



United States Department of Agriculture

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

Tuesday, January 19, 2021, 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. EST.

National Genetic Resources Advisory Council Members Present: Dr. Terrence Tiersch (Chair), Dr. John Buchanan, David Butruille, Mr. Preston Hardison, Dr. Amir Ibrahim, Dr. Stephen Kresovich, Dr. Sarada Krishnan, Dr. Jim McFerson, and Dr. Margaret Smith

NAREEEAB Representative Absent: Ms. Robin Beck

Absent: Dr. Chad Dechow, Dr. Steven Kerns, Dr. Kevin McCluskey, and Dr. Katherine Rainey

NAREEE Board Staff: Kate Lewis, NAREEE Executive Director and Shirley Morgan-Jordan, Program Support Coordinator

Ex-Officio(s): Dr. Peter Bretting and Dr. Harvey Blackburn

Others Present: Mike Lomas

I. Roll Call of Council Members, Ex-Officio Members and Other Attendees

Kate Lewis welcomed everyone and did the roll call. The group approved the December minutes providing the updates and edits are made. She expressed the importance of the minutes being documented. She inquired to the committee if the reports that she has been sending were relevant to the committee. The council asked that we balance the reports given they receive several emails a day.

II. Remarks from the NGRAC Chair

Terry Tiersch introduced Mike Lomas to the committee and stated Mike will be giving the council a presentation on Algae. Terry stated that he and others had a conflict with the monthly conference call and perhaps the group can look at changing the date.

III. Discussion about Annual Face-to-Face Meeting (Virtual in 2021) – agenda topics/logistics

Terry stated that the next NGRAC Meeting will be virtual and to think about what speakers they want to attend the meeting to give a presentation/discussion.

IV. Discussion of the Algae Report – Mike Lomas

Mike Lomas stated the history started about seven years ago with people trying to plan

with existing facilities so they would not lose valuable stocks of Algae. David Noble Jr., Mike Lomas, Charles Yarish, Stott Lindell, and M. Teresa Gutierrez-Wing are the writing partners for the report on Algae. Document development project started 2 ½ years ago. Mike Lomas reviewed the organization and goals of the draft document with the committee.

Important discussion to the committee from Mike Lomas.

The document was structured with an executive summary and summary recommendations were provided. Algae is a food source and it was also mentioned in the new Farm Bill. Over the past decades there have been other discoveries for the use of algae. The goal is to point out what has been done thus far and notice how far we have come in moving Algae forward. We are starting to realize there are gaps in the current infrastructure. Mike stated that there are some links to the Farm Bill on Algae. The report was created to collect information so it would not be lost. Going forward, we need to take a proactive point of view. How do we create the next generation to enable developments and progress? Mike stated, we do have an infrastructure and do not have to start from ground zero. The scope of the problem is the massive changes with the new advances. There are programs outside of USDA that are supporting algae uses including DOE.

A question was asked, what is the disconnect with the collections being established with the most recent Farm Bill. Mike stated, the disconnect is the shift with the science enterprise in the US. Over the course of time, all the new things Algae is used for have exploded faster than the support and policies of agencies funding projects. The grants are small and do not support building necessary capacity including databases for information. Mike went over the recommendations in the report. Terry asked the council to read the report and make comments and send the comments to Mike and him so an edited document can be prepared before next meeting.

V. Updates on Documents in Preparation

Microbial Report

- Terry reported the final version is going forward.

Group Members – Crop Vulnerability document

Please get the status report for the USDA Plant Germplasm Program Implementation Plan from Peter Bretting. THIS IS DIFFERENT from the crop vulnerability report that Jim is preparing

Preston Hardison – Tribal Issues

- He stated he would have a draft report ready by the next meeting.

– Cross-cutting Issues

There was insufficient time for discussion.

Harvey Blackburn/John Buchanan Animal Species Vulnerability Report

- This report will be discussed as it develops.

VI. Last Words and Adjournment

Shirley will be working with the Chair to establish a new date for the monthly conference call.

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.