



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

Executive Committee Conference Call – December 5, 2023, Meeting Minutes

Executive Committee Members Present: Dr. Kenrett Jefferson-Moore (Chair), Dr. V.M. “Bala” Balasubramaniam, Ms. Donnell Brown, Dr. Mario Ferruzzi, and Dr. Tamba Stevenson - 5

Members Absent: Mr. Richard De Los Santos, and Dr. Jane Kolodinsky - 2

NAREEE Board Staff Present: Ms. Kate Lewis, NAREEE Board Executive Director/Designated Federal Officer (DFO) and Ms. Michele Simmons, Program Specialist

I. Welcome from Kate Lewis, Roll Call, and Quorum Check. Quorum was met.

DFO Lewis updated the Board on the status of Farm Bill regarding the NAREEE Advisory Board. She informed them that we have no new Farm Bill, but we do have the authority to continue to meet and do the work of the Board and the Committees and Subcommittees through the end of September 2024. We only have the ability to spend money until this current continuing resolution expires on January 19th, 2024. We will keep you updated on the continuing resolution. DFO Lewis asked if there were any questions on the authority and the budget. There were none.

Ms. Simmons informed the Board that the minutes from the Executive Committee’s (EXECOM) 2023 September monthly meeting were approved via email from the Board that attended the meeting. The link to the approved minutes has been posted to the NAREEE website. Ms. Simmons asked if there were any questions. There were none.

II. Remarks from Chair

Dr. Jefferson-Moore welcomed everyone and stated it was good to see folks after not being able to have the EXCOM monthly meetings for October and November due to the Farm Bill expiring. She was looking forward to the Board meeting that was planned to take place in North Carolina this past November and hopes we can pick up our plans from where we left off.

III. Next Steps

A status update was given to remind the Board of current and planned future work projects.



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1. Installing new FY23 and FY24 Board Members:
DFO Lewis stated that the Office of the Secretary has the candidate slates for the vacancies for the FY23 and FY24 Board, Committee, and Subcommittees. As soon as we get information on these new and or reappointed Board Members, we will let you know. We realize that it's difficult to run the Board, Committees, and Subcommittees and do this good work without them being at full capacity. Once we have all the Members seated, there will be 15 Members on the Board.
2. Re-electing Chair, Vice Chair, EXECOM:
DFO Lewis stated that once we have more Members on the Board, we will reelect a new Chair, a Vice Chair and a new EXECOM, during the first meeting with the new Membership. DFO Lewis asked if there were any questions. Ms. Brown asked if traditionally, has there been 15 Board Members and if the Executive Committee would be reduced to seven? Will the Board remain at 15? DFO Lewis stated the Board will remain at 15, but the EXECOM will be reduced to 5. We are continuously requesting that REE leadership help us get the candidate selections back from the Office of the Secretary so we can move forward. DFO Lewis asked if there were any other questions. There were none.
3. REE Leadership Team Feedback from June 2023 Board Meeting:
Ms. Simmons updated the Board on the status of the REE feedback letter. The Ad Hoc Committee that worked on the letter included Dr. V.M. Balasubramaniam, Ms. Donnell Brown, Dr. Jim McFerson, Dr. Jane Kolodinsky, Dr. Kenrett Jefferson-Moore, and Ms. Tandra Stevenson, all approved the final draft. The final draft was sent to the entire Board, and they all approved. The draft was sent to Dr. Chester, Director of the Office of the Chief Scientist, on December 8th. After her review and approval, the letter will be transmitted to Dr. Jacobs-Young and her leadership team for their acknowledgement. Ms. Simmons asked if there were any questions. Ms. Stevenson asked if we can add pending work products to the monthly agendas to keep Board Members abreast of their statuses. DFO Lewis asked the Board for a consensus. There was a consensus to add a column of pending work products with their statuses to the monthly agendas.
4. Update Relevancy & Adequacy Evaluation: Precision Nutrition (PN)
DFO Lewis gave an update on the PN theme area. The PN USDA working Group is working on a summary document that outlines the precision activities. It's their goal to provide the Board a summary document in early January 2024. The Board's PN AD Hoc Committee includes Dr. V.M. Balasubramaniam, Ms. Liz Hobart (no longer on the Board), Dr. Jane Kolodinsky, Dr. Mario Ferruzzi,



