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

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**MINUTES**
**Executive Committee Conference Call**

**Thursday, July 7, 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 Cox, Dr. Dennis Heldman, Leo Holt and Terry Wolf

**Executive Committee Members Absent:** Dr. Nancy Childs, Dr. Steve Daley-Laursen

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

**Others Present:** Carol Keiser-Long

**Others Absent:** Walt Armbruster

## I. Roll Call of Executive Committee Members and Attendees, and Previous Meeting Minutes

- 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 provided welcoming remarks to the Committee.

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

- Dr. Catherine Woteki, REE Under Secretary was unable to attend the Executive Committee Conference Call due to a prior commitment.
- Caren Wilcox asked Rob Burk to relate to the Committee that things are happening so fast, that the previously discussed questions being developed by the Under Secretary's Office wouldn't be relevant due to the constant flux.
- The core functions of the Agencies are currently being discussed and Rob Burk suggested that Board input should focus on helping to identify those most vital activities of the REE Agencies.

## IV. Updates on Committee Activities and/or Reports

### Renewable Energy

- Carol Keiser-Long stated that there is an upcoming REC Meeting, July 14, 2011 in Washington, DC. Everything is set and Dr. Ann Bartuska is scheduled to speak concerning how the next farm bill may impact renewable energy activities of the USDA. There will be speakers from all four of the REE Agencies. Carol stated that the REC members will be reviewing the draft annual report of the committee, and planning for the next report. The REC members would like to know what the REE Agencies envision the role of the REC to be.

### Specialty Crop Committee

- Dr. Walt Armbruster was unable to attend the conference call.
- Rob Burk stated that the Advisory Board Office has been reaching out to stakeholders in both locations (East Lansing & Grand Rapids) Michigan to gain interest and see how many plan on attending the meeting. Senator Stabenow won't be in attendance but she may be represented by a staffer. It has been difficult identifying an ideal time to hold the listening sessions.
- Michigan State University, Interim Dean Dr. Buehler, and a variety of commodity representatives will be speaking.
- Jean-Mari Peltier indicated that representatives of NIFA would like to attend and would like to know if the SCC could also hold a meeting in Washington, DC for those unable to attend the Michigan sessions.

## V. Updates from Work Groups/Subcommittees

### Competitive Grants

- Dr. June Henton (Committee Chair) was unable to attend the meeting.
- According to Jean-Mari Peltier a charge was developed and is now being edited for the committee. It's just a matter of getting the question finalized. We may not get appropriate answers in return to the many questions that are being asked. A question was asked if there should only be one charge used. There was a discussion regarding the need for subject matter experts to be represented on the panels evaluating grant applications.

- Rob Burk stated that when pulling together a committee, a balance plan is developed and that balance includes whether the appointees will be from scientific, non scientific, academic, etc. backgrounds. Jean-Mari Peltier suggested that a conference call needs to be set and members of the committee can discuss the Committee charge. It was suggested to have Deborah Sheely speak to the committee concerning the competitive grants peer review committees.
- One of the Board members stated that people feel disenfranchised concerning Competitive Grants. There are ongoing concerns of how the panel works

**2010 Meeting Report Distribution Report**

**Specialty Crop Report**

- The Specialty Crop Report has been distributed to the REE Administrators and it is currently being distributed to Congress.

**Fall 2011 Meeting Planning**

- Rob Burk reported that the hotel for the Fall NAREEE Advisory Board meeting has been confirmed. A contract was signed holding the space for the meeting. Travel planning for the Fall meeting will be sent out early. The Board needs to establish a meeting topic. Some topics that were mentioned were: 1.) Food Security & Obesity; 2.) Competitive Grants & Panel Process.
- Volunteers are being solicited for the 2011 Fall Planning Committee.
- Rob Burk suggested that perhaps the Board should look at the core competencies/functions of the REE Agencies and provide input on where the Board views the priorities to be. A discussion of the core competencies/functions of the REE Agencies took place. Dr. Mary Wagner cautioned the Board against doing "more of the same."
- Members of the Executive Committee questioned how the term "core competencies/functions" was being defined by the USDA in its internal evaluation process.
- Leo Holt suggested that if he still sees value in the original suggested topic of food security, nutrition, and childhood obesity.
- Terry Wolf also stated that the Farm Bill is being discussed early within Congress and that typically in the Farm Bill formulation the topics of Agricultural Research & Market Development are omitted until the end.
  The suggestion was made to put the Farm Bill on the agenda for the Fall meeting.
- A question was asked on what happened to the Productivity Paper. It was suggested that there was very little content in the REE White Papers related to productivity enhancing research. A suggestion was made to ask for REE input on the response to the report so that the Board could gauge whether of not the recommendations were worthwhile.
- It was also suggested that the focus of research is important but that many on the Board felt that extension and education also need to be discussed by the Board, and may have unintentionally been omitted in the last year.

- Terry Wolf noted a need to address the issues related to the "early crop" reports of NASS. He had heard a number of complaints from the industry about the negative impact of incorrect data on the market.

## Relevancy and Adequacy

- Dr. Heldman reported that a draft of the Relevancy and Adequacy Report was distributed on May 5, 2011 asking for comments to be submitted back to the NAREEE Advisory Board Office by Wednesday, May 18, 2011. Dr. Milo Shult did have some excellent points concerning the report. This is just a start for the report and other issues need to be discussed.

## VI. Executive Director's Report

- Rob Burk went over all the upcoming open positions up for nomination that will expire September 30, 2011. The open positions are: Category B, D, E, H, J, K, and M. He reminded the member that if they are re-applying they must send in an completed form AD-755, and new nomination letters. He invited the members to nominate additional candidates to the Board, and to distribute the solicitation to their respective represented groups.
- Rob Burk reported that the number of nominations had been low, but they anticipate the number to increase dramatically near the deadline date of July 12, 2011.
- Dr. Steve Daley-Laursen will be submitting a draft report of the spring 2011 Meeting very soon.
- Leo Holt discussed the issue of "obesity". He recommended that a future meeting be held at the Jackson Laboratory (Sacramento, CA) which is focusing not only genetics but on human health.

***The next Executive Committee conference call will be Friday, August 5, 2011 at 11:00 a.m. Eastern Standard Time.***

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Shirley Morgan-Jordan

Jean-Mari Peltier
Chair

Rob Burk
Executive Director

APPROVAL BY ADVISORY BOARD: _____

Date

_____ _____

Initials Initials

Chair Executive Director