

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

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## DRAFT MINUTES Executive Committee Conference Call Tuesday, May 15, 2007 12:00 Noon – 1:00 p.m., e.s.t.

**Executive Committee Members Present:** Martin Massengale, Chair; George Hoffman, Vice Chair, Marty Apple, Walter Armbruster, Carol Keiser, Daryl Lund, and David Thomassen, Mary Wagner

**Executive Committee Members Absent:** James Zuiches

**Other Members Present:** John Cunningham

**Others Present:** Dr. Gale Buchanan, REE, Under Secretary and (Ex-officio)

**Board Staff Participation:** Joseph Dunn, Executive Director, NAREEE Advisory Board, Shirley Morgan-Jordan, Program Support Coordinator.



### I. WELCOME AND UPDATE

Joseph Dunn called roll of the Executive Committee members.

Martin Massengale, Chair of the NAREEE Advisory Board provided some introductory remarks and welcomed Executive Committee members and others on the call. Martin briefly touched on the Specialty Crop Workshop he had attended with Walt Armbruster in Arlington, VA. Martin stated that he had visited Capitol Hill concerning the Specialty Crop Committee and the Farm Bill.

Dr. Buchanan, who called in from Iowa, thanked everyone on the Executive Conference Call for attending. He stated that the Administrations version of the Farm Bill has gone through a number of hearings and that he, along with representatives from NIFA, Create 21, and the Research Programs met with Research Subcommittee of the House to speak about the Farm Bill's research title. He also stated that the Department (USDA) is working to draft the appropriate language because things will begin to move rapidly soon and expressed his concern that certain issues such as agricultural research and education may not be getting enough attention. Dr. Buchanan informed the Committee that he will be attending a bioenergy conference in Brazil the week after next, one of

three trips to Brazil he intends to take this summer. One of the Board members asked Dr. Buchanan if the Danforth proposal, Create 21, or NIFA has come out with a unified voice or plan. Dr. Buchanan stated that he supports the Administrations approach.

## **II. Status of Previous Meeting Reports (presented by Joe Dunn)**

### **► Specialty Crop**

The Specialty Crop Report was completed on April 30, 2007 and submitted to the Secretary of Agriculture on May 9, 2007. One week later, the report was sent to the House and Senate Committees/Sub-committees on Agriculture and Appropriations.

### **► Food Safety Work Group Report**

The Food Safety Work Group Report is in draft stage and is currently in the hands of the Executive Committee for review. Joe asked that any changes/edits be sent directly to him for incorporation into the report.

### **► Relevancy and Adequacy of Funding**

The last draft of the Relevancy and Adequacy Funding Report has been sent to the full Board for reply by May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2007. After finally editing to include any additional remarks of the Board the report will be sent to the Secretary and the appropriate Senate and House sub-committees.

### **► NAL Ad hoc Working Group**

Martin spoke of delaying the meeting of the NAL Ad hoc committee until June due to a report currently in draft form and under review by the Board. He commented that a meeting of the whole working group would be instrumental in developing more detailed information about the NAL and a better understanding of what the committee has been asked to do. Martin suggested that the results of this next meeting could be transmitted via summary document rather than a full report because the impact would be the same.

## **III. Updates of Protocol and Review Report**

John Cunningham explained how the Review and Protocol Sub-Committee reports are used by the agencies as part of its budget-performance cycle. He explained that these documents, as well as progress reports on competitive and other grants, are the primary source of information for CSREES to evaluate the relevancy, quality, and performance of its portfolios of programs in support of agency planning and evaluation and as required by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). John stated that these portfolio evaluations have identified performance, resource, and management gaps, as well as the successes of CSREES funding and are being used in strategic planning, hiring, and budget decisions and that the plans of work and annual reports are key to this process. Also long-term relationships defined by formula-funded partnerships allow the capturing of outcomes (changes in knowledge, action, and condition) over time, while grants, being two to five years in duration, primarily result in outputs and outcomes as changes in knowledge.

John said that improvements in the design and collection of the plans of work and annual report have been described. Specifically, these are in transition from large, unstructured narratives to database support collection of planned programs, inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes that will greatly improve the utility of the plans and reports for planning, evaluation, and national program leadership. This has also resulted in a substantial reduction in burden on the recipients of this funding in preparing and submitting the plans and reports through improved design and reuse of previously submitted information. John stated that the first plans of work using the new format were received in June 2006; the first annual reports on these plans will be due in April 2008.

#### **IV. Update on Specialty Crop Meeting and Future Plans**

Walt Armbruster stated that he is collecting feedback from the committee on where they would like to hold the next Specialty Crop meeting. Walt plans to coordinate activities among the various groups for the meeting. Walt stated that a good time to have the Specialty Crop Meeting would be in late August or early September. Mary Wagner offered to host the meeting in California. Walt suggested that having the meeting in the summer tends to attract more Stakeholders, and that having the meeting in California would improve the chances of attracting more stakeholders as well. Walt also stated that he had a range of suggestions in prioritizing the focus in the Farm Bill if it passes with mandatory money for specialty crop research.

Martin suggested piggy backing an Executive Committee meeting on the Specialty Crop Meeting.

#### **V. Discussion on Focus Topics for Fall Meeting in October 2007**

Martin said upon polling several Board members that “Rural Communities and Extension” and/or “Organic Agriculture” were popular topics. A discussion ensued on employing a title such as “The Impact of Human Health” that wouldn’t cover any specific program or organization but it’s vagueness would allow such topics as animal disease, plants disease, health to be discussed.

Dr. Buchanan stated that the Senate was asking a lot of questions concerning “Organic” foods and suggested that USDA/REE and the Board get ahead of this subject before another group is formed. He also stated that there will be a Farm Bill Forum on this topic shortly. Dr. Buchanan hopes that there will be more attention given to organic farming practices and that the REE agencies are interested in getting more coordination around this topic.

One of the Board members stated that in the area of economic risk for food borne microbes and food borne disease we should also integrate our activities with DHS and NIH and create working groups to be called upon to develop action plans. We need to study risk assessment, risk prevention, and risk mitigation.

#### **VI. Website Discussion**

Joe Dunn stated that our website development is making progress. He asked all the members to send an updated phone numbers if they have one to post on the website. He also told the committee that his office would send the website address to the full board.

**VII. Informational and Other Items**

The meeting adjourned at 1:10 p.m.

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MARTIN MASSENGALE  
Chair

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JOSEPH DUNN  
Acting, Executive Director

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

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Initials  
Chair

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Initials  
Executive Director