

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

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MINUTES

Executive Committee Conference Call
September 8, 2005
12:00-1:00 p.m., eastern daylight time

Joining the Executive Committee conference call today were: Martin Massengale, Chair; George Hoffman, Vice Chair; Cornelia Flora; Carol Keiser; Joseph Jen, Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics (REE), Ex-Officio; Merle Pierson, Deputy Under Secretary for REE; Deborah Hanfman, Executive Director; Shirley Morgan-Jordan, Program Support Coordinator; and Terry Van Doren, Director, Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs, REE.

Executive Committee members unable to attend were: Tonya Antle; Walter Armbruster; Jeff Armstrong; Tom Fretz; John Suttie.

I. WELCOME AND UPDATE

Dr. Martin Massengale, Chair, welcomed those members who were able to attend the conference call. He shared two items of interest. The Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns will be visiting Nebraska next week for a listening session on the upcoming 2007 farm bill. Dr. Massengale plans to attend this session.

Also, he said that Dr. John Cunningham, chair of a Board Working Group for Advising CSREES will be contacting Dr. Hefferan soon re: CSREES-related activities. [This Working Group's role is to assist the Board in its congressional mandate to provide advice on *Evaluation Protocols/State Plans of Work; Merit Review Procedures; and Making Competitive Grants* (ref. 1998 AREERA, Sec. 202&225 and 242,243&244 of Title II; Sec. 103a of Title I; and Sec. 403&406 of Title IV)].

Dr. Joseph Jen, Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics, USDA, said that the Department has been very involved in recovery work and assistance from the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina. More than 1,700 USDA employees are in New Orleans. USDA has been coordinating with other federal departments to support the immediate and long-term needs of those affected by the hurricane. The Southern Regional Research Center of ARS located in New Orleans has 500 scientists and other people there. The area is under 10 feet of water and the Center has been severely damaged. The USDA Financial Center was damaged also; its employees and operations moved to alternative sites in Philadelphia and Texas before the tragedy. Future paychecks should be received on time as a result. The new ARS Southern Horticultural Research Laboratory in Poplarville, Mississippi is the only building still standing in town.

REE agencies have been involved in assisting those impacted by Hurricane Katrina, including NASS, and CSREES programs involving national nutrition and food projects and the Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN). Dr. Jen said that there has been discussion about emergency funds for relocation, recovery and other disaster needs as a result of the hurricane. There are still 11 employees of USDA, of whom we have not received news.

Dr. Jen said that the FY 2007 Budget Proposal for USDA is almost complete and ready to go to OMB. The USDA budget for 2007 has a low target, but REE felled well. Dr. Jen said he was very pleased that REE was spared of big cuts and there are good numbers for the National Research Initiative (NRI). Dr. Merle Pierson said that he had nothing to add at this time.

II. ADVISORY BOARD MEETING !OCTOBER 18-20, 2005 (Washington DC)

Mrs. Carol Keiser, Chair, Program Planning Committee walked members through the draft agenda and highlighted key activities for the October 18-20, 2005 Advisory Board Meeting. The Agenda for Specialty Crop Listening Session for October 20-21, 2005, developed by the Board's Specialty Crop Committee, chaired by Dr. Walt Armbruster, is currently attached to the end of the Advisory Board's Meeting Agenda. Carol thanked Debbie Hanfman, Executive Director of the NAREEE Advisory Board, for her time and assistance in pulling together the detailed agenda. Both the Board Meeting and Listening Session will be held at the same meeting location: Best Western Capitol Skyline Hotel, 10th I Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. [Carol referred members to draft Agenda #6]

Carol noted that the new member Orientation Session from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 18th is just prior to the full Advisory Board Meeting, which begins at 1:30 p.m. Interested incumbent Board members are welcome to attend this Orientation Session, but it is optional. [At the same time of the Orientation Session, Dr. Tom Fretz, who was unable to be on this call, wants to hold a separate small pre-meeting briefing of the Ad Hoc Task Force on the National Agricultural Library to review the group's task.]

Following general business during the full Advisory Board Meeting (at approximately 2:40 p.m.), Dr. Jen will be responding to the Board's former Recommendation Reports to the Secretary that addressed three important areas:

- 1) Board's Mandated Annual Review on *Relevance to National Priorities and Adequacy of Funding*;
- 2) Board's Advice from the March 2005 Meeting & Focus Session on *Food and Nutrition Research, Extension, Education and Economic: Effectiveness of the Planning and Execution Process*; and
- 3) Board's Advice from last October 2004 Meeting and Focus Session on *Protecting our Food System from Current and Emerging Animal and Plant Diseases and Pathogens: Implications for Research, Education, Extension and Economics*.

There will be Board Q&A and Discussion following the REE responses to the above recommendations. Dr. Jen said that the full responses will be provided to the Advisory Board Office in advance for inclusion in Board members' briefing books. His verbal response during the meeting will focus only on the highlights to save time for Board Q&A.

