

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

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MINUTES Executive Committee Conference Call

Friday, February 1, 2013
11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. EST.

Executive Committee Members Present: Dr. Steven Hamburg (Vice Chair, Acting Chair), Dr. Charles Boyer, Dr. Carrie Castille, Dr. Nancy Childs, Dr. Steven Daley-Laursen, and Dr. Milo Shult.

Executive Committee Members Absent: Mr. Leo Holt

Ex Officio Member: Dr. Catherine Woteki (REE, Under Secretary)

NAREEE Board Staff: Robert Burk (Executive Director) and Shirley Morgan Jordan (Program Support Coordinator).

Others Present: Ven Neralla (REE and NIFA Director of Congressional Affairs), Dr. Merle Broussard (NIFA Deputy for Agriculture and Natural Resources) and Kimberly Whittet (NIFA Management and Policy Specialist)



I. Roll Call of Executive Committee Members and Other Attendees

- Rob Burk conducted a roll call of the Executive Committee as members signed on to the conference call.

II. Comments from the Under Secretary of USDA REE

- Dr. Woteki welcomed everyone on the call and thanked them for taking the time out to be on the call. She said the Farm Bill was extended and there is no legislative authority for program for the next 5 years. Congress is looking at sequestration and recalculating the

fine tuning the plans concerning sequestration. Further, USDA programs still face possible cuts of more than 8% through the sequester provisions if Congress is unwilling to change the dynamics of those budget cuts at federal agencies. REE has been working on the 2014 budget submission and will not be sent to the Hill until March. Dr. Woteki stated the extraordinary situations have been the norm these days.

- Dr. Woteki stated that she was concerned when the General Counsel has put the NAREEE Advisory Board into suspension and that she was very happy to see the Board reinstated through the extension. One development that we are looking at is the new subcommittee called the National Genetic Resources Advisory Council (NGRAC).
- Dr. Woteki stated that she is looking forward to the committee's formation. She stated that she did not want to cut back on the discussion concerning AFRI analysis discussion and asked that the EXECOM put the topic back on the agenda for discussion for next time. Dr. Woteki stated that she would send a copy of the remarks from the White House to the Board.

III. Congressional Update Including the Status of the NAREEE Advisory Board – Ven Neralla, REE and NIFA Director of Congressional Affairs

- The top line concern is the uncertainty of when Congress will complete work on issue affecting authority.
- Some of the basics things happening are:
 - Senate and House Agricultural Committee and the Senate House Agricultural Sub Committee are promoting signs the 112th Congress just ended January 3rd before noon. The new 113th Congress starts at noon on Jan 3rd.

The primary committee players are:

- House Agriculture: Frank Lucas (OK); Ranking Member: Collin Peterson (MN)
 - House Agriculture Appropriations – New Chairman: Robert Aderholt (AL); Ranking Member: Carson Farr (CA)
 - Senate Agriculture: Debbie Stabenow - (MI); New Ranking Member – Thad Cochran (MI)
 - Senate Ag Appropriation - New Chairman: Mark Pryor (AR); Ranking Member – Roy Blunt (MO)
- The priority was to clean research title and deal with proving people on the Capital Hill where the author has been used.
 - The hearing FY2011 through Fall was to attach a Farm Bill to whatever came out of the super committee process - which didn't go anywhere. For many people that was a good thing. The feeling was that Congress needed to go to the regulation order which is what happened in FY2012. The Senate passed its version but the House only made it came out of Committee and not to the floor.
 - The FY2008 Farm Bill expired on September 30, 2012 and NAREEE did get caught up. The fiscal cliff included a nine-month extension of the FY 2008 Farm Bill. Yet, with no

final version of a new farm bill the direct payments survived, much to the dissatisfaction of some groups as other, smaller programs lost their funding in the final rush of a nine-month extension. Roughly 40 programs were extended without mandatory funding ranging from the Grassland Reserve Program to beginning farmer programs and others for specialty crops, organics and areas such as rural development. These programs lost funds even though USDA is already halfway through its fiscal year. It was critical that the nine month extension didn't include mandatory funds for these programs. The farm bill could still get caught up in the sequester debate and eliminate or reduce the funds available. The running theory is that the farm bill offers a pot of money to be used for offsetting cuts in the upcoming sequester and debt-limit debate.

