



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 10-11, 2015

Draft Minutes

In Attendance:

Tim Phipps, Chair
Nancy Bull, NEED-ED
Cameron Faustman
Brad Hillman
Mike Hoffmann
Michael R. (Mickey) McGuire, USDA-ARS
Muquarrab Qureshi, USDA-NIFA
Rick Rhodes III
Mark Rieger
Dan Rossi
Fred Servello
Hunt Shipman, Cornerstone
Adel Shirmohammadi
Gary Thompson
Pat Vittum
Jon Wraith
Stephen Young, NE-IPM
Rubie Mize, Recorder

1. Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions – Tim Phipps, Chair

Chair Tim Phipps called the meeting to order at 8:00AM, welcomed NERA members and guests, and asked for brief introductions.

Muquarrab Qureshi is the new NIFA Liaison to the Northeast, replacing Hiram Larew who had recently retired.

- **Agenda Modification (Additions/Deletions) and Approval - Tim Phipps, Chair**

Mike Hoffmann will give the presentation on the Climate Hub. Allison M. Chatrchyan could not get a flight out of New York to get to the meeting at a reasonable time.

Chair Tim Phipps reminded all that the afternoon session will be a closed meeting for NERA members only.

The draft agenda was approved.

- Approval of the October 1, 2014 Minutes of the NERA Meeting held in Jekyll Island, GA – Tim Phipps, Chair

<http://www.nera.umd.edu/workshop/NERAMinutesOctober2014.pdf>

Motion made to approve the minutes was seconded and approved.

- 2. **Interim Actions by the Chair and NERA Executive Committee Report – Tim Phipps, Chair**

- Approved the release of the 2015 NERA Planning Grants RFA and the electronic ballot to confirm the recommendations of the Multistate Activities Committee. Participated in the review and selection of proposals to be funded, as a MAC member.
- Participated as MAC member in reviewing nine proposals submitted for the Joint NEED-NERA Planning Grants Program, and with Chair of NEED notified those who submitted proposals of review results.
- Serves as ESCOP Representative to the Budget and Legislative (B&L) Committee. Participated in monthly conference calls and attended in person meeting on March 3 in Washington, DC.
- Conferred with Executive Director on administrative and programmatic issues. A longer executive session has been added to the NERA agenda to discuss these issues and come up with courses of action.
- Prepared agenda of the March NERA spring meeting

Chair Phipps reported that the ‘Big Ask’ the B&L Committee had put forward is the \$100M for funding ‘Water’ research for the next five years. His task is to solicit regional impacts from Water-related research. This will give the committee ideas on what is needed. Chair Phipps will send out an email requesting this info from the directors.

Gary Thompson, who is currently serving as Chair of the B&L Committee, emphasized the need for impact statements that will be used to develop a comprehensive White Paper to present to NIFA. Impacts should not duplicate those from Water Research Institutes, less of past impacts, more on needs and capacity of Land-grants to address current and emerging water issues, and look beyond our own colleges including those partnerships that may strengthen capacity. Linking food and water is also vital.

Gary and Tim were requested to include in their e-mail, a summary explaining what type of info they need. NIFA wants to know the gaps and what resources are needed to meet those. Request will be included in the FY2017 budget.

3. Multistate Activities Committee Report (distributed for consideration tomorrow) – Fred Servello

MAC Chair Fred Servello shared the written report and noted that discussion will be on the following:

- Four proposals/requests received, particularly NE_TEMP2201: University-Community Intermediaries: Supporting Informed Decision-Making Around Polarized Issues. MAC recommends a different multistate format than what was submitted.
- Regional off-the-top for NE9 and NE59
- NRSPs – Tim Phipps will represent NERA at the NRSP Review Committee Meeting as Fred Servello has a university commitment
- Planning Grants – discussion on the RFA and process will be during the Executive Session

4. NIFA Update – Muquarrab Qureshi

Please see attachments below on the following:

- FY2016 Budget
- Farm Bill
- Management Initiatives

5. USDA-ARS Update - Michael R. (Mickey) McGuire

Mickey McGuire is representing ARS, on behalf of Dariusz Swietlik, Area Director.

- USDA - ARS Leadership Changes
 - Northeast Area
 - Area Director - Dariusz Swietlik
 - Associate Area Director - Charles Onwulata
 - Associate Area Director - Michael McGuire (Acting until July 17, 2015)
 - Beltsville Location
 - Beltsville Agricultural Research Center
 - Director - Ellen Harris
 - Beltsville Human Nutrition Center
 - Director - Naomi Fukagawa (Effective April 5, 2015)
 - US National Arboretum
 - Director - Vacant, actively recruiting
 - Eastern Regional Research Center
 - Director - Sevim Erhan
 - New Research Leader - Robert Moreau, Sustainable Biofuels

6. ESCOP Update and Discussion – Fred Servello and Dan Rossi

Please refer to attached ESCOP Report below.

7. NE Climate Hub Update – Mike Hoffmann

PowerPoint Presentation - <http://www.nera.umd.edu/workshop/NEClimateHubMarch2015.pdf>

8. NE IPM Center – Steve Young

PowerPoint Presentation - <http://www.nera.umd.edu/workshop/NEIPMCenterMarch2015.pdf>

9. Budget and Legislative Update – Hunt Shipman

PowerPoint Presentation - <http://www.nera.umd.edu/workshop/CornerstoneUpdateMarch2015.pdf>

10. NEED Update – Nancy Bull

PowerPoint Presentation - <http://www.nera.umd.edu/workshop/NEEDUpdateMarch2015.pdf>

- There is need for a unified 4H national strategic plan with common measures etc. There is opportunity for the system to have a youth development plan through 4H. USDA needs guiding principles for 4H.
- What is NEED's view as an 'investment partner' in the region? Nancy liked the term 'investment partner'. Social communication is what Extension does well and can be a strong partner in that arena.
- NEED Directors are very interested in developing more integrated, multistate projects with the experiment stations.

11. Executive Session – NERA Directors only

Decisions made at this Executive Session are –

- Motion to approve the FY15-16 NERA budget without an increase on the assessment, was seconded and approved.
- Directors approved the reclassification to upgrade the position of the Assistant to the Executive Director. Dan Rossi will work with Rutgers.
- Next steps for the committee looking into OED Structure and ED Position – Brad Hillman, Gary Thompson and Fred Servello
 - Prioritize responsibilities of the ED – there are 12 specific responsibilities
 - Continue looking into top three selected in the alternative models – #1 Fulltime, #2 Part-time and #3 Shared
- NERA Planning Grant procedures were discussed and there was general support for revisions recommended by MAC Chair Fred Servello. Potential for leveraged support is an important requirement. Additional comments should be forwarded to Fred Servello. Changes will be adapted in the next round of planning grants.

12. Multistate Activities Committee Report and Discussion – Fred Servello

<http://www.nera.umd.edu/workshop/MACReportMarch2015.pdf>

Action: Motion made to accept MAC's recommendations for the following, was seconded and passed:

- Approve proposal, NE_TEMP2241: Sustainable Farm Energy Production and Use, 04/2015-9/2020
- Approve proposal as an ERA (Education/Extension and Research Activity) - NE_TEMP2201: University-Community Intermediaries: Supporting Informed Decision-Making Around Polarized Issues, 10/2015-9/2020. Team will be given chance to revise proposal if they want to be considered as a standard multistate project. Proposal, as it stands, needs to strengthen its research component.
- Approve proposal, NE_TEMP2261: Harnessing Chemical Ecology to Address Agricultural Pest and Pollinator Priorities, 10/2015-9/2020
- Approve the Request to Write a proposal entitled, Addressing the Challenges to Continued Use of Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems in a Changing Climate, 10/2015-9/2020 [Renewal of NE1045]
- Approve FY2016 off-the-top funding requested for Northeast Multistate Projects:
 - NE9: Conservation and Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources = \$254,908
 - NE59: Multistate Research Coordination, Northeastern Region = \$ 40,788

NRSPs

- Directors are concerned about NRSPs not sunseting and want more discussion on lifespan of NRSPs.
- On NRSP7- Minor drugs proposal, in case they show progress to the previous concern ("NRSP7 must demonstrate that they have secured new (not in-kind) funds that are equal to or more than 2x the off-the-top funding requested prior to submitting a renewal proposal"), it's a 'no'. Suggestion was made that proposal should have 5-year budget reduction of off-the-top.
- Directors want to see a tight presentation from all the NRSPs, because they are very different. Show impacts, what we've invested and how much they have leveraged. And if not, why not? Have recommendations attached on how we want to deal with these NRSPs.
- Dan Rossi suggested having their representatives call in and give short presentation at future NERA meetings.
- There is need to have a clear mission of what off-the-top funding should be.
- Dan Rossi suggested revisiting the NRSP Guidelines.
- Tim Phipps will represent NERA at the NRSP Review Committee Meeting on May 28, and asked the Directors to send their concerns/comments/questions about the NRSPs.

13. ESS Multistate Research and Excellence in Leadership Awards – Tim Phipps

- NE-1201: Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals (MDA) was selected as the Northeast nomination for the National ESS Multistate Research Award. It is a relatively new project, but already very engaged in the research arena and has impressive accomplishments.
- Directors voted on the nominations for the Excellence in Leadership Award during the executive session.

14. Plan of Work (POW) Panel of Experts Discussion- Cameron Faustman

Cameron Faustman was appointed as our NERA representative to the POW Panel of Experts. Upon review of the agenda topics for the Panel's meeting on June 16-18 in Washington, DC (see attached), Cameron felt that a thoughtful discussion is warranted, so he could present the directors' concerns to NIFA.

- First four topics in the agenda are administrative in nature, and can be addressed in a different venue, perhaps USDA-Admin meeting in May. Prefer to spend time in June to discuss fundamental changes to the reporting process.
- There is general dissatisfaction in the reporting process. Heavy burden on formula vs. competitive, and Hatch vs. McStennis. Extension is not using REEport. Duplication in report required by NIFA.
- We also now have National Impacts database. Why can't NIFA harvest info from that database? Suggest they find ways to maximize use of this database.
- Rolling POW makes it complicated, but others prefer having ability to update planned programs

Action: Directors agreed to sign off on Letter to NIFA expressing concerns about the upcoming meeting in Washington, DC, and its agenda.

- NERA letter will be shared with NEED and they can decide whether to send a similar letter.
- Directors thanked Cameron Faustman for taking on this assignment and raising concerns on the POW process with USDA. He will give an update at the summer meeting.

