

# National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board

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REE Advisory Board Office  
Room 344-A Whitten Building  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave., SW  
Washington, DC 20250-2255

Mailing Address:  
STOP 0321  
1400 Independence Ave. SW  
Washington, DC 20250-0321  
Telephone: 202-720-3684  
Fax: 202-720-6199

## DRAFT MINUTES Executive Committee Conference Call

Thursday, January 8, 2009, 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. EST.

**Executive Committee Members Present:** Dr. Martin Massengale, Chair; Dr. Walt Armbruster, Dr. Fred Cholick, Mrs. Carol Keiser-Long; Dr. Edward Runge, Dr. Mary Wagner, Mr. Terry Wolf, Dr. Tom Rosol, and Jean-Mari Peltier.

**Executive Committee Members Absent:** None

**Ex-Officio:** Dr. Gale Buchanan, REE Under Secretary (ex-officio)

**Invited Attendees Present:** Dr. Joseph Dunn, REE, Deputy Under Secretary and (Past) Executive Director, NAREEE Advisory Board

**NAREEE Board Staff:** Mr. Bruce Mertz, Acting, Executive Director, Mrs. Shirley Morgan Jordan Program Support Coordinator



### I. Roll Call of Members and Invitees

Bruce Mertz, Acting, Executive Director called roll of the Executive Committee members.

### II. Comments and Welcome

Dr. Martin Massengale wished everyone a Happy New Year. He stated that he has spoken to Bruce Mertz and Dr. Walter Armbruster on a number of issues. He also thanked Bruce Mertz for working with the Board in the absence of Karen Hunter. Dr. Martin Massengale thanked Dr. Gale Buchanan for his dedicated support with working very closely with the Board. He stated that the NAREEE Advisory Board Office has made arrangements for the Executive Committee to travel to Washington, DC, on February 2-3, 2009, to meet with the six newly appointed Research, Education and Extension Office (REEO) Division Chiefs.

### III. Comments from Dr. Buchanan

Dr. Buchanan stated that his last day in USDA will be January 20, 2009 but he will remain in the Metropolitan Area until April 1, 2009, and then he will re-locate back to Atlanta, Georgia. He thanked the full NAREEE Advisory Board for their efforts and contributions to advance the REE Mission Area. He stated that the NAREEE Advisory Board is an important component of the Agency's stakeholder process and hopes the relationship between the Board and Agency continues to strengthen. Buchanan is in the process of wrapping up all open items and hopes the new Under Secretary will start over with some new ideas concerning research. Buchanan discussed some of the accomplishments that were achieved under his leadership. He hopes that the new Under Secretary will follow up on the programs that have been implemented such as the Fellowship Program. Buchanan hopes that the program will continue to provide opportunities for people to learn how USDA works. Buchanan prepared a job description and duties for the newly-created Chief Scientist position at USDA. Currently, the job description has been vetted and has a few more things that need to be done. A key part of Buchanan's goal was to create a new "Science Council" within the department. The purpose of the new Science Council would be to elevate science in Agriculture. Buchanan attended the Secretary of Agriculture's reception with Senator Johanns and Jim McClure and encouraged both to be a champion for REE. Buchanan developed correspondence that supports the notion that the Chief Scientist of the newly-created National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) reports directly to the Secretary of Agriculture. Fred Cholick stated that the University system has agreed that the chief Scientist should report directly to the Secretary. Buchanan closed by saying he enjoyed serving as Under Secretary and working with the NAREEE Advisory Board and in the future will work in a different light to further support REE activities. Dr. Martin Massengale again commended Dr. Buchanan on the work with the Board and also commended Fred Cholick.

Dr. Joseph Dunn also participated on the conference call and stated he enjoyed his past service as Executive Director of the NAREEE AB and he has learned a lot during his tenure at USDA.

#### **IV. Update on Committee Activities and/or Reports**

##### **Specialty Crop Committee Activities**

Walt Armbruster noted that Karen Hunter provided him with notes from the listening sessions. This information will be used to create a report that will be completed in Spring and subsequently transmitted to the new Administration coming into office in 2009. Armbruster has received industry input regarding matching dollars required in CSREES's new Specialty Crop Research Initiative Grant Program. Armbruster has agreed to develop a one page statement summarizing the Board's discussion on the matching funds requirement in the Farm Bill's Specialty Crop Research Initiative. The Listening Session for the Specialty Crop Committee is scheduled for March 13, 2009, in Orlando at the headquarters of the Florida Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association. The Committee needs a Federal Register notice for this meeting. Shirley M. and Bruce M. will work with Walt on this activity.

