



NERA

Northeastern Regional Association
of
State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors Meeting

**Sheraton Society Hill Hotel
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

September 17, 2007

Minutes

Steve Goodwin, Chair

In Attendance:

Steve Goodwin (MA), Chair
Edward Ashworth (ME)
Tom Brady (NH)
Tom Burr (NYG)
Reginal Harrell (MD)
Ian Hart (CTS)
Bradley Hillman (NJ)
Michael Hoffman (NYC)
Louis Magnarelli (CTNH)
Bruce McPheron (PA)
Robin Morgan (DE)
Anna Palmisano (CSREES)
Daniel Rossi (NERA)
Rachel Unger (PA)
Michael Vayda (VT)
William Vinson (WV)
Rubie Mize (NERA), Recorder

MAJOR DECISIONS

- Approved the draft agenda for this meeting as posted in url---
<http://www.agnr.umd.edu/users/nera/workshop/NERAAgendaSept2007.html>
- Approved the minutes of the NERA meeting held at the Renaissance Hotel, Providence, RI on July 9-10,2007, as posted in url---
<http://www.agnr.umd.edu/users/nera/workshop/NERAMinutesJult2007.html>
- Approved the MAC recommendations, posted in this url, and as follows:
<http://www.agnr.umd.edu/users/nera/workshop/MACReportSept2007.html>
 - Approved the Request to Write a Proposal entitled, "Biological Control of Arthropod Pests and Weeds" 01-2008 to 2013. Submitted by Richard C. Rhodes III (RI).
 - Approved the Request to Write a Proposal entitled, "Postharvest Biology of Fruit" 10-2008 to 2013. Submitted by Bradley Hillman/Daniela Sharma (NJ).
 - Approved the Request to Write a Proposal entitled, "Biological Improvement, Habitat Restoration, and Horticultural Development of Chestnut by Management of Populations, Pathogens, and Pests." 10-2008 to 2013. Submitted by Michael Vayda (VT)
 - Approved the proposal, NE_temp1302: "Collaborative Potato Breeding and Variety Development Activities to Enhance Farm Sustainability in the Eastern US" 10-2007 to 2008. Submitted by Kirby Stafford III (CTNH).

THE JOB JAR
(Work Assignments for the Executive Director)

- Inform USDA-CSREES on actions taken by the NERA Directors.
- Share with the directors the REE Energy Science and Education Workshop summary report as it becomes available
- Send by e-mail additional materials related to the laboratory security guidelines
- Continue to assist the Northeast Renewable Energy and Conservation Working Group and help with distributing the survey
- Facilitate the work of the 2008 Northeast Joint Session Planning Committee
- Arrange for the quarterly teleconference of the NRSP-1 Technical Committee [CRIS and NIMSS]
- Prepare for the NERA spring meeting to be held at Baltimore, MD on March 25-26, 2008. Suggested topics include:
 - Best Practices - Laboratory Security
 - Analysis of the Northeast Multistate Projects Portfolio

1. Welcome and Introductions - Chair Goodwin

Chair Goodwin called the meeting to order at 8:00am, and the directors briefly introduced themselves.

2. Review and Modifications to Agenda - Chair Goodwin

An item was added by Dr. Mike Vayda to the MAC Report. A Request to Write a Proposal entitled, "Biological Improvement, Habitat Restoration, and Horticultural Development of Chestnut by Management of Populations, Pathogens, and Pests," 10-2008 to 2013, was submitted at the last minute. MAC will recommend approval of this request.

A motion was made to accept the revised agenda with this added item. The motion was seconded and passed.

3. Approval of Minutes from the July 2007 Summer NERA Meeting - Chair Goodwin

<http://www.agnr.umd.edu/users/nera/workshop/NERAMinutesJuly2007.html>

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

4. Interim Actions and Executive Committee Report - Chair Goodwin

The Executive Committee met yesterday. Chair Goodwin highlighted two important issues that the directors should discuss prior to voting in the afternoon. The ballots were distributed for each station, and Chair Goodwin cautioned the directors not to vote until they have heard the presentations at the ESS meeting in the afternoon. These two issues are: the NRSPs' off-the-top funding and the Marketing Proposal.

