

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

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

**Wednesday, February 9, 2022 – Thursday, February 10, 2022
Virtual Meeting Via Zoom**

The National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics (NAREEE) Advisory Board provides advice to the Secretary of Agriculture and land-grant colleges and universities on top priorities and policies for food and agricultural research, education, extension, and economics. The NAREEE Board's main objective is to contribute to effective federal agricultural research, education and economics programs through broad stakeholder feedback and sound science in its ongoing role as advisor to the Secretary of Agriculture. The Advisory Board also, by mandate, provides reports and recommendations to the appropriate agricultural committees of the U.S. Congress. The Advisory Board met in a virtual public session on Wednesday, February 9th through Thursday, February 10th via a virtual zoom meeting. The meeting's main goal on day #1 was to hear from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) leadership and day #2 was used to review old Advisory Board business and conduct new Advisory Board business.

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS

On day #1 of the NAREEE Advisory Board a total of seven presentations given by USDA's Research, Education, and Economics (REE) leadership. The first presentation was a recorded presentation given by Deputy Secretary Dr. Jewel Bronaugh on the USDA's priorities and the role that science plays in shaping those priorities. The second presentation was given by Deputy Undersecretary Dr. Shefali Mehta who focused on investment in research and development within agriculture, decline in the U.S. on public Agricultural research and development spending, the priorities within USDA and what works to enable the priorities, and lastly public private partnerships. The second part of day one there was a Panel Discussion with the other REE Leadership Team. The Advisory Board heard 3–5-minute presentations regarding missions, overviews, staff, budgets, and accomplishments from the following REE Team members: Agricultural Research Service (ARS), Dr. Chavonda Jacobs-Young, Administrator, Economic Research Service (ERS), Dr. Spiro Stefanou, Administrator, National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), Mr. Hubert Hamer, Administrator, National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), Dr. Carrie Castille, Director, and the Office of the Chief Scientist (OCS), Dr. Dionne Toombs, Director. After each presentation the Advisory Board held a question-and-answer session.

KEY ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

During the Virtual ‘Whiteboard’ of Board Big Pic Thoughts/Comments on Leadership Panel Discussion moderated by the NAREEE Advisory Board Chair Dr. Edmund Buckner several recommendations were made in response to the REE Leadership presentations. The key issues were budget and how its allocated. The Board saw that the funds allocated for agricultural research and development are small and decreasing. And with this decrease in funds, it is critical that the Board work to enlarge the budget as not to fall behind the curve. A large issue regarding funding fell on some Board members that represent 1862, 1890, and 1994 universities. These programs all have the responsibility for research and extension, and they all have historically been underfunded so to see a trend that funding will not be given for research across the board, and extension across the boards how can they continue to have innovations and technological gains. There was very robust discussion about the diversity and inclusivity letter and one recommendation was that the language should be upgraded in the letter. Also, an Ad hoc committee has been formed to help draft an updated diversity and inclusivity letter.

BOARD BUSINESS

Old Board Business

- NGRAC Report – Safeguarding and Distributing Native Crop Wild Relative Genetic Resources of the United States – **The report was approved by the Advisory Board.**
- NGRAC Report – Microbial Genetic Resources in the USA - **The report was approved by the Advisory Board.**
- Diversity and Inclusivity Letter – **An ad hoc committee was formed to draft and revised letter; Ad hoc members: Tambra Stevenson, Jane Kolodinsky, and Mike Oltrogge.**
- Ad hoc committee on Agriculture Extension Programs (status, discussion, and next steps) - **The Advisory Board agreed that to table the discussion of these programs after board has had time to study over the historical documents.**
- Relevance and Adequacy (R&A) of 2020 Ag Climate Adaptation Report (discussion and next steps) – **The next steps taken will be recommendations from this the four key areas found in the USDA’s strategic plan.**

New Business

The Advisory Board FY22 Projects - Committee/Council/Subcommittee Updates and Forecasted Updates.

- Pollinator Subcommittee, Ms. Elizabeth “Izzy” Hill, USDA Honeybee and Pollinator Research Coordinator – **Advisory Board gave positive feedback**
- Citrus Disease Subcommittee (CDS), Mr. William “Gee” Roe III, W.G. Roe and Sons, Chair – Nov 2021 Public Meeting Minutes and the Subcommittee’s NIFA ECDRE Program RFP draft feedback submitted in Dec 2021 - **The report was approved by the Advisory Board.**
- Specialty Crop Committee (SCC), Dr. Gregory Goins, North Carolina A&T University, Chair - Jan 2022 Public Meeting Minutes with NIFA’s SCRI Program - **The report and minutes were approved by the Advisory Board.**
- NGRAC, Dr. Jim McFerson, Lead Recommendations Author - Oct 2021 Meeting Minutes and the Council’s January 2022 ARS NGRP Plan recommendations - **The report and minutes were approved by the Advisory Board.**

RESOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The NAREEE Advisory Board set out in this meeting to come up with recommendations for the REE leadership. One recommendation is that as a Board of academics, stakeholders, and industry should be an influence on how and what is funded. A large part of the Board represents 1862, 1890, and 1994 land-grant universities and have the responsibility for research and extension and they all have historically been underfunded. So, to see a trend that funding will not be given for research and extension across the boards is concerning and leads the Board to believe that they should also be a part of how the budget is allocated for research and development by being a part of the discussion. Also, the consideration of individual investigator awards, especially from NIFA are critical to development of our faculty through promotion and tenure and when we think of how important that is in terms of building the infrastructure moving forward. The next generation needs training and to do that there has to be an increasing the amount of those awards which would lead to better science. NIFA needs to work in the context of what the NIH is currently funding (\$170 million), but obviously missing in there is this component to food intersection. NIH is working in the same space that we need that connects to consumers, but there is no funding to help when there is a major point where when this is about the Nation’s health. A third recommendation is that NIFA and REE should make data more accessible to a broader community of scholars to facilitate high quality research in agriculture. And lastly, scientific integrity within the panels needs to be addressed. The talent management and the “good old boys” network must be addressed because it is a systematic issue that starts with the pool of dollars at the top and works its way down. It truly matters who are on these panels.

At the end of the meeting the Advisory Board set a target month of November 2022 for the next meeting. Ms. Shirley Morgan-Jordan agreed to send out a doodle poll close to see what exact dates will work.