

NERA Business Meeting Notes
Embassy Suites, Lincoln, NE
10/2/2018

Meeting convened at 8:00 AM.

In attendance: Jan Nyrop (Chair), Jody Jellison, Carol Thornber, Ted Andreadis, Adel Shirmohammadi, Fred Servello, Gary Thompson, Rick Rhodes, David Leibovitz, Doug Steele

The 10/2 meeting agenda was approved by acclamation.

The Bethany Beach NERA Summer meeting minutes were approved by acclamation.

The September 2018 NERA Zoom meeting minutes approved by acclamation.

1. Rick evaluation (closed session.)
2. NIFA Listens
 - Feedback so far
 - Jason Hubbard (WVU) – breakthroughs in plant/animal nutrient efficiencies
 - Rick Rhodes – Eradicate food insecurity, local food systems/production, agricultural prosperity
 - The NE is different - not commodity agriculture
 - Preserve, protect, build capacity funding
 - Infrastructure at LGUs
 - Gary Thompson will present ESCOP’s perspective on NIFA Listens at the 10/3 ESS Business Meeting
 - Hartford, CT – Fall 2018
 - Rick will attend
 - Encourage an AES Director from each region to attend NIFA Listens
 - 2017 – Joint ECOP-ESCOP written testimony
 - Look at the 4 listening sessions, consolidate feedback with the regional associations, create a national document for ESCOP
 - ESCOP Grand Challenges
 - Sustainability, competitiveness and profitability of U.S. food and agricultural systems
 - Adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change on food, feed, fiber and fuel systems
 - Support energy security and the development of the bioeconomy from renewable natural resources
 - Play a leadership role in a safe, secure and abundant food supply
 - Improve human health, nutrition and wellness
 - Heighten environmental stewardship through the development of sustainable management practices
 - Strengthen individual, family and community development and resilience
 - Small farms in PA are in trouble
 - Jan Nyrop – the Grand Challenges cover “everything”; do we need to make choices to narrow the focus?

- Adel Shirmohammadi – the ESCOP S&T committee is preparing a new Science Roadmap which is aligned with the ESCOP Grand Challenges
- Grand Challenge #6
 - Issues in the Northeast are different from other regions. The NE embraces cover cropping, other regions don't.
 - Water Quality – also about land use practices
- Jody Jellison – Importance of being able to address statewide and regional priorities.
 - Things can be important to a sub-location but might not be a national priority. We shouldn't lose (for a NE listening session) the identity of being a huge, heterogeneous country with multiple needs. Focusing on one issue (e.g. drought) is not inclusive.
 - NIFA is not only agriculture, but tends to represent strong "agriculture" subgroups. Rural economic / community viability is also important.
 - Advocating for infrastructure improvement – it needs to go beyond the Sightlines study
- Fred Servello – if you don't have a prepared portfolio of needs when the next bond issue arises, an opportunity is lost.
- Gary Thompson – we "go big and get sent home". The large asks aren't getting us anywhere...
- Fred Servello – there's groupthink at play – at each level of further detail, some regional bullets are lost. NIFA is in the position to create big, broad RFPs with many pieces, but in competition, the award goes to the region that has the biggest challenges. The NE region doesn't seem to get higher priority as it focuses on more narrow issues.
- Pay attention to the differences between regions when it comes time to draft the RFP. NIFA Listens is the time to communicate that.
- Ted Andreadis – we'll be better off communicating as a region rather than individual institutions. If we can present as a region, let's prepare Rick to do so on our behalf, when NIFA Listens is in the Northeast, Hartford CT Fall 2018.
- Rick Rhodes is registered as a speaker at NIFA Listens. Others can show up and provide written testimony after the listening session concludes.
- Adel Shirmohammadi – in Delaware we focused on the Rural-Urban Interface. That attracts attention of Extension partners, lots of NIFA funding deals with both research and extension, it is relevant and important to the Northeast Region. It also feeds into the push toward local food that is happening nationally.
- Gary – Because of our proximity and the rural-urban interface, the NE has a different mode of profitability than growing 10k+ acres of soybeans. Small, profitable operations recouping every dollar that they produce. BUT we still have large scale operations (major dairy, major poultry).
- **Jan Nyrop – if NERA has important priorities to communicate at NIFA Listens, send them to Rick by October 4. If we're really going to be effective, the ideas must be synthesized. Jan asked the OED to synthesize the feedback.**
- Rick – NEED is having the same discussion, and along with Ali Mitchell NEED's ideas will be aligned with NERA's.
- Planning to attend NIFA Listens: Jody Jellison, Ted Andreadis, Cameron Faustman, Rick Rhodes, Ali Mitchell

3. NERA Budget

- NERA has had a static assessment for quite some time (since 2008) and will eventually hit a wall 6-8 years out.
 - We could consider a stepwise increase to address increasing costs

- We could revisit the assessments and decide upon assessment changes on an annual basis, as needed
 - OED will share the budget docs electronically and this will be a topic for Summer Meeting 2019.
 - A recommendation for changing the calculation of the assessment:
 - Current assessment is based on 10+ year old MRF allocations
 - Recommendation: revise the assessments to correspond to the previous year Appendix A MRF allocation (e.g., base FY '19 assessment on FY '18 Appendix A [backing out off-the-top funding])
 - The greatest reduction in assessment under this model would be NY-Geneva (~\$900)
 - Greatest increase under this model, Penn State (~\$100)
 - MRF has been flat for quite some time
 - Should we consider tying the assessments back to the entire Hatch allocation (regular and MRF)
 - OED will create a document explaining the formula for MRF, assessments
4. NERA Chair Rotation and Officer-at-Large Nomination
- Jan Nyrop rotates to past chair, Jody rotates in as chair, Ted will be incoming chair, we need an Officer-at-Large
 - OED will conduct the nomination/Officer-at-Large appointment process
5. NERA Messaging
- Chair's recommendation:
 - Rick represents NERA and has to communicate synthesized opinions to support actions/initiatives depending on what organization he's representing.
 - Is Rick representing all NERA stations when speaking on National issues?
 - As part of the newsletter, OED could highlight upcoming decision points and summarize where NERA stands on those points. It would be the responsibility of individual NERA Directors to reach out if they have a problem with those summaries.
 - What happens if a BAA or NERA recommendation is not in the best interest of your institution/state?
 - Does the stamp of approval for NERA go out for a vote?
 - Should OED have the delegated authority to be able to speak on NERA's behalf? We ought to determine when that is or is not the case.
 - When should things go out for discussion?
 - If we require NERA positions to go out for discussion, Directors must commit to engagement.
 - Prior to the summer meeting: **Think of specific instances when OED messaging on behalf of NERA is not necessarily appropriate. When is a discussion required for NERA to communicate in support of an issue/initiative.**
 - Some national priorities are not in an institution's best interest.
 - Examples: NIFA Relocation, BAA support of SNAP-ED management by CES
 - **The topic on a mechanism for NERA messaging will be discussed in greater detail during the next NERA meeting in Summer 2019.**
 - **NERA Ex Comm could come up with suggestions or a straw person proposal for the group to discuss.**

6. National Impact Database
 - NE usage of the database is low. Only UNH has submitted research impacts to the NIDB in the past three years.
7. NERA thanked Jan Nyrop for his service as chair in 2018-19 and Jody Jellison rotated in as the NERA chair, ringing the ceremonial cow bell.
8. Meeting adjourned at 10:10 AM