

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

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DRAFT MINUTES Executive Committee Conference Call

Thursday, December 11, 2008, 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. EST.

Executive Committee Members Present: Dr. Martin Massengale, Chair; Mrs. Carol Keiser-Long; Dr. Walt Armbruster, Dr. Mary Wagner, Dr. Tom Rosol, Dr. Fred Cholick, Mr. Terry Wolf

Executive Committee Members Absent: Dr. Ed Runge, Mrs. Jean-Mari Peltier; Dr. Gale Buchanan, REE Under Secretary (ex-officio)

Invited Attendees Present: Research Education and Extension Office (REEO) Division Chiefs: Mrs. Charlotte Kirk-Baer, Dr. Catherine Parks, Dr. Mary McPhail-Gray, Dr. Robbin Shoemaker, Dr. Mark Walbridge, Dr. Jill Auburn

NAREEE Board Staff: Mrs. Karen Hunter, Executive Director, Mrs. Shirley Morgan Jordan Program Support Coordinator



I. Roll Call of Members and Invitees

Karen Hunter, Executive Director called roll of the Executive Committee members and asked the guests to introduce themselves.

II. Comments and Welcome

Dr. Martin Massengale welcomed the group and noted that since the last meeting, he'd prepared and sent out the appointment memos for the Protocol and Relevancy and Adequacy of Funding Committees for Fiscal Year 2009. The Protocol Committee is chaired by John Cunningham. Other members are: Ricardo Chavez Rel, Jim Clark, Alton Thompson, and Jim Zuiches. The Relevancy and Adequacy of Funding Committee is chaired by Ed Runge. Other members are: Nancy Cox, Tom Rosol, and Terry Wolf. Massengale also appointed several NAREEE Board members to the Planning Committee for the NAREEE-Farm Foundation Joint Symposium on Agricultural Research. Neil Conklin, President of Farm Foundation, will also appoint members to the Committee representing Farm Foundation. The NAREEE-appointed members are co-chair

Walt Armbruster, Fred Cholick, Joe Layton, Jean-Mari Peltier, and Mary Wagner. Massengale thanked the committee members for their willingness to serve.

Dr. Massengale noted that Bruce Mertz has been selected to fill in as temporary Executive Director during Karen Hunter's absence.

III. Comments from Dr. Buchanan

Dr. Buchanan was not available for the teleconference.

IV. Update on Committee Activities and Reports

Specialty Crop Committee Activities

Walt Armbruster reported that plans were in place for the 2009 Specialty Crops Listening Session on March 13. The session will be held in the Orlando, FL area at the Florida Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association. He also indicated that Karen Hunter was preparing notes from the 2008 listening sessions in Washington and New York States so that he could be preparing a draft report to be submitted in early March 2009 or later. The intent is to wait to submit the report until the new administration is in place and to lay the groundwork to submit future reports early in the year following the calendar year in which the work was completed.

Renewable Energy Committee Activities

Carol Keiser-Long reported that the Renewable Energy Committee was planning a face-to-face meeting in Washington, DC on Friday, December 19. An earlier date was proposed, but was not convenient to many members. She noted that 90% of the committee will be in attendance. Invited speakers for the meeting include Roger Conway with USDA's Office of the Chief Economist and Jim Fischer, who is active in the REE strategic energy science plan. The speakers have looked over the materials prepared by the committee thus far. The Renewable Energy Committee will be discussing subject matter areas with REE and delegating responsibility to specific committee members to write various portions of the report. The goal is to determine the general direction and key priority areas that REE needs to pay the closest attention.

The Renewable Energy Committee is also planning a stakeholder summit in late May of 2009, most likely in the Midwestern region of the U.S.

Keiser-Long and Massengale also attended the Cellulosic Ethanol Summit in Coral Gables, FL in November. The meeting was very production-oriented, centering on conversion technologies, and problems, gaps, and perceived changes that must occur before cellulosic ethanol can be competitive. The meeting was highly industry-dominated, with little governmental participation. Massengale also pointed out that cellulosic conversion has been receiving a lot of attention and support lately.

