (Matt Wilson, WVU; Lori Gula, UNH; Lindsay Willey, WVU;

Erin Miller, UME; David Leibovitz, NERA; and Rick Rhodes, NERA) is continuing the Association's interest in developing a Northeast Communications Network. In early September, the subcommittee will be sharing a communications assessment to develop an inventory of local and regional experiment station assets and needs. We've also added the NE communicators to this NERA News listserv. Welcome communicators! If you have items that might be of interest to the NERA directors, please send them to [us](#).

- The Scowcroft Institute of International Affairs (Texas A&M) invites you to participate in a virtual workshop dedicated to the [Potential Role of Land-grant Universities for Biodefense](#) on August 24 from 2:00-5:00 PM CDT. Please share this invitation widely.
- The [2021 Experiment Station Section Meeting](#) in Olympic Valley, CA on September 27-30, 2021 will be offering a hybrid meeting opportunity with a \$300 registration fee. More information will be shared as it arises.
- *Heads up:* NERA is slated to meet during the ESS meeting on Tuesday, September 28 from 9:00-11:30 AM PDT (12:00-2:30 PM EDT.) This will be a hybrid meeting and will offer an opportunity for those not in Olympic Valley to join.
- *And again:* How are you and your institution responding to the "pandemic of the unvaccinated?" We're interested to hear your thinking and strategies as we move closer to the fall.

Informational items:

- The NERA Executive Committee approved signing NCFAR's coalition letter supporting Dr. Chavonda Jacobs-Young's (currently the Administrator of ARS) nomination for USDA Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics (REE). Dr. Jacobs-Young has been a long-time advocate for the Experiment Station Section.
- ARS is searching for a [Supervisory Research Entomologist, Research Leader](#) in Maricopa, AZ and a [Supervisory Research Agronomist/Agricultural Engineer](#) in Pendleton, OR.



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NERA and its member institutions are committed to the principles of affirmative action, diversity, and inclusion.

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