



**United States Department of Agriculture**

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

**Specialty Crop Committee (SCC) Meeting Notes – Thursday, February 9, 2023**

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

**SCC Members Absent:** none

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

**GUEST:** Tambra Stevenson (NAREEE Board Member)

**I. Welcome, Roll Call, Approval of Dec 2022 meeting minutes**

Kate Lewis welcomed the group and attendance was taken of members. A quorum was established amongst the SCC members. The December 2022 meeting minutes were approved by consensus and will be posted to the NAREEE Advisory Board Webpage.

Danielle Farley provided an overview of the Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI) - Project Directors meeting invite for SCC members. She also discussed the timeline for providing recommendations to SCRI by August, 2023.

Kate Lewis proposed canceling the March meeting to attend the SCRI PD meeting.

Donnell Brown proposed to keep a March meeting and to also plan to attend the PD meeting.

Kate Lewis proposed a March meeting Thursday 3/16 2:00 – 3:00 PM and to keep the April SCC meeting as scheduled. Kate will follow up to invite Tom and Jessica Shade to a meeting as their availability allows.

Kate Lewis provided an update regarding the two Committee Members who stepped down and are not requesting to extend their services. A proposal for the new Committee Members is pending.

## **II. Statement from Chair:**

Dr. Goins welcomed everyone to the call including Tambra Stevenson. Dr. Goins mentioned that the March SCRI PD meeting will be good for SCC to develop a work plan for this year.

## **III. Presentation from Dr. Carlos Iglesias on World Vegetable Center**

The World Vegetable Center conducts research, builds networks, and carries out training and promotion activities to raise awareness of the role of vegetables for improved health and global poverty alleviation.

- 55 years of operation
- \$25 million/ year budget
- Employs 400 people
- Headquarters in Tainan, Taiwan

Background:

Vegetables can alleviate poverty by creating new jobs and new sources of income for farmers and landless laborers, improve health by providing essential micronutrients lacking in diets, enhance learning and working capacities of adults and children through improved diets and health, and improve the sustainability of food production practices by diversifying cropping systems. The Center's research and development work focuses on breeding improved vegetable lines, developing and promoting safe production practices, reducing postharvest losses, and improving the nutritional value of vegetables.

Questions from SCC members:

Donnell Brown shared a link in the chat regarding high rise swine farms in China. She said it is hard to image this type of production in the United States.

Kate Lewis asked if Dr. Iglesias if he can tell us again what his involvement is with this group?

Dr. Iglesias answered that the Board has a team of 6 people to review their research and development projects and that is his role on the Board. Also, he helps identify how to leverage other research across the world.

Jim Tuinier pointed out that last slide showed China way ahead of the United States as far as vegetable production. He asked if that map takes into account imports from United States?

Dr. Iglesias answered that the map he shared are rough figures that does not take into consideration imports and exports and water.

Tambra Stevenson mentioned the presentation raises visibility in the United States about specialty crop vegetable availability which was a major subject at the Food Not Feed Summit that just occurred in Washington, DC.

#### **IV. Discussion on SCC work plan for 2023**

Donnell Brown mentioned she is reading through the reauthorization of the Farm Bill for Specialty Crop Alliance. The research portion of this is most interesting to her. In research they are looking to bring all the research together with NIFA programs for easily access for the public. Donnell sent to Kate Lewis and she will move that forward to the group. It is 36-page document. The Specialty Crop Alliance is a group of organizations that advocate for Farm Bill changes.

Kate Lewis asked SCC members if they think, during the April meeting, that this committee will benefit from participating in any of the listening sessions mentioned by Donnell Brown with this advocacy group regarding the 2023 Farm Bill? The reason she asks is to guide the work plan for the next year.

Dr. Goins said yes, he agrees the Board should participate in the listening sessions. Right now, there is a lot of advocating for things related to the Farm Bill.

Kate Lewis mentioned that she did not know when the 2018 Farm Bill ends. She asked the SCC if anyone is aware?

Tambra Stevens responded that there is an 18-month runway.

Kate Lewis stated that she wanted to have a face-to-face meeting in the near future for SCC and hoped that it could happen this summer. She stated that an in-person meeting for SCC will not happen this year because of funding changes for the NAREEE Board. Kate Lewis suggested planning an in-person meeting for the Fall of 2023 starting in fiscal year 2024. She mentioned that as we continue to work together over the next few weeks or months lets think about the goals of the work plan for the next year.

Dr. Goins stated that after the PD meeting for SCRI we will be able to know more about developing a work plan.

Donnell Brown voiced disappointment that SCC will not be meeting in person this year.

Kate Lewis mentioned that Danielle Farley will be stepping away from the NAREE Board as her Detail ends.

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

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 2:54 p.m. ET

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, March 16, 2023.