

NRSP Review Committee Meeting Minutes
Hilton Atlanta Airport
May 31, 2016

1. NRSP_temp11, National Agricultural Research Data Network for Harmonized Data

- Presentations were made on the proposed NRSP or co-PI's/administrative advisors involved were at each 1862 regional spring meeting for the discussion
- Western Region Comments
 - Concept is well supported, timely and appropriate, lot of power in having big data sets available for further use
 - Lot of reservations about the proposal as it is
 - General consensus that business plan was not well developed, very hard to pull out cohesive plan from all the appendixes
 - What happens after ARS & NAL commitment ends, how would it be sustainable?
 - Might support funding for short term 1-3 years, then make another decision based on securing long-term support from other sources
 - Amount of leverage is not as great as indicated because a lot of it is unrecovered indirect cost which does not directly support the project
 - Animal science portion is very undeveloped, only tri-societies mentioned
- North Central Region Comments
 - Lot of same comments as west
 - Proposal as written is not supported
 - Lot of concern with ICASA as the core standard, focus is on crop simulation and may not be appropriate for other types of data sets
 - This whole area seems too big to be led by an NRSP as a national platform
 - AES's should not be primary lead on this, but a smaller part of a large national effort
- Northeast Region Comments
 - Many of same concerns as west
 - Like to see proof of concept work first, not convinced this is correct format for these data sets
 - Concern with budget, no plan for long-term sustainability
 - If the principle can be proven in a pilot effort, the larger proposal might be supported
 - Like to see alternative data formats considered
 - Nothing on environmental data
 - Doesn't seem to have sufficient budget to accomplish the large amount of work involved
- Southern Region Comments
 - Lot of same concerns as other regions
 - Not good budget plan, mostly dependent on unrecovered indirect costs and in-kind salaries
 - Good leverage of off-the-top funding is not indicated
 - Going after a new line in USDA NIFA budget is unrealistic
 - Very Florida centric, other institutions only contributing data
 - Not well integrated, only indicates that it would be of interest to CES
 - No specific quality control on data sets
 - Outreach and communication plan is not well defined
 - From technical standpoint, seems to be over reliant on Ag MIP

- Stakeholders Comments
 - CARET Executive met at NAL 6-7 years ago and asked about how Ag Library interacted with NIMSS and found out they didn't
 - Proposal to bring ARS, NAL, and Land Grant Universities together on this issue is very good
 - Private entities should be involved with this project, both in participation and funding
- USDA/NIFA Comments
 - From an NPL viewpoint, big data is of great interest to REE
 - This is similar to the plant database project, lots of data in different formats that need to be brought together for further use
 - The budget was presented too much like an AFRI grant with reliance on matching in-kind salaries and other support
 - Need to bring in private entities, consultants, data analysis companies, etc. to gain their support and to help ensure it is useful for industry
 - Important for Land Grant Universities to be involved in this area collectively, but the proposed structure may not be the most effective and sustainable mechanism
 - Scope of data types proposed may be too broad for a single data format
 - This type of project should lead to data models that farmers can use with their own data to improve production
- General Comments
 - Concept created lot of positive interest, but implementation details have too many problems and barriers, and does not appear to be sustainable
 - Land Grant Universities should be involved in data management at national level
 - Need to obtain competitively funded opportunities for work in this area prior to requesting NRSP funding
 - Proposal did a poor job of explaining where the direct funding needed would come from and how it could be sustained beyond a five-year term
- NRSP-RC Recommendation
 - Motion by Doug Buhler, second by Bret Hess – “Reject proposal as presented.” Passed unanimously
 - Proposal may be resubmitted with following concerns addressed, however the committee agreed revisions and new information needed was too substantial to be accomplished prior to an August conference call.
 - Resolve issue of data format that is not applicable to many potential uses of data
 - May need to consider different formats for plant and animal or other subsets or limit project to data sets where a single format is appropriate
 - Might consider applying for a NIFA planning grant to bring diverse data format expertise together to settle on best format(s)
 - Business model needs to be better articulated, more realistic, better leveraged, and show sustainability beyond 5 years. A revised proposal must address the short-term commitment of NAL, keeping in mind that a new budget line in USDA NIFA is unrealistic
 - Consider bringing in additional partners for expertise and financial support; ex. data analysis firms, consultants, private industry, other federal funding agencies, foundations, etc.
 - Develop a quality control process for data sets received
 - Develop a more definitive outreach and communication plan that explains the target audience and outcomes desired for workshops or other activities; for the harmonized

data sets; and for the ultimate end user of results. Define how Extension and education fit into a continuing outreach and communication effort.

2. NRSP-8 Midterm review

- Only criticism was lack of attendance by stakeholder representatives on committee at annual meeting in January, but PAG venue does not offer much for them. Project leadership might consider a separate stakeholder meeting/workshop held every 2-3 years.
- NRSP Review Committee agreed project is progressing well and no changes are needed

3. Potential new NRSP-7 proposal

- As far as the committee members know, nothing has changed with that group and its relationship with industry or efforts to find additional support
- There is authorization for funding in the Farm Bill, but nothing has been done to seek appropriations
- A new NRSP proposal from them is not expected.