

ESCOP Science & Technology: <http://escop.info/committee/scitech/>

04/05/2021

4 pm ET, via Zoom

Committee Members:

<p>Chair: <i>Jody Jellison (NERA)</i> Past Chair: Laura Lavine (WAAESD)</p> <p>Delegates: <i>Alton Thompson (ARD)</i> <i>John Yang (ARD)</i> <i>Joe Colletti (NCRA)</i> <i>Bill Barker (NCRA)</i> <i>Indrajeet Chaubey (NERA)</i> <i>Mark Hutton (NERA)</i> <i>Susan Duncan (SAAESD)</i> <i>Nathan McKinney (SAAESD)</i> <i>Gene Kelly (WAAESD)</i> <i>Chris Davies (WAAESD)</i></p> <p>Executive Vice Chair: <i>Bret Hess (WAAESD ED)</i> <i>Saige Zespy (WAAESD Recorder)</i></p>	<p>Liaisons: <i>Robert Matteri (ARS)</i> <i>Wendy Powers (ECOP)</i> <i>Tim Conner (NIFA)</i> <i>Jim Farrar (NIPMCC)</i> <i>Tim Killian (SSCC)</i></p>
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Agenda:

- 1) **Welcome** – Jellison
 - a) Jody welcomed everybody, noting that a quorum is not yet present. As a result, the agenda was re-arranged to begin with liaison updates, then circle back to roll call, minutes review and other action items.
- 2) **Roll Call** – Zespy
 - a) Saige took the list of roll from the Zoom participants list.
- 3) **Liaison Updates, as needed**
 - a) ARS (Bob Matteri)
 - i) Bob reported that ARS has been working on roll-out activities for new program increases for the new year.
 - (1) A very diverse bag was put together by Congress, including creation of positions and posting, development of agreements, etc. for new programs.
 - ii) Bob noted the administration has a new COVID workplace safety plan, which differs from the previous administration and is strongly employee-safety focused.
 - (1) ARS has been directed to be on maximum tele-work, with flexibility. If there is essential work to be done, it can be completed. For example, research and studies that have long-range results or for experiments that would be costly to replicate are allowed to continue. As a result, quite a bit of research is being conducted across the country.

- (2) Additional flexibility includes the addition of safety protocols (masks, distancing, sanitizing, etc.), allow up to 25 percent capacity at any one time in labs. Quite a few people have been able to be in the lab. There is also flexibility in how this can be accomplished, including shift staggering and more.
 - (a) Many ARS researchers are anxious to get back to their laboratories and get work done.
 - (b) There are some things, however, that can't be done or are on hold now, such as human studies and nutrition research that require people in close proximity.
 - (c) Bob noted that they aren't anticipating any large milestones will be reached.
 - (3) As vaccinations roll out, Bob noted that there hasn't been any guidance related to fully vaccinated people. Until that guidance comes out, maximum telework with flexibility seems to be working well.
- iii) Bob also noted that National Program Leaders on weeds and insects are putting together a stakeholder meeting. The broad meeting may focus on problems in the West, but they expect many more folks since the meeting will be virtual.
 - (1) The meeting is not expected to happen until the next fiscal year and is driven by several National Program Leaders.
 - (2) Bob encouraged any researchers to reach out to him if they have suggestions for avenues of communication.
 - (3) Bret noted that Jim Farrar can elaborate more, but the National IPM Coordinating Committee would be a great resource for Bob and ARS because their distribution lists include all the regional committees who work in IPM, as well as regional centers. Bob noted he would pass the information on.
- b) ECOP (Wendy Powers)
 - i) Wendy noted that ECOP met last week for several days. Committees gave report outs on the work they've been up to.
 - (1) Wendy noted that the committees have been working hard to develop case statements for advocacy, delivering the message for what Extension does around climate change, urban ag, workforce development and others (seven topics total).
 - (2) She added the work will likely focus on website objectives where program impacts can be gathered and emphasized around the country.
 - ii) Bill asked whether urban ag includes everything from community gardens to industrial scale greenhouses and aquaponics. Wendy explained controlled environment ag in urban settings, community gardens and more are all included in urban ag.
- c) NIFA (Tim Conner)
 - i) Tim report that much of the activity at NIFA is going toward answering the questions of Congress around programs and directives. They continue to educate Congress about particular items and they are also working to answer questions.
 - (1) He noted that it seems to have expanded five-fold recently.
 - ii) Another area of active work is on adjusting programs around administrative priorities.

