

ESCOP Social Sciences Subcommittee Meeting
February 21-22, 2017
Washington, DC

Location
APLU Building (Board Rm)
1307 New York Avenue, NW
Phone: 202.478.6040
<http://www.aplu.org>

Scheduled Topics and Presenters

Tuesday, February 21

- 8:00 AM Introductions, Review of Agenda, and Review of Minutes
1. Report to research dean, experiment station director
 2. Remind folks to make dinner reservations.
- 8:30 AM APLU Overview and Items on the Radar Screen
Ms. Wendy Fink, Associate Director Food, Agriculture, and Natural Resources
3. Provided overview of APLU structure and initiatives
 4. APLU connected to AAAE research agenda via Jack Elliott's involvement in the *Challenge of Change* initiative. Inclusion/equity and knowledge themes are cross-cutting.
 5. People in DC see agriculture as on discipline, not animal science, plant science, economics, etc.
 6. Supporters of Agriculture Research will be launching *Breakthroughs 2030*. What kind of funding is needed to fund a breakthrough in *photosynthesis*? **Who would be included from social sciences to sit on a committee like this?**
- 9:00 AM Data Science - NIFA
Dr. Parag Chitnis, Deputy Director for the Institute of Food Production and Sustainability, NIFA and Champion for NIFA's Big Data project
7. FACT – Food and Agriculture Cyberinformatics and Tools
 8. Lots of data are being generated
 9. Big data are differentially available
 10. Observational science → information science → predictive science
 11. Big data should be FAIR – findable, accessible, interoperable, re-usable
 12. Human → technology → data
 - a. Farmer decisions
 - b. Consumer decisions
 - c. Workforce development
 13. FY2017 workshops through AFRI Foundational Sciences Programs. How can data science help agricultural social sciences?
 14. FY2018 ready to fund areas that are ready to move forward with big data
 15. **Questions:**
 - a. **What are the actionable social, economic, and educational opportunities for investments?**
 1. **Digital competency in education and extension**
 2. **Asymmetric knowledge access (C-FARE report on data)**
 3. **Data value and privacy**
 - b. **What are the data infrastructure needs for social, behavioral, and economic sciences?**
 - 1.
 - c. **What are the policy needs for the access and use of social and economic data?**
 - 1.
 16. Big data/data science will be integrated into many NIFA RFA, not a separate

RFA.

17. How do we improve the quality of data that exists?
 - a. What are the challenges with big data?
 - b. How do we alleviate anxieties of sharing data?
 - c. Inconvenient data = mysterious data + mysterious collection + mysterious logarithms
 - d. How can we avoid making incorrect decisions based on wrong-data?
18. If the research is publicly funded, then the data should be publicly available at some point.

10:30 AM

NIFA Update/Panel Liaisons

Dr. Aida Balsano, *NIFA National Program Leader, Research and Evaluation & Rural Health*

Robin Shoemaker, *NIFA, National Program Leader for Economics*

19. Challenges of informing the new administration about agriculture
20. Currently on continuing resolution for funding through April 28. Operating at 2016 budgetary levels.
21. Making payments to states for capacity and competitive opportunities. Many RFA are awaiting approval and a bit delayed.
22. FY2018 budget is typically being discussed, but is not currently available.
23. NIFA has had discussion about Smith-Lever 3D funding for extension work. Explore ways that underrepresented groups can be funded through this funding.
24. AFRI funding. FY2018 was to be fully funded at \$700M. Meant to fund systematic and holistic approaches to agriculture challenges.
25. Conducting evaluation of NIFA capacity programs. Demonstrate value of capacity programs to stakeholders and identify research gaps.
26. NIFA is holding listening sessions from internal staff about future directions of NIFA science during Science Week.
27. Opioid overdose epidemic. NIFA rural health and safety tried to respond to this. Extension-focused funds available.
 - a. Community Assessment and Education for substance use.
 - b. 4-H has been active in healthy living.
 - c. Waiting to see what new administration wants to do with opioid overdose epidemic.
28. 2016 meeting discussion on *food waste*, some language will/has been added to RFA. Currently on-hold b/c of change of administration.
29. Higher Ed Challenge Grants. Proposed as a new funding opportunity under 2017 budget. Betsy Garrison heard they were zeroed out. Robin Shoemaker thinks the name has changed.
30. NIFA is trying to consolidate funding lines (~68) compared to NIH (1).
31. AFRI would be vehicle for new program in social science (i.e. social science impacts). Communicate desires, needs, justifications through NPLs, experiment station directors, use all avenues.

