



NERA

Northeastern Regional Association
of
State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors Meeting

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

March 14-16, 2016

Minutes

In Attendance:

Cameron Faustman, Chair
Ted Andreadis
Craig Beyroudy
Susan Brown
Nancy Bull, NEED
Bill Hare
Brad Hillman
Jody Jellison
Jan Nyrop
Tim Phipps
Muquarrab Qureshi, USDA-NIFA
Mark Rieger
Rick Rhodes III
Daniel Rossi
Deb Sheely, Guest-URI
Adel Shirmohammadi
Dariusz Swietlik, USDA-ARS
Gary Thompson
Eric Wommack
Jon Wraith
Rubie Mize, Recorder

1. Call to Order and Introductions – Cameron Faustman, Chair
 - Introductions – Chair Cameron Faustman called the meeting to order at 8:05AM, and asked everyone to give brief introductions.
 - Agenda Modification (Additions/Deletions) and Approval
There are two candidates for the NERA Executive Director position to be interviewed. The goal is to complete the agenda, but have ample time to get to know the candidates and have a thorough discussion after each interview.
Action: Motion made to accept the agenda, to be adjusted as needed, was seconded and approved.
 - Approval of the minutes of the September 28, 2015 NERA Meeting held in Charlotte, NC
<http://nera.rutgers.edu/workshop/NERAMinutesSept2015.pdf>
Action: Motion made to accept the minutes was seconded and approved.
 - Approval of the minutes of the December 15, 2015 NERA Conference Call
<http://nera.rutgers.edu/workshop/NERAMinutesDec2015.pdf>
Action: Motion made to accept the minutes was seconded and approved.
2. NERA Executive Committee Report – Cameron Faustman, Chair
 - Interim Actions by the Chair [Oct. 2015 to March 2016] – see details attached below
 - Chair Cameron praised the work of the ED Search Committee and thanked the members for dedicating their time to screen, review applications and hold phone interviews.
 - ESS Excellence in Leadership award – Chair Faustman congratulated Dan Rossi, who was unanimously selected by the directors and will be honored with this award at the APLU Annual Meeting in December.
 - ESCOP Leadership Nomination – Gary Thompson (PA) will represent our region and will serve in this capacity.
3. Best Practices/Discussion Session: An Experiment Station’s Role in Helping to Drive Economic Development – Jan Nyrop, Facilitator
 - Should we engage in economic development in agricultural research? Historically, ROI from research is high, 10:1. Based on productivity indexes, capacity fund has more contributions as it allows building relationships and leveraging of other funds. Hired post-doc to do analysis to rationalize investments. Paradox is why can’t we increase investments if ROI is high?
 - Two pressing issues – (1) talent pipeline, salaries not attractive enough and training fund lacking and (2) research dollars are static
 - Is focusing on economic development way to highlight agriculture and address both challenges?

- Daniel Gilbert, Harvard psychologist, popularized acronym PAIN – **P**ersonal **A**brupt **I**mmoral **N**ow – people act when challenged, when all four characteristics of threat are present. Does this apply to us? Can we get more investment by focusing in economic development?
- In NY, \$1.5B tobacco settlement money was designated for economic development. Governor announced competition among regions, \$500M each in 5 years. Ithaca and Geneva regions were winners. For Cornell, this funded a new plant science innovation center, food safety institute in GVA, and additional workforce and program investments. However, funding comes with lots of expectations in capital investment like workforce training, job creation etc., expected to result to significant economic advancement in the state.
- Big challenge in our region. In Northeast we have 150M customers and import 50% of our needs.
- What are our conceptual challenges? Not classic for agriculture, like industry.
- Our challenge is ‘educational’. Wegmans was one of co-leaders in NY and met weekly with University of Rochester which represented itself as an agricultural institute. Saw depth of networking, “Why was Cornell not on table?” Wegman gave \$150M for nutrition to University of Rochester. What partnerships do we form? How effective are they?
- 30% of time spent writing up proposals these past months. Need to look at different types of engagement and ways of accomplishing some of our broader goals to achieve of our objectives.
- What are specific expectations? NY state had 7 criteria, 3 important ones are (1) want to see jobs with real accounting that benefits agriculture specially food processing; (2) overall wealth go up – professional positions being opened and (3) expect 5:1 match. If awarded \$1M, \$5M match for Cornell will use competitive, capacity, foundation funds etc. Wegmans – may not align with academic mission.
- RI Economic Development changed name because effort failed and left state with enormous shortfall of \$1B. A power company left land, and URI proposed setting up an Agric Innovation district. URI Research Foundation serves as 501C3 and will serve as landlord that can lease the land. Ready to transfer state land to Foundation and two companies ready to start agric innovation.
- How do we view agriculture in the future? Is it traditional? Northeast will face population increase but no land, and still need to produce food. Huge customer base, now is the time.
- Topic is of particular interest to DC. Urban agriculture is buzz word in DC. UDC met with USDA and their question is how we look at economic development, specifically job creation in DC? UDC’s food hub model showcasing processing preparation, entrepreneurship and use of renewable energy received accolades and dollars from DC government. Now building 8 farms/hubs and signed partnership agreement with BARC to help strengthen UDC capacity. Maximizing use of renewable energy, using natural energy source, water and other innovations in urban agriculture will help address migration to urban that will increase demand. Northeast region is in best position to look at these issues. Take this opportunity in our region and be leaders in this field. UDC is strong in extension and currently building research capacity, and would like to partner

with those pursuing same goals. As production increases, food safety becomes an issue. How safe is food produced in the urban setting, is an important component to address?

- Only 5% arable land in NE, but has 30% of population and have very decentralized agriculture in region. Receipt from farm gate is high-no middlemen. Have lots of water. Because of high concentration of people, technology is different, more biological control, use of improved varieties and precision agriculture. Energy is now cheap but will not last, so transporting goods is currently cheap. What technological advancements do we need to help farmers in urban agriculture?
- We have this great opportunity but challenges deal with traditional concept of agriculture. Private industry has vested interest. Do others have economic development responsibility?
- Yes, in New Jersey. Rutgers has an Assoc. VP for Economic Development, an aggressive grant writer. Successful in getting a food innovation center, incubation project. Significant investment for economic development in depressed area in South Jersey. Not big money making but good for politics, and able to get funded. Now moving to North Jersey with a food incubation center. Brad's investment is for the staff that are not fully funded under the project. Goal is to move towards not requiring funds from the AES. Subsidy brings more political goodwill and economic development in area, compared to research farms. Under Assoc. VP is an office for analytic research with good statistician who apply numbers and economic analysis to grant-associated projects. Adding this is critically important! It is now self-sustaining as it is built into competitive grants. Include this component in the grants early in process. Positions are on soft money, but Brad guarantees them.
- There is also a conceptualized eco complex in central NJ. The idea is to have industrial park, and just now evolving. Eco complex in nice location, very accessible. This is an example of project that didn't take off until they got the right dedicated director from NJ-EDP that came with the economic development piece.
- Craig shared that in Colorado, Governor went to 64 counties with the Economic Development Officer. Gov. wanted to put together units within his admin that will drive eco development, biotech, etc. and not one said agriculture is an economic driver. We face those kinds of issues. Senator asked Colostate - What influence does agriculture have in workforce development? We have think of this in partnership with Extension and CARET when we push economic development. We have people representing us in Congress who have stake at this. Maintain ROI of 10:1 is message we have to send to Congress so it resonates with folks.
- Adel sent science roadmap brochures to USDA's State Secretary to show why funds are needed. MDA met with UMD faculty to get grant for anaerobic digesters, justifying that if developing small scale units will help farmers in Chesapeake region and reduce environmental effects. Cybersecurity issues are also important and UMD is taking lead, need to link to these issues too.
- What is the role of the Experiment Stations? How do we help faculty translate these or get on board with economic development, in their proposals, grants etc.?
- In some institutions promotions are based on productivity. PennState is working on commercializing research portfolio, challenge is if you don't have focus. Programmatically very difficult, hard to change mindset of faculty. Can you create this focal point to bring people on board? This is new president's priority.

