



United States Department of Agriculture

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

Specialty Crop Committee (SCC) Meeting Notes – Thursday, December 8, 2022

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

SCC Members Absent: Nikki Lynn Rothwell, Shawn Pebbles – 2

NAREEE Board Staff Present: Kate Lewis, NAREEE Board Executive Director/Designated Federal Officer (DFO), Danielle Farley, Michele Simmons

GUEST: Michelle Samuel-Foo, National Program Leader at USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)

Welcome, Roll Call, Approval of Nov 2022 meeting minutes

DFO Lewis did the roll call. She went on to welcome Dr. Michelle Samuel-Foo from USDA NIFA, NPL in plant protection division who previously worked at Alabama State University.

The meeting minutes were approved for November. Donnell suggested changing the minutes to include the title Dr. for Jessica Shade and for Tom Bewick.

Statement from Chair:

Dr. Goins mentioned remarks from the field at the minority landowners and farmers conference. He looks forward to discussing the USDA moonshot discussion on nutrition and one health initiatives.

Guest speaker:

Dr. Michelle Samuel Foo provided an overview of the NIFA Interregional Research Project (IR-4). The purpose of the IR-4 program is to enable the crop protection industry to provide safe, effective, and economical crop protection products for growers and consumers of minor/specialty crops. The crop protection industry cannot justify the costs associated with the research and development, registration, production, and marketing of crop protection products for minor/specialty crops due to the smaller market base and limited sales potential. The IR-4 program provides the assistance needed to ensure that new and more effective crop protection products are developed and made available to minor/specialty crop producers. These efforts require effective collaborations among federal agencies, the crop protection industry, and land-grant colleges and universities. Dr. Samuel Foo summarized the importance of the IR-4 program

to specialty crop producers.

Question from Dr. Goins: Insects are the true rulers of the earth, they were here before us and will be here after us. What are your thoughts on some the tangible topics related to the intersection of climate change and insect control?

Dr. Samuel -Foo Answer: This was a big and trending theme at the most recent Entomological Society of America meeting in Van Cover, BC, Canada. It is highly recognized as an issue effecting our dripline.

Question from Dr. Iglesias – What is the relationship with IR-4 and pesticide companies?

Dr. Samuel -Foo Answer: IR-4 process, anyone can submit a project request that goes through a duel process of reviewing with industry. If we generate residue information before submitting to EPA, it is up to a company to makes changes. This is essentially a two step process to make sure any request is registerable.

Question Donnell Brown: Would you say IR-4 is private/ public partnership?

Dr. Samuel -Foo Answer: Yes, that is an appropriate description. NIFA does participate in the management team but does not vote. Information is available to the public and anyone from the public can participate in the process.

Comment from Kate Lewis – If there are tools that our committee can share we will through outreach with the SCC members.

Question from Donnell Brown: Is there a grant program that people apply for funding for? Is the research with IR-4 internal to USDA?

Dr. Samuel -Foo Answer: IR-4s work is very specialized and works with 5 universities. It is a single award to North Carolina State University who then does sub-awards to each region and to farmers. There is certificate training to conduct IR-4 residue studies on production sites. IR-4 is always looking to collaborate with growers through the different regions.

Question from Danielle Farley: So, funding is made to a single institution?

Dr. Samuel -Foo Answer: 2021 was the first year a single award was made. In the past each region received an award. It is now a directed award to North Carolina State University who then makes sub awards as a method to reduce the administrative burden on institutions and producers.

Summary of Discussion with Gary van Sickle from the [California Specialty Crops Council](#):
Kate Lewis suggested we move this topic to next month's meeting as all time was used for the guest speaker and Q&A session. A motion to move this topic to next month was made and seconded.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 2:57 p.m. ET

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, January 12, 2023.