15. Station Updates – All

From the station updates, directors raised topics of interest for future Best Practices discussion:

- **Core facility cost center and Start-Up package**
 - Struggle with joint appointments built in contracts, ex. 80% AES 20% Teaching Rutgers adopting model with new hires with 0% AES line and then buying off if they have reasonable experiment station project. Brad will buy in 40% AES for 5 years, then revert to 100% college etc. What it does by default, is have budget to afford new lines. Will start taking people out of their 40-60%, and have new money for new hires.
 - Challenge of pulling it off, do transition incrementally.
 - Ag is only college in PennState that has splits. There are unintended consequences and candidates get upset, but this is so ingrained in our system
 - Research split, instructional and non-experiment station. Need to define what AES share is and expectations.
 - Degree to which Letter of Offer describes subsequent evaluation is important. What terms? Expectations written in letter, proposals, grants and graduate degrees confirmed.
 - Don't want to commit AES fund, but want to see what faculty can produce, hopefully something that can be competitively funded. If and when that is AES associated, ex. pollination project, then can buy out ex. 20% of time.
 - Faculty does not have idea where salaries come from, but are aware of assigned splits. McIntire Stennis – made it competitive, department chairs complain who will cover 30% salary. History and culture make it complicated to try new things.
 - Every institution has different models, and a basic model. That's how we've been doing business, do same thing or do something different. Are we going to be creative and come up with solutions or just do same as usual?
 - Include graduate students costs and fringes, perhaps just PhDs. Grad students about to unionize at UCONN.
 - Also include Post Docs, big change in fringe rates, usually cheaper to hire Post Docs than graduate students.
 - Do institutions have one Lab manager for each lab? Some have one person managing building and another manages lab.
 - How are lab spaces assigned? Usually included in faculty's appointment. How about Post Docs? Do faculty share lab? Who signs for packages (security issues)?
 - Lab with open template becoming popular – faculty ready to revolt, used to lab that's closed. At URI, it took a year for faculty to allow building manager to sign for everything. In the end this layout worked better. Because it's mixed across departments, it opened unique collaborations. Faculty and student offices are located across the hall, outside labs that are accessible with secured swipe cards.
 - At PennState there are no grad student offices, only cubicle structures to maximize interactions
 - At URI, policy is “get a grant, buy a bench”. Space committees evaluate these needs. Not have problem so far, faculty who wins big grants usually shares with others. Put early careers in there so they can collaborate with other successful faculty.
 - Larger labs' compliance and reporting also an issue. Need to hire staff to handle these.
- **Leadership**
 - Finding right people and nurturing them for executive positions, is a common problem in the Land-grants.
 - Include negotiations.

- Pipeline is a big issue. Also diversity, male-female ratio. LEAD21 is very representative 50-50 women. Are there barriers somewhere? Not the case in Extension and Academic Programs? Question we need to ask nationally, as Experiment Station Directors.
- **F&A Rates**
 - How are they computed as they relate to projects, some partly funded by private companies and others by federal agencies.
 - Federal agencies' rate vary from low (USDA=12%) to very high NOAA (46%).
 - Institutions will go broke if rate are not increased, ex. UDEL can't get beyond 41%
- **Ag Engineering challenges** also an important issue to Land-grant and our stakeholders, as discussed at previous NERA meetings.
- **Capital Infrastructure**
 - How do we take care of our infrastructure? UDEL paying price for deferred maintenance.
 - Do you get support from campus BPR Office in getting help for fixing facilities? What strategies do you use? If BPR not supporting, how do you fund upkeep.
 - Rutgers priority now are those biomedically oriented.
 - Sightlines, company doing analysis and estimates will reveal those. All Northeast Land-grants have signed on to this project.
- **Intellectual Property and Copyright issues**
 - Brad Hillman proposed a smaller group discussion of this topic. Rutgers has good royalty returns on plant intellectual property, but he wants to revisit the process at Rutgers.

Action: Dan Rossi will prioritize and categorize which ones are good for system-wide discussion, and which ones just for NERA. Topics of general interest will be submitted for consideration to the 2015 Summer Joint Session Planning Committee

16. 2015 Joint Summer Session Program – Jon Wraith, Cameron Faustman and Dan Rossi

- Jon Wraith suggested using summer program to talk about problems we can solve.
- There were also requests to discuss if we should continue the Joint Meetings. Is program of value?
- Suggestion to use – consent agenda – get written report from NIFA, Cornerstone and Climate Hubs for updates.
- Need more time for discussion – use Best Practices topics. Select those of general interest.
- What topics do we want to talk about at our next summer meeting? **Use Post-its on a poster board and people can add to the list throughout the Joint Session.** Then Executive Committee goes through the list.
- Leadership and Supporting New Farming and Food Enterprises in an Urban Area are good topics.
- There will be no reporting after breakouts, but will have a “gallery walk” – posters with summary notes will be posted around the room that people can read and talk about. Directors agreed to this gallery-walk, and also requested that **a summary or one-pager be made available to share with all participants.**
- Take Home Message is vital from these meetings. Directors want to take something back, for more discussion and perhaps lessons learned for adaption, to their stations.

17. 2015 ESS/SAES/ARD Workshop Program – Dan Rossi

- Program will include visit to a research center

- EDs recommend topics for the workshops. Should we suggest the Leadership topic? Social Sciences Subcommittee did an excellent analysis for non-agric people. This may be a good topic for one of the workshops.
- Impacts writing workshop was suggested, show examples or models of effective impacts.
- Also raised was the system reaction to the NRC Review. Invite NRC Committee Chair to give overview of findings, have a NIFA response, and one of our research directors give comments.

18. Nominations Committee Report – Fred Servello

Action: Motion made appointing the following as multistate project Advisors and NRAC Representative was seconded and approved.

- NE_TEMP2241: Sustainable Farm Energy Production and Use, 04/2015-9/2020
 - Advisor – Gary Thompson (PA)
- NE_TEMP2201: University-Community Intermediaries: Supporting Informed Decision-Making Around Polarized Issues, 10/2015-9/2020
 - Advisor – Margaret Smith (NYC)
- NE_TEMP2261: Harnessing Chemical Ecology to Address Agricultural Pest and Pollinator Priorities, 10/2015-9/2020
 - Advisor – Pat Vittum (MA)
- NRSP_temp4: Facilitating Registration of Pest Management Technology for Specialty Crops and Specialty Uses
 - Advisor – Brad Hillman (NJ)
 - [Note -- Brad requested that another Director take over as Advisor for NE1336: Improving Quality and Reducing Losses in Specialty Fruit Crops through Storage Technologies]
- Northeast Regional Aquaculture Center Board of Directors representing the Agric. Experiment Stations – Fred Servello (ME)

19. Resolutions Committee Report – Brad Hillman

None were brought forward.

20. Future Meetings – Dan Rossi

- Northeast Joint Summer Session –Sheraton Portsmouth Harborside Hotel and Conference Center, Portsmouth, NH, July 6-8, 2015
- Joint COPs Meeting, Providence, RI, July 21-22, 2015
- ESS Annual Meeting and Workshop, Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge, Charlotte, NC, September 28-30, 2015
- APLU Meeting, JW Marriott Indianapolis, Indianapolis, IN, November 15-17, 2015

21. Other Business

- Note that some discussions in this meeting are of confidential nature, specifically those during the executive session.
- The awardee, selected by the Directors at this meeting, for the region's National Leadership Award was notified in person and an announcement will be released to the Directors after ESCOP is notified.

22. Summary Comments and Adjournment – Tim Phipps, Chair

Chair Tim Phipps thanked everyone for participating and for the thoughtful honest discussion during the executive session. He wished everyone safe travels and adjourned the meeting at 1:05PM.

Report and Recommendations

NORTHEAST MULTISTATE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE MEETING

**The Admiral Fell Inn - Board Room [5th Floor]
Historic Fell's Point, 888 South Broadway, Baltimore MD 21231**

**March 9, 2015
2:30pm to 4:00pm**

Chair, Fred Servello (ME)

Present: Chair Fred Servello (ME), Tim Phipps (WV), Gary Thompson (PA), Cameron Faustman (CT), Dan Rossi (NERA/ED) and Rubie Mize (Recorder)

1. Request to approve a proposal for a new multistate Coordinating Committee
NE_TEMP2241: Sustainable Farm Energy Production and Use, 04/2015-9/2020

Action: MAC is pleased that the group addressed committee's concerns and submitted a much improved proposal. The justification has been strengthened, demonstrated importance of work, technical feasibility and expanded participation in the region bringing sustainable energy experts together. MAC recommends approval of the proposal.

2. Request to approve the proposal for a new multistate project NE_TEMP2201: University-Community Intermediaries: Supporting Informed Decision-Making Around Polarized Issues, 10/2015-9/2020

Action: MAC recommends approval as an ERA (Education/Extension and Research Activity) with expectations to develop more defined research activities if goal is to become a standard multistate activity. Proposal is well developed with strong membership but still lacking details in research activities. MAC expects that as group starts working together that research and methodology will be better defined.

3. Request to approve the proposal for a new multistate project NE_TEMP2261: Harnessing Chemical Ecology to Address Agricultural Pest and Pollinator Priorities, 10/2015-9/2020

Action: MAC recommends approval and encourages additional participation in the region.

4. Request to approve the Request to Write a proposal entitled, Addressing the Challenges to Continued Use of Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems in a Changing Climate, 10/2015-9/2020 [Renewal of NE1045]

Action: MAC recommends approval of the Request. MAC advises the team to include in their full proposal how proposed activities build on accomplishments of NE1045, and include details of stakeholder input to demonstrate importance of project in the region. MAC also encourages the technical committee to reach out to experts in the region, particularly those in urban areas.

5. Request for off-the-top funding for Northeast Multistate Projects:

- NE9: Conservation and Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources
FY2016 Budget Request = \$254,908
- NE59: Multistate Research Coordination, Northeastern Region
FY 2016 Budget Request = \$ 40,788
The funding requested is to support the Northeastern Regional Center for Rural Development.

Action: MAC recommends approval for both projects in the amounts requested for the FY2016 regional off-the-top.

6. NRSPs

Note that NRSP Review Committee representative, MAC Chair Fred Servello, is gathering input on the proposed NRSPs to bring to the meeting on May 28 in Denver. However, due to university commitments, he is unable to attend this fly-in. Tim Phipps will attend and represent NERA.

- NRSP_TEMP004: Facilitating Registration of Pest Management Technology for Specialty Crops and Specialty Uses, 10/2015-2020

This project has a very strong stakeholder group, and continues to evolve through the years. The NE IR-4 Center from Cornell has relocated to Rutgers. Dan Rossi serves as the Regional Advisor, but has been approached to be the IR-4 Northeast Director. A new regional NRSP-4 Advisor needs to be assigned to replace Dan Rossi.

