



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

**Specialty Crop Committee (SCC) Meeting Notes – Thursday, April 11, 2024**

**SCC Members Present:** Dr. Gregory Goins (Chair), Ms. Donnell Brown, Mr. Casey Foster, Dr. Lorin Harvey, Dr. Carlos Iglesias, Mr. Jack Karlin, and Mr. Jim Tuinier - 7

**SCC Members Absent:** Dr. Charlie Messina - 1

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

**I. Welcome, Roll Call,**

DFO Lewis welcomed the group and attendance was taken. A quorum was established amongst the SCC Members. The prior minutes from the March 2024 meeting were approved after one minor edit that DFO Lewis made to the minutes in real time. Ms. Simmons will post the March agenda and minutes to the SCC web site.

**II. Statement from Chair:**

Dr. Goins welcomed the Members. He stated that this is Mr. Tuinier's last SCC meeting now that his term has ended. Dr. Goins appreciated working with Mr. Tuinier and thanked him for his service and commitment in his involvement with the SCC. Dr. Goins noted that he is planning to attend the California Specialty Crop Council Tour this June.

**III. Old Business/Review**

DFO Lewis asked Mr. Tuinier if he wanted to address the Members at his last meeting. Mr. Tuinier thanked the Members for his time on the Committee. He also let them know that it has been a great experience working with them.

DFO Lewis welcomed Mr. Foster and Dr. Harvey to the group. She asked them to give a brief background of themselves. Mr. Casey Foster is the Ag Program Manager from the Nebraska Department of Agriculture. He has been running the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program and the Farmers Market Program. Mr. Foster also runs the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program.

Dr. Lorin Harvey is an Assistant Professor at Mississippi University. He runs an applied research and extension program that works closely with the sweet potato growers, both in Mississippi and across the southern US. The SCC existing Members introduced themselves to Mr. Foster and Dr. Harvey. They also gave brief backgrounds about themselves as well.

DFO Lewis talked about the In-person meeting that has been discussed for the past couple of months. The plans were to have the SCC meeting in California during the California Specialty Crop Council June 2024. Due to the constraints of the FY24 budget for the NAREEE office, the SCC will be unable to meet this FY year. She informed the Members if they would like to attend the California Specialty Crop Council Tour to contact Gary Van Sickle for more details. DFO Lewis asked if there were any questions. Ms. Brown asked if the California Specialty Crop Council Tour would be sponsored? DFO Lewis stated that anyone wishing to attend the tour would have to pay the registration fee on their own.

DFO Lewis gave a brief update on the Committee's FY23 Feedback on Hemp Research Needs Roadmap. The Office of the Chief Scientist sent an acknowledgment letter to the SCC September 2023 thanking them for their feedback. The public launch of the Roadmap occurred March 8, 2024, at an ARS lab in Philadelphia, PA. The USDA is now putting an implementation plan together. The Hemp Research Roadmap is posted on USDA's website at the link [here](#). She asked if there were any questions. There were none.

#### **IV. New Business**

DFO Lewis talked about some of the possible work items for the SCC for FY24 which included the USDA AMS/FAS Specialty Crop Efforts. She stated that there's a new Advisory Committee called the Seasonal and Perishable Agricultural Products Advisory Committee. DFO Lewis suggested that the SCC review the following 3 links for possible discussion at the SCC meeting in May.

- [Specialty Crops Competitiveness Initiative](#)
- [Specialty Crops Resource Directory](#)
- [Seasonal and Perishable Agricultural Products Advisory Committee](#)

DFO Lewis asked how does the AMS Managed Specialty Crop Block Program know about the research that's going on as a part of the Specialty Crop Research Initiative? Ms. Brown stated that the research can be tracked through a system called Current Research Information System (CRIS). Dr. Harvey also stated that USDA makes announcements when they fund grants.

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

DFO Lewis asked if there were any more comments or questions. There were none.

The meeting adjourned at 2:56 p.m. ET.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 9, 2024, @ 2pm ET.