

National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education and Economics Advisory Board

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MINUTES Executive Committee Conference Call Friday, July 11, 2014, 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. EDT.

Executive Committee Members Present: Dr. Milo Shult (Chair), Dr. Charles Boyer, Dr. Mark McLellan, Dr. Steven Daley-Laursen and Dr. Robert Taylor

Executive Committee Members Absent: Dr. Patsy Brannon, Dr. Carrie Castille, Leo Holt, and Julia Sabin

NAREEE Board Staff: Michele Esch (Executive Director)

Others Present: Dr. Catherine Woteki (REE, Under Secretary)

I. Roll Call of the Executive Committee Members and Meeting Attendees

Michele Esch conducted a roll call of the Executive Committee once members signed on to the conference call.

II. Welcome from the Co-Chair

Dr. Milo Shult welcomed the members of the Executive Committee.

III. Comments from the Office of the Under Secretary of USDA REE

Dr. Woteki welcomed everyone on the call and provided an update on three important and relevant topics:

- Appropriations
USDA is finalizing their internal preparation of the FY2016 Budget. This will be submitted to the Office of Management and Budget sometime around Labor Day.

The FY 2015 Appropriations is still under consideration by the House and Senate. There has been discussion that the budget process will be stalled because it is an election year, however, we remain hopeful that the budget process will proceed.

- Foundation for Food & Agriculture (FFAR)
The establishment of the FFAR is underway. The ex-officio members are working to incorporate the Foundation and to select the Board members. The Secretary

expects for these tasks to be completed this summer. (Update: the members of the FFAR have been identified and will be meeting soon to begin their work.)

- There was a recent incident in a Center for Disease Control laboratory where several researchers were unintentionally infected by anthrax. This led to a full investigation of their laboratories. One of their findings involved the inappropriate transmission/contamination of a strain of the avian influenza virus being shipped to an ARS laboratory. There was no human exposure. The CDC influenza laboratory has been closed until appropriate safety measures are in place. The CDC will also announce that there will be a moratorium on the movement of biological materials from BSL3 or BSL-4 facilities. APHIS has implemented its own investigation into their labs.

IV. Working Groups Update

Agricultural Experimental Stations

Dr. Shult indicated that the working group had been in consultation with Dr. Steven Slack, ESCOP, regarding their recommendations. The Working Group will provide further updates at the next meeting.

Relevancy and Adequacy

The Relevancy and Adequacy Committee would like to hold a series of round table discussions at the fall meeting to discuss pertinent questions related to the REE programs and funding.

Dr. Shult provided an update on the process for establishing the national priorities. Dr. Shult asked Dr. Woteki if it was acceptable for the Board to submit a memorandum (separate from the Relevancy and Adequacy report) outlining the Board's support of the goals in the REE Action Plan. Dr. Woteki said that she thought that would be acceptable but wanted to confer with Dr. Sonny Ramaswamy to ensure that would be acceptable for NIFA. Dr. Shult indicated that he would begin to draft something for the Executive Committee and the full Board to comment on while awaiting confirmation from Dr. Ramaswamy.

Balance of Crop Research

Dr. Mark McLellan stated that the Working Group had drafted recommendations to provide guidance to USDA on how to approach the balance of crop research. He indicated that the working group is focusing on providing guidance to USDA on how to evaluate and review the balance of crop research between public and private research funding. Three core recommendations have been identified with a description of a suggested approach, rationale and expectations.

- *Item 1 — The USDA should commission a set of studies to create an accurate and broad picture of current private and public funding of agricultural research.*
- *Item 2 — The USDA should host various regional listening sessions to assess public*

opinion on the issue of rebalancing private versus public funding of agricultural research.

- *Item 3 — The USDA should host an annual meeting of a research roundtable for the express purpose of sharing research focus and research needs across public and private entities.*

The Executive Committee discussed the issues of acquiring information on the investment in research of private companies. Companies tend to mix true research funds and development funds. However, Dr. McLellan explained that corporations are required to report all true research funds in their IRS filings. Utilizing associations, societies or other third party organization will help act as a more trusted “middle man” in potentially acquiring this information from private entities.

Dr. Shult indicated that he was pleased with the outcome of the committee, specifically that they have identified a process for ensuring that the data is available rather than identifying the final product.

Dr. McLellan pointed out that there is a cautionary statement in the report to ensure that we continue to maintain the current research system. The report should be finalized by the fall meeting.

Open/Big Data

Dr. Daley-Laursen provided an overview of the dialogue the working group had held so far. He indicated that he wanted Dr. Woteki’s input and reaction to the summary.