- For most states economic development focus came about from money coming in from state and industry. NJ's is built from bottom up, each was built piece by piece but not part of large agenda. They built the economic agenda around it. Get right manager and it runs well.
 - ARS has some control in driving their scientists' agenda. There were 400 or so agreements with industry but many failed. ARS given authority, 8-10 staff supported by licenses from centers of utilization of products. For example, hydraulic fluid used by military developed by ARS. Why do scientists do it? If they find right partners in industry, some motivated by it. 10% of licenses go to scientist. This was game changer. Office of tech transfer job is to look for those good partners who can produce the technology. How do we evaluate science? Not by publications, but by impacts.
 - New Jersey's model is what UDC did. CAUSES formed, Land-grant programs department fully integrating research, extension and teaching. Each faculty has these three appointments. Economic, social and environmental ROI expected from 8 centers. Dean very proactive in telling how science creates jobs. DC government now can see UDC value- community education focused on depressed areas. Media outlets picking up these success stories. Integration works, complete change and not just publications or education, expected outcome is economic development. Dean is ag economist.
 - UDEL has center on behavioral and economics with funding from ARS that does consumer behavior research. Want to see economic development in region, but not cheap. For ex. studying putting honey in bear jar cost \$100K. Mark suggests bringing faculty together.
 - How do we tie economic development to our basic mission? There is no historic or current conflict. AES initiated in the context of economic development and remain very consistent with our core mission.
 - Our faculty reward system can create conflict. Depends on vision articulated by leadership, and types of young people we hire.
4. NIFA Report – see detailed report attached below
- Muquarrab continued the conversation, as NIFA has strong interest in economic development. Discipline gaps, particularly social science being looked at. NIFA wants to see what partners need -- social, behavioral, environmental economics, etc., and is considering hiring a subject matter expert in system economics.
 - NIFA values our input and develops programs based on needs of constituents. Within the six priority areas, Secretary and Office of Technology and Research are looking at creative 21st century approaches. FY2017 AFRI spells out requirements for integrated, systems based agriculture based on innovation, technology and creating jobs. Mandatory programs will enter microbiome area not just plants and animals but also water, environmental, looking at integrated relationships.
 - NIFA needs to be more strategic and offer targeted training grants to prepare future scientists. NIFA has no training grant program for scientists in given area. With or without mandatory funding, NIFA built it in current fellowship programs. Targeted areas may change every 2-4 years. Concept being developed, and will be operationalized in RFAs.
 - Of proposals that requested as Centers of Excellence, 15% of applicants that were able to demonstrate integration had 20-21% success.

- National Vet programs will help fulfill animal-vet needs. Schools and colleges will train production animal workers. RFA being developed.
- New programs in 2017 include Home Visits program – engaging extension expertise in rural and underserved areas including tribal areas to improve quality of life and family setting. Proposes \$20M will complement HHS programs, not duplicate.

Discussion:

- Gary inquired about a capacity funding analysis, a 6-month study being conducted that was mentioned by Cathy & Sonny at meeting last week in VA. What's outcome desired? Muquarrab will get more specifics. Budget & Legislative Committee advocating for capacity funding and interested to know about this study.
- If USDA is looking at ROI and economic impacts from capacity funding, shouldn't we contribute to conceptualization of study as delivery of programs will affect us? We should participate at early stages.
- A director also suggested that there should be a step in **fact checking**.
- During the Center for International Programs reorganization, NIFA being a domestic agency analyzed if it should invest in international programs. It was concluded that agriculture is global and has partnerships with foreign entities. Otto Gonzalez, forest ecologist is the new Center Director.
- Muquarrab added that Million Women Mentors and Citizen Science also new programs at NIFA

5. USDA-ARS Update Questions/Comments - Dariusz Swietlik, ARS

- Dariusz gave a brief update on ARS programs, budget and personnel
- On query about updating facilities at PennState, Dariusz will visit with Dean about use and upgrade of ARS facility.
- On question about purchasing research plot in ARS farm -- legislation prohibits use or sale of land other than for agricultural purposes. Other agencies have plans of building facility in ARS land, but will need authorization from Congress.
- Suggestion was made to allow building business incubators in ARS land. ARS is allowed to lease but can't make profit.
- Suggestion made to revisit topic on Infrastructure Maintenance and Upgrade as a Best Practices session in future meeting, and as example look at ARS facilities in our campuses. Also interesting area is how we handle administration/supervision of ARS personnel in our labs.

6. Best Practices/Discussion Session: Communications for Telling Our Research Story – Mark Rieger, Facilitator

During this session, Mark conducted an interactive survey among directors present. Here are the results and discussion:

- Hiring communications director - preference is someone with solid journalistic/media skills, with little ag background
 - Directors attended training for communicating science
 - Can have both and train them where they're weak
 - 67% prefer strong print and web, modest social media and 33% strong social media

- Very few directors make sleek publications
- Percentage of time your Communications team spend communicating research compared to teaching, extension, or other issues in the college
 - 0-25% - 40%
 - 26-50% - 53%
 - 75% or more 7% - UNH has dedicated communicator at AES
 - URI uses faculty website to describe research.
- ***Chair Faustman mentioned that academic programs brought members of their staff at their meeting. Would we want to consider bringing our communicators at our meeting, and have break room for them to meet as well?*** Communicators meet at national level annually, Association for Communication Excellence in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Life and Human Sciences (ACE). UMD brought development officer at their meeting. Mark will bring his communicator if directors decide to do this.
- Thinking about your Communications Director, to what extent should (s)he be plugged in to APLU initiatives and actionable issues?
 - 73% somewhat engaged and 27% engaged/aware
 - Staff think they have no impact in national, so will put effort in state
 - At UDEL, had op-ed picked up by major media outlet so there's advantage
 - Resources can also be limiting ability to engage
 - kglobal can help take local story national – invite kglobal to our meeting with communicators
- How useful are APLU and K-Global communications/publications for communicating the work and impact of your experiment station?
 - Not useful/not used = 69%
 - Sometimes useful = 23%
 - Frequently useful = 8%
 - Is story being put out really land grant?
 - There are 2 kglobal audience – targeted and public
 - Rick noted that CMC report will talk about how committee will improve understanding of kglobal report. There's disconnect between kglobal and communicators
 - Are communicators aware of kglobal and Ag is America
- What is the primary audience for your research communication?
 - Academia = 15%
 - Industry = 31%
 - Moms, millennials and foodies = 8%
 - Prospective funding (NIFA, NSF etc.) = 46%
 - CT-NH research findings and diagnostics results are targeted to legislators/funders
- How well are the science and impacts of your experiment station being communicated to external stakeholders?
 - Not very well = 15%
 - Could be worse = 77%
 - Very well = 8%
 - UDEL redid website to make sure they're presenting themselves well to students
- How well does your faculty communicate science to the public?

- Poorly = 10% Not very well = 71% Adequately = 21%
- Those with joint appointments Ext/Res (with public funding) and also with academic do better
- Good ones get tapped over and over. Have to put stars in front.
- UDEL has elevator pitch contest
- Practice a 6-min talk, with best set of presentations and have practice audience to critique
- A communicator professional suggested that, first line is-- “The reason this works and why this is important is because....”
- Use ‘**the**’ land-grant university and people start to get curious
- Helpful if already connected to media outlets ex. newspapers, and hire individual who can help administrative heads guide them how to respond to political issues.
- Mark had training with former reporter from CBS on how to respond and found that very useful.
- There will be a workshop at the Sept. ESS Meeting entitled, “Simmer it Down: Strategic Issues Management for LGUs - *This session previews best practices in strategic issues management for land-grant universities; explores the value of and differences between issues management, crisis communication, and reputation and brand management; and the role of executives in initiating principles and systems of issues management at land-grant universities and across the LGU system to maximize resources and minimize risk.*” Faith Peppers of UGA and Chris Sigurdson of Univ. of Arizona will present.

7. Budget and Legislative Update Questions/Comments – Hunt Shipman

Hunt was unable to attend. He submitted a written update, see PDF file below. There were no questions from the directors.

8. NEED Update – Nancy Bull

- See written update below.
- Lost Mary Jane Willis, Extension Assoc. Dir. at Rutgers, this year. An endowment was established in honor of Jane and will focus on urban programming. There is renewed interest in National Urban Extension program.
- NEED-NERA Planning Grant – Chris Callahan at UVM and 12 Northeast states awarded \$950K from FDA.
- There is interest to replicate in Northeast, the North Central Batelle study of consumer sciences to help document what our impacts are. Need to find funding.
- When we meet at summer meeting, do we need to meet jointly with NEED? Make it an interactive session and perhaps look at economic development in Pittsburgh.
- Are there new strategies for Extension to help communicate work of Research faculty?
- Nancy will invite Susan Crowell, CARET Representative and Media Specialist at our summer meeting. Dan suggested tapping her for second discussion group.