Northeast directors have repeatedly voiced their concern over NRSPs that are not sunseting or having 'entitlement' expectation. Is this one of those that we should start to wean? This is a very valuable project but should we continue to fund it at the same level or reduce it further to a minimum cap? Yearly off-the-top funding requested is \$481,182. NRSP-4 has been very successful in obtaining funds from other sources including industry, and keeping its special grant, \$11.9M.

- NRSP_TEMP006: The US Potato Genebank: Acquisition, Classification, Preservation, Evaluation and Distribution of Potato (*Solanum*) Germplasm, 10/2015-2020

MAC members would like to see the progress NRSP-6 had taken to address concerns from the previous 5-year proposal:

- A budget plan that shows increased monetary support from other sources, not just in-kind, specifically from Univ. of Wisconsin and industry.
 - Provide more specific quantifiable documentation of its impact on the industry
 - Understand ARS policy of ‘No fees for service’, but explore other ways that industry, that’s significantly benefitting from this project, can help support and make NRSP-6 financially sustainable
- NRSP_TEMP007: A National Agricultural Program for Minor Use Animal Drugs, 10/2015-2020

NRSP-7 lost special grant funding in 2013 and turned to the system for an annual support at a minimum of \$325K to keep it operational. It was allowed a 1-year extension as the committee works on obtaining additional funding. NRSP-RC comments from last year’s submission – “NRSP-7 must demonstrate that they have secured new (not in-kind) funds that are equal to or more than 2x the off-the-top funding requested prior to submitting a renewal proposal”. Has the committee met this requirement?

- NRSP_TEMP009: National Animal Nutrition Program, 10/2015-2020
- NRSP-9 up for termination in 2015, but no proposal and peer reviews submitted yet.

7. 2015 National Multistate Research Award Nominations

- NE-1201: Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals (MDA)
- NE1227: Ovarian Influences on Reproductive Success in Ruminants

Action: MAC recommends NE1201 to be the Northeast region nomination. This group is relatively new, but already very active and very engaged in their research arena. They have a tremendous list of accomplishments, and will be a strong contender in the national level.

8. Advisor assignments:

New Projects:

- NE_TEMP2241: Sustainable Farm Energy Production and Use, 04/2015-9/2020
 - Advisor – Gary Thompson (PA)
- NE_TEMP2201: University-Community Intermediaries: Supporting Informed Decision-Making Around Polarized Issues, 10/2015-9/2020
 - Advisor – Margaret Smith (NYC)
- NE_TEMP2261: Harnessing Chemical Ecology to Address Agricultural Pest and Pollinator Priorities, 10/2015-9/2020
 - Advisor – Pat Vittum (MA)

Also need Advisors for the following:

- NRSP_temp4: Facilitating Registration of Pest Management Technology for Specialty Crops and Specialty Uses
- NEERA1004 - Northeast Region Technical Committee on Integrated Pest Management
- NE1332- Biological Control of Arthropod Pests and Weeds

9. 2015 NERA Planning Grant

Action: MAC will review in July the revised proposals from the two that were given conditional approval.

NE1504 – Assessing and promoting “food agency,” a construct for helping individuals navigate the food environment (Funding Request = \$7,250)

NE1506 - Terrestrial biomonitors to assess changing climate & honey bee health (Funding Request = \$10,000)

Current MAC members:

- Fred Servello, ME (2012-2015) - Chair
- Tim Phipps, WV (2013-2016)
- Gary Thompson, PA (2012-2015)
- Cameron Faustman, CTS (2014-2017)
- Pat Vittum, MA (2014-2017)
- Ken La Valley, NH/NEED (2014-2017)

Northeastern Regional Association of
State Agricultural Experiment Station
Directors Meeting

March 9 – 11

The Admiral Fell Inn

Baltimore, MD

NIFA Talking Points

M. A. Qureshi – NIFA Liaison

Deputy Director, NIFA/IYFC

mqureshi@nifa.usda.gov

1. Budget

- a. **FY16 Appropriations:** The President sent his **2016 budget** to Congress on Feb. 2, 2015. House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee hearing is on March 24.
- The 2016 budget proposals demonstrate **strong support for science** and for NIFA programs in particular. While some programs are reduced or eliminated, there continues to be tremendous support for the REE mission area and NIFA programs, as evidenced by the **2015 Congressional** appropriations and the **President's 2016** budget proposals.
 - The President's budget for NIFA seeks an **increase of 16.5 percent** above 2015 discretionary levels.
 - **Primary Budget Initiatives** that support major societal challenges include: **Significant increases – approx. 38 percent** – for **AFRI**, which will focus on challenges in agriculture and health, ensuring food security and solutions for water management, tactics for adapting to and mitigating the impacts of climate variability and change, strategies for improving nutrition and health, promotion of foundational science, and strengthening education and literacy.

AFRI initiatives for FY 2016 include:

- **Pollinator Health** Initiative
- **Antimicrobial Resistance** Initiative
- **Feedstocks for Biobased** Products Initiative
- **Challenge Areas:** Food Security, Water for Agriculture, Climate Variability and Change, Nutrition and Health, Bioenergy, Food Safety
- **Significant increase (approx. 42 percent) in Foundational Science**, and will include **Critical Agricultural Research and Extension** program and **Exploratory Research Grants** program
- **Education and Literacy** Initiative
- **Inter-Agency Collaborations**

- **Competitive Capacity Awards Program for 1862 and 1890 Institutions**
 - This is a new program that will **complement existing capacity programs** and **competitive programs** in addressing **national and regional problems** in food, agriculture, natural resources, nutrition, human sciences
 - This **Competitive Program requires 100 percent non-federal match**
 - A total of **\$20 million** will support this competitive program allocated through:
 1. Hatch Act: \$12.5 million;
 2. Smith-Lever 3(b)&(c): \$4 million;
 3. Evans-Allen Act: \$2.5 million; and
 4. 1890 Extension: \$1 million
 5. \$1.5 million for pollinator health

- **Innovation Institutes:** This new investment creating **public-private partnerships** focuses on the **bio economy**. These institutes are the **Biomanufacturing Institute** and the **Nanocellulosics Institute**.
 - \$80 million in funding, divided equally, will support a **NIFA-run competitive selection process** that leverages public-private partnerships.
 - The Innovation Institutes will **bring together** academia, government, and non-government research institutions and industry partners, and will require a match of support from non-federal sources.

- **FARM-Vets:** A new program to **engage Veterans** in agriculture.

- **Outreach activities in food safety — \$5 million —** to integrate food safety standards and guidance in agricultural production systems.

- **Increase support to enhance Minority-Serving Institutions.**
 - Increase of **\$13 million** in Evans-Allen, 1890 Capacity Building Grants, 1890 Extension, and 1890 Facilities programs to accommodate **Central State University**.
 - Increase of **\$0.6 million** in the 1994 Research, Tribal Colleges Education Equity, and Extension Services at 1994 Institutions programs to accommodate the **College of the Muscogee Nation and the Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College**.
 - A request of **\$10 million** for establishment of endowment fund for **Hispanic-Serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities**

- Funding for **Grants for Youth Serving Organizations** to support pilot-demonstration projects in rural communities.

- **Crop Protection/Pest Management, the IR-4 program, and the SARE Program** are all continued at FY15 levels.

- **Outreach** activities through the **Cooperative Extension System** continue at **2015 levels**.

- The budget also continues to support the **President’s STEM Education Initiative to consolidate programs**.

- **Management Initiatives** include:
 - Increase in support for **modernization of NIFA’s grant applications systems** as well as **management processes**.
 - Proposal to **eliminate old account structure** and create a **single unified account** to house all NIFA programs. The **merger will not impact the function or funding level** of any program, but it will help simplify the management of funds within the financial systems.

- **Mandatory Programs** included as authorized in the **2014 Farm Bill**.

2. Farm Bill

- a. **One Year Later:** The 2014 Farm Bill recently had its first anniversary on **Feb. 7**. The bill provided authority to NIFA to run nearly all its programs and restores **mandatory** funding – approx. \$900 million over five years.
- The **Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research** has been launched to **complement and supplement but not duplicate** existing programs, and the Board, on which NIFA's Director serves as an ex-officio member, is in the process of **developing a strategic direction** to invest **leveraged resources** in support of agricultural research and extension.
 - NIFA welcomed **three new land-grant 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 SCRI, OREI, BFRDP, BRDI, and the Biodiesel Fuel Education Program. As a consequence, **\$120 million of funding was reinstated** for these critical research and extension projects.
 - In 2014 NIFA deployed the SCRI grant opportunity, which provides **\$80 million** in mandatory spending on issues relevant to specialty crops, **with \$25 million dedicated to a new Citrus Disease Research and Extension** program intended to help develop innovative approaches to fighting the devastating citrus disease, **Huanglongbing** or Citrus Greening. On Feb. 9, we awarded **\$23 million** for **seven projects** that will help develop long-term solutions.
 - The 2014 **OREI** program provided **\$20 million** to fund **19 organic** agriculture research and extension projects.
 - NIFA made **39 awards**, totaling **\$18.9 million**, through the **BFRDP** competitive grants program to assist new farmers.
 - We also launched a **new \$35 million competitive grant** program, the **Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) Program**, which is intended to enhance the purchase and consumption of fresh fruits

and vegetables by Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program participants.

- b. **Matching Funds:** 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. Matching for these awards means that a grantee must provide funds, in-kind contributions, or a combination of both, from sources other than funds provided through such grant in an amount that is at least equal to the amount awarded by NIFA, unless the grantee is exempt from the matching requirement or the requirement is waived. The new requirement impacts grants made after Oct. 1, 2014. **Guidance** can be found on the **NIFA website**.
- c. **Centers of Excellence:** Based on stakeholder feedback and USDA approval, NIFA began issuing implementation guidance for the **Centers of Excellence** in our first RFAs last month.
 - NIFA held its first informational webinars and information is available on the NIFA website.
- d. **Commodity Boards:** Specific language is being developed, based on stakeholder input, to create competitive funding opportunities in partnership with Commodity Promotion Boards that will be a part of the 2016 AFRI program.

