



Research, Education, and Economics (REE)  
National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics (NAREEE) Advisory Board

**Specialty Crop Committee (SCC) Meeting Minutes – October 13, 2022**

**SCC Members Present:** Donnell Brown, Gregory Goins (Chair), Carlos Iglesias, Jim Tuinier and Marguerite Green – (5)

**SCC Members Absent:** Nikki Lynn Rothwell and Shawn Pebbles – (2)

**NAREEE Board Staff Present:** Kate Lewis, NAREEE Board Executive Director/Designated Federal Officer (DFO)

**I. Welcome and Attendance of SCC Members and Quorum Check**

DFO Lewis welcomed the group and attendance was taken of members and other attendees and a quorum was established amongst the SCC members.

There were no minutes to approve from the September meeting because a quorum was not met when the SCC met then.

**II. Statement/Update from the Chair**

Dr. Gregory Goins' welcomed everyone to the call and congratulated Shirley Morgan-Jordan on her new position and wished her well. Dr. Goins went on to mention that the committee's appointments have been extended until January. Dr. Goins also congratulated all the 25 new awardees for the Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI) grant.

Lastly, Dr. Goins shared that he is willing to have someone else be the chair of the SCC as time moves on. DFO Lewis is going to research the term limits of the chair.

**III. FY23 – Update on Existing and Proposed New SCC Members**

DFO Lewis began her discussion informing the Committee that she found it necessary to extend the terms of Nikki Lynn Rothwell and Shawn Pebbles. Both of their terms have been extended to the end of January 2023.

DFO Lewis happily reported that there have been several applicants to the Committee, but she cannot share the applicants with the Committee at this time. Currently DFO Lewis is waiting on the formal vetting process held by the USDA therefore the Secretary cannot confirm new members until after the applicants are vetted and that process has not begun the process due to backlog. Because of this DFO Lewis was forced to extend Mr. Pebbles and Dr. Rockwell's terms.



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Several committee members had questions on how SCRI grant money is distributed and what happens to any extra funding left on the table. DFO Lewis asked if the committee would like her to invite the SCRI staff (Tom Bewick, Megan O'Reilly, and/or Jessica Shade) to the next meeting in November and the Committee agreed that would be ideal. DFO Lewis also asked the Committee to email her their questions for the SCRI staff as soon as possible and she will share them and hopefully they can be answered in the November meeting.

The committee has received a formal acknowledgement of receipt to their 2022 recommendations and DFO Lewis is still working with NIFA on a formal response to their recommendations.

#### **IV. Specialty Crops and 2023 Farm Bill discussion (attachments)**

Mr. Jim Tuinier started off the conversation by commenting on how well the attachments from DFO Lewis were put together. He went on to comment that the matching funds have been waived through 2022 and have not been approved for 2023. Mr. Tuinier stated that matching grants needs to be promoted by the Committee.

Ms. Donnell Brown asked, "How successful are people getting a waiver if they ask for one?"

Dr. Goins stated that a lot of historically under-served universities would not apply because they would want to be a part of fund matching.

Ms. Brown suggested that having webinars would be helpful for applicants and DFO Lewis suggested that the Committee add this suggestion to their 2023 recommendations.

Prior to the next meeting DFO Lewis will try to wrestle up the draft response from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) in enough time for the committee to review it.

The Committee noted that the SCRI website has been updated and is very helpful for new applicants.

DFO Lewis commented that she has not seen any USDA enterprise-wide updates on the 2023 Farm Bill. The 2018 Farm Bill is still valid until the end of 2022. If a new Farm Bill is not reauthorized the Committees are not reauthorized.

#### **VII. Wrap-up/Adjourn**

(1) DFO Lewis will redouble her efforts to obtain a response for the 2022 SCC recommendations back from NIFA; (2) invite the SCRI Staff to the November SCC meeting and (3) DFO Lewis will



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share the information for the NIFA Stakeholder Input Listening Session on November 2, 2022.

Lastly, a leader in NIFA contacted DFO Lewis about talking to the SCC the IR-4 Project. Dr. Goins made a motion to invite the leader from NIFA to discuss the IR-4 Project. Dr. Iglesias seconded and the motion was approved.

The meeting adjourned at 2:52 p.m.