

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

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MINUTES Executive Committee Conference Call

Friday, September 7, 2012, 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. EST.

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

Executive Committee Members Absent: Dr. Charles Boyer.

Ex-Officios: Dr. Catherine Woteki, REE, Under Secretary

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

Others Present: Dr. Ann Bartuski, REE, Deputy Secretary, 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 the Chair

In place of the Board Chair, Rob Burk welcomed everyone on the conference call and thanked Dr. Catherine Woteki and Dr. Ann Bartuski for participating on the call.

II. Comments from the Under Secretary of USDA REE

Dr. Catherine Woteki spoke about the current outlook and agenda for REE.

Dr. Woteki stated that the “Farm Bill” was facing some uncertainty. She stated that she hoped that Congress would move to extend the Farm Bill before it expired.

Dr. Woteki spoke about the potential for a continuing resolution, and noted some of the possible impacts of sequestration. If sequestration occurs, there will be fewer job opportunities related to science and technology. Spending has already been cut and we face what would be an immediate and widespread impact on the food, agriculture, and environmental research needed to grow economic performance and competitiveness.

Each of the four REE agencies budgets through the Office of Management and Budget would be impacted differently, due to specificity of those agencies activities.

Drought continues to be a high priority within USDA. The agency has created a website for farmers looking for answers and help related to the drought. She noted that the eXtension website has buttons that take all the inquiries for drought problems and concerns.

In looking at the agenda, Dr. Ramaswamy is currently out of town now but plans to discuss the evaluation plan of NIFA with the Board. He will address the procedures and outcomes of NIFA grants of NIFA along with the AFRI budget analysis.

A question was posed by one of the Board members regarding the impact on ARS laboratories.

IV. Updates from Work Groups/Ad Hoc Subcommittees

Relevancy and Adequacy – Dr. Carrie Castille and Dr. Steven Daley-Laursen

Jean-Mari Peltier noted that she had recently tasked Dr. Dawn Thilmany (NAREEE Advisory Board Member representing the Agricultural and Applied Economics Association) to review the NIFA AFRI program data for outcomes. She also moved to organize a working group to address the topic. Dr. Woteki indicated that she understood that the Board had agreed to table this until after Dr. Ramaswamy and NIFA finish evaluating the data and submit their report at the next meeting of the full Board. She suggested that the Board wait and then ask additional questions concerning the report after that time. A majority of the members on the call spoke in concurrence with Dr. Woteki’s comments. Dr. Daley-Laursen noted that he did not see that said analysis would be appropriate for inclusion in the current Relevancy and Adequacy report.

Relevancy

Dr. Carrie Castille stated that she had sent the draft report to the group asking for comments and all the comments have been consolidated. Dr. Carrie Castille stated that she will work with Dr. Steven Daley-Laursen to consolidate the reports.

Adequacy

Dr. Steve Daley-Laursen stated that the deadline for comments to the Adequacy report was the end of last week. He received approximately eight comments and will compile those comments into the report.

NASS

The NASS report has been completed, and is scheduled for distribution to the Under Secretary, and Secretary next week.

Extension

Dr. Milo Shult reported that the report on Cooperative Extension development effort was being lead by Rita Green. It had excellent input from the committee and will be ready by the Fall NAREEEAB meeting. This report is ready to be sent forward to the Executive Committee for review. Dr. Steve Hamburg questioned how much opportunity was still available for him to provide comments/input. Dr. Shult and Mr. Burk indicated that he would have ample opportunity through the Executive Committee, and Full Board review process.

Brainstorming

Dr. Mary Wagner has scheduled a meeting with Dr. Catherine Woteki, and Rob Burk to present the results of the brainstorming work session. Dr. Wagner noted that she is prepared to move forward with whatever Dr. Catherine Woteki would like to do with information.

V. Updates on Permanent Committee(s) Activities and/or Reports

Specialty Crop Committee (SCC)

The SCC has developed a letter/report, which the REE Advisory Board Office has requested to be edited, under the guidance of the Office of the General Counsel, so as to assure that the letter does not appear to be lobbying on pending legislation. It has been redrafted and is up for review. There are concerns that the SCRI will expire if nothing is done to renew it.

Renewable Energy Committee (REC)

Carol Keiser-Long stated that the REC Report has passed through the committee and it is ready for review by the Executive Committee. She also noted some of the key features of the report.

Citrus Disease Research and Development Advisory Committee (CDRDAC)

The report has been delayed. There is a current draft in process and they are trying to fine tune the report. The Citrus committee anticipates the report being done before the October Board meeting.

VI. Executive Director's Report – Rob Burk

Agenda for Fall 2012 Meeting

Rob Burk supplied the draft agenda to the Executive Committee for review. The Executive Committee had an open discussion on the upcoming Fall NAREEEAB meeting draft agenda. Rob Burk added that Dr. Bohman is looking forward to the opportunity for ERS to discuss its international programs.

Dr. Steve Hamburg suggested that the Board have more time on the agenda for discussion concerning the reports being sent up to the Executive Committee and the Board. He also suggested that there be a 1st phase and then a 2nd phase approach to the meetings in the future, as had been discussed at previous meetings. He would like to see more forethought put into the planning of the meeting topics. The REE Mission Area has suggested they would like to pose a set of questions for the Board to answer at the meeting. Rob proposed that the evening session of the meeting could be dedicated to brainstorming future meeting topics.

Rob Burk stated that Dr. Mary Wagner (term limited), Dr. Bender, and Mr. Starkey will not be applying for re-appointment. He anticipates that the appointments will be made before the next meeting of the full Board.

V. Executive Report

Rob Burk gave an update on the status of the budget. The Board will be well within the spending limits outlined by Statute for FY2012.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 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