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

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MINUTES
Executive Committee Conference Call

Friday, May 6, 2011 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. EST.

Executive Committee Members Present: Jean-Mari Peltier (Chair), Dr. Mary Wagner (Vice Chair), Dr. Carrie Castille, Dr. Nancy Childs, Dr. Nancy Cox, Dr. Steve Daley-Laursen, and Leo Holt

Executive Committee Members Absent: Terry Wolf and Dr. Dennis Heldman

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

Others Present: Carol Keiser-Long

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 and Welcome from Chair and Review of Previous Meeting Minutes

- Jean-Mari Peltier noted that the April meeting of the Executive Committee was cancelled due to its proximity to the NAREEE Board meeting at the end of March 2011.

- Rob Burk stated that the minutes of the March meeting of the Board were ready for distribution.

- Those members on the conference call voted by unanimous consent to have Rob Burk distribute the minutes of the Executive Committee by email in the future for approval so as to expedite their distribution to the full Board.

III. Comments from the Under Secretary of Research, Education, and Economics

- Dr. Catherine Woteki, Under Secretary was unable to attend the Executive Committee Conference Call due to a prior commitment.

Updates on Committee Activities and/or Reports

IV. Renewable Energy Committee (REC)

- Carol Keiser-Long and Dr. Carrie Castille attended the 2011 International BIOMASS Conference & Expo on May 2-5, 2011 in St. Louis, Missouri and stated that there were over 1,000 participants at the meeting. There was a lot of involvement of the private sector. The tours were interesting and informative. Anheuser Busch was one of the participants at the Conference. They also toured a waste site and an energy facility that does R&D Stock and Applications of Science Research. Carol will select a couple of presentations to send to the committee.

- The REC will have a meeting in Washington, DC on July 14, 2011. The committee will review a draft of its annual report. Carol Keiser-Long reported that the REE White Paper has effectively in identifying what the REC has recommended. It captured some of the gaps on what strategic matters need to be addressed.

- A question was raised on whether technology from the private sector was behind, duplicated, or not answering the questions concerning feed stock production?

- Dr. Carrie Castille stated that she thought there was a gap in the description and, or involvement with Universities in the REE White Papers. She noted that there is an opportunity to improve the connection between ARS and Universities/Industry to let them know what we can do and have done.

- Carol Keiser-Long felt that emphasis needs to be placed on the importance of stakeholder feedback in relation to the topics covered in the REE White Papers. We need to have more clarity on the best regional biomass options with an integrated system approach in terms of logistics and feed stock availability. ARS and REE need to raise the bar on their credibility by utilizing success stories to continue to let everyone know that research is important.

V. Specialty Crop Committee (SCC)

- Rob Burk stated that Dr. Walter Armbruster (Committee Chair) reported that edits to the FY 2010 SCC report will be done by this weekend and distributed to the Board by Monday.

VI. Competitive Grants

- Dr. June Henton has been working with the Committee to outline a Committee Charge since the Board meeting in March.

- There was a discussion related to the involvement of relevant stakeholders with the SCRI review process. A comment was made that impacted industry stakeholders cannot be part of the review panel. The Specialty Crops Farm Bill Working Group is proposing a two step process – industry review for compact stakeholder for relevance and impact and the scientific panel to review for scientific merit. Jean-Mari Peltier suggested that the Competitive Grants committee review the list of factors which review panels are charged to consider, and seek comments on whether these are the right components to determine whether a grant has merit and should be funded. She expressed that she felt it would be helpful if Rob Burk would distribute that list of factors to the Committee, as well as the Executive Committee.

VII. Fall 2010 Meeting Report

- A version of the meeting report and its associated Executive Summary has been distributed to the working group for a final round of edits. The report will be supplied to the full board after that point. This report was distributed to the full board for review and approval in December 2010.

VIII. Fall 2011 meeting Planning

- Following an online poll of the membership a majority of the Board members are available on Nov 7-9, 2011 to attend a Board meeting in Washington, D.C.

- Rob Burk and Shirley Morgan-Jordan visited several hotels and the hotel that offered the best price for the date range selected by the majority of NAREEE members is the Mandarin Oriental Hotel in Washington, D.C. They offered hotel rooms at the government per diem rate, and the conference room costs were the lowest of all locations with availability, and facilities to meet the capacity needs of the Board.

IX. Relevancy and Adequacy

- Dr. Dennis Heldman is reviewing the previous reports of the Relevancy and Adequacy and is preparing a first draft of the annual report for distribution to the Committee. Once that process is completed, it will go the Executive Committee for review and approval. The report is to be finalized and sent to the REE Advisory Board Office by June.

X. Spring 2011 Meeting Review

- Dr. Steven Daley-Laursen will be developing a report related to the information covered by the panel on collaboration at the Spring Board meeting.

- Jean-Mari Peltier noted that she will be meeting with Dr. Woteki on behalf of the National Grape and Wine Initiative in the coming week to discuss the Grape and Wine industry serving as the "poster child" for collaboration with the USDA. The discussion with Dr. Woteki will be centered on the models discussed at the Spring meeting of the Board.

XI. Executive Director's Report

- Budget: The NAREEE Advisory Board has officially spent $213.322.00 dollars for FY2011. There are also a number of additional encumbered expenses that the Board has already committed to for funding in the fiscal year. When those committed expenses are accounted for the Board has unofficially spent $323,701.09 for FY 2011.

- Rob Burk noted that the Board should consider developing and submitting a review of the REE Action Plan by August. Members of the Executive Committee agreed to meet and review the action plan in late July or August in Washington, DC. Rob will poll the group for the best possible dates

- There was a brief explanation of the terms of service and nomination/appointment/re-appointment process for the NAREEE Board member terms ending Sept 30, 2011.

- A Federal Register Notice from the NAREEE Advisory Board Office was published to solicit nominations of members to the NAREEE Advisory Board. The eventual appointments/re-appointments will fill the 8 available positions on the Board. The deadline for nominations is July 12, 2011.

XII. Other

- A member questioned if there had been an official response from REE related to the comments by the individual members of the Board on the REE White Papers. Rob Burk noted that Dr. Woteki asked Rob Burk, at the REE Staff meeting, to relate her thanks to the Board for their efforts. She noted that there were a number of good points provided. Rob Burk questioned the Executive Committee on whether they would like a formal response letter. There was not a consensus by the Committee on whether a formal response was necessary. Jean-Mari Peltier echoed Dr. Woteki's thanks to the Board members for their work.

- An announcement was made that Dr. Beachy will be leaving the USDA. Dr. Chavonda Jacobs-Young will serve as the Acting Director of NIFA until a new appointment is made.

- The members present made unanimous decision to have Rob Burk formulate a letter of

"Best Wishes" to Dr. Beachy from the full Board, signed by Jean-Mari Peltier (Chair) on behalf of the Board, concerning his departure.

The next Executive Committee conference call will be Friday, June 3, 2011 at 11:00 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Shirley Morgan-Jordan

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Jean-Mari Peltier
Chair

_____
Rob Burk
Executive Director

APPROVAL BY ADVISORY BOARD: _____
Date

_____ _____
Initials Initials
Chair Executive Director