3. 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
- 80 percent reduction in travel from 2010
- More than 16,000 attendees for 2014 peer panels and webinars
- Transitioning from the CRIS website to REEPort allowed terminating the CRIS site

- Digitizing paper records and space inventory
- Released Capacity Funds RFA before start of FY
- Use of Knowledge Discovery Tools

4. **New NIFA Website:** Our new public website is planned to **go live next week.**

- We've made **major improvements** to the look, feel, content, navigation, and searchability.
- New features on the web include:
 - New **grants search tool** accessible from the homepage.
 - New **"Tools" section** that explains the various **NIFA web applications** and databases,
 - An **"Impacts" page** that highlights the outcomes our grantees have achieved
 - A number of revised sections, so users **can do exactly what they want**—**'Search for a Grant'** or **'Apply for a Grant'**—within two clicks.
 - The website is now **compatible** with a **variety of devices.**

5. **Grants Modernization**

- NIFA is moving at a good pace to modernize its grants system. This effort will:
 - Improve management and data reporting,
 - Strengthen financial oversight,
 - Provide transparency and simplify processes,
 - Provide self-service capabilities for applicants/grantees, and,
 - Promote a paperless environment.
- As part of this modernization effort, we will be using "Grantor," a USDA granting portal that is being developed in collaboration with other USDA agencies. We looked at a number of electronic grant systems, but we believe Grantor will provide NIFA stronger financial oversight, better transparency, simplified processes for grantees, "self-service" capabilities

for applicants, and improved management and reporting of data and results.

- Grantor will be fully integrated with Grants.gov and will support the NIFA research and related forms.
- In May NIFA will have completed an assessment document that will provide the framework for the implementation of Grantor.

**NIFA – Center for International Programs
Selected Research-Related Activities**

Enhancing NIFA's Funding Opportunities through International Engagement

- Recognizing that the challenges and opportunities related to agriculture today are increasingly global in nature, USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) has been making a concerted effort to allow for more international engagement in the domestically-focused competitive grants programs it administers. The following language has recently been added to several AFRI programs:
 - *AFRI is intended to promote advances in U.S. agriculture and forestry. Agriculture, however, is increasingly worldwide in scope and reach. To attain AFRI's goals for U.S. agriculture global competence of our nation's workforce, applicants to Foundational or Challenge Area RFAs are encouraged to include international partnerships or engagement in proposals as appropriate. Applicants are asked to keep in mind that while international activities supported by AFRI may contribute to Food Security as described in the U.S. Government's Feed the Future Food Security initiative (www.feedthefuture.gov) **any international activity proposed under AFRI such as partnerships, exchanges, training, trips, etc., must first and foremost support AFRI's domestic program goals.** Applicants must clearly describe and demonstrate how international activities proposed in applications submitted to AFRI will contribute to and support advances in American agriculture.*
 - *If international activities (e.g., partnerships, exchanges, travel, etc.) are proposed, applicants must describe indicators that will be used to assess those activities. Appropriate indicators include but are not limited to those posted at the U.S. Government's Feed the Future global food security initiative Web site (www.feedthefuture.gov/progress). Additional guidance and suggested examples for possible international partnerships linked to this AFRI RFA are provided in the AFRI Water for Agriculture Challenge Area Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) (http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/afri/afri_faq_webinars.html).*
- Although only U.S. institutions and organizations are eligible for funding under NIFA's grant programs, such entities are allowed to sub-contract with foreign partners if such a relationship advances the objectives of the program. Areas that have been opened more widely to allow international partnerships include food security, climate change and water.

(continued)

- In 2014, NIFA joined the [Partnerships for Enhanced Engagement in Research](#) (PEER) program with other U.S. government funding organizations (National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and U.S. Geological Survey) as a PEER partner. PEER is a competitive grants program that invites scientists in developing countries to apply to USAID for funds to support research and capacity-building activities that will be conducted in partnership with U.S. government-funded scientists. The country scientists seek out partners that are currently active NIFA grantees. NIFA is focusing on climate change and water management during the first year.
- Feed the Future: Common Bean Productivity Research Program (CBPRP) – This program, part of the government-wide Feed the Future initiative, supports research to improve the production of the common bean, a main staple produced throughout food insecure areas of the world, including East and Southern Africa. The five USAID-funded projects are working to address challenges to common bean production faced by smallholder producers.
 - Iowa State University -- Routine and reproducible transformation system for the common bean
 - Michigan State University -Developing and delivering common bean germplasm with resistance to the major soil borne pathogens in East Africa
 - University of Nebraska - Development of transgenic beans for broad-spectrum resistance against fungal diseases
 - University of Nebraska - Genetic approaches to reducing fungal and Oomycete soil borne problems of the common bean breeds in Eastern and Southern Africa
 - Cornell University - Improving bean yields by reversing soil degradation and reducing soil borne pathogens on small-holder farms in Western Kenya
- In FY 2014, NIFA partnered with the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) of the United Kingdom (UK) for a new priority area to solicit Collaborative Standard research applications in two areas: Animal Health and Disease; and, Veterinary Immune Reagents. The goal of this pilot partnership is to leverage fiscal, physical and intellectual resources to facilitate coordinated research that addresses high impact diseases and animal health issues relevant to stakeholders in both the U.S and the UK.
- NIFA-CIP is exploring closer collaboration with USAID on university-based “[Innovation Labs](#)” (formerly called “Collaborative Research Support programs”). We are currently identifying NIFA-funded awards that have the potential to gain from and complement the research activities underway at the Innovation Labs. For more, information on the Labs and a list of all participating universities, please visit: <http://feedthefuture.gov/article/feed-future-innovation-labs>

NERA Meeting
March 9-11, 2015
Admiral Fell Inn, Baltimore, MD

Experiment Station Committee on Organization and Policy Report
October 2014 – February 2015

1 ESCOP Officers

- Chair - Robert Shulstad
- Chair-Elect – Shirley Hyman-Parker
- Past Chair – Steve Slack
- Executive Vice Chair – Eric Young
- ESS Rep to BAA Policy Board – Steve Slack
- Budget and Legislative Committee Chair – Gary Thompson
- Communications & Marketing Committee Incoming Chair – Richard Rhodes
- Science & Technology Committee Chair – John Russin
- NRSP Review Committee Chair – Bret Hess

NERA Representatives to:

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

Meetings

- ESS Annual Meeting and Workshop, Jekyll Island Club Hotel, GA, September 30 – October 2, 2014
- ESCOP Executive Committee Meeting in conjunction with APLU Meeting, Hilton Bonnet Creek Resort, Orlando, FL, November 3, 2014
- ESCOP Meeting in conjunction with the AHS/CARET Meeting, Omni Shoreham Hotel, Washington, DC, March 3, 2015
- ESCOP Meeting in conjunction with Joint COPs meeting, Providence, RI, July 22 (TBC)

- ESS Annual Meeting and Workshop, Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge, Charlotte, NC, September 28 – October 1, 2015
- ESCOP Executive Committee Meeting in conjunction with APLU Annual Meeting, Indianapolis, IN, November 15-17, 2015

Budget and Legislative Committee

- With the release of the Presidents 2016 budget, the Committee will work through the BAA Budget and Advocacy Committee in advocating for the FY2016 NIFA budget.
- The Water Security Initiative is the next big audacious ask. It was recognized that it may take several years to implement. The report entitled “National Initiative on the Improvement of U.S. Water Security” has been distributed. A two page summary of the report has been prepared. They worked with Cornerstone to modify it so in time for the AHS-CARET meeting. The Initiative did not make it into the President’s 2016 budget.
- The Committee will start working on 2017 budget priorities. It is investigating a strategy to develop a model of “advocacy infrastructure” that focuses on tactical approaches to a targeted “ask” for the Water Security Initiative in FY17.
- A draft Return on Investment White Paper has been prepared to demonstrate the return on investment in capacity funds. The Committee is looking to identify examples of regional and local impact to include in the paper along with numerical ROI statistics. Their goal was to have a one page executive summary along with the final report by March, 2015.
- The Committee scheduled a face-to-face meeting in Washington on March 3rd.

Communications and Marketing Committee

- The CMC works closely with kglobal and Cornerstone on a targeted educational effort to increase awareness and support for basic and applied research and transformational education provided by Land Grant Universities through Agricultural Experiment Stations and Cooperative Extension.
- The AHS had decided to join as equal partners and the \$400,000 budget will now be equally shared by ESS, CES and AHS.
- The PBD voted to approve the expenditure of \$55,000 to support the message testing expansion recommendation. kglobal has conducted a series of focus groups and will conduct a national survey to test messaging around the themes of Health and Nutrition and Water Security.
- With the addition of AHS as an equal partner the CMC has revised its previous Operational Guidelines. The CMC is in the process of implement the new Guidelines. Scott Reed has agreed to serve as this year’s Chair. Nancy Cox will be an AHS representative and has agreed to serve as the Past Chair. Rick Rhodes has agreed to serve as the Incoming Chair and Daniel Scholl as the ESCOP representative.
- The next project for the CMC will be to develop a plan of work for the coming year.

Science and Technology Committee

- The Science and Technology Committee will be meeting monthly by conference call.
- The Committee is currently working on an ESCOP response to the NAS review of AFRI.

National Research Support Review Committee

- The NRSP Review Committee will next meet in June.
- The Committee will be considering new five year proposals for NRSP-4, NRSP-6, NRSP-7, and possibly NRSP-9.

Other Activities

- Impact Reporting
 - A permanent joint ECOP/ESCOP steering committee has been organized to replace the current ad hoc committee for the Impact Database at TAMU. The committee will work on issues such as how to write impact statements and dealing with variation in the quality of impact statements. Oregon State University offers online training (information at learn@oregonstate.edu).
 - Directors are encouraged to continue to submit impact statements for their institutions.
- BAA Futuring Task Force
 - The Task Force has reviewed the proposed futuring process, timeline, budget and task force composition. An initial and critical first step in the process is the identification of a professional facilitator/consultant to further develop a conceptual framework for the process and to guide the process. To date, the Task Force has been in contact with three firms.
 - The Task Force has funding of \$50,000 from the BAA and is exploring with APLU other funding opportunities.
 - The Task Force is working with APLU to identify ways to involve institutional leaders (such as presidents and provosts) in the project.
 - The proposed timeline has completion of the futuring activity during the coming year with a goal of having a draft of the futuring report ready for the next APLU meeting. This timeline may need to be adjusted.
- Capital Infrastructure
 - The BAA PBD approved a proposal from the Capital Infrastructure Task Force for a survey of institutions to generate an estimate of total capital infrastructure needs on our campuses. The approval included a plan to pay for the survey cost through an assessment of institutions included in the survey. Nearly all Land-grant institutions are participating in the study.
 - A contract with Sightlines was signed by APLU to conduct the survey and generate estimates of capital infrastructure needs that can be aggregated across the entire system
 - Sightlines will produce a written report and Power Point presentation that will document the amount of deferred maintenance at the universities that can be aggregated by region of the country. They will provide campus data, analysis and the report on-line in a format that can be regularly updated. In addition, Sightlines will provide recommendations for actions that can be taken at the campus, state and national levels to address and manage deferred maintenance. The study will begin in March and be completed by mid-May.
 - A steering committee was appointed to work with Sightlines to provide feedback and guidance, assist with institutional contacts and follow-up, review drafts of the preliminary and final reports, and generally serve as a sounding board.

