

National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board

REE Advisory Board Office
South Building Room 3901
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20250-0321

Mailing Address:
STOP 0321
1400 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20250-0321
Telephone: 202-720-3684
Fax: 202-720-6199

MINUTES Executive Committee Conference Call

Friday, April 13, 2012 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 (Noon) EST.

Executive Committee Members Present: Jean-Mari Peltier (Chair), Dr. Steven Hamburg (Vice Chair), Dr. Carrie Castille, Dr. Nancy Childs, Mr. Leo Holt, Dr. Steve Daley-Laursen, Dr. Mary Wagner.

Executive Committee Members Absent: Dr. Charles Boyer, Dr. Milo Shult

NAREEE Board Staff: Robert Burk (Executive Director) and Shirley Morgan-Jordan (Program Support Coordinator).

Others Present: Carol Keiser-Long



I. Roll Call of Executive Committee Members and Other Attendees

Rob Burk conducted a roll call of the Executive Committee as members signed on to the conference call.

II. Comments and Welcome from Chair

Jean-Mari Peltier welcomed everyone on the conference call and commended all of those involved with the recent Spring NAREEEAB Meeting conducted in College Station, Texas. The meeting gave the Board an opportunity to hear the perspectives of those involved in Extension from across the country.

Jean Mari stated that one of the highlights of the meeting was when Dr. Catherine Woteki spoke to the faculty of Texas A&M and when she met with the Board.

Briefing on the Senate Bill for a Foundation on Food and Agriculture Research by Andrew Vlasaty –Senate Agriculture Committee Staffer

Andrew Vlasaty spoke about a proposal to create a private foundation to fund agricultural research.

This legislation would establish the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research, which would solicit private donations to fund food and agricultural research activities in the following areas:

- plant health, production and products;
- animal health, production and products;
- food safety, nutrition and health;
- renewable energy, natural resources and environment;
- agricultural and food security;
- agriculture systems and technology; and
- agricultural economics and rural communities.

Senator Roberts is concerned with the agricultural research budget. Mr. Vlasaty stated that it is safe to assume that there will be cuts in the budget.

Agriculture research is a major concern and it plays a role in national security. In the year 2050, we will have to feed 9 billion people, and research is needed to prevent future food shortages.

Senator Roberts is trying to foster new and collaborative approaches to research. This will bring the research community together and leverage private sector funds for research.

Andrew Vlasaty stated that they are looking very closely at their language to model the bill. Senator Roberts is very interested in the proposal and believes the proposal deserves discussion to help with the situation we are in. The foundation could motivate more innovation and cooperation between the public and private sectors.

Dr. Nancy Childs asked a question concerning who would hold the intellectual property rights emerging from the public/private Foundation funded research, and if the Foundation dollars would supplement or replace budgetary dollars for REE research.

Andrew Vlasaty stated that there is 100 million of unclear funding. He stated that the foundation would probably be competitive and there will be some concerns about the funding. In order to be successful, you would need to attract the best science. He stated that research community follows the dollars.

Dr. Nancy Childs asked the question, “What would give assurance that this would be dedicated funding?”

Andrew Vlasaty stated that the foundation could:

- give broad authority to leverage dollars and partnership with other countries;
- be flexible and powerful; and
- supplementary to USDA research – help leverage new funding of research.

He stated that we need to think outside the box and get through the budgetary challenges that face the country.

Dr. Steve Daley-Laursen questioned how the NAREEEAB could make a difference.

Andrew stated that his office will be working with a coalition of stakeholders and that they have been successful in getting a broad based letter of support from the Agriculture community.

Andrew stated that Congress wants to do a mark-up of the Farm Bill in two weeks. They will reconvene on the 26th or 27th. Further work is need on the House side.

It is important that the committee talk about this further to assure that any issues of concern are addressed.

Senator Roberts is anxious to have a dialog about this foundation. Andrew stated that anyone that wanted to discuss the bill further should feel free to send an email or call his office.

III. Comments from the Under Secretary of Research, Education, and Economics

Dr. Woteki spoke about the most recent responses to the NAREEEAB report published on *Cooperative Research and Technology Transfer* and how to approach moving research forward.

She stated that she will ask ERS to address the recommendations made by the Board and she will send back the response early next week.

Dr. Woteki stated that she will provide the Board with the outline of REE Agency research. She also pointed to Dr. Keith Fuglie with ERS as an excellent resource. Dr. Fuglie is in charge of the research related to Cooperative Research Models. That work is divided into three themes:

- Theme One; Implications of private funding of public research. Example coop (University of California at Davis and Australia).

Study one. Examine how industry sponsorship affects delay and secrecy of academic publications. Utilizing data from Germany.

Study two.

- Theme Two; Economic implications of joint private-public research collaborations.