9. ESCOP Update – Dan Rossi

- See detailed report below
- Budget & Legislative Committee - Gary Thompson

- President's budget request left Hatch, Smith Lever, McIntire Stennis flat – conversation tending to accept 'flat' funding, but eroding buying power 5% per year. Decision is to go with last year's higher number request.
- Representatives from ECOP B&L sit at ESCOP B&L meetings, and vice versa
- Process to present new initiatives to NIFA- joint ECOP/ESCOP B&Ls
- Discussion began to advocate for capacity funds, lots of white papers already written. What are ways to communicate our efforts other than developing another white paper? Educate smaller pieces of the universe, target local stories to local people and tying them to dollars. Joint B&Ls will meet again in September to discuss common issues.
- Communication and Marketing Committee – Rick Rhodes III
 - Plan of Work completed and discussed at meeting last week how to implement:
 - Create roadmap for project to clearly articulate and explain how kglobal and Cornerstone work together.
 - Share quarterly report from kglobal to Deans/Directors/communicators– Rick will work with communicator to digest data and prepare a one-pager cover explaining the report.
 - Message testing project – kglobal had successfully done one in past. Plan is to (1) do message testing in 2017 (2) ask Cornerstone efficacy of marketing project and (3) ask communicators at home how effective messages were.
 - Communicators at institutions will be engaged actively. Faith Pepper at UGA will manage database of communicators in land grants and will hold webinars.
- Science & Technology Committee
 - Had looked at NRC review of NIFA, and made recommendations.
 - Antibiotic resistance still in discussion. Regional project NCDC230-antibiotic resistance led by Deb Hamernik from Nebraska. Faculty from Northeast invited to join.
- Others
 - Capital infrastructure needs – Dan will try to get Sightlines report for our region and share with directors. Committee appointed to work with USDA-ARS and how to seek funding.
 - Diversity in Research Leadership – Tim, Dan and Rubie are members. Group looks at broad array of issues. Is our culture receptive of diversity? By September, group will have specific action steps ready.
 - Healthy Foods Healthy People initiative – following the water security initiative, this will be the next focus
 - NIMSS – new system is launched
 - ESCOP Budget – handout distributed

10. ED Candidate Interview Planning – Closed Session

11. Multistate Activities Committee Report – Tim Phipps, Acting MAC Chair

<http://nera.rutgers.edu/workshop/MACReportMarch2016.pdf>

- NE Project Recommendations

Action: Motion to accept MAC’s recommendations for the following multistate project proposals was seconded and passed.

1. Approve proposal NE_TEMP1601: Eastern White Pine Health and Responses to Environmental Changes [10/2016-09/2021]
2. Approve proposal NE_TEMP2361: Explorations into the Turfgrass Phytobiome: Establishing Standardized Research Methodology for Studying Microbial Communities and Developing Reliable Applications for Turfgrass Management [10/2016-09/2021]
3. Approve proposal NEERA_TEMP1601 (currently NEERA1003): Northeast Pasture Consortium Collaboration [10/2016-09/2021]
4. Approve proposal NEERA_TEMP1004 (currently NEERA1004): Northeast Region Technical Committee on Integrated Pest Management [10/2016-09/2021]
5. Approve Request to Write a Proposal for NE1231 - Collaborative Potato Breeding and Variety Development Activities to Enhance Farm Sustainability in the Eastern US [10/2017-09/2022]
6. Approve Request for FY2017 Off-the-top funding for Northeast Multistate Projects:
 - NE9: Conservation and Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources
FY2017 Budget Request = \$262,298
 - NE59: Multistate Research Coordination, Northeastern Region
FY 2017 Budget Request = \$ 40,788

- NEED-NERA Planning Grant Recommendations – Five proposals were received. Need to form the Review Committee with two directors each from NEED and NERA.

- Northeast Supplementary Multistate Research Guidelines

Action: Motion made to approve the guidelines

[\[http://nera.rutgers.edu/workroom/nesupguide2016.pdf\]](http://nera.rutgers.edu/workroom/nesupguide2016.pdf) was seconded and passed.

- ESS Award for Excellence in Multistate Research Nomination

Action: Selected as the Northeast winner and will be submitted as the region’s nomination for the national multistate research award is NE1227: Ovarian Influences on Reproductive Success in Ruminants. Advisor Gary Thompson will inform members of the technical committee.

- NRSP Discussion: Request for off-the-top FY2017 funding for the NRSPs was shared with the directors. This will be voted on at the Sept. ESS meeting. Concerns were raised mainly on the proposed NRSP_temp11 national data harmonization project. Jan Nyrop will give a brief presentation and address questions. Effective Jan. 2016, Dan Rossi is serving as one of the Exec. Dir. support for the NRSP Review Committee, in preparation for the Northeast taking over the leadership in 2018.

12. Proposed NRSP, “National Agricultural Research Data Network for Harmonized Data” (NARDN-HD) – Jan Nyrop

- Primary lead is Jim Jones at UFL, project is open and everyone invited to participate. Concern is that additional participation is not captured in proposed budget.
- This is federal requirement in 2017. Project will provide capabilities for system to comply with requirements. How will project make it easy to input and output data?

- If federal mandate, why use NRSP?
- Proposal came to S&T, found no consistent pattern on where data should reside
- Benefit of doing is meeting federal mandate and allow useable format
- NCBI collects genomic data, not perfect but stable and accessible, and agency funded. Other examples are water data from UGA and soils from NRCS, systems are available from different sources. How is project different and better than existing systems?
- How reliable is data to be collected in this NRSP? Who vouches for data? Who's responsible for product accession?
- Is it intended to be central repository?
- Purpose of NRSP is to provide data harmonization and query. There are test cases performed on software platform. How will this be financially sustained in 5 years?
- Directors are asking for proof of concept. Do subset and prove principle. Focus on set of data and show how to use it.
- New NRSP will address- (1) no common database in same format (2) continuity of standards will be biggest contribution
- Some Directors like idea, but wants to know how it'll be operationalized before voting in Sept. and to consider other models
- Jan Nyrop will relay concerns with technical committee, and Dan Rossi will raise them at the NRSP Review Committee meeting in May.

13. OED Report – Dan Rossi
See detailed report below

14. Future of the North American Biotechnology Council – Gary Thompson
See Powerpoint/PDF attached below

15. 2016 Joint NE Summer Session Program Discussion – Gary Thompson and Mark Rieger

- Program posted at <http://www.event.com/events/2016-northeast-joint-summer-session/agenda>
- June 20-22, 2016 at the Sheraton Pittsburgh Hotel at Station Square, Pittsburgh, PA
- Theme is “The Impact of Innovation on the Environment, Climate, and Health”
- The Planning Committee had been diligently meeting and working out details for the meeting.

16. 2016 CES and ESS Workshop Program Discussion – Dan Rossi

- Program posted at <https://conferencereg.colostate.edu/Jackson2016>
- September 19-22, 2016 at Jackson Lake Lodge, Grand Teton National Park, WY
- Communication and Marketing Committee proposed that one of the workshops be on Strategic Issues Management for Land-Grant Universities to help institutions with “crisis communication, and reputation and brand management etc.”
- **NERA Meeting will be Sept. 20, Tuesday, 7:00-8:45AM, Room-Antelope 2.**

17. Nominations Committee Report – Tim Phipps

- a. Advisors for Multistate Projects:

- NE_TEMP1601: Eastern White Pine Health and Responses to Environmental Changes [10/2016-09/2021] - Fred Servello (ME)
 - NE_TEMP2361: Explorations into the Turfgrass Phytobiome: Establishing Standardized Research Methodology for Studying Microbial Communities and Developing Reliable Applications for Turfgrass Management [10/2016-09/2021] Pat Vittum (MA)
 - NE1035: Commercial Greenhouse Production: Component and System Development [10/2013-09/2018] – Adel Shirmohammadi (MD)
- b. NERA Members for Joint NEED-NERA Planning Grant Review Committee (2 each from NERA and NEED)
- Tim Phipps (WV) and Susan Brown (NYG)

Action: Motion made to approve the above nominations was seconded and passed.

