



Northeastern Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors

## Northeastern Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors

### Summer 2017 Business Meeting

The Greenbrier – White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia

June 14, 2017

#### Minutes

In attendance:

Mark Rieger

Ted Andreadis

Sabine O’Hara

Carol Thornber

Bill Miller

Gary Thompson

Bradley Hillman

Jan Nyrop

Kumar Venkitanarayanan

Fred Servello

Tim Phipps

Adel Shirmohammadi

Muquarrab Qureshi – Northeast Liaison USDA-NIFA

Rick Rhodes

David Leibovitz

#### Action items are in bold.

1.) Call to Order and Introductions

- Mark Rieger called the meeting to order and asked everyone to introduce themselves.
- **Request for Carol Thornber to be added to NERA Listserv**

2.) Approval of NERA Meeting Minutes, March 13-15, 2017

- **Request for amendment to add S&T report from Adel Shirmohammadi to Spring 17 minutes**
- **Unanimous approval of minutes, with the addition of the S&T report.**

### 3.) Multistate Activities Committee Report and Discussion

- MAC Chair Fred Servello walked through the committee's report and recommendations for discussion. Recommendations are posted on the NERA Website under Agenda/Mintues (link to PDF: [http://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/895599\\_9cf83d81597d4298a5c7577db777841c.pdf](http://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/895599_9cf83d81597d4298a5c7577db777841c.pdf))
- Approval of Requests to Write and Peer Reviewed Projects
  - NE\_TEMP1020 – **Approved, with a caveat to provide the technical committee with an opportunity to revise.** Brad Hillman will bring the comments back to the group on linking the viticulture and oenology. This was an unusual project in the sense that it was approved 20 years ago for the first time as a project.
  - NECC1200 re-write – Cameron Faustman had been previously involved with this; equine groups in the Northeast have been stronger than other regions' groups. **Support was given for this group to move forward, in fact as a Coordinating Committee rather than multistate project.**
  - NE\_TEMP1962 – received unanimous approval.
  - NE\_TEMP1231 – received unanimous approval
  - **A motion was unanimously approved for all proposals.**
- Administrative Adviser Recommendations
  - NRSP6 seeks a replacement for Ed Ashworth
  - NRSP9 seeks a replacement for Cameron Faustman
  - Since the MAC chair goes to the NRSP Review Committee, a suggestion was made for the MAC Chair to become the "temporary" representative to the NRSPs which seek replacements (NRSP6, NRSP9)
  - **Northeast AAs will continue to serve in their current roles.**
  - **MAC Chair (Fred Servello) will serve as the AA for NRSPs that need replacements assigned (NRSP6, NRSP9).**
  - **Unanimous approval of a motion introduced by Mark Rieger; seconded by Tim Phipps and Adel Shirmohammadi**
- Discussion on Multistate Activities (NRSPs, "NE" projects)
  - Cameron Faustman expressed frustration with having 4 AA's assigned to an NRSP.
  - Adel Shirmohammadi and Cameron Faustman both serve as AA's to NRSP1
  - *Are there bylaws or rules that mandate each region providing an AA for an NRSP?*
    - **Rick will follow up with regional EDs on regional AA requirements for NRSPs**
  - *How are budgets set for projects such as "NE9"? Are these resources coming off the top on a regional basis? National basis? A couple hundred dollars come into Geneva by earmark, to be used exclusively for maintenance of a particular germplasm. Why has that budget seemingly increased over time while other projects have stayed level?*
    - **Rick will follow up with Dan/Rubie on this question**

- **Jan will follow up with Tom Burr**
- **Muquarrab offered to provide any clarification needed from NIFA**

