

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

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MINUTES Executive Committee Conference Call

Friday, August 3, 2012 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 (Noon) EST.

Executive Committee Members Present: Jean-Mari Peltier (Chair), Dr. Charles Boyer, Dr. Carrie Castille, Dr. Nancy Childs, Dr. Steve Daley-Laursen, Leo Holt, and Dr. Mary Wagner

Executive Committee Members Absent: Dr. Steven Hamburg (Vice Chair), and Dr. Milo Shult.

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

Others Present: Dr. Ann Bartuska (Deputy Under-Secretary for REE), Elvis Cordova, Carol Keiser-Long, and Ven Neralla.



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 the Chair

Rob Burk thanked Dr. Ann Bartuska for joining the conference call.

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

Dr. Ann Bartuska stated that it was a pleasure to join the Executive Committee conference call. She reported that Dr. Catherine Woteki was on a well deserved vacation. She stated that

Congress had been relatively quiet for the past five weeks, but she noted that there was still a lot going on.

She noted that REE had officially released the white papers. She thanked the NAREEEAB for their assistance in the review of those papers and said that the Board members provide important contributions to the work of the USDA.

In looking at the budget for FY2013 and FY2014, she stated that they are continuing to use the Action Plan as a guide for their allocation of funds and thanked the Board for their contribution and insight in its development.

Dr. Ann Bartuska stated that the drought is devastating to the country and over 50% of counties impacted have been declared as disaster areas. REE has been asked to look at any ways that the agencies can provide relief and to be creative in providing support to the impacted states. She noted that the website www.drought.gov can be accessed by the public for more assistance information. NASS has also done an excellent job in posting updates on the website concerning the drought. There is ongoing research related to the drought Long Term Agro-Ecosystem Research (LTAR) Network. Dr. Ann Bartuska also discussed upcoming meetings of the G20 in Mexico. Dr. Steve Daley-Laursen questioned how regional science centers could keep track of what's going on concerning the LTAR and LTE programs. Dr. Ann Bartuska stated that the Program Leads hold monthly meeting. She did not know if a website is being updated and stated she will get back with him. Dr. Daley-Laursen also noted that the draft Relevancy and Adequacy report indicated that active interaction on global and national issues is desired, so understanding how REE is doing this is good info for the Board.

Update for REE Congressional Affairs – Ven Neralla, Director of Congressional Affairs, USDA REE and NIFA

Mr. Neralla welcomed everyone on the call and stated that he wanted to take a few minutes to talk about the Farm Bill. He stated that the Senate passed its version of the Farm Bill in June. The House offered its version back in late June, and set the mark up on the Bill for July. In the last week the Bill language was released by the committee, and there has been discussion of decoupling disaster assistance from the extension. However at this point this is all speculation. Ven noted that the Farm Bill expires on September 30. Elvis Cordova noted that he is a member of an internal committee which works to coordinate the USDA responses/information on the Bill. The intent is to have one voice on the Farm Bill coming from the Department, and the Secretary will lead that effort, and relate that information. Jean-Mari Peltier questioned whether the Department was “o.k.” with the extension. She further questioned the administration's position on the expiration of the specialty crop research initiative, and the organic programs. Ven indicated that the extension would not be a straight forward extension as proposed. The House version had a straight discretionary fund extension for specialty crops, beginning farmers, and BRDI. Ven asked that if any of the members had questions, or heard of anything that they should relate that information to Rob Burk, or himself.

IV. Updates from Work Groups/Ad Hoc Subcommittees

Relevancy and Adequacy – Dr. Steven Daley-Laursen

Dr. Daley-Laursen stated that the Relevancy Report is in good shape and he is waiting for one comment and then the report will be ready to go to the Executive Committee and then to the full Board. The relevancy segment of the report is approximately 4 pages long and the adequacy portion is shorter. In total the report contains about 20 recommendations. He stated that the deadline for committee reports is August 6th.

NASS Report/Extension Report – Rob Burk

Rob Burk reported that the NASS report was submitted to the Executive Committee for review about one week ago. Dr. Milo Shult has been working with Terry Wolf and consulting with Dr. Cynthia Clark in the development of the report. A couple of comments have come in from the Committee. It was suggested that a new date for completion of the review. Rob noted that NASS is very interested in the recommendations of the Board.

Brainstorming Session – Dr. Mary Wagner

There is no update at the current time. The group had some discussion concerning the meeting and will sit down with Drs. Bartuska and Woteki when time permits on REE, Under Secretary's schedule.

V. Updates on Standing Committee Activities and/or Reports

Specialty Crop Committee (SCC)

Jean-Mari Peltier stated that the SCC had originally planned to have a listening session in California but the timing did not work out. She stated that the group wanted to move the SCC discussions forward. A letter was developed that was delivered to Rob Burk for circulation to the SCC. The committee all agreed that SCC research funded through the USDA should go forward. She noted that there has been speculation about the content in the House and Senate Farm Bill versions. Jean-Mari Peltier suggested that we get a call together for Dr. Woteki, Dr. Bartuska, Ven Neralla, and others. Rob Burk reported that some members of the SCC had noted concern over some of the content of the letter related to the appropriateness of advocacy for pending legislation, and he echoed that concern. Jean-Mari further discussed the intent of the letter. Among her points was the importance that funding be uninterrupted for competitive grants to specialty crops. Jean-Mari requested that the draft letter be distributed to REE leadership for their thoughts.

Renewable Energy Committee (REC) – Carol Keiser-Long

Carol Keiser-Long stated that the 2012 REC Annual Report has undergone edits by the committee. She noted that the REC Report is unique compared to last year. In the current report the REC worked to determine directly from the program leadership of the REE agencies, what

topics they viewed as of the greatest concern. The REC then built on those issues, and developed recommendations related to them. She noted that, much like SCRI, BRDI mandatory funding is a great value and they hate to see it go away. Jean-Mari Peltier questioned if bio-based products were included in the study.

Citrus Disease Research & Development Advisory Committee (CDRDAC) – Rob Burk

Rob Burk stated that the Citrus Report is in is currently under development by the committee. There was some miscommunication about the responsibility for the development of the report, but Rob believes that has been resolved.

VI. Executive Director’s Report – Rob Burk

Budget Update

Rob Burk stated that the NAREEE Advisory Board has spent, or is obligated to spend, approximately 340K this year and is on track to spend significantly less than FY2011. He stated that it is in our best interest to stay well below the budget, so that those funds saved might be used towards other important programs of the REE agencies.

Future Meetings

- **The next Executive Committee conference call will be Friday, September 7, 2012 at 11:00 a.m. EST.**
- **NAREEE Advisory Fall Meeting, October 23-25, 2012, The Phoenix Park Hotel, Washington, DC.**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Shirley Morgan-Jordan

Jean-Mari Peltier
Chair

Rob Burk
Executive Director

APPROVAL BY ADVISORY BOARD:

Date

Initials
Chair

Initials
Executive Director