



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

Executive Committee (EXECOM) Meeting – March 4, 2025 Minutes

NAREEE Committee Members Present: Drs. Kenrett Jefferson-Moore (Chair), V.M. “Bala” Balasubramaniam, Jane Kolodinsky, William Lytle - 4

Members Absent: – Ms. Donnell Brown, Ms. Vanessa Garcia Polanco, Dr. Mario Ferruzzi - 3

Guest – Ms. Elizabeth “Izzy” Hill, USDA Office of the Chief Scientist

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

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

DFO Lewis noted that the February meeting minutes were approved with no comments or revisions. Ms. Simmons will have the web team post the February minutes and agenda to the NAREEE website.

I. Report/Remarks from the Chair Dr. Jefferson-Moore, Chair

Dr. Jefferson-Moore welcomed the group. She thanked the Board members for their time and commitment. It matters. She stated that she appreciates members staying committed to the business of the Board, especially during this unprecedented time.

II. New Business

Overview of Upcoming Pollinator Subcommittee Recommendations:

Ms. Izzy Hill, Ex-Officio member of the Pollinator Subcommittee summarized the following recommendations that will be provided to the Board shortly:

- **Addressing Honeybee Colony Losses**
 - Critical losses of honeybees in 2024 and early 2025
 - Commercial beekeepers experiencing 63% losses (make up 80% of colonies)
 - 1.1M colonies lost -- 50% of total colony loss



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- ARS trying to address this situation with current capacities
- Bee brokers have taken a large hit
- The community is also continuing to look at solutions to reduce the sale of adulterated honey

One member commented that this is a crisis, and requested what the NAREEE Board can do? DFO Lewis suggested the Board pass the subcommittee’s recommendations quickly, so USDA has the support they need to respond as needed. Ms. Hill said the honeybee community has been reaching out to Secretary Rollins; correspondence has been sent to her office. Ms. Hill indicated the lack of media coverage of the situation.

• **Improving NASS Honeybee Census**

- NASS implements 3 different inquiries on honeybees
- This info is used regularly. Issues however with the 2022 Census, number of colonies were over reported. This has led to confusion
- 2.8-3M active colonies; Census reported 4M colonies
- Recommendation will contain suggestions for increasing beekeeper responses and NASS colony determination process

Status and Next Steps of the FY25 R&A Relevancy and Adequacy (R&A) Assessment:

DFO Lewis shared a one pager outlining the R&A Assessment for Evaluating Extension/Research into Action. She requested via email, Board feedback, on next steps. She presented those results to the EXECOM. DFO Lewis also indicated that she spoke with Dr. Deirdra Chester, Director of the Office of the Chief Scientist. Dr. Chester suggested the assessment be framed, and the questions finalized. At that time the REE Undersecretary/Chief Scientist could be briefed on this initiative.

The Board chair emphasized the relevancy of this project; this subject has been on the table for years. She stated that moving forward – the hybrid idea outlined above – should still be a priority and focus.

One member stated that she felt it’s the Board’s responsibility to be proactive. She is support of framing the R&A project – research into action -- to help REE set the agenda moving forward, especially with new leadership that may not understand the landscape. She felt it’s important to create a path to answer the question “What is the Extension of the Future?”



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DFO Lewis indicated that there were 6 responses from 14 Board members.

Two members voiced their support for the small committee to continue to frame the idea and finalize the questions, with opportunities to add members to the committee from the Board and continue the assessment after briefing the Undersecretary.

One member underscored her commitment to this project and indicated that she's willing to serve as chair of the R&A Committee.

DFO Lewis indicated that an initial meeting will be scheduled, and she'll make sure all project briefing documents will be available for reference and refinement.

III. Old Business

DFO Lewis summarized the status of the 3 prior Board-approved products and the meeting to discuss the FY24 Precision Nutrition recommendations.

One member commented on the connection between the current situation with honeybees and pollinators depletion, and the Crop Vulnerability report.

IV. Wrap-Up/Adjourn

Approved meeting minutes may be found [here](#)

Recurring EXECOM meetings will take place the 1st Tuesday of each month

Next meeting: Tues 4/1/25, 12:00 – 1:00 pm ET

The meeting adjourned at 1:58 p.m. ET.