18. Resolutions Committee Report – Brad Hillman
No resolution presented at this meeting

19. Station Updates – All

20. ED Candidates Discussion – Closed Session

21. Future Meetings

- Northeast Joint Summer Session – Sheraton Pittsburgh Hotel at Station Square, Pittsburgh, PA, June 20-22, 2016
<http://www.event.com/events/2016-northeast-joint-summer-session/>
- Joint ESS/CES Meeting – Jackson Lake Lodge, Wyoming, September 19-22, 2016
<https://conferencereg.colostate.edu/Jackson2016>
- APLU Annual Meeting – Austin, TX, November 13-15, 2016
<http://www.aplu.org/meetings-and-events/annual-meeting/2016>

22. Summary Comments and Adjournment – Cameron Faustman, Chair

Chair Faustman thanked everyone for an engaging meeting. He requested that the directors continue to reflect on the interviews and discussion, and to communicate with him any concerns or comments. Communication will be forthcoming for the final selection process.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10PM.

Interim Actions by the Chair – Cameron Faustman
October 2015 to March 2016

1. Released electronic ballot to confirm appointments for the following. Both were unanimously approved by the NERA members.
 - Dr. Rick Rhodes III (RI) as 2016 NERA Officer-at-Large
 - Dr. Jan Nyrop (NYC) as the Northeast Regional Advisor for the proposed NRSP-National Agricultural Data Network (NADN)
2. Teleconference with the NERA Executive Committee on November 6, 2015 to discuss updates on action items from the Sept. 28 NERA Meeting in North Carolina, in particular the ED Search process, and to plan for the full NERA Meeting/Teleconference on December 15, 2015.
3. As a follow-up to the Dec. 15 NERA teleconference, sent email on Jan. 5, 2016, regarding updates and deadlines for the following:
 - a. NERA Executive Director Position – Candidates to be interviewed in-person at the March meeting. Members were advised to schedule travel so they will be available through 4:00 pm on Wednesday, March 16, 2016.
 - b. 2016 Experiment Station Section Excellence in Leadership Award – Deadline: Feb. 1, 2016
 - c. 2016 Experiment Station Section Award for Excellence in Multistate Research – Deadline: Feb. 28, 2016
 - d. ESCOP Leadership – Deadline: Feb. 28, 2016
4. Reviewed nomination for the 2016 ESS Excellence in Leadership Award with members of the Executive Committee. A nomination will be put forward by the Executive Committee at the March meeting.
5. Released on Dec. 6, 2015 the 2016 Joint NEED/NERA Planning Grant RFA with NEED Chair. Deadline was February 19, 2016. Five proposals received. Awaiting NEED's appointment for the joint review committee.
6. Conferred with and received regular updates from the Chair of the Search Committee on the status of the ED Search. On March 8, 2016 sent email to survey NERA members how voting will be handled at the March meeting. Members unanimously agreed to allow station directors not present at the meeting to vote. One vote per station. Materials will be sent to all the NERA members. Skype or phone hook-up will be available if needed.
7. Teleconference with the Executive Committee on Feb. 11, 2016 to finalize agenda for the March 14-16, 2016 NERA meetings.
8. Other Committee responsibilities:
 - a. Member of the NERA Multistate Activities Committee.
 - b. One of the NERA Reps. to the ESCOP Science and Technology Committee. Participated in monthly calls of the S&T.
 - c. Member of the Communication and Marketing Committee (as ACOP Rep.). Participated in quarterly calls of the CMC.

NIFA Update

Dr. Muquarrab A. Qureshi
Deputy Director, IYFC

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1. **Budget**

a. **FY 2017 Budget:**

- The 2017 President’s budget was released on February 9, 2016.
- The 2017 budget builds on the 2016 priorities of cross-agency Presidential and USDA initiatives, the Research, Education and Economics Mission Area, and providing support for NIFA’s mission of advancing agricultural research, education and extension to solve societal challenges.
- The proposed overall funding for NIFA’s 2017 budget \$1,884 billion--an increase of approximately 26 percent above 2016 levels.
- The President’s FY17 budget proposes doubling funding for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI), minor increases in funding for some programs, and sustained funding for others.
- The FY17 President’s proposed \$700 million for AFRI is the authorized level of funding established under the 2008 Farm Bill. The requested AFRI appropriation consists of two parts:
 - \$375 million discretionary funding request.
 - Discretionary funding will continue to target climate change, pollinator health, antimicrobial resistance, bioenergy, water use and availability, and microorganisms and their environments (microbiomes).
 - \$325 million mandatory funding request.
 - This one-year mandatory funding is part of a government-wide investment in research and development.
 - Mandatory funding will be used by NIFA to invest in “systems approaches” that comprehensively identify solutions to complex challenges in sustainably increasing agricultural production.

2. **REE Open Data Initiative:**

- REE is supporting the Administration’s efforts to increase access to the results of federally funded scientific research.
- USDA has been drafting a public access policy for federally funded scholarly publications as well as for scientific datasets produced with the use of federal funds.
- REE held two listening sessions for stakeholders who have an interest in the public access of federally funded agricultural research data. These stakeholders include federally funded researchers, industry scientists, producers, universities, libraries, publishers, users of federally funded research results, and civil society groups.

3. Farm Bill

- a. **Progress:** The 2014 Farm Bill is completing its second year of implementation.
- The bill provided authority to NIFA to run nearly all its programs and restores mandatory funding – approx. \$900 million over five years.
 - Three new land-grant institutions were established that included two 1994 institutions: College of the Muscogee Nation (Oklahoma) and Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College (Michigan), and the 1890 Central State University (Ohio).
 - The Farm Bill reauthorized the mandatory programs, including the Specialty Crops Research Initiative (SCRI), the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative (OREI), the Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Development Initiative (BFRDP), the Biomass Research and Development Initiative (BRDI), and the Biodiesel Fuel Education Program. As a consequence, \$120 million of funding was reinstated for these critical research and extension projects.
- b. **Matching Funds Provision:** The 2014 Farm Bill added a new requirement for financial matching of some NIFA competitive grant awards. No AFRI awards are impacted by the new matching requirement. The new requirement affects grants made after Oct. 1, 2014. Guidance can be found on the NIFA website.
- c. **Centers of Excellence Provision:** In accordance with the 2014 Farm Bill, and taking into consideration stakeholder feedback, last year NIFA established a process for designating Centers of Excellence in the food and agricultural sciences and providing these Centers with priority in funding.
- Information about the specifics of the Centers is available on the NIFA website.
 - In its first year of implementing the CoE provision, NIFA awarded more than \$41.8 million to a total of 34 projects that were qualified as CoE.
 - Only 8 percent (156 of 1860) of applicants requested that their application be considered for a Center of Excellence designation.
 - Applicants who applied for a CoE designation experienced higher funding rates than the overall pool of eligible applicants. Funding rates for applicants requesting CoE designation were 21 percent as compared to funding rates for all CoE-eligible applicants at 16%.
 - NIFA’s two-step approach to reviewing for scientific merit and CoE designation did not adversely impact the geographical and institutional balance in the award portfolio.
- d. **Commodity Boards Provision:**
- The Farm Bill legislated that NIFA create competitive funding opportunities in partnership with Commodity Promotion Boards.
 - A Federal Register Notice calling for RFA topics was published on July 24, 2015.
 - 18 proposed topics were received by Sept. 22 from 12 Federal and State Commodity Boards
 - All topics were found acceptable by NIFA.
 - After extensive discussions with the submitting Commodity Boards, 7-9 topics will be incorporated in FY16 AFRI RFAs.

- NIFA has had excellent dialogue with Commodity and Marketing Order Boards on this endeavor.

e. New Veterinary Services Grant Program:

- The Veterinary Services Grant Program (VSGP) is authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill. Initial funding for the program, \$2.5 million, was appropriated in the FY 2016 budget.
- The program is intended to relieve veterinarian shortage situations and support veterinary services.
 - Grants will be made available on a competitive basis to qualified entities to develop, implement, and sustain veterinary services through education, training, recruitment, placement, and retention of veterinarians and veterinary students.
 - Grants will also be made to establish or expand veterinary practices.
- NIFA is actively engaged in developing and implementing this program. Listening sessions were held in mid-February.
- NIFA anticipates releasing the first Request for Applications for this program in April 2016 with the first grants awarded under this program anticipated to be announced by Sept. 30, 2016.

f. Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research (FFAR):

- The Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research (FFAR), on which Sonny Ramaswamy serves as an ex-officio member, is making good headway in laying out a strategic direction to invest leveraged resources in support of agricultural research and extension.
- On June 11, 2015, the Foundation named Dr. Sally Rockey as its first executive director. Rockey is currently deputy director for extramural research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). She also served for 19 years with CSREES, NIFA predecessor.
- In October 2015, FFAR announced its two inaugural programs: a research award for innovative early career scientists to pursue research in food and agriculture and an initiative to fund first responders in the face of potential threats to the food and agriculture system.
 - With the New Innovator in Food and Agriculture Research Award, FFAR will support up to 10 early-career scientists with up to \$200,000 per year. The award is designed to give recipients three years of financial support to pursue highly innovative research in one or more of FFAR's seven focus areas and to act as mentors to the next generation of standout scientists in food and agriculture.
 - The Rapid Response Program – modeled on the success of Project GREEN at Michigan State University – will serve as an innovative tool to help protect farmers and consumers from immediate threats to our food supply.