The end of the day's agenda items are expected to include comments from Dr. John Goldberg, Professional Staff Member from the House Committee on Agriculture, U.S. Congress, who has been invited to share some perspectives on agricultural research, extension, and education with respect to the Board and the REE agencies. At the March 2005 Board Meeting, Dr. Goldberg provided important comments regarding the Board's role and activities, and stated the high importance of agencies to proactively share their major activities and/or modifications in programs that would be of interest to the Board from an advisory standpoint. Then Dr. Jeff Armstrong, Dean, Michigan State University, will share some perspectives on the upcoming 2007 farm bill.

A working evening reception of the Board will be held on Tuesday, October 18 to kick-off three Focus Topics scheduled for the next day: **1) Emerging Diseases and Zoonotic Pathogens** (led by Focus Leader Dr. Joseph DiPietro); **2) Changes in Rural America and Links to REE** (led by Focus Leader, Dr. Cornelia Flora); and **3) Strengthening Partnerships** (led by Focus Leader, Dr. Tom Fretz). Mrs. Carol Keiser will serve as the evening moderator. For the first part of the evening, each Focus Leader will address their respective topic in brief with the intent of engaging and stimulating the Board members and audience on the essentiality of these topics to REE and USDA. The Overarching Theme for these Focus Topics is, *CRITICAL CROSSROADS IN AGRICULTURE: IMPLICATIONS & EXPECTATIONS FOR RESEARCH, EDUCATION, EXTENSION & ECONOMICS*. The objective is to stimulate the audience in their thoughts, critical questions, and specific needs in these areas.

The second part of the evening will highlight the National Agricultural Library (NAL) of USDA and its important role in meeting USDA's Strategic Goals. Conference call attendees interjected questions or comments during Carol's walk-through of the agenda. Ms. Deborah Hanfman, Executive Director, asked if the second part of the evening reception on NAL should also include some discussion that would tie into the three Focus Topics discussed in the first part. There were a couple of members who thought this would be a good idea. Dr. Jen and Dr. Pierson pointed out that the NAL did not have the time or staff to do this and that the key issue is to discuss NAL's services and role within the Department and nationally.

Then Carol Keiser went over the issues that would be discussed the following day, Wednesday October 19, under each of the three Focus Topics, along with their respective objectives. Focus Leaders of the Board's Planning Committee for this meeting would moderate each of their respective sessions (each approximately 3 hours). Dr. Cornelia Flora asked if two professional colleagues could attend the luncheon presentation. Ms. Hanfman said that the meeting was open to the public and that they were welcome to attend during the meeting; for the more specific question regarding food, she had been in touch recently with the Office of General Counsel and would talk to the office soon and let her know.

Carol Keiser said that the wrap-up of the Focus Topics would be on Thursday morning, October 20th. Each Focus Leader will be reporting on the major points and recommendations heard in the last day-and-a-half. The Board meeting will adjourn at 9:00 p.m.

III. SPECIALTY CROP COMMITTEE'S LISTENING SESSION !OCTOBER 20-21, 2005 (Washington DC)

Walter Armbruster, Chair, Specialty Crop Committee, was out of the country during this conference call. It was noted that he and the Specialty Crop Committee members have been working hard on the Listening Session agenda for October 20-21 which will follow the full Advisory Board Meeting in Washington, DC. They have made progress on speakers for the panel sessions and planning activities are moving ahead nicely.

IV. ADVISORY BOARD NOMINATIONS: UPDATE

Dr. Joseph Jen said that he received the package of nominations last week [Friday a.m., September 2, 2005]. He and Dr. Pierson are working with the White House Liaison's Office to decide if one of the categories, which did not have an adequate pool of nominees that would fit the "non-research function," should be filled as part of the current nomination process. Also, "Category O.1994 Equity in Land-Grant Institutions" is currently vacant as a result of a member's resignation, for personal reasons, that occurred after the formal solicitation process for FY 2006 members. Dr. Jen also noted that there was a lot of competition under category "M.1862 Land-Grant Colleges and Universities." Dr. Jen also said that pool of overall nominees was short on ethnic minorities; however, there was an increase in female representatives.

Should any of the members seeking reappointment not be selected by the Secretary, Dr. Jen invited them to the October 18-20, 2005 Board meeting.

Other Items of Interest

Dr. Martin Massengale said that he is working with the Secretary of Agriculture's scheduling secretary to see if he has time to come to either Meeting or Listening Session and meet with the group. Dr. Merle Pierson said that the Secretary is very good at making appearances at these types of events.

There were no additional items for discussion by the Executive Committee.
The Chair thanked all on the call for participating.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Martin Massengale, Chair

Deborah T. Hanfman, Executive Director

Initials following Advisory Board Approval

DATE APPROVED BY BOARD

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