- (1) The Biden-Harris administration has four priorities, and Sec. Vilsack has about seven priorities. Many are still focused around COVID-19.
 - (a) COVID-19 will not end overnight, and the administration is still working to administer programs in that area.
 - (b) Economic recovery is a top focus. NIFA is looking at programs to bolster recovery, including modifying RFAs to address concerns.
 - (c) Climate is the biggest topic that everyone is trying to understand more and integrate together, for both the REE mission areas and also outside of those are.
 - (d) Racial equality and diversity are also of utmost concern.
 - (e) NIFA is working to make sure their programming that address those areas are a priority.
- (2) Tim noted that priorities reflect the opportunities that stakeholders have given NIFA and NIFA shares back.
- iii) Most pressing, Tim noted that Plans of Work have been received by all but a handful of LGUs. NIFA has 30 days to approve those plans or return them for amendments.
 - (1) Tim noted that, with new NPLs, it's important to train those employees to make sure Plan of Work reviews are consistent and most useful for land-grant partners.
- iv) Jody asked whether there will be a carry-forward for 2020 capacity funds, similar to 2019's carry-forward. Though states vary, Jody noted that expenditures were significantly curtailed because labs were at 25 capacity or less. She further noted that important decisions must be made moving forward, depending upon the ability to have no-cost extension on 2020 funds.
 - (1) Tim said for 2019, he knows the answer. They are working on trying to get there for 2020. For annual funds, Congress has not appropriated dollars to continue those. NIFA is working to understand the nature of the dollars, where they came from.
 - (2) Jody added that, because of COVID restrictions, funds were able to carry forward in 2020. Looking at 2020, they had an entire year at 25 percent capacity, versus just a sliver of the year.
 - (3) Tim noted that, internally, NIFA recognizes that we are still in a COVID crisis. However, they are trying to get guidance from Congress and others.
 - (4) Bret noted that the Western Directors have begun to ask that question, as well, so it's a bigger question across the country, instead of on an institution-by-institution basis.
- v) Bill noted that moving to Kansas City was, in part, to create easier access to the private sector. Bill asked what the response of private industry has been to a focus on climate change and agriculture as a solution.
 - (1) Tim noted that most of the dialogue around climate change has been agency-to-agency, at the level of directors and deputy directors, rather than agency-to-private sector.
 - (2) Overall, Tim noted that the private sector seems to be very supportive, though the largest questions remain on the role that NIFA will play in the climate change and agriculture discussion.

- (3) Bill noted he is very excited, but other sectors might not be as excited.
- (4) Tim said NIFA is working to get its own work together, and other conversations are likely occurring at higher levels.
- (5) Bob Matteri added that increases were received by ARS to flesh out climate hubs, and they were meant for practical applications. The goal is to find solutions, and agriculture will have an impact on that work. Bob noted that ARS is starting on climate change work.
- vi) Bret asked an additional question about the President's American Jobs Plan. The President's plan mentions funding for research and development. He asked whether it is something Tim and Bob have seen their agencies initiate discussions on the matter.
 - (1) Tim noted they have seen the numbers and are thinking about it, but there are no concrete items at this point. He noted it is too early to know much at this point.
 - (2) Bob noted similar informal discussions have been held at ARS, but it is unknown how that will shake out.
- d) NIPMCC (Jim Farrar)
 - i) Three white papers were shared with the SciTech committee. The National IPM Coordinating Committee has been working on these papers after identifying the three topics at their 2019 meeting. They spent approximately a year gathering information and working on drafts.
 - (1) In 2020, they met with solid drafts and have been working to polish and format the documents to their current form.
 - (2) Jim noted that, at this point, the white papers are largely wrapped up. However, he wanted to share the documents to allow others to look through them and make sure there aren't areas of concern.
 - (a) Comments on the wording should be sent to Jim directly.
 - (3) The first documents are several pages long. Further, the white papers are being distilled down to one page, as leave-behind documents for policy makers.
 - (4) The white papers suggest that a better job could be done if more funding was available to do work around IPM.
 - (a) No number was suggested, but a group is working on a next step to figure out a reasonable funding suggestion to work through the Science and Tech Committee, ECOP, and the APLU structure.
 - (b) Jody asked about the plans and process of adding quantifiable numbers to the data. Jim explained a few committee members are working on this item, trying to identify what it would look like to put a number on funding suggestions.
 - (i) To date, comparisons with "sibling" programs in NIFA (such as SARE and IR4) have been conducted.
 - (ii) NIPMCC is also utilizing a document from Mike Harrington and Robbin Shepherd in 2014, when several lines were consolidated into crop protection and pest management. At the time, a robust document was developed, identifying erosion of support.