Study one. University-Private partnership effects on productivity of private farms
Study two. Public-private models and how it affects productivity and employment

- Theme Three; Public and Private roles in performing agricultural and NR research.

Study one. Private sector investment in public research on biofuels
Study two. Evolving roles of public and private life science research. Public research creates public good.

Jean-Mari stated that the research is very important and it would be additional work for the Board, but she noted that it is doable.

Steven Daley-Laursen stated that the research Dr. Woteki explained was very impressive.

Jean-Mari stated that she loved the examples given and hopefully they are identifying any “red flags.”

The Cooperative Research and Technology Transfer Report of the Board has been shared with the Hill and Secretary of Agriculture along with the Ex-officio members of the Board.

IV. Updates on Committee Activities and/or Reports Committee Memberships

Specialty Crop Committee

By unanimous consent the Committee approved the Specialty Crop Committee appointments. Jean-Mari indicated that stakeholders who were unable to attend the last meeting wanted a Specialty Crop Meeting in Washington, DC.

By unanimous consent the Executive Committee agreed to hold a meeting of the Specialty Crop Committee in Washington, DC.

Renewable Energy Committee

Carol Keiser-Long stated that the Renewable Energy Committee (REC) had a great meeting in College Station, Texas. There was a tremendous effort from people calling in from Washington, DC to assist the REC with its direction moving forward. There wasn't complete agreement on all of the suggested topics of focus, but a strong list of topics for discussion has been developed. The REC is compiling its notes from the meeting.

The Senate Agricultural Committee has tasked the Government Accountability Office to investigate the duplication of research efforts across Departments and Agencies. One area of focus will be on renewable energy.

Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) was a central topic of discussion at the meeting. Carol indicated that she believes that the USDA is taking a lead on LCA issue.

Citrus Committee

The Citrus Committee held a meeting at Lake Alfred, Florida on February 28, 2012. The committee also toured the University of Florida's citrus research facility at Lake Alfred, Florida. Huanglongbing (HLB), aka citrus greening disease, is a topic of extreme industry concern. The Committee will have another meeting in mid May, or early June in California. The overall goal is to produce a report by the end of June about HLB, and recommendations on where REE efforts should be directed moving forward. Dr. Bartuska has been involved with the Citrus Committee from the beginning and accompanied the Citrus Board on its visit/meeting in Lake Alfred, Florida.

Jean-Mari asked if the Committee was specifically looking at the budget allocation for Citrus research through the NIFA Specialty Crops Research Initiative. Rob Burk indicated that in keeping with the charge the Committee is looking at a combination of funding sources, including SCRI, and will address potential issues with the funding process.

Brainstorming Meeting – Dr. Mary Wagner

Dr. Mary Wagner discussed a number of topics covered during the brainstorming session, and notes from the meeting are available from the REE Advisory Board Office.

Dr. Wagner indicated that we should solidify some of the issues raised and develop a plan for the next steps.

Jean-Mari questioned whether we want this to be a stand alone piece or incorporated into the Relevancy and Adequacy Report? Dr. Wagner stated that it was amazing how collaboratively everyone worked together and at the end everyone was on one accord. We need to get together and dissect it a little further and not lose any work that's been done. Each area could be re-assembled with a smaller team to break the information down.

Relevancy and Adequacy

The Relevancy and Adequacy Sub-Committees held two discussion sessions during the NAREEE meeting in College Station, Texas.

Rob Burk stated the notes should be compiled by Paul Phelps by the 28th of the month. He will give the highlights documents to the office and Rob Burk will have the report for Dr. Castille next week.

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Dr. Milo Shult is currently working on a number of reports including the report from the Fall 2011 meeting of the Board, and a review of the research title. He will also be working with the Extension working group to develop a report from the meeting in College Station, Texas.

VI. Executive Director's Report

The NAREEEAB Office is checking for potential meeting sites for the Fall NAREEEAB Meeting in October. The meeting will be held in Washington, DC.

Dr. Steve Daley-Laursen stated that close communication needs to be kept concerning the Relevancy and Adequacy Report. He suggested that Jean-Mari Peltier, Dr. Carrie Castille, Rob Burk, and himself should hold a conference call on alternate weeks from the Executive Committee conference calls. We will also need to set up conference calls for the Relevancy and Adequacy Sub-Committees on a regular basis so that we can compile the notes and finalize a report.

Future Meetings

- **The next Executive Committee conference call will be Friday, May 4, 2012 at 11:00 a.m. EST.**
- **Potential Citrus Meeting, June 19, 2012, US Salinity Lab, Riverside, CA**
- **NAREEE Advisory Board Fall Meeting, October 23-25 – Washington, DC**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean-Mari Peltier
Chair

Rob Burk
Executive Director

APPROVAL BY ADVISORY BOARD:

Date

Initials
Chair

Initials
Executive Director