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and Ms. Tambra Stevenson. Once DFO Lewis receives the summary document from the USDA working Group, which we expect to receive by January 2024, she will provide it to the PN Ad Hoc Committee so they can begin the evaluation using that summary document of activity for the PN theme area. DFO Lewis asked if there were any questions. Dr. Ferruzzi asked what time frame is expected for turnaround of their evaluation? DFO stated this project was adopted June 2023. If the PN AD hoc Committee gets the summary in January, they will have a couple of months to discuss, assess, and write their evaluations. Then we will move it through the Executive Committee for approval, then to the full Board for approval, the REE Under Secretary, and then to the Secretary.

5. Planning FY24 Board meeting:

The Board Members discussed rescheduling the meeting and to keep the plans to have the meeting in North Carolina hopefully, when the Board is fully staffed. It was suggested that the meeting take place in early June 2024. With the current continuing resolution expiring January 19, 2024, further discussions for the next in-person Board meeting will start once we have a final answer on the Federal budget for FY24.

6. Updates on the Boards, Committees and Subcommittees:

The Emergency Citrus Disease Research Extension Program (ECDRE) is a \$25 million annual granting program that awards grants to put projects in place with universities and research cooperatives to address citrus greening. Every year the ECDRE relies on the Citrus Disease Subcommittee (CDS) to reassess the research priorities for this program. We will be forwarding this document that outlines the research priorities that CDS has approved for the FY24 version of this program. We hope to move this document through to the EXECOM and then Board for their review and approval.

The CDS hasn't had an in-person meeting since December 2019. Their November 2023 meeting, which was going to be an in person in Washington, DC with the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) leadership and the program grantees was canceled due to the expiration of the Farm Bill and FY24 Budget. We will be working with CDS over the next few months to hopefully reschedule their in-person meeting sometime in FY24.

Last summer, the Specialty Crop Committee (SCC) provided program recommendations for NIFA's FY24 Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI). This committee has been notified by Secretary Vilsack of his appreciation of the



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SCC's work on the SCRI program for this fiscal year. The SCC also has not had an in-person, annual formal meeting since prior to 2020. We are looking forward to restaffing this committee and finding a location and a date when we can have an in-person meeting in FY24. The SCC is one of the Committees where we recommended through the Farm Bill legislation to increase the size to either eight or nine Members. The SCC is currently at four Members. Ms. Brown is currently a Member of the SCC and the NAREEE Advisory Board. DFO Lewis thanked Ms. Brown for her continued engagement and support.

The National Genetic Resources Advisory Council (NGRAC) was established under the NAREEE Advisory Board in 2012. The NGRAC provides advice and recommendations to the Agricultural Research Service, which is part of REE's mission area on animal, plant, insect and microbe genetics, and genetics preservation. The NGRAC has transmitted a series of recommendations on a Farm Bill deliverable. It is the National Plant Germplasm System (NPGS) Plan. It was a plan that Congress recommended in the 2018 Farm Bill which was finalized and just recently released. The NPGS plan lays out a strategy for the most responsible germplasm management in the next ten years and relayed an outlined associated costs for doing that. DFO asked if there were any questions. Ms. Brown stated the grape and wine industry and those repositories have been neglected for a long time, and it's nice to see some funding and a plan for maintaining those assets.

DFO Lewis stated that all the Committees and Subcommittees are on the NAREEE website if they would like to see what their charges are, the current list of Members, work products, and meeting minutes.

A new Subcommittee under the Board dealing with pollinators and issues around pollination called the Pollinator Subcommittee are in the works. The candidate slate and a list of nominees is with the Office of the Secretary (OSEC). We look forward to the OSEC nominating this first group of Subcommittee Members. This will consist of nine different representatives.

DFO Lewis asked if there were any questions. There were none.

IV. Wrap-Up/Adjourn

The next meeting will be **January 9, 2024, from 12 noon - 1 pm ET**.
The meeting adjourned at 1:01 p.m. ET.