In December, Keiser-Long attended the Biomass Research and Development Initiative Technical Advisory Committee's (BRDI TAC) meeting in Washington, DC and presented an update on

Committee activities. The chair of the BRDI TAC commended the Renewable Energy Committee for taking the initiative to communicate with the BRDI TAC.

V. Farm Foundation Planning Committee Appointments

See earlier comments from Dr. Massengale regarding appointment of NAREEE representation to the Farm Foundation Planning Committee. Walt Armbruster reported that Neil Conklin (Farm Foundation) has identified four potential participants for the Planning Committee and that two had confirmed their interest and willingness to serve. A conference call is being tentatively set up for next week. Conklin and Armbruster have discussed a rough outline and overview of the program, consistent with the goals set forth in the proposal. They plan to draft a series of potential quarter-day sessions and present them to the Planning Committee for feedback. The Farm Foundation has reserved the Press Club as the location for the meeting; it can accommodate 100 people. Dr. Massengale suggested inviting the new Secretary and Under Secretary for REE to attend.

VI. FY 09 Executive Committee meeting dates/times (conference calls)

After some discussion, it was decided that the Executive Committee will meet on the second Thursday of the month from noon until 1:00 PM Eastern time, via teleconference.

VII. Future Meeting Dates for Committee and Full Board Meetings

Shirley Morgan-Jordan reported that the spring full Board meeting is scheduled for April 28-30, 2009 at the Doubletree Hotel in Washington, DC. It was suggested to set aside some time during the April meeting to converse with the new REEO Division Chiefs and also to have a debriefing session from the NAREEE-Farm Foundation meeting on April 28. Mary McPhail-Gray suggested trying to meet with the Board earlier than the April meeting so that the Board could provide feedback and input into the REE Roadmap. The Executive Committee decided to try and set up a meeting at USDA for late January or early February. Karen Hunter will poll the group and identify a potential date. Charlotte Kirk-Baer recognized that the meeting was a good opportunity for the Board to provide important input by bringing expertise from the categories they represent.

The fall full Board meeting is scheduled for October 28-30 at the Madison Hotel. Shirley is investigating dates/availability for the spring 2010 full Board meeting. Currently she is checking for availabilities the second and third weeks in March.

Walt Armbruster reported that the Specialty Crops Committee is planning a listening session in the Orlando, Florida area on March 13, 2009.

Carol Keiser-Long reported that the Renewable Energy Committee is tentatively planning their first stakeholder meeting for late spring of 2009 (possibly in May) at a yet to be determined Midwestern location.

Dr. Massengale reminded the Executive Committee that they are invited and welcome to attend either or both of these subcommittee meetings, but that they are not required to do so.

VIII. Introduction of new REEO Division Chiefs

The REEO Division Chiefs commented on their work to date and stated that they hoped to accomplish three things during the conference call: 1) to identify themselves, 2) to explore ways in which REE can work with the Board, and 3) to determine a date to meet in person. The REEO Division Chiefs noted that they work as a team to identify barriers to coordination of programs. They will rely on the Board to provide input from the various category areas. Dr. Massengale suggested that one item the REEO might consider working on is how to increase the visibility of REE programs. Charlotte Kirk-Baer noted that science was a high priority for the REEO Division Chiefs and that they hope to cultivate a good working relationship with the next Under Secretary. Dr. Armbruster pointed out that at the recent Farm Foundation conference on world food supply there was a call for white papers on high priority topics. He volunteered to see if these papers would be something appropriate and useful to share with the REEO Division Chiefs. The REEO Division Chiefs requested a contact list of the Executive Committee members. Karen Hunter indicated she would provide this information. The REEO office is located in the USDA South Building on the third floor. The Division Chiefs’ offices are located together with an adjacent conference room.

Carol Keiser-Long complimented the Division Chiefs for taking the initiative to meet with the Executive Committee via teleconference and in person. Martin Massengale reiterated that the Board would like to cultivate a good working relationship with the REEO Division Chiefs, and cautioned them that the Board is advisory in nature, not policy-making or enforcing.

IX. Other

There were no additional reports.

The meeting adjourned at 1:20 p.m.

MARTIN MASSENGALE
Chair

Karen Hunter
Executive Director

APPROVAL BY ADVISORY BOARD: _____
Date

Initials
Chair

Initials
Executive Director