

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

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 2255
1400 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20250-2255
Telephone: 202-720-3684
Fax: 202-720-6199

DRAFT MINUTES Executive Committee Conference Call Thursday, February 28, 2008, 12:00 Noon – 1:00 p.m., e.s.t.

Executive Committee Members Present: Dr. Martin Massengale, Chair; Dr. Walter Armbruster, Vice Chair, Dr. Marianne Smith Edge, Mrs. Carol Keiser-Long, Dr. Daryl Lund, Dr. Mary Wagner, Dr. Edward Runge and Dr. Jim Zuiches.

Executive Committee Members Absent: Dr. Martin Apple, Dr. David Thomassen and Dr. Gale Buchanan (Ex-officio),

USDA Staff Participation: Dr. Joseph Dunn, Executive Director, Mrs. Shirley Morgan Jordan, Program Support Coordinator



I. Roll Call

Joseph Dunn, Executive Director, called roll of the Executive Committee members.

II. Welcome and Update

The Chair of the Advisory Board, Martin Massengale provided some introductory remarks and thanked those Executive Committee members for being on the call.

Martin then reviewed the agenda for this meeting.

Martin and Joe stated that plans for the March meeting are nearing finalization. Joe reminded the Committee the meeting will begin at 1 p.m. on October 18th, and the first speaker will be Secretary Shafer who will be giving general comments. This will be followed by remarks by Mr. Dan Dooley and Dr. Arden Bement in the early afternoon, followed by a general business meeting of the Board. During the reception the evening of the 18th Under Secretary Buchanan will be delivering his comments. The central theme for remarks made by Mr. Dooley and Drs. Bement and Buchanan will be on potential future activities directions of the Board. Joe then stated that he is engaging the administrators to advise how they would want to participate in the follow-up session Wednesday morning.

Walt Armbruster and Martin then updated the Committee on progress being made toward identifying a new Executive Director, since Joe's "term of office" ends with the current

Administration. Martin said that he and Walt Armbruster had reviewed the job description and had discussed the job requirements with Dr. Buchanan.

Daryl Lund commented that an update on the Relevancy and Adequacy report should be on the agenda for the spring meeting, and asked that time be set aside perhaps Wednesday morning for committees to meet. Martin suggested committees meet during breakfast on Wednesday and Thursday, and asked Shirley if she could arrange for some breakout rooms.

Daryl also said that he will not be able to make the meeting and asked that Martin appoint Alton Thompson as the co-Chair to present the update. [note: Alton Thompson has informed the Board office that he also will not be at the meeting. Dr. David Thomassen has agreed to present the Relevancy and Adequacy review.]

Ed Runge asked that a copy of the last Peer Review report be sent to him. Martin commented that members of the Board who are on the Peer Review Committee should plan to attend one or more reviews. Daryl Lund stated that he is Chairing the panel for New Products and Assessments which will be held on Tuesday and Wednesday in Beltsville MD. Daryl suggested we discuss the process at the March meeting with Ed Knipling.

It was concluded that all committee's should be offered a chance to report at the March meeting.

III. Update on Reports and Recommendations from the October Meeting

Martin stated that Joe and Shirley were nearing completion of the NAL and Organic Agriculture reports. Joe commented that he expected the NAL report to be released on 2/29, and the Organic report on 3/5. Joe also stated that he would wait for comments from the Executive Committee on the "Rural Entrepreneurialship" until 3/7, and hoped to have it ready for release to the whole Board by 3/21.

Martin asked the Committee how much time they felt they needed to review these reports. It was generally concluded that five working days would be sufficient, but ten would be better to allow for folks on travel etc.

IV. Progress in Rreparing for Remainder of the March meeting.

Joe informed the committee that Mr. John Riordan, a professional facilitator from Cindy Zook Associates, was hired to assist the Wednesday morning session, when the four REE agency administrators will present their vision for each agency, and discussions will take place on how the Board can best help them achieve that vision.

Marianne Smith Edge reported that the "Educating the Future Workforce for Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Areas" work group has assembled an agenda for that focus session, which will begin the afternoon of the 19th and end that evening with a reception speaker. Marianne then reviewed each speaker and the subject they would cover.

A question was then raised regarding past responses from the Department to Board recommendations. Martin commented that the Department may have only responded one or two times previously to Dr. Buchanan's policy of responding to each report, which he commended as being very helpful.

V. Update on the Farm Bill

Joe Dunn was asked to brief the Committee on the status of the Farm Bill. Joe stated that to the best of his knowledge, no House conference committee members had been appointed. He also reported that some circles believe we will get a Farm Bill within three weeks, others believe it won't happen until next year.

Martin asked Joe to find out which categories on the Board would be eliminated if the Senate version passed. Joe said he would find out and report them at the next meeting.

VI. Planning for the Fall Meeting

Shirley Morgan reported that the contract had been signed with the Sheraton Four Points (1201 K Street NW) to hold the fall meeting there Nov. 12 -14, 2008. Martin stated that he will ask the Board for potential Focus Topics for the fall meeting at the meeting next month.

VII. Other Issues

Joe Dunn asked if there has been any decision regarding where to hold the Specialty Crop meeting. Walt Armbruster said that would be one of the topics for discussion at the next meeting of the Specialty Crop Committee.

Daryl Lund commented that the Boards website was not up to date regarding meeting minutes and agendas, and that some recent reports were missing. Daryl also asked that old reports or a list of old reports, going back to the establishment of the Board, be listed on the web site. Joe and Shirley said they are working with NAL to keep the website up to date, and that they will attempt to locate the old reports for posting. It may have been, however, that the electronic versions of these reports were not transferred when the web host changed from a private company to the Federal Govt. Shirley stated that it should be possible, however, to find the originals of those reports and rescan them in for posting. This may take some time though, and it was generally agreed that if the Board was appropriated more money, some of that could be used for improved data management.

Hearing no other comments, Martin adjourned the meeting at 1:15 p.m.

MARTIN MASSENGALE
Chair

JOSEPH DUNN
Acting, Executive Director

APPROVAL BY ADVISORY BOARD: _____
Date

Initials
Chair

Initials
Executive Director