5. Executive Director's Report – Dan Rossi

[Executive Director's Report \(PDF\)](#)

ED Dan Rossi reported that the Northeast Renewable Energy and Conservation Working Group had met twice by teleconference.

The members of the Working Group are:

- CARET – Hank Clark (ME)
- CARET – Bob Frazee (MD)
- NEED – Doug Lantagne (VT)
- NEED – Bill Hare (DC)
- NERA – Mike Hoffmann (NY)
- NERA – Bradley Hillman (NJ)
- Facilitator – Dan Rossi

The group had developed their charge as follows:

“The Northeastern States need to develop highly competitive programs dealing with renewable energy and conservation. To help promote such programs the present working group has been formed. The explicit mission of the group is the promotion of an open dialogue in the area of renewable energy and conservation. This will lead to enhanced collaborations in research, teaching and extension amongst land grant institutions, federal and state agencies and the private sector. The initial task will be the development of a compendium cataloging programs and personnel actively engaged in energy and conservation projects. The working group intends to be additive to the focus of the Sun Grant initiative and insure that the needs of both rural and urban audiences are addressed.”

They have also developed a survey posted online at url--

<http://surveys.cit.cornell.edu/Survey.aspx?s=75d34a99e84d4ebfbaf0beb95897f7f2>

Dr. Mike Hoffman requested the survey group at Cornell to look at this draft survey and had received feedback. The survey had been revised based on this and discussions with the Working Group. The output will be a searchable database. Once the survey is finalized it will be distributed to the directors who will be requested to send them to department chairs and scientists and faculty working on renewable energy and conservation projects. It is not yet resolved who will host the database. The Working Group will continue to meet to discuss implementation details.

Dr. Rossi highlighted the meetings that he had recently attended, on behalf of NERA, and distributed the following reports:

- [Meeting Summary: REE Energy Science and Education Workshop Washington, DC, September 5-6, 2007](#)
Dr. Rossi will share the report from this workshop to the directors as soon as it becomes available.
- [Meeting Summary: USDA Laboratory Security Workshop Washington, DC September 7, 2007](#)

The Texas A&M issue was briefly discussed. It is important to be proactive in setting up security and accountability system in academic labs and field facilities. Initially, the guidelines were not intended for universities, but there are about a dozen chemicals found in labs that are listed in TOPS (Dr. Rossi will send out the list). Dr. Rossi noted that it appears that universities will be required to report for all locations, including outlying stations, and certain chemicals. If a facility exceeds a threshold for a particular chemical, DHS will require a security plan and possibly additional security measures. The threshold levels are generally high enough that universities would not exceed them. However, a revised list with new thresholds is currently under review in the White House. Bio-safety labs, like the one in CT-NH has tight security and needs FBI clearance for access. There must be a distinction of the biological agents vs. chemicals.

A suggestion was made that this will be a good topic for "Best Practices", perhaps at the spring meeting. "Are our scientists GLP-minded?" "What are good lab practices?" "Should we come up with a modified GLP?" "What aspects can we work on with USDA re-guidelines?" Perhaps we could invite IR-4 scientists who have extensive experience with GLP.

Additional materials given to the directors:

- [Federal Register Notice that was published in December 2006.](#)
- [TOPS Screen which outlines the proposed program.](#)
- [American Council on Education input to DHS on Chemical Facility Regulations.](#)
- Additional information can be found at www.regulations.gov under Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards Proposed Rule or the docket # DHS-2006-0073.