##### **Renewable Energy Committee Activities**

Carol Keiser-Long reported that the Renewable Energy Committee had a face-to-face meeting in Washington, DC, on Friday, December 19, 2008. Presentations by and Dr. Fischer and Dr.

Conley delivering excellent comments and a white paper setting the tone of the meeting for the Renewable Committee. Keiser-Long made writing assignments for committee members and most of the writing assignments have been complete. The Renewable Energy Committee will deliver the draft comments to Mr. Bruce Mertz upon completion next week. Mertz will edit and format report and seek input to sharpen its focus. Keiser Long thought that the Committee Report will be complimentary to the March 2008 Strategic Energy Science Plan. The report will also recommend areas where USDA can take a leadership role. The report for the Renewable Energy Committee will be submitted before their mandated annual deadline.

Keiser-Long also stressed the Renewable Energy Committee needed to maintain contact with the The Biomass Research and Development Board, co-chaired by the DOE and USDA. In December, Keiser-Long attended the Biomass Research and Development Initiative Technical Advisory Committee's (BRDI TAC) meeting in Washington, DC. Keiser gave public comment at this meeting but proposed that the Renewable Energy Committee be Ex-officio members to the BRDI board.

Keiser-Long also reported that the Renewable Energy Workgroup report is complete and is ready for the next steps. The workgroup report was sent to the Executive Committee and the Renewable Energy Work Group on Dec. 15 for comment. Bruce Mertz was asked to send the revised Work Group report to the Full Board for final comments.

### **NAREEE-Farm Foundation Planning Committee**

Walt Armbruster informed the Executive Committee that a NAREEE Farm Foundation Planning Committee has been formed and the group will have its first planning meeting during the third week on January. Armbruster stated that the Farm Foundation Meeting will be held April 28, 2009, from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm at the National Press Club. Out-of-town NAREEEAB members must stay the night before the April 28 meeting. The Full NAREEEAB Meeting is April 29<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup>. Armbruster plans to invite industry groups to participate in the program. Finally, Armbruster thanked Dr. Gale Buchanan and Dr. Joe Dunn for all their participation with the Specialty Crop Committee Meetings.

## **V. Updates on Work Group Reports**

### **Renewable Energy**

The workgroup report is finished and ready to go to the next level. The report was sent to the Executive Committee on December 15, 2009. Now the report is ready to go to the full Board for approval

### **Invasive Species**

Thomas Rosol stated that it was very difficult to put the Invasive Species Report together and would have the report wrapped up by the weekend coming. Bruce will follow up with Tom to check on Progress.

### **Poultry**

George Watts was not invited on the call. Bruce will follow up with George to check on Progress.

### **Commodity Crops**

Jean-Mari Peltier thanked Karen Hunter for sending the reports to the working group. Peltier reported that she will be wrapping up the Commodity report in the next few weeks and will be sending the report to Bruce. Jean-Mari Peltier stated that she would finalize the report and present the overview and points from the presentations received from the 2009 Fall November Meeting at the producer meeting being planned by Armbruster in April 2009.

## **VI. Spring Full Board Meeting**

Martin Massengale asked the Executive Committee for suggestions on the Focus Topic of the next Full Board Meeting. Armbruster mentioned climate change implications for agriculture (seconded by Peltier, perhaps with an international angle). Armbruster thought it is important to know what is going on in the field and processing. There are many unanswered questions in the area. Carol mentioned air quality and water quality. Climate Action Partnership and carbon footprints was also mentioned as a potential topic. Armbruster also mentioned youth nutrition and training the next generation of scientists in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). The Heartland Institute Foundation was mentioned as offering a view of climate change that is different from other climate change theories. Discussion then addressed the question of what can be done in the area of research, education and extension on climate change adaptation and mitigation. Finally, Armbruster discussed a op-ed piece from Wes Jackson and Wendell Berry that considered a 50-year Farm Bill and looked at the perennialization of major grain crops. Armruster said he will forward some of this information to Bruce to share with the Executive Committee.

Massengale concluded that the next Focus topic for the Spring 2009 Board meeting should be Climate Change Implications in Agriculture.

## **VII. Future Meeting Dates for Committee and Full Board Meetings**

Shirley Morgan-Jordan reported that the Spring Meeting will be April 28-30, 2009, at the Double Tree Hotel in Washington, DC and the Fall Meeting will be October 27-30, 2009 at The Madison A Loews Hotel in Washington, DC. Other logistics will be available at a later date.

**VIII. Other** – nothing to report

The meeting adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

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MARTIN MASSENGALE  
Chair

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Bruce Mertz  
Acting Executive Director

APPROVAL BY ADVISORY BOARD: \_\_\_\_\_

Date

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Initials  
Chair

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Initials  
Executive Director