NERA Meeting
March 9-11, 2015
Admiral Fell Inn, Baltimore, MD

Report of the Office of the Executive Director
October 1 – March 6, 2015

NERA and Regional Activities

- NERA Planning Grants Program
 - Supported the 2014 award recipients
 - Joint NEED-NERA Planning Grants program
 - Supported the review of proposals
 - Notified the award recipients
 - Supported the award recipients
 - Finalized and distributed the announcement for a 2015 NERA Planning Grants Program
 - Supported the MAC review of proposals
 - Notified award recipients
 - Supported award recipients
- NE USDA Climate Hub
 - Participated in bi-monthly conference calls with NE Climate Hub state representatives
 - Assisted in the preparation of a common Hub framework statement to be used in NIFA grant proposals
 - Participated in monthly calls with NE Climate Hub leadership
- Great Lakes Specialty Crop Climate Consortium
 - Coordinated with Jeff Jacobsen in the development of a program for a meeting to discuss opportunities for enhanced research and outreach collaborations in the Great Lakes region on climate change adaptation with specialty crops. Five institutions are considering the creation of a consortium – Cornell, Michigan State, Penn State, Ohio State and Wisconsin.
- 2015 Northeast Summer Session
 - Hosted regular conference calls to develop the program for the joint session
 - Coordinated with the host institution the logistics for the joint session
- NERA Chair Support
 - Assisted in the development of the March 2015 NERA meeting agenda and compiled agenda materials
 - Prepared NERA Chair's Interim Actions report
 - Prepared NERA ESCOP Report
 - Prepared NERA OED report
 - Prepared NERA 2016 budget
 - Assisted in the development of the March 2015 NERA Executive Committee meeting agenda

- Assisted NERA Task Force to examine alternative executive director organizational models
- Northeast Regional Aquaculture Center Mid-Atlantic
 - Served as a member of Board of Directors and participated in annual meeting
 - Prepared NERA NRAC report
 - Approved as necessary appointments to the Industry and Technical Advisory Committees
- IR-4 (NRSP-4)
 - Served as Regional Administrative Advisor
 - Assisted in the development new five year NRSP-4 proposal
 - Assisted in the NIFA NRSP-4 peer review
 - Assisted in the planning of the relocation of the NE IR-4 Center from Cornell to Rutgers
 - Assisted in identifying and coordinating with the University of Maryland for hiring the NE IR-4 Field Coordinator for FY16 (position is transferring from Cornell)
 - Served as co-PI on Northeast Region IR-4 2015 NIFA grant proposal
- NE-1049
 - Served as Administrative Advisor
- Relocation of NERA Office
 - The NERA office was relocated with the ARS Beltsville Administrative Building as part of a building-wide reorganization
 - OED used this opportunity to relocate to a smaller office to reduce costs
- Multistate Activities Committee (MAC) Support
 - Assisted advisors and technical committee members in submitting their proposals and participation forms and coordinated peer reviews for the following projects:
 1. NE_TEMP2241: Sustainable Farm Energy Production and Use, 04/2015-9/2020
 2. NE_TEMP2201: University-Community Intermediaries: Supporting Informed Decision-Making Around Polarized Issues, 10/2015-9/2020
 3. NE_TEMP2261: Harnessing Chemical Ecology to Address Agricultural Pest and Pollinator Priorities, 10/2015-9/2020
 - Assisted advisors and technical committee members in submitting the following Requests to Write:
 1. Addressing the Challenges to Continued Use of Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems in a Changing Climate, 10/2015-9/2020 [Renewal of NE1045]

National Activities

- ESS/CES Communications and Marketing Committee Co-Chair Support
 - Served as the ESS Executive Director point person
 - Assisted in scheduling, planning and developing agenda for Executive Committee and Full Committee conference calls
 - Assisted in the planning and agenda development of a Full committee meeting in March 2015

- Revised the Committee operational guidelines and assisted in their implementation
 - Prepared monthly reports for ESCOP CAC calls
 - Prepared agenda brief for March ESCOP meeting
- ESCOP Chair's Advisory Committee (CAC)
 - Participated in monthly CAC conference calls
- ESCOP Social Science Subcommittee
 - Participated in the annual SSSC meeting and co-led a discussion on the role of the SSSC with ESCOP
- ESS/SAES/ARD Annual Meeting and Workshops
 - Assisted in the development of the program agenda for the September 2015 meeting
- NRSP-1 Management Committee
 - Provided support to the NRSP-1 Management Committee
 - Participated in quarterly conference calls of the NRSP-1 Management Committee
- NIMSS
 - Assisted in providing access to the Amazon based version of NIMSS to Clemson
 - Continued to make corrections to NIMSS resulting from the transfer to Amazon
 - Coordinated with Clemson to initiate work on the redesign of NIMSS
 - Served as regional NIMSS Coordinator
 - Provided national level support for the operations of NIMSS
 - Supported NIFA Management Dashboard access to NIMSS data
- BAA Futuring Task Force
 - Supported chair (Mike Hoffmann) of the Task Force Committee
 - Assisted in the search for a professional facilitator for the futuring effort
 - Assisting in scheduling, planning and developing the agenda for Task Force monthly conference calls and a face-to-face meeting in November
 - Prepared monthly reports for ESCOP CAC calls
 - Prepared agenda brief for March 2015 ESCOP meeting
- Capital Infrastructure Task Force
 - Supported chair (Mike Hoffmann) of the Task Force
 - Assisted in negotiating a final contract between Sightlines and APLU
 - Assisted in the preparation of the institutional assessment plan for funding the Sightlines survey
 - Assisted in appointing and served on Sightlines survey steering committee
 - Prepared monthly reports for ESCOP CAC calls
 - Prepared agenda brief for March 2015 ESCOP meeting
- LEAD 21 Program
 - Served on Board of Directors (served as Program Chair until February and Board Chair since)
 - Participated in Class X Second and Third sessions
 - Participated in February Board of Directors meeting
 - Participated in a series of discussion to consider options for relocating LEAD21 to another host institution
 - Assisted in the drafting of a RFP for hosting LEAD 21

- NIFA Programs
 - Participated along with the other research EDs in a series of meetings on March 4, 2015 with NIFA leadership and co-presented a seminar to NPLs
 - Monitored and provided feedback on:
 - NIFA budget developments
 - NIFA competitive grants programs
 - NIFA operational web and teleconferences
 - NIFA Hatch MRF utilization

Travel

- October 6-9, 2014 – LEAD 21 Class X Second Session, Kansas City, MO
- October 19-21, 2014 – Northeast Management Officers Meeting, Geneva, NY
- November 2-4, 2014 – APLU, ESCOP Executive Committee, BAA Futuring Task Force, and BAA CLP Meetings, Orlando, FL
- February 11-12, 2015 – Northeast Regional Aquaculture Board of Directors Meeting, College Park, MD
- February 23-27, 2015 – LEAD 21 Class X Third Session and Board of Directors Meeting, Washington, DC
- March 2-5, 2015 – AHS-CARET, Communications and Marketing Committee, ESCOP, Executive Director/NIFA NPL, ESCOP Social Science Subcommittee and IR-4 Project Management Committee Meetings, Washington, DC

NERA Meeting
March 9-11, 2015
Admiral Fell Inn, Baltimore, MD

Northeast Regional Aquaculture Center Report

NERA Representatives to NRAC Board of Directors:

- Richard Rhodes
- Dan Rossi
(In addition, Adel Shirmohammadi represents the Dean of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Maryland)

Meetings

- The annual NRAC Board of Directors meeting was held on February 12, 2015 in College Park, MD
- The next BOD meeting is not yet scheduled

Grants Program

- Sixteen pre-proposals were submitted in response to the RFA. Of these, six were invited to submit full proposal. Two withdrew resulting in the submittal of four proposals.
- Three proposals were approved by the BOD for funding:
 - Proposal 15-11 – “Safe Feedstocks for Bivalve Aquaculture”
 - Proposal 15-02 – “Development And Evaluation Of Novel, Non-Toxic Solutions For Biofouling Control And Predator Exclusion In Shellfish Aquaculture”
 - Proposal 15-06 – “Testing and Application of Novel Probiotic Bacteria for Use in Marine Aquaculture”
- In addition, a fourth proposal in response to a request from the Board was approved for funding. This proposal, “Impact Assessment of NRAC Funding on Aquaculture in the Northeast,” is aimed at evaluating the value of NRAC and what significant changes from the industry have resulted from our funded projects
- Three problem statements were approved for inclusion in NRAC's upcoming RFA for pre-proposals. The goals around which these three statement were developed were:
 1. Increasing profitability and/or marketability through product diversification
 2. Improving aquaculture production through cost-effective management, improved efficiency, and reduction of input costs
 3. Improving shellfish and finfish health maintenance, disease control, and biosecurity

NRAC Policy Issues

- Two policy issues were discussed and will require additional attention:

- Intellectual property
- Salary charges on grants

Advisory Committee Vacancies

- Industry Advisory Committee: Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, and Vermont
- Technical Advisory Committee: Maine, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont

Board of Directors Vacancies

- NERA Representative – Dan Rossi has completed a four-year term \
- Dan will approach the NERA directors at their March meeting for a replacement

Board Chair Election

- Rick Rhodes was re-elected for another three-year term

2015 Experiment Station Section Award for Excellence in Multistate Research

Nominating Region: Northeast

Nominator: Dr. Gary A. Thompson **E-mail:** gat10@psu.edu

Project or Committee Number and Title: NE-1201; Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals (MDA)

Technical Committee Chair: Vivek Kapur **E-mail:** vkapur@psu.edu

Administrative Advisor: Gary A. Thompson **E-mail:** gat10@psu.edu

Summary of Significant Accomplishment(s)

Issue, Problem or Situation Addressed: The Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals (MDA) multi-state initiative brings together leading scientists with a shared vision of improving food security by reducing losses from two of the most important mycobacterial diseases of animals - paratuberculosis (Johne's disease; JD) and the tuberculosis complex of diseases (bovine tuberculosis, bTB) that together result in significant losses to animal agriculture. The mission of MDA is to facilitate development of shared research as well as leveraging of intellectual and physical resources to address the most pressing needs and reduce health impacts and economic losses from bTB and JD. The specific *project objectives* are to:

1. Increase understanding of the epidemiology and transmission of mycobacterial diseases in animals, including through predictive modeling;
2. Develop and implement new generations of diagnostic tests for JD and bTB;
3. Improve understanding of the biology and pathogenesis of JD and bTB as well as the host response to infection;
4. Establish programs to develop and evaluate new generations of vaccines for JD and bTB; and,
5. Develop and deliver education and outreach material related to JD and bTB in electronic and print form for use by extension specialists, veterinarians, government agencies, producers and other stakeholders, and utilize trade media, producer organizations and other outlets to aid in dissemination of information generated through the initiative.