Dr. Daley-Laursen stated that the topic is very expansive and dynamic and that the working group mostly wants to provide useful and relevant recommendations to USDA, REE and the REE agencies. 7 key components have been identified by the working group:

- 1) **Realistic Mandates and Business Plans.** The Working Group wants the USDA REE to ask OSTP and OMB to consider whether their Big and Open Data management mandates are realistic. Is there a realistic business plan or estimate of costs for achieving federal big data mandates and who pays for this? Have USDA REE agencies proposed any methods of directly funding the mandates (e.g., direct costs within competitive grants or dedicated percentages of capacity funding)?
- 2) **Cost.** Have OSTP or OMB consulted with Congress on estimates of cost for data management and possible authorization and appropriation solutions or adjustments to the language in Cooperative Agreements and other legislated vehicles?
- 3) **Focus.** The Working Group wants to support the USDA REE in focusing on: a) storage, curation, quality assurance, access, and interoperability of research data generated in federally funded research and outreach projects; b) library/technical aspects of managing and curating publications and data in

- distributed systems; c) public access to data, and d) proprietary and intellectual aspects of data that affect producers, agricultural and natural resource industries, universities and the working relationships between these parties. There are other aspects of Big and Open Data that our working group does not want to focus on including: personnel data, student data, or data analytics for marketing, product development or assessment of organizational performance.
- 4) **Agency Strategic Action.** The Working Group wants to support the USDA REE in formulating implementing a philosophy, vision and strategic and operational plans for the management of data resources.
 - 5) **Intra-Agency Collaboration.** The Working Group acknowledges that parts of the USDA REE mission area are doing data management planning, but also wants to support the USDA REE in minimizing atomized, separate and unrelated activities across its programs and agencies, and maximize joint planning and implementation of data management activity. REE units/programs that we know are doing some planning include ARS, eXtension, NAL, NASS, among others.
 - 6) **Stakeholder Interaction and Consultation.** The Working Group wants USDA REE to adequately engage with and involve a broad array of stakeholders in discussions and deliberation about the management of Big Data and Open Data. Does the agency know about the full array and diversity of issues emerging? Has the agency reached out to find local, regional or state level solutions and innovations already underway within universities, industry, and other agencies?
 - 7) **Inter-Agency Collaboration.** The Working Group wants to support USDA REE in demonstrating leadership and management innovation, and in pursuing meaningful and useful collaboration and cooperation among agencies in the design of Big and Open Data systems.
 - 8) **Scales.** The Working Group acknowledges the importance of the International GODAN effort and wants to support the USDA REE in working on Open Data issues and solutions at local, state, regional, national and global scales.

Dr. Woteki commented that the initial conversation is very well thought out. She then provided information on the differences between the Open Data and Big Data initiatives and how USDA is implementing them as separate initiatives. Dr. Woteki stated that Big Data initiatives have resulted in additional budget requests but Open Data initiatives do not have any additional funds for implementation.

Dr. Mark McLellan stated that the Board needs to get a good understanding of how REE and USDA leadership wants to get information and what will be most useful.

Dr. Woteki acknowledged the briefings previously provided by Dr. Simon Liu on the Open Data initiative, and stated that his briefing from May is still current. She suggested that a next step would be to provide the Working Group with a briefing on the Big Data activities and initiatives of USDA. This will help frame a more productive conversation for the October NAREEE meeting.

Dr. Shult asked Dr. Woteki if she was comfortable with the topics the Board was discussing and providing recommendations on and Dr. Woteki said yes, and also

acknowledged the work of the Citrus Disease Subcommittee and the Specialty Crop Committee.

Dr. McLellan asked whether there would be USDA guidance on the BSL 3 moratorium. Dr. Woteki indicated that we would share the CDC guidance with the Board (<http://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2014/p0711-lab-safety.html>). Additional information will be shared as it becomes available.

V. Update and Discussion on Fall Meeting and Agenda

The next NAREEE Advisory Board meeting will be held October 21-23 in Washington DC. Dr. Shult explained that USDA utilizes resources to bring everyone in for these meetings and we need to ensure that we will utilize the time efficiently. We need to create a planning group to identify potential speakers, working sessions, etc.

VI. Executive Director's Report

(For informational purposes only; this information was not discussed at the meeting.)

Committee Updates

- Citrus Disease Subcommittee will meet on December 9-10, 2014 in Lake Alfred, Florida. A report is being developed from the May meeting for deliberation by the NAREEEAB.
- The Specialty Crop Committee held a teleconference call on July 1 to discuss recent activities and to begin to plan for their face to face meeting. The meeting will be held October 1-2, 2014, in Washington, DC. The goal for that meeting will be to provide a refresher on FACA and Ethics and to complete the review and recommendations on the previous year's SCRI grants and to provide comments on the relevancy review process for the upcoming year. The Committee will also develop a plan for fulfilling their larger charge of providing advice and recommendations on the specialty crops industry.
- The National Genetics Resource Advisory Committee (NGRAC) will be announcing new members in the coming weeks. The NGRAC held a conference call on June 16, 2014, and will hold a meeting September 23-25, 2014 in Ames, IA.

VII. Other Business

There being no other business to conduct, the meeting adjourned at 12:04 p.m.

The next EXECOM Call is scheduled for Friday, August 8, 2014 at 11:00 am EDT.

Dr. Milo Shult
Chair

Dr. Steven Daley-Laursen
Vice Chair

Michele Esch
Executive Director

APPROVAL BY ADVISORY BOARD:

Date

Initials following Advisory Board Approval