#### 4.) NERA Spring Meeting Date and Agenda Setting Process

- Spring Meeting Date – typically second week of March in Baltimore at the Admiral Fell Inn, directly after CARET-AHS.
  - Multiple date options were discussed for the NERA Meeting
    - Before CARET-AHS rather than after
      - ESCOP Meetings tend to be at the beginning of CARET-AHS, and it would be nice to cover both NERA and ESCOP meetings in one trip.
    - Parallel to CARET-AHS
      - (Jan Nyrop) The opportunity cost of making 2 trips to DC is not money, it's time. If we can do it more efficiently by pulling both meetings together, let's consider it. Our time together as NERA in the spring has to be our highest priority.
    - End of the week of CARET-AHS
      - (Brad Hillman) Typically the hill visits take place on a round trip day from New Jersey in an effort to skip the "expensive" part of CARET-AHS, but somebody does need to attend to represent Rutgers. Does anybody use the Thursday for hill visits?
      - (Adel Shirmohammadi) Typically the hill visit was Wednesday afternoon and Thursday morning. It all depends when you can get an appointment. During the CARET-AHS meeting, small programs may be valuable but typically the general sessions aren't necessary.
    - **Final decision on NERA Spring Meeting dates was tabled.**
    - **Rick and Dave will put together scenarios for NERA's Spring Meeting and CARET-AHS and run it by the Directors.**
- Agenda Setting Process
  - It would be advantageous to make the second day at the Summer Session a "follow-up" day to come up with an action plan on how we act together in response to what we learned on Day 1. We could forgo the "business" piece of the summer meeting and handle it electronically or elsewhere.
  - There was no time for synthesis of the information from Day 1 at the summer meeting, but high interest in doing so as a group rather than individually back at our institutions.
  - "Business" typically held on Day 2 can be handled by conference call or Zoom meeting. Things that happened in Day 1 should continue, or have follow up on Day 2.
  - Our ability to communicate digitally is improving. Our video presence on Zoom meetings provides great opportunities to expand virtual meetings and could change past practices.

- Day 2 could serve as a productive day of fitting Day 1's material into a vision/mission for the Northeast.
- Some institutions don't have an Associate Dean for Academic Programs. Let's keep APS as a section in mind as we probably don't interact with them enough. Clearly there are intersections of research and academic programs. APS meets in early March every year; let's not distance ourselves from that group.
- (Muquarrab Qureshi) NIFA is taking a strategic look at what students want to learn rather than what we want them to learn. It would be wonderful for Directors to look at NIFA's education pipeline programs (pre-doc, post-doc pipeline). This administration will be focusing on Community Colleges. If you can form a small-level subgroup to examine NIFA's education programs, we will take your suggestions to heart and give a presentation if requested. NIFA is examining initiatives in formal and non-formal development, leadership skills, soft skills for the 2018 budget cycle. RFAs go out in March/April. Maybe the spring meeting would be a good way for NERA and NIFA to be involved with this together? Every agency should be able to see itself in NIFA's Strategic Plan. Lots going on with education – we need to strengthen the nexus between research and academic programs.
- Academic Programs Section is a thin group. Cameron Faustman has been pushing for their involvement, so we should include him in this discussion on involvement with APS. Under Cameron's leadership he has pushed for less "business as usual".
- Suggestion: In Philadelphia let's continue this discussion. Perhaps we can form a subcommittee and have something to discuss with NERA and NIFA in 2018?
- **Mark Rieger can work with NERA on follow-up to involvement with Academic Programs Section**
- **NERA will follow up with Wendy Fink on involvement with APS**

#### 5.) ESCOP Report

- ESCOP Chair Bret Hess (Wyoming) has been to DC several times, meeting with people from multiple organizations (NIFA, NSF, SoAR, C-Far, APLU).
- ESCOP has open dialogue with many audiences that don't understand what ESCOP is or does. Gary Thompson as Chair and Rick Rhodes as Executive Vice-Chair will continue in more targeted discussions over the next year.
- ESCOP has agreed to support Breakthroughs 2030, a National Academies organized study on food and agricultural research.
- Strong focus in ESCOP and from NIFA on reporting time and effort on capacity funds.
- Guidance from NIFA on time/effort reporting has been unclear, and we likely won't receive clear guidelines in writing.
- Penn State example:
  - PSU certifies time and effort once per year
  - NIFA wants *minimum* quarterly reports where faculty sign off on their percent of effort on appropriated funds and state match

