

**ESCOP Science & Technology**  
**Call Notes: 4 pm ET, January 23, 2017**  
**215-446-3656, ACCESS CODE: 1442561**

**Committee Members:**

<p><b>Chair:</b> Marikis Alvarez (ARD)</p> <p><b>Delegates:</b> Ken Grace (WAAESD) David Thompson (Chair-elect; WAAESD) Joe Colletti (NCRA) Deb Hamernik (NCRA) Cameron Faustman (NERA) Adel Shirmohammadi (NERA) Nathan McKinney (SAAESD) Harald Scherm (SAAESD) John Yang (ARD) Ed Buckner (ARD)</p> <p><b>Executive Vice-Chair</b> Jeff Jacobsen (NCRA ED) Chris Hamilton (NCRA AD; Recorder)</p>	<p><b>Liaisons:</b> Terry Nelsen (ERS) TBD (OSTP) Robert Matteri (ARS) Doug Walsh (Pest Mgmt Subcom) Edwin Price (ICOP) Dwayne Cartmell (Social Sci Subcom) Parag Chitnis (NIFA) Denise Eblen (NIFA)</p>
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**Participants:** Marikis Alvarez, Ken Grace, David Thompson, Joe Colletti, Deb Hamernik, Adel Shirmohammadi, Ed Buckner, Parag Chitnis, Alton Thompson, Brian Scheffler (ARS), Jeff Jacobsen, Chris Hamilton (recorder)

**Action Items:**

1. Approval of October 24, 2016 Call Notes
2. Finalize an S&T recommendation to ESCOP concerning the formation of a data management issues working group to interface across universities, USDA ARS and NIFA.
3. Jeff will provide Chris with an updated version of the NIPMCC Rules of Operation to post on the ESCOP website.

**Call Notes:**

4. Approval of October 24, 2016 Call Notes – Approved
5. NIFA Update, Parag Chitnis
  - a. Data initiative launched in October at the Chicago meeting, with results of several workshop proposals being submitted such as on small farm data, animal genomics data, plant phenotyping, food ontology; how to make Ag data available, etc. Results from these workshops will help to inform FY18 requirements. Still looking for clarification from new administration before doing press releases.

- b. Open data policy, data management plan requirements will soon apply to all NIFA grants; there is an open question as to how the data management policies apply to research using capacity funds.
6. ARS Big Data overview with guest Dr. Brian Scheffler to complement our previous discussion of C-FARE's "Advancing U.S. Agricultural Competitiveness with Big Data and Agricultural Economic Market Information, Analysis, and Research" at [http://www.cfare.org/UserFiles/file/10-7-2016BigData\\_v1.pdf](http://www.cfare.org/UserFiles/file/10-7-2016BigData_v1.pdf)
- a. ARS conducted an assessment of its current IT systems and data management identified issues with moving and computation of large datasets. From this assessment, ARS developed a five-year plan for data management. Brian will try to obtain the assessment and five-year plan information to share with this committee.
  - b. ARS had no access to larger computer systems for large-scale computation, so they have partnered with a high performance computer cluster, located in an APHIS facility in Ames, IA. IA State helps maintain the cluster, so costs are reduced. ARS also works with the National Ag Library (NAL) for archiving and curation of their data and publications.
  - c. ARS has many scientists needing access to and training with complex computational systems. ARS is developing training workshops to help with this, which also will hopefully create community and support networks.
  - d. Images (and modeling efforts, phenotypic data) hold a significant risk of swamping data systems and storage and must be considered when developing data management plans.
  - e. Initial data needs to go into systems correctly from the start (i.e. using correct naming conventions, harmonizing data, providing metadata), to save time down the road.
  - f. A place to start may be with high throughput facilities and LTAR sites. A uniform challenge across all research communities and agencies are how to pay for this.
  - g. Further S&T discussion with the group focused on partnering with other groups (public and private), creating communities, collaborations, training, and consistency of data handling (good data management practices regardless of specific research thrust). Empowering our scientists, as well as graduate students, and helping them to avoid mundane tasks are key. In addition, there is a general recognition that many universities are forming groups/units to address on their campus and several are involved in multi-institutional efforts.
  - h. Please contact Brian if you have any further questions.
7. ARS Update, Robert Matteri – Bob was not able to join today's call.
8. Results/Q&A on the NIPMCC Updated Rules of Operation
- a. 8 votes were cast (out of a possible 11)
  - b. All votes were in support of the updated Rules
  - c. Jeff will send Chris the updated version to post on the ESCOP website, under the NIPMCC documents
9. Other:
- a. Agreement by the committee to create recommendations for ESCOP to consider the formation of a data management team or working group to address issues at universities and possibly to work with NIFA on best practices and workable policy recommendations
  - b. Joint Excellence in Multistate Research Award nomination from W & S regions. How should S&T address this? Consensus on the phone was to keep nominations as regional for now. Jeff will take this feedback back to EDs and the requesting AAs.
10. S&T horizon topics:

- a. <https://medium.com/@AgSecVilsack>. Nov article entitled Food and Ag Science Will Shape Our Future (<https://medium.com/usda-results/ch11-ad478971cba7#ocpnen1es>)
- b. <https://www.oecd.org/sti/inno/oecdreviewsofinnovationpolicy.htm>
- c. <http://www.ers.usda.gov/amber-waves/2016/november/us-agricultural-rd-in-an-era-of-falling-public-funding/>

Call adjourned at 4:06 pm CT