Dr. Rossi met separately with Dr. Ralph Otto, and Dr. Anna Palmisano and the NPLs on August 28. He plans to meet again with the NPLs again in October. These meetings are useful in educating the NPLs about the system and how they can effectively serve the states that are assigned to them. The NPLs saw their role as the point of communication at CSREES for the states they represent. The ones who have visited their assigned stations saw opportunities and would likely be more proactive in sharing info with their LGU-partners. We need to have better

communication as to who are the NPL liaisons retiring so time is not wasted when the NPLs travel for their state visits.

Dr. Rossi and Dr. Arlen Leholm are working on the new ESCOP strategic plan. Dr. Rossi sought guidance from the directors as to how much time he should devote to this activity. There is value in being actively involved in this task. Incoming ESCOP Chair Bruce McPherson would like to see an alignment of the Science Roadmap with our stakeholders and the future work of ESCOP.

An attempt was made to reconcile the priorities Dr. Rossi heard during his station visits with the current Northeast multistate research portfolio. The purpose is to assess if our portfolio is meeting the needs of our region. This can also serve as guide for MAC when reviewing proposals for relevancy.

[Click here to view table with complete list.](#)

Some of these priorities are:

- Forest Fragmentation
- Global Climate Change
- Marine Fisheries/Aquaculture
- Organic Agriculture
- Wildlife Management

This will be discussed again by MAC and will be included in the NERA spring meeting agenda.

6. **Multistate Activities Committee Report – Bill Vinson**

<http://www.agnr.umd.edu/users/nera/workshop/MACReportSept2007.html>

A motion was made to approve items 1 to 4, which includes the additional Request to Write a Proposal entitled, "Biological Improvement, Habitat Restoration, and Horticultural Development of Chestnut by Management of Populations, Pathogens, and Pests" submitted by Dr. Mike Vayda (VT). The motion was seconded and passed.

NRSP Off-the-top Recommendations for FY2008

[Revision to Guidelines and Summary of Final Budget Recommendations](#)

[Comparison of NERA and NRSP Review Committee Recommendations](#)

NRSP-1 Report - Mike Vayda

[Dr. Colien Hefferan's Memo Re-Changes in CRIS](#)

Dr. Mike Vayda reported that the NRSP-1 Technical Committee met at CSREES in Washington, DC on August 28. Dr. Greg Crosby, who is in charge of One Solution, attended this meeting. Dr. Vayda has two major concerns he wanted to share with the directors. One is Dr. Colien Hefferan's memo which indicated that CRIS had gone ahead with system modifications without any input from the Experiment Station directors or their representatives. The second is the funding issue. Why do we continue to fund CRIS if the modifications done will serve the other sections as well, i.e. Extension and Academic Programs. Shouldn't these sections bear some of the costs for maintaining CRIS?

Dr. Vayda inquired if the technical committee was talking to the right people who are making the decisions about content. Dr. Palmisano noted that Dr. Greg Crosby is the right person to talk to as he works closely with the Planning and Accountability staff. Bob MacDonald should be included in the discussion.

NRSP-1 is scheduled to terminate in 2009. The project will be reviewed this Fall. It was also decided to hold a quarterly teleconference in addition to the annual meeting. The committee may recommend a one-year extension to give the project time to evolve when One Solution is implemented. "How should NRSP-1 look like?" What are our reporting needs? We should work closely with Extension in developing or modifying the reporting forms in CRIS.

NRSP-6 Funding Situation and FY08 Off-the-top Request - Ed Ashworth

Dr. Ed Ashworth recommended to the directors not to vote for the FY08 off-the-top funding level of \$110,000 in the ballot. He requested that an amendment be made to return the funding level to the FY2006 in the amount of \$150,000. NRSP-6 is the first of the IRs created. It is considered an orphan, in a way, as it did not get incorporated in any regional center. There is a need to continue to support this potato germplasm collection/maintenance/distribution activity in a reasonable level as this activity could not be turned on and off. This is an NRSP that cannot be self-supporting and we should not expect our support to zero out.