- Stations should be treating Hatch projects like a competitive grant and report time and effort off that grant.
  - Penn State’s administrative officers thought they were reporting okay until they saw a presentation from NIFA at NERAOC
- **Slides from Time and Effort Reporting from NERAOC have been posted to the NERA website: [click here to view](#).**
- New Mexico State University documents time and effort monthly.
- Institutions have varying levels of reporting frequency. Most use Hatch funds to support a faculty member, and that person is working on things other than their Hatch project.
- Maryland recent audit experience:
  - NIFA audited UMD last fall
  - Two days spent on campus, NIFA wanted to see a sample presentation on 2 CRIS projects and 2 competitive projects
  - NIFA wanted to visit research centers and facilities
  - NIFA concluded by meeting with Dean and Finance Director of the college
  - Field tours are mainly just sightseeing for finance/legal representatives from NIFA. You aren’t presenting to auditors that understand the science of our work.
- What NIFA wants to see is becoming increasingly gray. Directors and Administrative Officers would appreciate clear, written guidelines – particularly on time and effort reporting.
- Directors need a more formal mechanism to see what we’re all doing and determine best practices.
- **Bill Miller will follow up with some information on reporting on capacity funds.**
- **Multiple Directors expressed interest in a “Dealing with NIFA” Best Practices session**
- **Gary and Rick will work between ESCOP and NERA to communicate how other Directors / regions are doing with time/effort reporting and NIFA requirements**
- Communications and Marketing Committee update:
  - Rick Rhodes serves as Executive Vice-Chair of the CMC.
  - kglobal has been hired to work with APLU on the committees’ initiatives.
  - Following the meeting, a video campaign will be launched to support the “One-Ask” \$200m increase across the BAA Priority Areas.
  - Julia Weede mentioned that “Video is King” – a third-party endorsement of what the CMC has underway
- Science and Technology Committee update:
  - Big Data is still a hot topic for ESCOP and NIFA; a session is planned for the ESS meeting in Philadelphia
  - Multistate Research Project award selection and scoring:
    - NC1186 received first place (score: 90)
    - W3112 received second place (score: 84)
    - NE1227 received third place (score: 78)
    - S1065 received fourth place (score: 73)
    - More project submissions involved extension components this year

- Adel did not entirely agree with how the scoring turned out. 2 projects on animals (NE1227 and W3112) were the more solid projects.
  - NC1186 was broken out well into 6 or 7 clearly defined objectives.
  - Criticism for NE1227 was that they discussed \$10m in grants secured, but over what time period? The current iteration or all iterations of the project?
  - **Adel can share a copy of the winning proposal NC1186 upon request.**
- Diversity Catalyst Committee update:
  - Our institutions will only reflect excellence once we become inclusive environments. These initiatives extend far beyond merely diversity and well into inclusion.
  - We typically sound like we're taking a "Noah's Ark" compliance-style approach to filling two of each "bubble" of diversity.
  - We need to become inclusive environments, where all are welcome to sit and eat at the table. That is where excellence is achieved.
  - Working toward inclusion is a journey – even experts / trainers in the field are still on this journey.
  - **The DCC seeks a NERA replacement for Tim Phipps and is open for nominations.**

#### 6.) Budget Discussion

- Assessments will remain level in FY2018.
- Small salary increases built into our budget.
- \$31k allocated to all planning grants (NERA, NEED-NERA)
- **Motion to approve budget introduced by Gary Thompson, seconded by Adel Shirmohammadi, received unanimous approval.**