- (iii) They are working to gather additional information and come to a reasonable number that would support IPM nationally.
 - (iv) Bret asked about the role of the Society for Weed Science moving forward with a request to see Crop Improvement lines increased. Bret asked what that increase and request might entail.
 - 1. Jim asked what region is considering the action, and Bret noted it is a western effort. Jim said he is unable to answer Bret's question, but he will check in with his colleague at the Western IPM Center.
- (5) Bret asked whether there is interest in these white papers being presented to the Chair's Advisory Committee to make leadership aware of the white papers and notification that one-pagers or coming, or if they should be posted to the STC website.
 - (a) Jim noted that presentation to leadership and posting on the STC website would be very helpful.
 - (b) Jody asked what order should be presented, and Jim noted that he has no preference of whether the long papers should be presented first, with a one-pager second, or if they should all be presented as a package.
 - (i) Bret suggested that two steps may be advantageous. Bret also asked whether committee members saw how the documents could be utilizing moving forward or if they have a useful application of the white papers as questions about IPM come up. Bret sees them as being robust documents.
- e) SSSC (Tim Killian)
 - i) Tim noted the SSSC Committee met for two days. They had really good meetings and good presenters.
 - ii) Further, Tim hopes to bring a white paper to the group at the next meeting in May. Committee members are looking at the administration's priorities and want to develop a paper about how social science research can contribute to the administration's priorities.
 - iii) Bill commented that many different venues are beginning to recognize the critical nature of social science in research.
 - (1) In particular, Bill is AA for a chronic wasting disease multi-state research committee, and social science came up. In that topic, hunter buy-in is essential to ensure the success of programs.
 - (2) An additional topic he had to review involved looking at the gap between awareness of an issue and taking action.
 - (3) Bill noted that the paper seems really timely and important.
 - (4) Tim added that, in previous years, there was a lot of proposals for including social sciences on basic science research proposals, but they weren't always successful proposals. It was sometimes encouraged to take social sciences out of those programs.
 - (a) Tim noted that the social science committee wants to be included in basic research and wants to be included in a positive way, while also beginning to decide how social scientists can lead their own proposals for their own research.

4) Approval of meeting notes from 02/01/2021 – Jellison

- a) Jody noted that everyone received the minutes from the February meeting.
- b) Alton moved that the minutes be accepted. Bill Barker seconded the motion. The motion passed without opposition.

5) **Agricultural Research Infrastructure Advocacy** – Thompson

- a) Alton noted the initiative is a bold, dynamic, \$11.5 billion initiative.
- b) He noted that, on March 31, President Biden had a press conference in Pittsburgh about the American Jobs plan, which proposed to invest \$2 trillion across U.S. infrastructure.
 - i) On page 16 of the document, a section is entitled "Advanced U.S. Leadership in Critical Technologies and Upgrade American Research Infrastructure."
 - (1) As the proposal moves forward, this is the section that APLU hopes to attach it to.
 - (2) Currently, \$40 billion is assigned in the request for research infrastructure, and APLU will continue its effort to try to attach the \$11.5 billion to this section.
 - (3) To achieve this, a marker bill or two will likely be necessary. As a result, Cornerstone and Caron Gala are actively involved in the effort.
 - ii) President Biden pointed out that the infrastructure bill is about restoring U.S. competitiveness globally and also restoring jobs. Both items were central in the APLU proposal.
 - (1) ARIA talks about restoring competitiveness of U.S. agriculture and creating 200,000 jobs nationwide in the initiative.
 - iii) Alton noted that, in order to attach ARIA to the American Jobs Plan, it must be attached to a bill in Congress. Alton noted that they are in the process of identifying congressional champions and influencers to move the effort along.
 - (1) No specific champions have been identified yet, though the scope is being narrowed on several individuals.
- c) A letter was circulated to Experiment Station members and colleagues about an update on ARIA. The letter was signed by Moses Kairo (ESCOP), Glenda Humiston (PLC) and Willis Tom Coon (BAA).
 - i) The update kept everyone engaged in communications, and it also provided details on meetings and assistance provided by the White Office Public Outreach Office.
 - ii) A webinar was also held with the Rebuild Rural Coalition.
 - iii) Support has also been received from other organizations nationally.
 - iv) The email also included all previous document, including the advocacy plan, advocacy materials, and communications toolbox documents.
 - v) Broadly, there is high-level support for ARIA.
- d) A second email will go out this week, within the next several days, that talks about the American Jobs Plan and where ARIA fits in the American Jobs Plan.
 - i) Included will be a sign-on letter. Currently, the ARIA team is working on identifying other organizations outside of Agriculture Experiment Stations and the land-grant system to support the effort.
 - (1) As an example, Farm Credit Services of America and the Rebuild Rural Coalition are supporters.
 - (2) APLU is hoping to engage more than 200 organizations to sign on.