Dr. Bill Vinson raised the issue that there are projects like NIMSS that serve us and warrants continued support. Dr. Tom Burr noted NRSP-5 falls in this category and its funding level was restored to the FY2006 level for the same reasons cited for NRSP-6. There was consensus among the directors that funding for NRSP-6 should be returned to FY2006 level at \$150,000.

NRSP-7 will also return to the table to request for off-the-top funding. There is no assurance that the funding will be restored as an earmark, so the committee returned with a request for FY2008 funding.

Chair Goodwin cautioned the directors to hold off on their votes until after the NRSPs discussion at the ESS Meeting in the afternoon.

7. ESCOP Marketing Plan - Chair Goodwin and Dan Rossi

[Memo from ESCOP Chair Ron Pardini](#)

[Update from ESCOP Chair, Justifications and RFP](#)

The marketing firm has been selected from six that submitted proposals. Three were interviewed on Sept. 12. The Podesta firm will give a presentation at the ESS Meeting in the afternoon. An electronic vote will be held in October on whether to support this marketing effort. The plan is to have a \$300,000 assessment each year for 3 years, \$240,000 per year for the marketing firm and \$60,000 to our advocacy firm, Cornerstone, for coordination of our education efforts with their advocacy initiatives. This task is not included in the current Cornerstone contract.

Some of the comments are --

- What are the chances for success?
- Federal funds could not be utilized so the states would have to raise the assessment from other sources. The stations have responsibility in our own districts to inform our elected officials where we spend our money.
- How does this differ with marketing efforts already being done by the institutions?
- Shouldn't this be a concerted effort, not just with Extension, but also our USDA partners in support of NRI, grants, etc.? This may fragment the system and will defeat the CREATE-21 concept. Should we also include ARS?

Chair Goodwin encouraged the directors to voice their concerns at the marketing firm's presentation in the afternoon.

Incoming ESCOP Chair McPherson will be attending the ECOP meeting in Wyoming to take the ESS message regarding this marketing plan. ECOP had expressed interest in a system-wide marketing effort.

8. Nominations Committee Report

No report.

9. Resolutions Committee Report

No report.

10. Future Meetings - Dan Rossi

2008 NERA Spring Meeting: Admiral Fell Inn, Baltimore, MD (March 25-26, 2008)

2008 NERA Summer Meeting Planning Update

[Joint Session Planning Committee Teleconference Notes, Sept. 12, 2007](#)

The Northeast Joint Session Planning Committee met by teleconference on Sept. 12. At the last summer meeting, our colleagues from the District of Columbia expressed interest in hosting if the theme is "Urban Agriculture". Delaware, which is scheduled to host the session in 2008, agreed for DC to host it next year. The meeting is tentatively scheduled for July 13-15, 2008.

Topics suggested for the Joint Session were:

- Report or follow-up of the Bioenergy topic from the July 2007 Joint Session
- Urban/Metro Initiatives – opportunities in the Northeast for teaching, research and extension.
- Recruitment of faculty and students – how do we recruit faculty from other disciplines? How do we encourage students to consider agricultural majors at the undergraduate and graduate level?

2008 ESS Fall Meeting

ESCOP Chair-Elect for 2008 is Dr. Steve Pueppke from Michigan. The location for the 2008 meeting will be Traverse City, Michigan. The dates are not yet fixed.

11. Closing Remarks and Handover to Incoming Chair – Chair Goodwin and Robin Morgan

Chair Goodwin thanked the directors and Dr. Anna Palmisano for serving as our CSREES liaison. Dr. Palmisano informed the group that a new liaison will be announced at the NASULGC meeting in November. The regional liaisons are due for rotation. She thanked the directors for helping her develop an understanding of the challenges in the region as well as the states.

Chair Goodwin handed over the NERA bell to Dr. Robin Morgan, our 2008 NERA Chair.

12. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:00am.



[Back to Workroom](#)