Outcomes: The MDA officially began operation on October 1, 2012 and has since hosted three well-attended annual meetings with workshops, over 100 teleconferences, and facilitated numerous research interactions that together highlight the impressive research, education, and extension accomplishments and impacts of the diverse community of MDA stakeholders. The MDA has added considerable value through facilitating the development of multi-functional and interdisciplinary teams of research scientists, state workers, and extension officials with a diversity of expertise from various institutions (academia, government including regulatory, non-governmental organizations, international, and industry) that have developed shared resources and have successfully competed for significant funding from various sources (including the USDA, NIH, NSF, and industry). Some of the major accomplishments and impacts of the MDA are highlighted below:

The MDA executive committee (EC), led by Dr. Kapur, addresses a variety of important issues on weekly teleconferences ranging from developing creative ways for attracting funding to obtaining and distributing valuable samples for research purposes. The committee has a great synergism and enthusiasm that motivates all members to complete action items assigned. EC extension member, Dr. Olson, keeps the group informed through distribution of timely news events pertinent to MDA goals and coordinates outreach efforts to keep the MDA in the minds of animal producers, stakeholders at scientific conferences and legislators on Capitol Hill. Through

meetings in Washington DC with USDA leadership (APHIS, NIFA, ARS,), partner organizations (AVMA, IDFA, NMPF, NASDA, AFBF), and Congressional staff awareness of MDA is greatly increased. As a result, the MDA is now a sought-after organization for signing on to many agricultural initiatives brought before Congress. Finally, EC members, Drs. Quinn, Grohn, and Kapur are working to expand the MDA into Mexico and have been charged by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to develop a special international workshop on developing bTB control and eradication strategies to be held in December 2015 in Morocco.

Another notable recent accomplishment was the coordinated establishment of a well-characterized bovine blood and tissue sample repository for use by the community. The sheer size of this 10,000-sample repository created several logistical challenges, but through persistence and creative thinking, support from USDA-APHIS, the repository is now established and available to MDA members and any stakeholders interested in validation of newly developed diagnostic tests. This resource has already been used by pharmaceutical and diagnostic companies, academic and government scientists, as well as a Canadian regulatory agency to help validate their diagnostic tests in development. The impact of this effort should bring forth newer generations of accurate diagnostic tests for these diseases.

The heart and soul of the MDA are its research investigators who design and execute experiments that combat bTB and JD through vaccine development, diagnostic tests or a fundamental understanding of the biology surrounding these diseases. MDA investigators have made considerable progress in the past few years with only a few examples selected as highlights. Dr. Grohn has led a highly interactive team of researchers (NY, PA, UMN, GA, MI, OR, TN, USDA and elsewhere) in support of clinical vaccine trials and the assessment of vaccination effectiveness. His research group has also designed a 3-step framework for Bayesian modeling and simulation approach, and the model was tested in a simulated case study for a killed whole-cell vaccine against JD in dairy herds. Key model parameters have been estimated from the longitudinal prevalence data of the whole herd (adult animals) and the control and vaccinated groups in a vaccinated herd. Dr. Grohn's team has leveraged these activities with significant recent extramural funding from the prestigious and highly competitive NIH and NSF emerging infectious diseases program. Dr. Bannantine (USDA-NADC) leads the diagnosis research group as they continue to conduct research on the newly identified *Mycobacterium avium* subspecies *paratuberculosis* (MAP) specific monoclonal antibody, 17A12 that can for the first time differentiate MAP from all other *Mycobacterium* species and working together with Drs. Kapur (PA), Sreevatsan (MN), Behr (Canada), and an industrial partner (Advanced Diagnostics Inc.) have received significant grant support from the USDA-NIFA and NIH to develop novel diagnostic tests. Dr. Coussens (MI) has recently demonstrated that subclinical MAP infected cows have significantly more immunoregulatory T cells in their periphery than uninfected controls that could lead to novel diagnostics and disease prevention approaches, and working with Drs. Neiberger (WA) and Kirkpatrick (WI) and have begun to unravel the genetic mechanisms that control susceptibility to infection. Finally, the vaccine development program, led by Drs. Kapur and Hines (Georgia) and involving more than a dozen other MDA investigators has recently completed a coordinated multi-stage vaccine evaluation and development trial that is unprecedented in its scope and impact, and a series of publications describing the approach and results have recently appeared in the *Frontiers in Microbiology Journal*.

Other recent accomplishments include: Establishment of computational modeling and simulation approach to estimate the effectiveness of vaccination against JD and bTB in food animal populations, and establishment of a powerful tool for elucidating basic principles of JD and bTB transmission dynamics, interpreted at the appropriate epidemiological scale (NY, MI, MN, TN, USDA); Development of standard evaluation criteria in the validation of vaccine

candidates and the evaluation of 22 vaccine candidates against MAP in controlled double-blinded studies involving more than a dozen US and international institutions; Implementation of a faster test-and-removal plan with a 2-month testing interval in epidemic disease control of the bTB in cattle herds (MN, MI); Application of mathematical models of infection from a longitudinal study performed in three states (NY, PA, VT) for approximately 10 years with considerable USDA and State funding support; Comparative genomic analysis of fully sequenced isolates of *M. paratuberculosis* and *M. bovis* (PA, MN, WI); Created a convenient risk assessment tool that provides “just-in-time” education, simplified management and testing plans, make it easy to collect data, and establish accountability, and developed a user friendly website in collaboration with colleagues in Italy; Conducted a national survey of veterinarians regarding knowledge and information needs related to JD and bTB by dairy and beef producers and using the information for priority setting (PA, WI, VT); Outreach activities including meetings with editors of six major dairy trade publications and interviews with two Agricultural Radio networks on the accomplishments and impacts of the MDA; Poster presentations on MDA at International meetings as well as at the Joint Annual Meeting (JAM) of the American Dairy Science Association and the American Society of Animal Science, the annual meeting of the United States Animal Health Association, and our registered web-site: mycobacterialdiseases.org.

Impacts: The MDA multi-state initiative has enabled development of a strong translational pipeline for new diagnostic tests, vaccine candidates, and strategies to manage, prevent and control JD and bTB and the development of *a strong communications and extension plan* including workshops, [MDA web-site](#), newsletters, regular conference calls, and an annual conference of MDA investigators, all complemented by interactions with external stakeholders (and external advisory board). The *overall impacts* of our efforts have led to: (i) A better understanding of on-farm pathogen transmission dynamics and identification of critical control points in the transmission chain; (ii) Development of alternative sampling and testing strategies for detection of infected animals and herds adopted by the national voluntary control program for JD and used by DHIA; (iii) Standardization of laboratory protocols for culture and PCR diagnostics, reducing timelines for rapid detection of infected animals; (iv) Characterization of genetic differences between isolates for molecular epidemiologic analyses and tracking of strains in infected animals and the environment; (v) Development of standards for animal challenge models for evaluation of vaccine efficacy; (vi) Identification of key mycobacterial genes, proteins and lipids for development of next generation diagnostic tests and vaccines; (vii) Development of a novel pipeline for vaccine evaluation and identification of candidate vaccines in collaboration with USDA-APHIS and major animal health companies. (viii). Development and widespread use of an on-line JD veterinary certification program and courses for animal producers, and milk processors; (ix) Development of community resources including MAP isolates, serum samples and other clinical material for validation of diagnostic tests, genomic microarrays, recombinant proteins, and mutant strain banks; and (x) Establishment of a not-for-profit entity for increasing awareness and fund-raising for MDA.

Links to Extension: The extension component, led by Dr. Olson, continues to collaborate with the VBJDCP to address education, share information, and provide tools for producers, other scientists, industry partners, and the USDA through the “MDA Interest Group” at the JAM and meeting with the National Association of Extension Veterinarians at USAHA.

Partnerships, Associations or Collaborations: The External Advisory Board is an important component of the MDA and provides direct links to important industry groups including NMPF, NCBA, AABP, and APHIS. The American Association of Mycobacterial Diseases not-for profit organization developed to support work related to MDA has provided meeting resources and added visibility for the work of the MDA. Finally, international collaborations with European, Australian, New Zealand and Japanese partners are very active.

List of Participating Institutions**Appendix 1**

Participant	Station or Institution
Abdellrazeq, Gaber	Alexandria University, Egypt
Aly, Sharif S.	Dept. of Population Health and Reproduction, SVM, UC Davis
Babiker, Khalid	Veterinary Research Institute, Sudan
Bakker, Douwe	Central Veterinary Institute, The Netherlands
Bannantine, John	USDA-ARS/Iowa
Barletta, Raul	University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Bermudez, Luiz	Oregon Wheat Commission
Bolin, Steven	Michigan State University
Buskirk, Daniel	Michigan State University
Carter, Michael	USDA-APHIS
Chamberlin, William	Billings Gastrointestinal Association
Chang, Yung-Fu	Cornell University-New York
Collins, Michael	University of Wisconsin
Coussens, Paul	Michigan State University
Eckstein, Torsten	Colorado State University
Eda, Shigetoshi	University of Tennessee
Estes, Mark	University of Georgia
Fossler, Chuck	USDA-APHIS-VS-CEAH
Gardner, Ian	University of Prince Edward Island, Canada
Godden, Sandra	University of Minnesota
Groenendaal, Huybert	Epix Analytics
Gröhn, Yrjö	Cornell University-New York
Grooms, Daniel	Michigan State University
Hines II, Murray	University of Georgia
Hondalus, Mary	University of Georgia
Hovingh, Ernest	Pennsylvania Cooperative Extension
Kapur, Vivek	Pennsylvania State University
Karls, Russell	University of Georgia
Khare, Sangeeta	US Food and Drug Administration
Lein, Donald	Cornell University-New York
Machado, Gustavo	Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil
McDonald, Jeannette	CEO of VetICE
McNair, James	Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute, Belfast
Miller, Ryan	USDA-APHIS
Nol, Pauline	USDA-APHIS-VS-Western Region
Olson, Kenneth	KEO Consulting, Illinois
Orloski, Kathleen	USDA-APHIS
Pithua, Patrick	University of Missouri
Quinn, Frederick	University of Georgia
Sakamoto, Kaori	University of Georgia
Schukken, Ynte	Cornell University-New York
Smith, Julie M.	University of Vermont
Sohal, Jagdip Singh	Canadian Food Inspection Agency & University of Montreal
Sorge, Ulrike	University of Minnesota
Sreevatsan, Srinand	University of Minnesota
Stabel, Judy	USDA-National Animal Disease Center
Sweeney, Raymond	University of Pennsylvania
Sylte, Matthew	University of Georgia
Talaat, Adel	University of Wisconsin
Wadhwa, Ashutosh	Global Alliance for Rabies Control
Wells, Scott	University of Minnesota
Zagmutt, Francisco J.	Epix Analytics



April 10, 2015

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Animal and Plant
Health Inspection
Service

Veterinary Services

Surveillance,
Preparedness and
Response Services

4700 River Road

Riverdale, MD 20737

Vivek Kapur, B.V.Sc., Ph.D
Professor of Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences
Associate Director, Huck Institutes for the Life Sciences
Penn State, University Park, PA

Subject: Letter of support for the Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals (MDA) multi-state initiative for the 2015 Experiment Station Section Award for Excellence in Multistate Research.