4. **Management Initiatives:** NIFA has made significant progress in our management initiatives to identify best practices and improve processes, including implementation of Continuous Process Improvement across the agency. Recent progress includes:
- 80 percent reduction in overtime costs from 2011
 - Transitioning from the CRIS website to REEPort
 - Digitizing paper records and space inventory
 - Use of Knowledge Discovery tools to more effectively analyze data and inform decision making.
 - NIFA piloted an initiative to transition from annual RFA-grants.gov application submissions for “out-years” for continuation awards to a process of email request and submission of a two page document that meets NIFA grant award requirements for making an award amendment to the first year’s competitive award for the three ‘out-years’. Based on estimated wage rates at NIFA and at 1862 and 1994 land-grant institutions, the estimated savings for 102 Tribal grants is \$122,196.
- a. **FY 16 Capacity RFA Schedule:**
- As a result of feedback from NIFA partners and stakeholders, NIFA released its FY16 Capacity Grant RFA earlier than in previous years.
 - All Capacity RFAs were published before July 30, 2015 except for Animal Health Disease Research.
 - This allowed initial payments to be released in FY 16, Quarter 1 (Nov. – Dec.).
 - This is critical to stakeholders as it allows vital funding to be available earlier in the fiscal year.
- b. **RFA Processing:**
- NIFA established an agency-wide CPI effort in 2014 as part of the USDA blueprint for stronger service. The CPI process is part of Secretary Vilsack’s Lean Six Sigma (LSS) initiative to build in efficiencies, or improve NIFA’s business processes.
 - NIFA continues to identify ways to reduce the time from panel review to award for some programs, including AFRI.
- c. **Financial Management, Oversight, and Outreach:**
- NIFA program and business units are working closely in the coming months with recipients to ensure proper stewardship of Federal funds. Additional terms and conditions may be added to Request for Applications (RFA’s) and Awards, and NIFA will also be streamlining processes in the following areas: Period of Performance requests; Monitoring Awards; Closeout; Timely Programmatic and Financial Reports, and etc.
 - NIFA is encouraging grantees to reach out if they have questions about properly administering sponsored activities and complying with applicable regulations and policies. OGF staff would be happy to assist with any questions.
 - The **National Extension and Research Administrative Officers’ Conference (NERAOC)** will be held in Philadelphia, hosted by Penn State University.
 - NERAOC provides the state and federal participants the opportunity to share information on budget, finance, grants management, human resource management,

diversity and inclusion. It also allows the federal participants the opportunity to enhance communication, collaboration, and cooperation with our external stakeholders by increasing outreach and education efforts and engaging in two-way dialogue with our partners.

- OGFM will be presenting many sessions on the financial and grants management track.
- OGFM will be performing several outreach site visits and financial reviews along with a National Program Leader (NPL).
 - These visits will comply with the Improper Payments and Information Act of 2002 (IPIA) and touring research and extension facilities to see first-hand the programs that NIFA is supporting.
 - OGFM will be meeting with Deans and Association Deans of the Colleges of Agriculture, the Finance Departments, the Sponsored Programs Offices, Human Resources, Payroll Departments, and the Grants Accounting Managers.
- d. **PARS Session at NERAOC:** PARS will present a Reporting, Accountability, and Administrative Track at the 2016 National Extension and Research Administrative Officers Conference to be held in Philadelphia the week of April 24-27. **Sessions include:**
 - REEport Overview
 - REEport Best Practices
 - Leadership Management Dashboard (and Data Gateway)
 - Plan of Work
 - Planning for Success: Tips from an Evaluation Perspective
- e. **Plan of Work:** Plans for inclusion of the Plan of Work into REEport are underway. It could take two years to complete. A subgroup of the Plan of Work panel are looking at Subject of Investigation (or Subject of Work) codes to determine gaps for Extension reporting. You can find the Plan of Work Panel recommendations and NIFA's response to those recommendations on the NIFA website at: <http://nifa.usda.gov/tool/pow>.
- f. **NIFA Reporting Conference:** PARS holds a NIFA Reporting Web conference every second Thursday of odd months from 2-3:30 pm Eastern.
 - The Reporting Web Conference Series (RWC) is a bi-monthly series run by the NIFA Planning Accountability and Reporting Staff (PARS) which seeks to foster consistent, quality communication between NIFA leadership and its partners, including the Land Grant University system. The RWC is an effective tool for NIFA to explain new or emerging reporting policies and procedures as well as an opportunity for grantees and business offices at the LGUs to participate in real-time Q&A sessions. The general topics covered by the RWC series include:
 - REEport
 - AREERA State Plans of Work
 - Annual Reports of Accomplishments
 - Outcome Reporting

- Financial Reporting

g. REEport

- The REEport Financial Report was released in the fall of 2014; it must now be completed by all new non-Capacity grant projects awarded after October 1, 2014. These were due on Feb. 1, 2016. The requirement to submit a REEport Project Financial Report was written into all terms and conditions for new awards made beginning October 1, 2014.
- A new function to allow for changes on programmatic data for non-Capacity grant projects was released late fall of 2015. This will help grantees and NIFA improve and maintain data quality; training for this new function will be provided through reporting webinars and guidance posted on the REEport section of the NIFA website. PARS will offer internal training April-May 2016.
- A release on system performance was deployed in early March 2016. This has resulted in significantly faster times for page loads and project searches for internal NIFA staff. Performance improvements for external customers will be addressed in summer of 2016.

h. Grants Modernization:

- Grants modernization will reduce costs and staff time required to process, manage, and close-out grants. It will also help applicants and grantees better understand the processes and give them additional options and features, improving their overall experience.
- Decrease the time it takes to process a grant application from receipt to award. NIFA expects to be able to get funding into the hands of grant recipients faster as a result.
- NIFA is partnering with the USDA and will use their grants management system, known as USDA Grants.
- USDA Grants is the de facto grant management system for USDA. NRCS, FAS, FNS, AMS, RD, NIFA and Forest Service will use USDA Grants for grant making.
- USDA Grants provides a robust financial management component.
- USDA Grants is currently testing self-service capabilities for use by applicants. Several land-grant universities are part of the testing team.
- USDA Grants will be fully integrated with Grants.gov and will support the NIFA research and related forms.
- NIFA has completed a thorough assessment phase of USDA Grants' current capabilities and NIFA's needs.
- Initial implementation will begin with Capacity Grants commencing in FY 2017. The development work is underway, release 1 is scheduled for 1 August 2016.
- NIFA will continue to partner with NIH where appropriate such as on the use of Star Metrics and Federal RePorter.

i. NIFA "Data Gateway":

- Last year, NIFA debuted a new online data tool on our public website that provides our stakeholder and partners, researchers, scientists, academia and interested others data related to NIFA grant funding.
- The Data Gateway supports NIFA commitment to increase transparency in its awards program.
- The Data Gateway incorporates a robust search capability that allows users to find a variety of funding data such as awards, knowledge areas, grantee type, fields of science, subjects of investigation, states, Congressional districts, and appropriation year.
- Data goes back to 2002, users can view trends in grant awards.
- Recent enhancements to the Data Gateway include:
 - More flexibility to narrow search on project level detail such as: Publications, Patents, Progress, Impacts, and Project Participants by FTE's, CIP Codes and Undergraduate and,
 - Congressional District Heat Map. Additional drill down capability to such filters as: State, Congressional district, Organization Level (i.e. University of Florida), Award, Project.

j. New NIFA News and Information Service:

- Earlier this year, NIFA launched a new email subscription service to make it convenient for partners/stakeholders to receive news and information from our agency.
- Our subscription service includes topics Agency updates, press releases, announcements, programs, initiatives, research, education, and extension projects, funding opportunities, grants awarded, budgetary and legislative updates, policy changes, blogs, significant NIFA-funded impacts or items of interest about and for land grant universities and non-land grant colleges of agriculture.
- With this new service, users even select the frequency of your information. For example, information can be received as soon as it is posted, once daily, or once a week.
- To subscribe, see the icon on NIFA'S main webpage.