#### 7.) OED Summary Report and Plan of Work

- Newsletter should be clear and bulleted.
- On Newsletters, include Executive Assistants, mark with response required or high importance
- Enthusiasm and encouragement for holding more Zoom meetings with NERA
- NERA has considered holding a meeting jointly with other regions. Perhaps a fly-in, or before/after a national meeting. No commitments have been made.
- Suggestion for developing an orientation for new NERA Directors.
  - Every new Director should have something at their fingertips as an orientation.
  - **NERA will determine who's hiring new Associate Deans/Directors and discuss providing training materials, to capture the greatest number all at once.**
- Planning Grant discussion:
  - The deliverable Directors want from planning grants – not a draft proposal, but a report.

- It might be another year before a group starts writing the proposal, depending where they are in the cycle. Just some reporting back to see what they've accomplished as a group.
- **NERA can develop a format for a Planning Grant team outcome report**
- Some planning grant submissions have been too heavy on the extension side. We aren't typically seeing researchers come together to submit these. Extension has become the driver of planning grant teams more now than ever.
- The RFA hasn't previously listed extension as the main anchor with research being the "support" piece. Typically it's the other way around.
- If a strong team forms in an area valuable to the NERA Directors, we'd support them. Teams should be encouraged to identify clear research questions and write in that direction.
- Station visits: **Rick will be working on a case-by-case basis to schedule visits to each station. He will communicate expectations for those visits with the Directors.**
- **NERA will draft a one-pager with the "typical" schedule of meetings across the year, and what happens at each meeting.**
- **Dave Leibovitz will offer to provide a NERA report to the NEMO group in October.**

#### 8.) Nominations

- NERA seeks nominees for a multitude of committee, liaison and representative positions
  - Officer-at-Large (currently Jody Jellison)
    - **Nominee – Ted Andreadis (CT)**
  - NEED member on the MAC (currently Pat Vittum)
    - **NERA Will discuss this with NEED. Pat is okay to serve on the MAC as long as she's allowed, despite her retirement.**
  - Nominating Committee – 2 members (currently Tim Phipps and vacancy)
    - **We don't necessarily need a Nominating Committee and/or chair. Absorb by the Executive Committee**
  - Liaison to NEED (currently vacant)
    - **Unsure of need for this position – will discuss the value of this position with Mike O'Neill**
  - Liaison to ACOP (currently vacant)
    - **Nominee – Mark Rieger**
  - NESARE representative (currently Jon Wraith)
    - **Nominee – Adel Shirmohammadi**
  - Diversity Catalyst Committee representative (currently Tim Phipps)
    - **Nominee – Gary Thompson**
    - Half-day session planned at Joint COPs; the last 2 hours will be devoted to creating a roadmap for Diversity and Inclusion engagement with the BAA, which will go to the PBD.
  - NRSP6 and NRSP9 Administrative Advisers from the Northeast
    - Is there a policy in writing which determines the need for an AA for each region on an NRSP?

- Could this be a leadership opportunity for a Director's designee to serve as an AA?
- **NERA will investigate what the policy is on assigning AAs for NRSPs for each region**
- **NERA will revisit the Operating Guidelines to remove the Nominating Committee, effectively having it absorbed by the Executive Committee.**
- **NERA will revisit Nominations in September.**

9.) Executive Director and Coordinator Evaluation

- ED and Coordinator evaluation historically takes place at the NERA Spring meeting
- We plan to continue this practice but have some outstanding unevaluated time
- **ED and Coordinator evaluation of activities thus far will take place at the ESS meeting in Philadelphia, September 2017**
- **Further evaluations will take place in March of 2018 and subsequent years**

10.) NERAOC Discussion

- The Northeast is host region for NERAOC in 2020
- Northeast must select a host institution for NERAOC 2020 by October 2017
  - Past three Northeast hosts were Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Maryland
- Dave Leibovitz sits on the NERAOC Planning Committee representing ESCOP
  - NERAOC planning committee meets in Grand Rapids, MI July 2017
  - NEMO group meets in New Jersey October 2017
- No high interest expressed at this time
- **Adel will look into the idea of hosting and discuss with Rubie Mize back at UMD**