- As for a budget update for the National Institute Food and Agriculture (NIFA), on September 28, 2013, the President signed a FY2013 Continuing Resolution (CR) that will fund the government through March 27, 2013. The six-month CR was passed by the House and Senate. The question as to whether there will be an omnibus that will include everything thru March 1, 2013. March 1st is the deadline.
- The President's budget has not been released and there is no update when it will be released. By law, the President is required to submit a budget request to Congress for the upcoming fiscal year by the first Monday of February. It looks like the budget may not be released until the end of February. The Office of Management and Budget announced last month that the president's budget would not be released until Feb. 13, "based on the need to finalize decisions and technical details of the document." Activities normally start happening around that time.
- Dr. Woteki stated that the sequestration status is all up in air and there is much going on. NAREEE Advisory Board is under the extension.

IV. NIFA and an Agriculture and Foods Research Initiative (AFRI) Analysis – Dr. Merle Broussard, NIFA Deputy for Agriculture and Natural Resources, and Kimberly Whittet, NIFA Management and Policy Specialist

- Merle Broussard stated that Senator John Goldberg, House of Agriculture asked for a large amount of tables concerning Competitive Grants dated for 5 years. The Agency gave the tables to him and then John Goldberg asked the NAREEE Advisory Board to look at it also.
- The report from the NAREEE Advisory Board is the result of NIFA.
- Dr. Woteki would like for Dr. Merle Broussard and Kim Whittet to walk through these reports. Dr. Sonny Ramaswamy will meet on Tuesday, February 5, 2013, with John Goldberg.
- Dr. Merle Broussard will go over some high points and key tables for the work point of underlying. He stated that he wanted to demonstrate lining of funding priorities of AFRI and major way the agency approached NRI.

There are five challenges: 1) Food Safety, 2) Bio Energy, 3) Climate Change, 4) Food Safety, and 5) Nutrition. The discussion was about focus, scale, and impact. We have

made some changes to some programs. One program was implemented and there were some concerns about how the information was put together and the changes. How funding of the projects came about and the primary challenges.

NIFA does not clarify a project on the Farm Bill Priority, but uses the Current Research Information System (CRIS) Codes within the agency and had to manually code projects by the new code. Documentation and reporting for ongoing agricultural, food science, human nutrition, and forestry research, education and extension activities for the United States Department of Agriculture; with a focus on the NIFA grant programs. Dr. Merle Broussard stated that coding large projects up to \$45 million was a lot of work. The report sent to the Board was a summary of the data. The tables should show how NIFA mapped the Farm Bill Program and made some adjustments so the RFA tells what Farm Bill priority was addressed. New projects will be coded with new codes using CRIS. This presents a challenge and the CRIS Code has specific definitions concerning the scale and scope. NIFA must make the very best judgment when funding the project.

In the report:

Table 1: pg 8 – Farm Bill priorities and alignment with the AFRI foundation

Table 2: pg 10 – Summary of fund FY 07-11 using the major Farm Bill priorities

Table 3: pg 11 –Funding for FY 2010, FY2011, and FY2012

NIFA went to large grants and made a lot of awards from a continuous grant model forecasting the outcome for future years. Stakeholders are concerned about the size of programs and NIFA will scale back and they won't be as large. The numbers can be complicated using the classification on a new program. Dr. Woteki asked Dr. Broussard if they were getting positive responses on the funds allocated with the folks on the Hill. She stated that this is the first discussion and she wanted the NAREEE Advisory Board to hear it first. Then she would discuss it with John Goldberg and then report out.

- Dr. Steve Daley-Laursen suggested that we make it an agenda item for the upcoming Fall Meeting. Dr. Steven Daley-Larsen asked two questions:
 - 1) What are the priority areas? Competitive grants/Non Competitive grants?
 - 2) Conventional breeding wasn't a priority in FY02 but why is it in FY08 Farm Bill

The answer provided was that it was likely tracked in molecular areas.

Dr. Steven Daley-Larsen asked a question concerning Figure 4 in the report concerning The Food Safety Nutrition and HH. He asked where the coding of health dramatically increased and what does that mean. Does that mean a dramatic increase in money? He stated that it would be great to see how much money was allocated. Dr. Merle Broussard answered stating the money means no year. It could come from before or after. The money is shifted to fund different projects.

Dr. Steve Hamburg stated that we need to look at how we can reflect continuity and look at how the real work works and look at it. Dr. Steve Hamburg stated that there needs to be a long-term continuity in research. This topic needs to be discussed more. He stated

that maybe the database can be reframed. This is what the NAREEE Advisory Board does. We do represent a diversity of areas. We could be effective and represent to mandate.