5. Staffing Update

- **CIP Director Named:** On Feb. 7, Dr. Otto Gonzalez was recently appointed as the Director of the Center for International Programs (CIP). Gonzalez previously served as the special projects officer and international agricultural development specialist for the Office of Capacity Building and Development in USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service since 2010. Previous assignments include positions with the American Association for the Advancement of Science Diplomacy Fellow with the U.S. Agency for International Development; Foreign Agricultural Service; U.S. Department of State as senior agricultural advisor to the special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan. Gonzalez earned his B.S. in biological sciences and M.S. in biology from Fordham University, Bronx, NY. He earned his Ph.D. in Natural Resources and Environment (focused in forest ecology) from the University of Michigan.
- Dr. Jeanette Thurston has been appointed as NIFA's Science Program Analysis Officer, reporting to Dr. Meryl Broussard. Her responsibilities are to provide leadership in advancing the mission and science program goals of the agency.



NERA Spring Meeting March 15, 2016

Current Fiscal/Political Landscape

- Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 provides “breathing room”
 - FY 2017 congressional budget ceiling already set? Doubtful...
 - Return to “regular order” appropriations process (again)?
- Politics?
 - November Elections loom large.



FY 2016 Recap

Land-Grant NIFA Priorities (\$Millions)

Priority	<u>FY 15- Enacted</u>	<u>FY 16- Enacted</u>
Smith-Lever 3(b)-(c)	300.000	300.000
Hatch-Act	243.701	243.701
Evans-Allen (1890s Research)	52.485	54.185
1890 Institutions Extension	43.920	45.620
McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry	33.961	33.961
1994 Research & Extension	6.247	6.247
Agriculture and Food Research Initiative	325.000	350.000
Total	1,005.314	1,033.714



FY 2016 Recap

- NIFA saw wins in FY 2016, receiving \$819.7 million in funding for research and education activities and \$475.9 million for extension activities.
- In total, our funding level increased by \$37 million compared to FY 2015.
- Overall, funding for our *priorities* increased by \$28.4 million – capturing 75% of the NIFA increases.



FY 2017 Budget Request

Land-Grant NIFA Priorities (\$Millions)

Priority	FY 16 - Enacted	President's FY 17 Request	APLU Request
Smith-Lever 3(b)-(c)	300.000	300.000	304.000
Hatch-Act	243.701	243.701	256.201
Evans-Allen (1890s Research)	54.185	58.000	60.500
1890 Institutions Extension	45.620	48.350	49.350
McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry	33.961	33.961	35.500
Agriculture and Food Research Initiative	350.000	375.000	700.000
Total	1,027.467	1,059.012	1,405.551

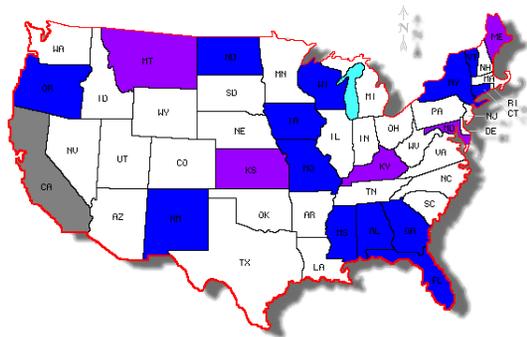


Blessed States / Strong Stalks

- Not all states created equal; some “blessed” with Ag Appropriations Subcommittee members
- All 50 states need “Strong Stalks” networks, but blessed states must have them.



Key Ag Appropriations States

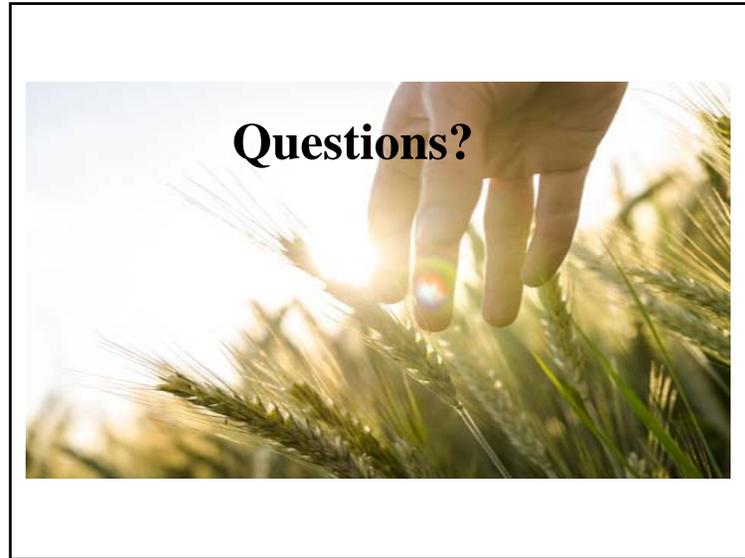


Subcommittee Members from State

- - One
- - Two
- - Three

Key Ag Appropriations States

Three Members		Two Members		One Member	
CA	Sen. Feinstein	KS	Sen. Moran (C)	AL	Rep. Aderholt (C)
	Rep. Farr (R)		Rep. Yoder	CT	Rep. DeLauro
	Rep. Valadao	KY	Sen. McConnell	FL	Rep. Rooney
	Rep. Rogers (C)		GA	Rep. Bishop	
		MD	Sen. Mikulski (R)	IA	Rep. Young
			Rep. Harris	MO	Sen. Blunt
		ME	Sen. Collins	MS	Sen. Cochran (C)
			Rep. Pingree	ND	Sen. Hoeven
		MT	Sen. Daines	NM	Sen. Udall
			Sen. Tester	NY	Rep. Lowey (R)
				OR	Sen. Merkley (R)
				VT	Sen. Leahy
				WI	Sen. Baldwin



Northeast Extension Directors Update to NERA
March 14-16, 2016
Baltimore Maryland

ECOP Core Themes for the 2016 Year

- Build Partnerships and Acquire Resources
- Expand involvement with national partners (NC-FAR, NACo)
- Increase Strategic Marketing and Communications
 - Fully engage with ESS-CES-AHS Communication and Marketing Project
- Enhance Leadership and Professional Development
 - Enhance visibility by communicating impacts through www.landgrantimpacts.org
- Strengthen Organizational Functioning
 - ECOP 4-H National Leadership Team
 - 4-H Engagement Campaign
 - Private Resource Mobilization
 - Strengthen communications with the Monday Minute
 - Conducted new director, administrator orientation

NEED Core Areas of Focus

Personnel Changes

- Lisa Townson departed University of New Hampshire
- Stephen Wright stepped out of director position at the University of Maryland
- Dan Lerner, VT, completed his term as chair of NEED
- We lost Mary Jane Willis, associate director, Rutgers

NEED meets monthly on the first Wednesday of the month as needed

Executive Committee

Chair, Steve Bonanno, WVA
Chair-elect, Mike O'Neill, CT
Past chair, Dan Lerner, VTY
ECOP chair, Michelle Rodgers, DE

Areas of Focus for NEED for the Current Year

- NEED-NERA planning grants; NEED funded Northeast Regional Grant
 - Chris Callahan, UVM, as lead PI
 - UVM was awarded \$950,000 FDA Grant to Promote Food Safety as
 - The Northeast Center to Advance Food Safety (NECAFS).
 - The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has awarded a \$950,000, three-year grant to a consortium of 12 northeastern states and the District of Columbia to promote food safety on small and medium-sized produce farms and food processors in the region.
 - The project's co-directors are Elizabeth Bihn, Cornell University; Amanda Kinchla, University of Massachusetts; Luke LaBorde, Pennsylvania.
- To visit each institution during 2015 to meet and get to know the organization better. Only University of Maryland and Maryland Eastern Shore left to visit.
- NEED Website up and running Go to: northeastextension.org
- Strengthening the organizational building blocks:
 - Initiating a new regional diversity award to present at our summer meeting
 - Implemented a new logo and accompanying letterhead

- Exploring option of meeting with small states in other regions; Ag commissioners
- Financial and Budgetary Issues

- Changed Fiscal Year to July 1
- Examined models for the NEED assessment.
 - These included state % of total Smith Lever funding for the region; state population vs total region population or the BAA factor used to determine funding for APLU; Approved the Smith Lever model for the NEED assessment + \$500 per state to further developing working relationships with NERA + \$5000 per state first established in 2009 as a equalizing factor across all states.