Dear Dr Kapur,

The Cattle Health program in APHIS Veterinary Services is pleased to support the nomination of Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals (MDA) multi-state initiative for the 2015 Experiment Station Section Award for Excellence in Multistate Research. Given the importance of the mycobacterial diseases to animal agriculture and the considerable research experience and interests of members of our agency, we are very supportive of a collaborative program and believe this to be an opportunity to continue to make a difference in the battle against Johne's disease and bovine tuberculosis.

USDA APHIS is charged with safeguarding the health of our nation's livestock and Johne's disease and bovine tuberculosis are two diseases that are costly to producers and diseases that we work with extensively. The Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals (MDA) multi-state initiative and its predecessor organization, the Johne's Disease Integrated Program (JDIP), have been great collaborators in our effort. They have provided expertise needed to enhance and validate diagnostic tests and develop standard criteria for the evaluation of vaccine candidates that are invaluable to our efforts. The enhancements to the diagnostic tests are now used in the Voluntary Bovine Johne's Disease Control Program and the vaccine evaluation program has identified promising vaccine candidates.

Again, I am pleased to support the nomination of the Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals (MDA) multi-state initiative for the 2015 Experiment Station Section Award for Excellence in Multistate Research.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Carter DVM MPH
Assistant Director of the Cattle Health Center
Surveillance, Preparedness and Response Service
APHIS-Veterinary Services



Safeguarding American Agriculture

APHIS is an agency of USDA's Marketing and Regulatory Programs
An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

Federal Relay Service
(Voice/TTY/ASCII/Spanish)
1-800-877-8339



UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

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BRUCE L. KING
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Utah Veterinarian

DAVID D. SCHMITT
PRESIDENT-ELECT
Iowa Department of Agriculture and
Land Stewardship

BOYD H. PARR
FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT
Clemson University Livestock and
Poultry Health

BARBARA C. DETERMAN
SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT
National Pork Producers Council

KRISTIN M. HAAS
THIRD VICE-PRESIDENT
Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food
and Markets

ANNETTE M. JONES
TREASURER
California Department of Food and
Agriculture

STEPHEN K. CRAWFORD
IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT
New Hampshire Department of
Agriculture, Markets and Food

April 9, 2015

To whom it may concern:

The United States Animal Health Association, established in 1897, is a forum for communication and coordination among State and Federal governments, universities, industry, and other concerned groups for consideration of issues of animal health and disease control, animal welfare, food safety and public health.

Bovine tuberculosis (TB) and paratuberculosis (Johne's disease) are diseases of concern to our members. We have been pleased to work with the Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals (MDA) multi-state initiative and its predecessor organization, the Johne's Disease Integrated Program (JDIP), in efforts to address both diseases. We appreciate the knowledge and expertise that they and their members have brought to our meetings. Their input has been valuable in developing recommendations from our committees. They willingly share the findings from their work in presentations to our committees that are published in our proceedings, providing use of the information in many more venues. They also contribute to the efforts of our National Johne's Work Group that help to apply the research results in the field.

USAHA is pleased to offer strong support for the nomination of the Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals (MDA) multi-state initiative for the 2015 Experiment Station Section Award for Excellence in Multistate Research.

Sincerely,

Benjamin D. Richey
Executive Director, USAHA

119th Annual Meeting
Oct. 22-28, 2015
Providence, RI



**National Cattlemen's
Beef Association**

April 10, 2015

SUBJECT: Letter of support for national recognition of the Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals (MDA) multi-state initiative (NE1201).

Dear Selection Committee:

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) is the oldest and largest national trade association representing cattlemen and women in the United States. It is with great pleasure that we recently learned that the Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals (MDA) multi-state initiative (NE1201) has been selected to receive the 2015 Experiment Station Section Award for Excellence in Multistate Research for the Northeast region and is now under consideration for the national award.

NCBA is concerned with improving mycobacterial disease control and management in cattle herds in the United States. We stress herd security measures to identify and control mycobacterial disease in cattle through the Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) program. We appreciate that the comprehensive research and outreach efforts of the Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals (MDA) and their predecessor organization, Johne's Disease Integrated Program (JDIP), have resulted in improved diagnostic testing that is now used in the field. The work of MDA/JDIP has benefited animal health and assisted producers in providing the consumer with a safe and secure food supply.

The Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals (MDA) multi-state initiative is most certainly a worthy nominee for the 2015 Experiment Station Section Award for Excellence in Multistate Research at the national level. Our experience with MDA/JDIP definitely supports their selection for the national award. We would appreciate your positive consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kathy Simmons".

Kathy Simmons, DVM
Chief Veterinarian, National Cattlemen's Beef Association



National Dairy Herd Information Association

April 10, 2015

Vivek Kapur, B.V.Sc., Ph.D
Professor of Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences
Associate Director, Huck Institutes for the Life Sciences
Penn State University
University Park, PA

Paul Coussens, Ph.D
Professor of Immunology
Director, Center for Animal
Functional Genomics
Michigan State University,
East Lansing, MI

Subject: Letter of support for the Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals (MDA) multi-state initiative which received the 2015 Experiment Station Section Award for Excellence in Multistate Research

We would like to lend the support of the National Dairy Herd Information Association to the nomination of the Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals (MDA) multi-state initiative for the 2015 Experiment Station Section Award for Excellence in Multistate Research. This effort will be a most worthy recipient of the award. The benefit to dairy farms and the management of animal health will be greatly enhanced by multistate and organizational synergies.

Paratuberculosis (Johne's disease) and bovine tuberculosis (TB) are two of the most prevalent and economically significant infections of cattle. They result in hundreds of millions of dollars in annual losses to U.S. dairy producers. The DHIA system makes milk ELISA testing for Johne's disease available to dairy producers across the nation. The educational materials on ELISA testing developed by JDIP/MDA are a critical component of our quality certification program. They are used in training our workforce and assure producers that their DHI labS and field technicians are both trained and qualified to handle and test the samples from their animals. The work that JDIP/MDA has done to enhance and validate diagnostic tests greatly aids producer efforts to control both diseases now and reduce their impact in the future.

The two primary diseases to be addressed by the project have been known for decades, but they still present significant challenges to producers. The expertise brought together through this project provides a great opportunity to improve the technologies used to combat the diseases and provide producers with enhanced tools to address both diseases. The development of improved management, genetic and genomic tools would be exciting prospects for the dairy industry

The research and tools proposed to be developed will benefit the US dairy industry by helping farmers make economically optimal management decisions and safe guarding animal health, both of which will result in sustainable farm profits, dairy protein supplies available to consumers, and increased international opportunities for feeding an expanding world population.

National DHIA and its 18,500 dairy producers urges strong consideration and support for this project.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Jay Mattison
CEO and Administrator
National DHIA



Kent Buttars
President
National DHIA



Agriculture and
Agri-Food Canada

Agriculture et
Agroalimentaire Canada

April 9, 2015

Vivek Kapur, B.V.Sc., Ph.D
Professor of Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences
Associate Director, Huck Institutes for the Life Sciences
Penn State, University Park, PA

Kenneth E Olson, Ph.D., PAS
Principal
KEO Consulting
Schaumburg, IL

Re: Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals (MDA) multi-state initiative

Dear Dr Olsen, Dr Kapur,

Paratuberculosis (Johne's disease) and bovine tuberculosis (TB) are diseases of concern around the world. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada has had the opportunity to work with the Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals (MDA) multi-state initiative and its predecessor organization, the Johne's Disease Integrated Program (JDIP). We have obtained and used samples from the JDIP sample repository in our Johne's work. The repository is a valuable resource that is helping to address the disease not only in the United States but in Canada as well by helping us validate and improve our diagnostic tests.

I am pleased to be able to offer my endorsement of the nomination of the Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals (MDA) multi-state initiative for the 2015 Experiment Station Section Award for Excellence in Multistate Research.

We wish you the good luck in this application and look forward to working with the Network.

Sincerely,

Dr. Nathalie Bissonnette
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada | Agriculture et Agroalimentaire Canada
Research Scientist (AAFC) - Adjunct Professor (Université de Sherbrooke)
Science & Technology Branch | Direction général des sciences et de la technologie
Dairy & Swine Research and Development Center
2000 College road, Sherbrooke (Qc) J1M 0C8
nathalie.bissonnette@agr.gc.ca

Experiment Station Section Awards for Excellence in Leadership (June 2014)

Purpose

To recognize those who have served the Regional Associations, the Experiment Station Committee on Organization and Policy (ESCOP), the Experiment Station Section (ESS) and/or the national Land-grant System with exemplary distinction. Through this person's leadership, he/she shall have personified the highest level of excellence by enhancing the cause and performance of the Regional Associations and ESS in achieving their missions and the Land-grant ideal.

Award and Presentation

Up to five awards, one from each ESS region, will be presented each year. The awards shall be signified by the creation of a suitably inscribed piece approved by the ESCOP Executive Committee and presented to the recipient or his/her proxy at the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) annual meeting and will be further memorialized by a resolution to be read during the ESS fall meeting. The home institution shall be made aware of the recognition by formal letter from the ESCOP Chair to the Chief Executive Officer of the institution and its governing body (Board of Trustees, Board of Regents, etc.) with others copied as appropriate. The expense of the actual award recognition will be borne by the Regional Association, while the expenses associated with travel of the winners to the APLU meeting will be borne by the Associations and/or home institutions.