Dr. Steve Daley-Laursen stated that we have had some discussions of how the Board can be helpful. He asked Dr. Merle Broussard how the NAREEE Advisory Board could be effective in that triangle. Would you suggest communication between NAREEE and John Goldberg? Would you like to give it some thought? You as an individual could talk to representative and staff and give personal opinion.

Dr. Milo Shult stated that it was a good suggestion. This particular area has been discussed in research. He stated that we should have that topic item on the agenda for discussion.

Dr. Woteki stated that we need to pressure the Science Agency to report on the input and the outcome. They need to do a better job with publications, patents, investment companies, etc. It would be great to discuss further and brief the NAREEE Advisory Board. Dr. Woteki stated that concerning this particular report, you might want to make comments after the Spring Meeting. That would be the best way to go.

Dr. Merle Broussard said that if the Executive Committee has any questions to please send to Rob and he will try to answer it. Dr. Milo Shult agreed and stated that reports go to the four Administrators and then to the Secretary for review. The Board should wait for that review and then send a response collectively.

V. Status of Committee Reports

- Rob Burk discussed the Board reports and the process for review and distribution.
- The model of the Department puts together an analysis and the Board will provide recommendations after the Department comments.
- Dr. Woteki stated that she sees the NAREEE Advisory Board having a role with all programs. Concerning several discussions of the elevating FY 2008 Farm Bill, NIFA will continue to conduct reviews. She reminded the Executive Board that NIFA just finished the Specialty Crop Programs and AFRI Programs were conducted. She stated that she provided overall advice on the evaluations and also the evaluations of ARS.

Dr. Woteki stated that she will be coming to the NAREEE Advisory Board for advice. Each major disciplined area is from the National Academy of Science. Dr Steve Hamburg asked if she could give the Board a running list of what's going on.

- Dr. Milo Shult questioned the status of GAO report from a year ago. Dr. Woteki commented that it was coming to the final stages of report preparation. They provided a copy but no conclusion and recommendations were included. REE had to review and correct the report. GAO only gave review of chapters of facts. The report will be

favorable and no duplication was found between NIFA and ARS. The report should be completed in the next few weeks.

IV. Welcome from the Chair

- Dr. Steve Hamburg welcomed the Executive Committee back and thanked Dr. Woteki for being on the call. Dr. Steve Hamburg stated that we have an opportunity to sort out some things and had time for some reflection. The Board needs to think about how to better organize become more effective. Where should the burden lie and who should do the work? The conversation needs to start regarding what has worked and what needs changing. The Board also needs to discuss a better method of putting topics on the agenda\timeline. Rob stated that he had been working on by-laws with OGC internally. He also stated that OGC will do a better job partnering with Board internally to better enable the Board to do its work. An ongoing running list of topics would be good.

Dr. Woteki stated that the Board needs to bring meaningful questions also. She stated that maybe at the next meeting the Board could carve an hour out for the Executive Committee to talk.

VI. PCAST Report

- Dr. Woteki stated that she wanted to save the PCAST for the next Board meeting with the full Board and maybe include someone from PCAST. Dr. Steve Hamburg agreed that the Board should talk about it at a later date.
- Dr. Steve Hamburg stated that we need to make it for discretionary reading for each topic. Providing the material to everyone makes a difference.
- Dr. Woteki thanked the Board for being back in business and signed off on the call.

VIII. Executive Director's Report

- **Scheduling for the Spring 2012 Board Meeting**
Rob Burk asked all the Board members that haven't stated their availability to go to the doodle page and do so.
- **Reports**
 - The General Operating Procedures were approximately 15 years old needed to be updated. Rob was finally able to sit with lawyers at OGC and evaluate the laws for what has and hasn't been addressed. All the changes will be discussed at the next meeting.
 - The Extension Report, Renewable Energy Report and Relevancy and Adequacy Report have all went into hibernation.

- The REC Report lacks some clarity but not to change the meaning but just get more clarification.
 - The Extension Report is in decent shape and will move forward next week.
 - There will be ongoing active list and matrix of reports. A timeline will be made and a spreadsheet layout of what's going on.
- The Relevancy and Adequacy and Specialty Crops Report will be re-submitted to move forward.

- **Budget Update**

The Board is operating well within the budget given.

The next Executive Committee conference call will be Friday, March 1, 2013 at 11:00 a.m. Eastern Standard Time.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Shirley Morgan-Jordan

Dr. Steve Hamburg
Acting Chair

Rob Burk
Executive Director

APPROVAL BY ADVISORY BOARD:

Date

Initials
Chair

Initials
Executive Director