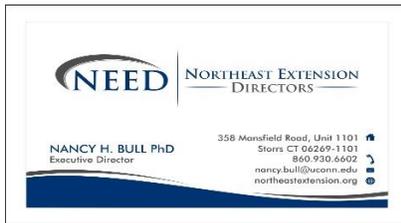
Based on an ECOP review of the current staffing model, do a performance review for the NEED Executive Director and request plan of work and accomplishments for the year.

Program Areas of Focus

- Developed an app challenge to implement in states who wished to do so;
- Leadership development for Extension Directors
- National Urban Extension Leaders-three representatives per region;
May be of interest to researchers perhaps time in Pittsburg to visit

Prepared by Nancy H. Bull

Northeast Extension Executive Director



NERA Meeting
March 14-16, 2016
Admiral Feel Inn, Baltimore, MD

Experiment Station Committee on Organization and Policy Report
October 2015 – March 2016

ESCOP Officers:

- Chair – Shirley Hyman-Parker
- Chair-Elect – Bret Hess
- Past Chair – Robert Shulstad
- Executive Vice Chair – Carolyn Brooks
- ESS Rep to BAA Policy Board – Clarence Watson
- Budget and Legislative Committee Chair – Gary Thompson
- Communications & Marketing Committee Incoming Chair – Richard Rhodes
- Science & Technology Committee Chair – Marikis Alvarez
- NRSP Review Committee Chair – Clarence Watson

NERA Representatives to:

- ESCOP:
 - Tim Phipps
 - Cameron Faustman
 - Mark Rieger
- ESCOP Budget & Legislative Committee
 - Tim Phipps
 - Jon Wraith
- ESCOP Science & Technology Committee
 - Cameron Faustman
 - Adel Shirmohammadi
- NRSP Review Committee
 - Fred Servello

Meetings

- ESCOP Meeting in conjunction with the 2016 AHS/CARET Meeting, Westin Alexandria, VA, March 7, 2016
- ESCOP Meeting in conjunction with 2016 Joint COPs meeting, San Antonio, TX, July 18-20, 2016
- 2016 Joint CES and ESS Meeting and Workshop, Lake Lodge, Jackson, WY, September 19-22, 2016
- ESCOP Executive Committee Meeting, Austin, TX, November 13-15, 2016

Budget and Legislative Committee

- The ESCOP Budget and Legislative Committee meets monthly by conference call.
- The Committee provides input into the BAA Budget and Advocacy Committee in advocating for NIFA capacity and competitive budget lines.
- The ESCOP and ECOP Budget and Legislative Committees are working to coordinate their efforts and to define their respective roles.
 - The Committees had a joint face-to-face meeting on March 7. A second meeting of the two committees is scheduled for the 2016 Fall ESS/AES/ARD Meeting and Workshop (Joint with CES) in Jackson Hole, WY.
 - The Committees prepared a joint document “Board on Agricultural Assembly Process for Advancing New Budget Initiatives.” The document was approved by the BAC and Policy Board.
 - The Committees are currently working on strategies to advocate for the “both-and” of competitive and capacity funding.
- The Committee considered developing a competitive grants transaction costs study to support the full authorization of AFRI at \$700M. In light of the President’s FY17 budget proposal, such a study was considered to be counterproductive.

Communications and Marketing Committee

- The Communications and Marketing Committee (CMC) meets quarterly by conference call and in person at the CARET/AHS meeting in March.
- It is a joint ESS, CES and AHS effort to oversee and guide the Communications and Marketing Project (CMP), a coordinated and targeted educational effort to increase awareness of the value of Land Grant University agricultural and related programs, state agricultural experiment stations and Cooperative Extension. The CMC continues to work closely with kglobal and Cornerstone providing feedback and input to their plans and activities. It also closely monitors the detailed quarterly report generated by kglobal.
- The CMC has prepared its first annual (2016) plan of work and is in the process of implementing it. Three working groups were appointed and led discussions at the March 6th meeting on the following general areas of the POW: message testing, engaging communicators and communicating CMC progress. The goal was to identify specific actions associated with the strategies listed in the POW.
- The CMC is also working on a proposal to develop a strategy for reaching out to potential Congressional candidates to explain the value of the LGU’s. The proposal will serve a proof of concept for such an effort for future presidential candidates.

Science and Technology Committee

- The ESCOP Science and Technology Committee meets monthly by conference call.
- The Committee oversees the ESS Multistate Research Award and Excellence in Leadership programs.
- The Committee reviews and evaluates various Federal agency, foundation, and related entities reports relating to science policy. It is currently focusing on: USDA’s open access policy for data and publications; the recent APLU report on antibiotic resistance; a

review of the AGree Report; a review of the Riley Foundation Report; and an OSTP request for input on innovations in ag and research priorities

- There are two subcommittees that coordinate their efforts through the Science and Technology committee – Social Science and Pest Management Strategies.

National Research Support Review Committee

- The ESCOP NRSP Review Committee will meet in Atlanta, GA on May 31, 2016 to develop recommendations on five year proposals and budgets.
- The NRSP Guidelines were revised to provide a better explanation of how the review should be set up for a project that is going to submit a renewal proposal.

Other Activities

- Capital Infrastructure Needs
 - The Sightlines firm presented the final report on the capital infrastructure and deferred maintenance needs of US colleges of agriculture at the APLU meeting.
 - Discussions are underway between the BAA and USDA REE leadership on they partner to develop multiple strategies to address this issue.
- Diversity in Research Leadership
 - The Diversity in Research Leadership Task Force has been appointed with the charge to explore the topic of diversity in research leadership across the Land-grant university system, to provide ideas and actions for consideration, and to supplement institutional, regional and national diversity and inclusion efforts. The focus will be primarily on enhancing diversity among the Experiment Station Directors, Research Directors, and their associates and assistants.
 - The Task Force is chaired by Karen Plaut of Purdue and meets monthly by conference call.
 - The goal is to provide a set of recommendations discussion at the ESCOP meeting during the Joint COPs session in July.
- Water Security
 - The Water Security Initiative started as a joint ESS and CES effort to develop and fund a major program focusing on managing and protecting our water resources.
 - The BAA created a broader *ad hoc* national Working Group on Water Resources.
 - The Working Group has developed a series of recommendations for how the LGU's can to best address this challenge (e.g., water quantity and quality issues).
 - Efforts are underway to coordinate the advancement of the initiative with NIFA leadership and to promote the five year, \$500 million budget request.
- Healthy Food Systems, Healthy People
 - Like the Water Security Initiative, the Healthy Food Systems, Healthy People Initiative is a joint ESS and CES effort to prepare a major budget request.
 - The overseeing committee is preparing a brochure to help explain this initiative.
- NIMSS
 - The new NIMSS was relaunched on January 21, 2016.
 - While there have been some hiccups, it has many new and improved functions
 - A number of training sessions have been presented to assist users.