11.) Resolutions

- Brad Hillman shared Resolutions of Appreciation for the following:
  - Ed Ashworth on his retirement from University of Maine
  - Greg Weidemann on his retirement from UConn
  - Tim Phipps on his return to faculty at West Virginia University
  - West Virginia University as host institution
- The resolutions are enclosed below
- **A motion was introduced to approve all four resolutions was seconded and passed with unanimous support.**

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**Resolution of Appreciation to Dr. Ed Ashworth, University of Maine**

WHEREAS, Dr. Ed Ashworth has distinguished himself as Dean of the College of Natural Sciences, Forestry and Agriculture and Director of the Maine Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station and,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Northeastern Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors at their meeting in White Sulphur Springs, West

Virginia on June 12-14, 2017, express sincere appreciation to Dr. Ashworth for his dedicated service to agriculture in his state and the region, and for his many valuable contributions to the Association, and wish him success in his future personal endeavors.

June 14, 2017

Signed by Mark Rieger, Chair

Northeastern Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors

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**Resolution of Appreciation to Dr. Gregory Weidemann, University of Connecticut**

WHEREAS, Dr. Gregory Weidemann has distinguished himself as Dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources and Director of the Connecticut – Storrs Agricultural Experiment Station and,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Northeastern Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors at their meeting in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia on June 12-14, 2017, express sincere appreciation to Dr. Weidemann for his dedicated service to agriculture in his state and the region, and for his many valuable contributions to the Association, and wish him success in his future personal endeavors.

June 14, 2017

Signed by Mark Rieger, Chair

Northeastern Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors

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**Resolution of Appreciation to Dr. Tim Phipps, Associate Dean and Associate Director, West Virginia University**

WHEREAS, Dr. Tim Phipps has distinguished himself as Associate Dean of the Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Design and Associate Director of the West Virginia University Agricultural Experiment Station, and

WHEREAS, Dr. Phipps served as Advisor to NEERA1402 and multistate research project NE1049, and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Northeastern Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors at their meeting in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia on June 12-14, 2017, express sincere appreciation to Dr. Phipps for his dedicated

service to agriculture in his state and the region, and for his many valuable contributions to the Association, and wish him success in his return to the Faculty at West Virginia University.

June 14, 2017

Signed by Mark Rieger, Chair

Northeastern Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors

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### **Resolution of Appreciation to the Host Institution – West Virginia University**

WHEREAS, the Northeastern Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors participated in an engaging, productive, and well-organized meeting with the Northeast Extension Directors (NEED), Deans and Administrative Heads (AHS) and Members of the Council for Agricultural Research, Extension and Teaching (CARET) on June 12-14 at The Greenbrier in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, and

WHEREAS, the Directors were very pleased with the informative presentations and engaging discussion on the topics of “Social Media, Messaging and Communications in the Digital Age: What’s the Story?”, and

WHEREAS, the Directors enjoyed the tour of The Bunker (Project Greek Island), the rich history and elegance of The Greenbrier and its grounds, the receptions and dinner in the Crystal Room and at the Greenbrier Golf Club Champions Room, and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Directors acknowledge their appreciation to Dean Dan Robison, Associate Dean Tim Phipps, Dean Steve Bonnano, and Associate Dean Jennifer Williams for making the meeting a great success and a memorable experience.

June 14, 2017

Signed by Mark Rieger, Chair

Northeastern Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors

#### 12.) Final comments and adjournment

- Gary Thompson shared that the ESS Meeting in 2017 will be held in Philadelphia September 25-27, 2017. The theme is “A Question of Balance” and the agenda is taking shape. Meeting website should be going live by July.
- **A motion introduced to adjourn the meeting was seconded and unanimously approved at 2:27pm.**