11:00 AM

DISCUSSION Part I

What role does the social sciences and our disciplines play in the discussions and utilization of Big Data?

NOON

Lunch

1:00 PM

How ESCOP's Science & Technology Committee Interfaces with SSSc

Dr. Jeff Jacobsen, Executive Director, North Central Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors

32. Duane Cartmell recommended forwarding the S&T committee minutes to the SSSc group throughout the year.
33. Who's teaching anything related to data science, data management??? Training for graduate students and faculty.
34. Questions:

- a. How do SSSc want to function as a national group?
- b. Is there a regional/national group for participation?
- c. What is your best practice when you return home?
Report, conversation with experiment station director. Close the loop.
 1. Report to experiment station director, dean of research, department (chair)
 2. Report to professional organization.
 3. Secretary for SSSc will prepare minutes and “report” w/in 2 weeks of annual meeting.
 4. Notes in professional journal.
 5. Update website.
 6. Quarterly conference calls w/ follow-up, as necessary.
- d. Statement/one-pager about “big data” to share with experiment station directors. Prepare draft for consideration tomorrow.
- e. Before meetings meet with experiment station director to find out their concerns/ideas with social sciences in agriculture.

2:15 PM

DISCUSSION Part II

What role does the social sciences and our disciplines play in the discussions and utilization of Big Data AND how do we communicate those roles through the ESCOP and NIFA systems?

35. Economists, sociologists might be used to large data, GIS, spatial data, multi-level models. Geographers seem to be lacking in coa.
36. Social scientists must consider confidentiality and anonymity of our data.
37. Lots of federal data is suppressed data to preserve anonymity.
38. challenges with big data:
 - a. How do we secure, provide access to big data?
 - b. How do we make big data a living entity?
 - c. Where did big data come from? Presidential mandates for accessibility.
 - d. Is Big Data a large data set or connecting many large, complex data sets to address questions?
 - e. Need a research agenda on big data and social science in agriculture.
39. What is the question about big data from SST? Helping farmers use big data? Or, using big social science data to inform agriculture?
40. What are the questions and who are the questions for? Who are we questioning?
41. Big data should serve rural and urban communities alike.
42. NIFA needs the questions, then they can provide the mechanism (funding) to help find the answers.
43. Need a workshop on big data in social sciences in agriculture.
44. What has happened to the capacity for social science research in colleges of agriculture over the last 10 years, compared with other disciplines?
45. NCC-170 coordinating committee on large data. Group we may want to connect with. All statistician focused. Bruce Craig is the administrator.

4:30 PM

Reflection/Implications/Next Steps
Future/Continued direction of this committee

46. Leadership rotation. (see attached)

ESCOP February 2017 Action Items

47. “white papers”
 - a. ACTION 1: Big data questions. Questions that may be answered via big data about human dimensions in agriculture. [Corinne Valdivia, Ntam Baharanyi, Linda Lobao]
 - b. ACTION 2: Positioning social science research related to agricultural research. What does NIFA, S&T want from social sciences related to big data? [Erica Erlbeck, Kris Ricketts, Corinne Valdivia]
48. ACTION 3: What do we need? Webinars (via folks from Iowa State). Need a

workshop on big data in social sciences in agriculture. [**Jeff Jacobsen**, Tracy Rutherford,]

49. ACTION 4: Jack Elliott visited with 6 chief scientists from USDA. Issues in reach public and understanding the public. Task: write a formal request to USDA and Office of Chief Scientist to add a 7th scientist in area of social, behavioral, communications. Vet the idea w/ Science & Technology ESCOP. [**Jack Elliott**, Kris Ricketts, Dwayne Cartmell, Betsy Garrison]
50. ACTION 5: What is the connection between agriculture and human health? [**Roberta Portella**, Dreamal Worthen]. Determine if this might be a theme for a conference call(s) or future meeting.
51. ACTION 6: What does Sonny mean by “humans matter?” [**Travis Park**]. Follow up for clarification on Sonny’s final slides of his big data presentations.
52. ACTION 7: Workshop grant proposal on big data from social science. [hold in reserve, will come from 1/multiple institutions.]
53. Consider an advocacy 101 for next year.