Eligibility

Eligible for this award are former or current State Agricultural Experiment/Research Station (SAES or ARD) leaders who have provided service as assistant director, associate director, director, or as chief operating officers with equivalent, but variant titles (e.g. vice chancellor, associate vice chancellor, associate vice president, dean for research) and/or as a regional executive director. This award is distinctive in its expectations and not necessarily coincident with retirement, election to specific office or any other specific professional benchmark.

Nominations

Nominations shall include a statement of accomplishments prepared by the nominator(s) unbeknownst to the candidate and supported by letters from up to five (5) former or current members of the ESS. Other letters of support from the home and other institutions may be submitted with the discretion of the nominator(s). Nominations shall address the contributions of the nominee to the Land-grant ideal through service to include offices held, committee assignments, other service and, in particular special and extraordinary service activities. Such service should include for example: active participation in affairs of the Regional Association and/or ESCOP; regional, national and/or international special assignments with distinctive performance that has advanced the mission of the ESS and the land-grant ideal; and a record of

significant accomplishments in the agricultural sciences. Specific examples of contributions may include the enhancement of cooperation across institutions, creation of model administrative systems useable by other institutions, and development of new strategic directions for the Regional Associations or the ESS. Although testimony as to the nominee's contributions to his/her home state and institution are welcomed, they are not pivotal to assessing the contributions to ESS and related activities.

Submission and Review

Nominations for the recognition should be submitted to the Regional Associations by February 1 of each year. The Regional Associations will review the nominations and will select one regional winner. The Associations will submit the names of the winners to the ESCOP Chair by July 1 and he/she in turn will forward them to APLU. The winners will be announced at the fall ESS meeting and the awards will be presented at the APLU annual meeting. Regional Associations may also choose to recognize the Awardee in addition to the above venues.

Agenda Topics

The following topics will guide the panel discussion over the two and half days we are together in Washington, D.C. (not necessarily in the order they appear here). Panelists, both LGU partners and NIFA staff, are expected to come to panel prepared with their own and their respective colleagues' (other regional LGU partners, stakeholder groups, etc.) thoughts organized in a way that allows them to contribute to the panel discussion in a fruitful and efficient manner.

TOPIC: Timing of Submissions

The current due date for the POW and Annual Report each year from the states is April 1. Are there different dates that would make more sense for when the Plan and Annual Report should be due to NIFA? Consider the following:

- Having an approved POW in place is a requirement for being eligible for receiving the applicable capacity funds; the capacity RFAs come out each year in the August/September timeframe. In this regard, the POW is functionally part of the “application” to the RFA; essentially, it serves as the project narrative.
- For most other NIFA programs/projects, annual progress reports are due within 90 days after the period of performance being reported on. The AREERA Annual Reports are currently due approximately 180 days after the close of the previously federal fiscal year’s period of performance (related: the individual Hatch and Evans Allen Project Progress Reports in REEport are due by March 1 annually, 120 days after the close of the previous federal fiscal year).
- Workload Burden: Having the same due date requires the states to work on both the POW and AR report submissions at the same time each year; could workload burden be reduced if they could work on and submit the two reports separately/consecutively? Also, the same submission date means that NIFA NPLs have to work on their reviews of each submission simultaneously, effectively cutting their allotted 60 day review period for each report in half and reducing the opportunity for meaningful feedback.

TOPIC: Connecting Projects to Programs

- This currently applies to Hatch/Hatch Multistate and Evans Allen research funds only; individual projects of each PD (or co-PD) at an institution being supported by these funds must have a documented project in REEport.
- The Programs in the Plan of Work should encompass all of the projects an institution has submitted to REEport.
- How can we do a better job of showing how each project supports a particular program?
 - What challenges do states face when trying to associate projects in REEport to Planned Programs in the POW (currently a requirement at project initiation)?
 - What challenges do NPLs face when reviewing a POW and trying to understand how all of an institution’s research projects support a program?
 - How can we assure that Annual Reports clearly show activity and results of both research and extension functions, as appropriate to the various planned programs?
- How can we standardize reporting between Research and Extension? The first bullet above of this topic says “projects to programs” applies to Research only, but what if it could apply to Extension (Smith-Lever 3b&c and 1890 Extension) as well?

- Let's consider a scenario where the work being done, both in Research and Extension, is documented via "projects" in REEport while the "Programs" in the POW are significantly pared down into lists of those projects (states would no longer need to include such lengthy narratives of activities being done in those programs):
 - Could this reduce reporting burden in the POW and Annual Report?
 - What would be the benefits of this approach?
 - What would be the negatives of this approach?

TOPIC: Software Functionality

- Is there anything about how the software functions that you particularly like? Why?
- Is there anything about how the software functions that you particularly do not like? Why and what about it would you like to see changed?
- For LGU partners: Is there anything about the software that impedes your institutions from reporting high quality data?
- For NPLs: Is there anything about the software that impedes your ability to provide a comprehensive, high quality review of the POW and Annual Report?

TOPIC: Reporting Outcomes

Ensuring that high quality outcomes are present in Annual Reports is in the best interest of the states and NIFA. Successful impacts can be reported in the form of an aggregated national number or individual qualitative story by NIFA to defend and support the capacity funds and their importance to agricultural research and extension and subsequently link those outcomes to higher level impacts. What can we do to collect outcomes and impacts in a better way, both at the nationally aggregated level and individual state level? Consider the current ways each of these is reported on:

- National Outcomes:
 - The national outcomes are quantitative only; the purpose is to be able to aggregate them so that NIFA can report a "national" impact.
 - NIFA has used Google Forms for three years now; does this positively or negatively affect a state's option to report on any of the indicators?
 - There are just over 200 disparate data points that make up the national outcomes and indicators; is this too many? Is it overwhelming to know which ones are or are not important?
- State-Defined Outcomes
 - Currently, the software is set up with a 1:1 ratio for quantitative measure to qualitative story (i.e. for each outcome measure a state enters into their Annual Report, they are able to report a success story related to that one measure); there is no ability for a state to relate multiple quantitative measures with one qualitative statement.
 - Should we change the software to collect these data differently? If yes, how?
 - Consider: For reporting purposes (to USDA, Congress, etc.) , NIFA's view is that the most useful qualitative data the agency receives in the Annual Reports are those that truly follow reporting on; 1) what the "issue" was, 2) "what was done" about it, and 3) what the "results" were. Further, linking such an alliterative to quantitative data adds power to the personal.

TOPIC: What does NIFA need?

Plans of Work and Annual Reports should serve the specific purposes of allowing states to meet the legislative requirements for receiving the applicable capacity funds and allowing NIFA to monitor and report out on the impacts of those funds. In thinking about those two purposes, we need to ask the question: what data does NIFA really need to carry out its “monitoring”?

- There are only two components in AREERA reporting that are legislatively required: Stakeholder Input and Merit Reviews; all other data currently collected in the POW and Annual Report are discretionary.
- Are there parts of a POW/AR that the states find burdensome to report on? Why? Let’s consider if any of those overlap with NPL reviewers’ perception:
 - Are there parts of a POW/AR that NPLs do not find very useful in determining if a state is producing useful outcomes and meaningful impacts?
 - Are there parts of a POW/AR that NPLs rely on in order to determine overall acceptability of a state’s programming and integration of research and extension?

**2015 Northeast Joint Summer Session
Planning Summary
March 6, 2015**

Budget – See page 2 for detailed budget.

Meals – Until the final number of participants is known, the estimates used for meals will be based on the Meals Minimum in the contract with the Sheraton (i.e., \$11,500.00 plus 20% service charge and 9% state meals taxes). This amount could increase depending upon final meal expenses (menu prices will be set 30 days before the event).

Dinner Tuesday night will be at the Sheraton.

Registration Fee – The hotel contract and other expenses (guest speaker expenses, gift bags, etc.) is estimated at \$21,735.00. If we succeed in getting 60 paid participants and the Registration Fee is set at \$385.00, we should cover all expenses with total revenue of \$23,100.00.

The registration fee for spouses will include 1 reception, 1 dinner, 2 breakfasts and 2 lunches. The standard per diem rate for New Hampshire is \$46/day (Portsmouth is \$61/day). Given that spouses may choose to be away from the hotel at lunchtime, a registration rate of \$80 seems reasonable.

Registration cancellations are fundable if received no later than **Friday, June 26, 2015**. A \$25 service fee will be assessed to all refund requests.

Room Contract – The Sheraton will hold 120 guest room nights (\$189.00/room night) for our conference, totaling revenues of \$22,680.00. This revenue figure is net and non-inclusive of taxes, service charges and commissions. The hotel will allow for a 20% reduction in this figure or Minimum Revenues of \$18,144.00. If our conference should fall below this minimum, the difference will be calculated and charged to the booking party (UNH/COLSA).

Additionally, should the Total Room Nights consumed be equal to 100 or more, the function room rental rate will be \$2,000.00. Should the Total Room Nights consumed be less than 100, then the function room rental rate will be \$4,000.00.

Tours – UNH Extension is looking into providing two tours on Monday, 8:00am to 3:30pm, one on land, the other at sea. Fees for these tours will be in addition to the Registration Fee.

If a UNH vessel is available, an ocean tour may be arranged (looking into that now). If not, then a tour with the Isles of Shoals Steamship Co. (similar to the 2012 national meeting but without dinner) may be possible. At this time their summer schedule is not yet available.

Expense Estimate:

Expenses	Amount	Notes
Meals - minimum - Food & Bevs	11,500.00	Per contract w/Sheraton
Service Charge - 20%	2,300.00	Per contract w/Sheraton
State Meals Tax - 9%	1,035.00	Per contract w/Sheraton
Reception bartender	100.00	Per contract w/Sheraton
Audio Visual	1,500.00	Estimate
Function room rental	4,000.00	
Function room rental discount	-2,000.00	With Minimum of 100+ room nights consumed
Total Contracted Expenses	18,435.00	Per contract w/Sheraton
Guest speaker expenses	2,000.00	Estimate
Gift bags	1,300.00	Estimate
TOTAL Expenses	21,735.00	Estimate to be covered by paid registrations

Revenue Estimates:

# of Paid Attendees	Registration Fee Amt	Total Revenue Estimates	
60	x 300	18,000	
55	x 300	16,500	
60	x 350	21,000	
55	x 350	19,250	
60	x 385	23,100	Covers Total Expense Estimate above
55	x 385	21,175	

Room Contract:

If the Discount Minimum of paid rooms is not reached, then NHAES pays the difference.

Sun Jul 5	Mon Jul 6	Tue Jul 7	Wed Jul 8	Total Rm Nites	X Rate	TOTAL	Minus 20% Discount Minimum
	60	60		120	\$189.00	22,680.00	18,144.00

Note: These room dates may be adjusted to cover extra night stays (Sunday or Wednesday) if available.