NERA Meeting
March 14-16, 2016
Admiral Fell Inn, Baltimore, MD

Report of the Office of the Executive Director
September 26, 2015 – March 11, 2016

NERA and Regional Activities

- Planning Grants Program
 - Supported the 2015 NERA and NEED/NERA award recipients
 - Prepared and released the 2015-16 NEED/NERA Integrated Planning Grants Announcement
 - Scheduling a review of the NEED/NERA grant proposals.
- 2016 Northeast Summer Session
 - Supported the event planning and program planning committees
 - Prepared a preliminary draft program
- NERA Chair Support
 - Assisted the chair in planning (including agenda preparation) for two Executive Committee and one NERA conference calls
 - Assisted in the development of the March 2016 NERA meeting agenda and compiled agenda materials
 - Prepared NERA Chair's Interim Actions report
 - Prepared NERA ESCOP Report
 - Prepared NERA OED report
 - Assisted in the development of the March 2016 NERA Executive Committee meeting agenda
- Multistate Activities Committee (MAC) Support
 - Assisted in the development of the March 2016 MAC meeting agenda and compiled agenda materials
 - Worked with advisors, technical committee members and NIFA to initiate the following projects:
 1. NE_TEMP1601: Eastern White Pine Health and Responses to Environmental Changes [10/2016-09/2021]
 2. NE_TEMP2361: Explorations into the Turfgrass Phytobiome: Establishing Standardized Research Methodology for Studying Microbial Communities and Developing Reliable Applications for Turfgrass Management [10/2016-09/2021]
 3. NEERA_TEMP1601 (currently NEERA1001): Northeast Pasture Consortium Collaboration [10/2016-09/2021]
 4. NEERA_TEMP1004 (currently NEERA1004): Northeast Region Technical Committee on Integrated Pest Management [10/2016-09/2021]
 5. Request to Write a Proposal for NE1020: Multi-state Evaluation of Winegrape Cultivars and Clones [10/2004-09/2017]

- NERA Executive Director Search Committee
 - Assisted with the release and advertisement of the position
 - Assisted with the scheduling of the committee conference calls
 - Assisted with scheduling of candidate interviews
- Other NERA activities
 - Developed a complete list of NERA representatives to regional and national committees and organizations.
 - Prepared a major revision of the Northeastern Supplement to the Guidelines for Multistate Research Activities
- NE USDA Climate Hub
 - Participated in a NE Climate Hub Partners Meeting, Annapolis, MD
 - Participated in bi-monthly conference calls with NE Climate Hub state representatives
 - Participated in monthly calls with NE Climate Hub leadership
- Great Lakes Specialty Crop Climate Consortium
 - Worked with Jeff Jacobsen on next phase of this program.
 - Looking to expand participation beyond the original four institutions – Cornell, Michigan State, Penn State and Ohio State.
 - Planning the next face-to-face meeting: goals, program and invitees
- IR-4 (NRSP-4)
 - Served as NE Regional Director
 - Served as co-PI on Northeast Region IR-4 2015-16 NIFA grant
 - Submitted the Northeast Region IR-4 2016-17 continuation grant proposal
 - Continued to work with Cornell in the transition of the Northeast Regional Center to Rutgers
 - Continued to work with the University of Maryland on the development of new NE field coordinator office
 - Continued to work with Rutgers to host additional field research which will be transferred from Cornell
 - Chaired the IR-4 Path Forward planning activity
 - Assisted in the preparation for an external organizational review of the IR-4 program
- NE-1049
 - Served as Administrative Advisor

National Activities

- ESS/CES Communications and Marketing Committee
 - Served as the ESS Executive Director point person
 - Assisted in scheduling, planning and agenda development for quarterly Executive Committee and Full Committee conference calls in October and January
 - Assisted in the scheduling, planning, and agenda development for a face-to-face meeting of the Committee in March
 - Supported the Chair of the Plan of Work Committee in developing and receiving approval of the 2016 Plan of Work

- Supported the CMC Chair in developing an implementation plan for the Plan of Work
- Supported two of the implementation working groups including scheduling of conference call and preparation of reports
- Prepared monthly reports for ESCOP CAC calls
- Prepared an agenda brief for the 2015 ESCOP Executive Committee meeting
- ESCOP Chair's Advisory Committee (CAC)
 - Participated in monthly CAC conference calls
- ESS-CES/NEDA Joint Meeting and Workshops
 - Participated in monthly planning calls for 2016 Joint ESS and CES meeting
 - Assisted in the development of the program agenda for the 2016 joint meeting
- ESCOP NRSP Review Committee
 - Served as Executive Director representative to the NRSP Review Committee
- NRSP-1 Management Committee
 - Participated in quarterly conference calls of the NRSP-1 Management Committee
- NIMSS
 - Continued to support and maintain original NIMSS
 - Provided support when appropriate to Clemson in the redesign of NIMSS
 - Served as regional NIMSS Coordinator
 - Supported NIFA Management Dashboard access to NIMSS data
- LEAD 21 Program
 - Served as Chair of Board of Directors
 - Worked with University of Georgia in the transition of the LEAD21 unit from an academic department to Cooperative Extension
 - Drafted and negotiated a new LEAD21 contract with UGA
 - Prepared and implemented an formal annual review for the LEAD21 Director
- ESCOP Leadership Diversity Initiative
 - Participated in monthly ESCOP Diversity in AES Leadership Ad Hoc Committee conference calls
 - Served on two Task Force working groups
- ESCOP Social Science Subcommittee
 - Represented the ESCOP Science and Technology Committee at the annual SSSC meeting in Washington, DC
 - Led a discussion on more active interfacing of the SSSC and ESCOP on major projects
- NIFA Programs
 - Monitored (including participating in NIFA teleconferences and webinars) provided feedback on:
 - NIFA budget developments
 - NIFA competitive grants programs
 - NIFA reporting requirements
 - NIFA Hatch MRF utilization

Travel

- September 28-October 1, 2015 – ESS and NERA Meetings, Charlotte, NC
- October 26-28, 2015 – NE Climate Hub Partners Meeting, Annapolis, MD
- November 14-17, 2015 – APLU, ESS/CES-NEDA Planning Committee, ESCOP Executive Committee, and BAA-PBD CLP Meetings
- February 2-4, 2016 – ESCOP Social Science Subcommittee Meeting, Washington, DC
- February 26, 2016 – LEAD-21 Board of Directors Meeting, Washington, DC
- March 6-10, 2016 – Communications and Marketing Committee, CARET/AHS, Budget and Legislative Committee, ESCOP and IR-4 Project Management Committee Meetings



North American Agricultural Biotechnology Council

What is it?

Where is it going?

Why are we asking for your input?

Some NABC History

National Agricultural Biotechnology Council

- Founded in 1989
- Founding Members:
 - Cornell, Iowa State, UC Davis, Boyce-Thompson Inst.
- Ralph WF Hardy, President

Initial focus - discuss transgenics in agriculture

Expanded scope - topics relevant to agricultural biotechnology (water, climate change, etc.)

Currently, 20 members from US and Canada

Current Members

- BTI
- Cornell
- MSU
- NCSU
- NDSU
- THE OSU (Ohio)
- OSU (Oklahoma)
- Penn State
- TAMU
- WSU
- U Arkansas
- U California
- U Connecticut
- U Illinois
- U Kentucky
- U Manitoba
- U Minnesota
- U Missouri
- U Nebraska
- USDA-ARS

North American Agricultural Biotechnology Council

Goals and Objectives

Address agricultural biotechnology from a multi-constituency perspective

NABC strives to:

- **Provide an open forum** for people with different interests and concerns to come together to speak, to listen, and to learn from meaningful dialogue on the potential impacts of agricultural biotechnology
- **Define issues and public policy options** related to biotechnology in the food, agricultural, and environmental areas
- **Promote increased understanding** of the scientific, economic, legislative, and social issues associated with agricultural biotechnology by compiling and disseminating information
- **Facilitate communication** among researchers, administrators, policymakers, practitioners, and other constituencies to ensure the safe and efficacious development of biotechnology for the benefit of society
- **Sponsor meetings and workshops** and publish and distribute reports that provide foundations for addressing issues

NABC Meeting Publications

NABC Report 27: Stewardship for the Sustainability of Genetically Engineered Crops: The Way Forward in Pest Management, Coexistence, and Trade (2015, Penn State)

NABC Report 26: New DNA-Editing Approaches: Methods, Applications and Policy for Agriculture (2014, Cornell)

NABC Report 25: Biotechnology and North American Specialty Crops: Linking Research, Regulation, and Stakeholders (2013, TAMU)

NABC Report 24: Water Sustainability in Agriculture
(2012, Arkansas)

NABC Report 23: Food Security: The Intersection of Sustainability, Safety and Defense (2011, Minnesota)

NABC Report 22: Promoting Health by Linking Agriculture, Food, and Nutrition (2010, UC Davis)

NABC Report 21: Adapting Agriculture to Climate Change
(2009, Saskatchewan)

NABC Present and *Future*

Current context:

Ralph Hardy & other staff are retiring in the next 2 years

NABC member group needs to be ~25 to be stable

Options

1. Articulate and Implement a Future Agenda

What is needed and who needs it?

Find new leadership and perhaps leadership structure

Find new members (and retain the old)

2. Declare victory and disband

Not a good plan if there is a need.