

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

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DRAFT MINUTES Executive Committee Conference Call

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

Executive Committee Members Present: Dr. Martin Massengale, Chair, Dr. Fred Cholick, Mrs. Carol Keiser-Long, Mr. Terry Wolf, Dr. Tom Rosol, and Mrs. Jean-Mari Peltier.

Executive Committee Members Absent: Dr. Walt Armbruster; Dr. Edward Runge, Dr. Mary Wagner

Ex-Officio: Dr. Katherine Smith, Acting, REE Under Secretary (ex-officio)

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 thanked everyone for joining the conference call. He explained the Executive Committee met with the REEO Chiefs last week. The Executive Committee and the REEO Chiefs had a good discussion on priorities and how to be more effective when conferring with the REE Office. Massengale also discussed his visit with Secretary Tom Vilsack on February 3. The purpose of the visit was to introduce the NAREEE Advisory Board to the Secretary. Martin Massengale opened by briefing the Secretary on NAREEE Advisory Board Activities and procedures, including the Board's generation of reports containing research, education and extension recommendations. Massengale invited the Secretary to speak at the next Board meeting that is being held April 28 - 30. The Secretary was asked to speak either at lunch or as a keynote speaker on the first day when the program is co-sponsored with the Farm

Foundation. We will work with the Secretary's scheduler on a more specific time in the near future.

The Secretary then offered some comments on where he thought USDA will be focusing efforts in the coming years.

He opened by stating that there are a lot of institutions across the U.S. that are doing great work. One area of concern is the need to reduce overlap and/or duplication of research. His administration is going to survey the field to find out where there are research gaps. In addition, they will look for areas to coordinate research. Dr. Massengale mentioned to him the existing multistate research program within CSREES. The Secretary indicated that he wanted the Department to do more cooperative work with other Federal Agencies.

Three areas that were considered important by the Secretary include:

- Renewable Energy and efficient use of energy in production and processing of agricultural products
- Nutrition – in particular helping young consumers gravitate toward healthy meals
- International Issues – in particular working on world hunger / food access.

With regard to producers, any area where farmers can increase their efficiency and reduce their impact on the environment/climate will be of interest.

Finally, the Secretary stated that at the end of 4 years.....he wants everyone to know what USDA does.

The Secretary has agreed to speak, schedule permitting, at the Farm Foundation Meeting and stated that he would attend the NAREEE Advisory Board Meeting when he's in town. He did tell Dr. Massengale that he was getting close to picking an Under Secretary for REE but would not disclose that information until the vetting process is complete.

III. Comments from Dr. Katherine Smith

Dr. Smith stated that she has been invited to a lot of new meetings – including a Biotechnology Research Group meeting. She felt the Department should have greater visibility on more issues. The Secretary of Agriculture is going to plant a Lincoln Garden for school children. There will be food grown at every Federal Agency. The REEO Division chiefs drafted a Federal Register asking a number of questions. Dr. Smith will let the Board know when the Federal Register is out. The Federal Register contains questions such as: how research should be prioritized; the difference between Extramural and Intramural; and how to rate a project. One of the Board members asked Dr. Smith if the REEO Chiefs addressed how to systematically utilize input from the stake holders. Dr. Smith stated, "The system struggles with that."

Dr. Massengale noted that the NAREEE AB is planning a 2-hour session with REEO Division Chiefs at the April Board meeting. The Board also can have input on the REE Roadmap at this Board meeting and also through the Federal register notice.

IV. Update on Committee Activities and/or Reports

Specialty Crop Committee Activities

The Specialty Crop Committee is making progress with getting in their report for the last fiscal year. The Specialty Crop Committee will hold their listening session in Maitland, Florida at the Fruit and Vegetable Association building beginning with a reception on March 12, 2009 and Specialty Crop Committee business meeting on March 13, 2009.

Renewable Energy Committee Activities

Bruce has been instrumental in helping to put the Renewable Energy Report together. The committee is down to the first final draft and the committee plans to submit their Annual Report earlier than the due date. There will be five recommendations from the committee in which the REE mission area is encouraged to take a leadership role. The committee will plan a stakeholder summit later this year.

NAREEE-Farm Foundation Planning Committee

The first day (April 28) of the spring Board meeting will be the program co-sponsored with the Farm Foundation. Secretary Vilsack has been asked to speak at the conference. The program is moving along nicely. Dennis Heldman has been appointed to chair a work group to develop and execute the focus session on climate at the spring Board meeting.

V. Updates on Work Group Reports

Renewable Energy

The Renewable Energy Workgroup has submitted their report to the Executive Committee

Invasive Species

Thomas Rosol stated that he is working on a draft report.

Poultry

The report from the Poultry Committee was submitted to the full Board today.

Commodity Crops

Jean-Mari Peltier sent a power point presentations and data to Bruce to help pull the report together. One of the Board members suggested that Jean-Mari should get a little deeper into the report and address more issues. Terry Wolf volunteered to help work on the report with Jean Mari. Terry and Jean-Mari discussed possibly attending the Commodity Classics Meeting at the end of February 26-28, 2009 in Texas to summarize information for the Commodity report.

VI. Spring Full Board Meeting

Dr. Massengale discussed some of the topics that need to be covered at the April 2009 Board meeting.

Discussion topics include:

- NAREEE-Farm Foundation Meeting de-briefing
- Past Report Presentation/Discussion with Agencies and/or Under Secretary
- Discussion of Focus Topic: Climate Change and Agriculture
- Meeting and Discussion with REEO Division Chiefs
- Visit from Congressional staffer

VII. Future Meeting Dates for Committee and Full Board Meetings

Next Executive Committee Conference Call: March 19th
Fall 2009: October 28-30, Madison Hotel
Spring 2010: Potential dates in spring 2010 for the Board meeting were discussed.
The Committee concluded that the last two weeks of March 2010 would be desirable to hold the Board meeting.

VIII. Other – no report

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

MARTIN MASSENGALE
Chair

Bruce Mertz
Acting Executive Director

APPROVAL BY ADVISORY BOARD: _____
Date

Initials
Chair

Initials
Executive Director