5:00 PM

Adjourn (Dinner on your own)

Wednesday, February 22

- 8:00 AM Meeting Reflections/Observations/Housekeeping Items
1. Try to set meeting agenda early.
- 8:30 AM Caron Gala, *Executive Director*
The Council on Food, Agricultural and Resource Economics (C-FARE)
2. Caron circulated C-FARE annual reports.
 3. Big data impact/use with small farmers has not been researched.
 4. Looking at extension work to work with farmers about big data (privacy, using, gathering, making decisions with).
 5. Looking for liaison from Social Sciences Subcommittee to prepare for the John Brandt Forum in the fall to prepare for the winter forum. Fall Brandt Public Policy conference. Liaison from ag econ. Over 100 people attend, mostly Congressional staffers.
 6. At luncheon last week, 100 staffers, which is about 1/3 of all agriculture staffers on the House side.
 7. Big Data...think about how we can catalog and share data nationally.
 8. What do newer generations think about data collection on them?
 9. What are the costs/benefits of big data collection?
 10. Other initiatives:
 - a. Rural communities and their health
 - b. What kind of industry is good for rural communities?
 - c. What do you think about when you think of rural America? More than a stereotype.
 - d. What kind of wealth creation contributes to rural communities? (Rural broadband)
- 9:30 AM Wendy Naus, Executive Director
Julia Milton, Assistant Director for Public Affairs/Government Relations Associate
Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA)
11. Created in Reagan Administration 35 years ago.
 12. Everyone should sign up for biweekly e-newsletter.
 13. No one in DC knows the rules anymore with the new administration on how to influence policy. Try to advocate but not become a target. Currently, science is not a direct target for direct cuts.
 14. Hiring freeze on federal workers with overall goal of reducing federal workforce, federal gag order (normal, but will it be prolonged).
 15. Congress is where we'll find stability, where we can affect change. But, Congress doesn't move quickly, if at all. Margins got narrower after fall 2016 elections. Bodes well for sciences.
 16. COSSA 3-pronged strategy. Be proactive. (1) direct lobbying, (2) member engagement, (3) public engagement
 17. *Why Social Science* blog.
 18. Social Science Advocacy Day.
 19. What you can do. Work with professional society. Engage with advocacy, join COSSA. Engage with policy-makers directly (calls that are NOT made are not going to be answered). Need to have a ground-game at home (talk about your science with the Girl Scouts, Lion's Club, schools, etc.)
 - a. COSSA website includes funding by state and institutions.
 - b. We are STEM. Social science is not different than STEM. Funding and policy is beneficial to STEM.
 20. March for Science in April in DC. COSSA is not leading the effort.
 - a. We should be marching into our local official's offices and educating policy-makers about social sciences. Storytelling is important. We need to humanize science, not how great it is and you can trust us. Put a human face on the scientist.

b. More harm if you're not there than if you are there.

21. 2008-09. Middle of financial crisis. No budget for next year. Did have Recovery Act, passed w/in 6 weeks of Obama taking office. Democrats had control of both sides of Congress.
22. 2016-17. No budget for next year. Republicans have control of both sides of Congress. No gel/glue between Republicans. No one expected this and no one knows how to function in this climate. Most in stages of grief. May see FY17 appropriation bills in the next few weeks. CR expires end of April. Skinny budget request for FY18 will/may be out in mid-March. Deadlines for agency budget requests, normally due now, have been bumped to June 2017 for FY18.
23. Low-hanging fruit for budget cuts = discretionary, non-defense funding, which is where we all sit. ~15% of total budget. This year, if social science is in trouble, then it's because all of science is in trouble and subject to cuts. Thus, everyone is banding together.

10:00 AM Break

10:15 AM Summary Discussion/Implications/Next Steps/SSSc business

24. Update the ESCOP website.
25. Which other groups, like NAAE, NCFAR (National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research), should we bring into our meetings. NCFAR speaks for whole REE/NIFA portfolio.
26. Do we need an "advocacy 101" workshop in the future?

10:30 pm Adjourn

Prep for meeting

- 1) Data Science in Agriculture Summit, October 2016,
<https://nifa.usda.gov/event/data-science-agriculture-summit>
- 2) "Big Data and the Future of Agriculture" lecture delivered by Dr. Sonny Ramaswamy, NIFA, at the Soil, Big Data, and Future of Agriculture Conference held on June 25, 2015 in Canberra, Australia.
<https://nifa.usda.gov/resource/big-data-and-future-agriculture>
- 3) Advancing U.S. Agricultural Competitiveness with Big Data and Agricultural Economic Market Information, Analysis, and Research
http://www.cfare.org/UserFiles/file/10-7-2016BigData_v1.pdf