- ii) The letter will be sent to Secretary Vilsack. Ideally, the letter will be delivered by April 14.
 - iii) Alton strongly encouraged feedback and wide distribution for sign-on support.
 - iv) After champions are identified, the team will draft a "Dear Colleague" letter to be circulated among Congressmen.
 - v) Alton noted that the letter sent out on March 31 will be updated to provide specifics with the American Jobs Plan. He encouraged holding off on sharing the letter with stakeholders for one to two days until the next letter comes out.
 - e) Alton noted that ARIA is moving aggressively with the plan.
 - i) They are working to continually update talking points and FAQs on the effort.
 - f) Alton and Moses met with ECOP on Thursday.
 - i) While the focus is on experiment stations, Extension and Academic Programs are also included. Alton and Moses have worked with Chris Watkins (ECOP Chair) and Caroline Henning (ECOP ED) to outline the basics of ARIA.
 - (1) The chairs have also been asked to participate in the weekly planning committee to move the effort forward.
 - ii) ECOP has indicated that they support the plan.
 - (1) Moses will likely reach out to Chris regarding a letter of support to the ECOP membership indicating ECOP's support.
 - (2) Extension is more in touch with stakeholders than researchers, which is very valuable in the long-term, broad spectrum support.
 - (3) Jody further added that Extension is present in every county across the country and represents the stakeholders.
 - g) Alton believes that this a big effort, but it is likely be successful. He also noted that NIFA will be instrumental in distributing funds, after they are successfully obtained.
 - i) APLU will work to ensure the process and funds can be equitably and fairly distributed to all land-grant institutions across the country.
 - h) Bret added that, looking forward, the Branch Station Communication prepared by STC will likely be an extremely important document so almost all of Congress can see that, even though they might be funding a particular university, funds will be distributed throughout the state.
 - i) Alton noted that the leadership team found the Branch Stations document was very important. This piece makes the proposal much more marketable.
 - ii) He noted that a key point is that the funds are not just campus based, and rather, they affect rural communities widely.
 - (1) In the ARD meeting, the key point is that these funds are not just campus-based, but they include branch stations nationwide.
 - (2) It will be an important point in advocacy efforts that these funds positively impact rural communities and economic development. He noted this is a highly important point in moving the effort forward.
 - iii) Jody added that it must be brought down to tangible items, particular for representatives. The majority of representatives don't have a soft spot in their hears for campus, but they are committed to local communities. She suggested bringing information down to specific county or counties is really what sells a story and makes the difference between universal support and targeted support.
- 6) **Climate Survey Results** - Hess

- a) This item will be tabled to the next meeting, as a result of tight timeframes in this meeting.
 - b) To preview the topic, Bret noted that the National Academies has released a pre-print of *Global Change Research Needs and Opportunities for 2022-2031*. The presentation next meeting will explore how survey results match with the report. When NIFA begins to address climate change, ESS will have an idea of how well the organization fits in with climate change.
- 7) **Next Scheduled Meeting(s) – Jellison**
- a) The next meeting is set for **4-5 pm Eastern May 3, 2021**.
 - b) Jody encouraged anyone with business items to contact Bret or herself, and the item will be added to the May 3 business meeting.
 - c) Jody also noted that review of Multi-state research Awards is coming.
 - d) Chris Davies moved to adjourn. Nathan McKinney seconded the motion.
 - i) Jody thanked everyone for attending, and she noted she appreciated particularly the time and effort of the liaisons in attending.

Action Items:

- React to NIPMCC white papers. (All)
- Present NIPMCC white papers in their full form to ESCOP leadership and post them to the ESCOP STC website. (Bret)
 - In presenting white papers, foreshadow the coming of one-pager documents. (Bret)
- Be on the lookout for continued information from ARIA. (All)
 - Encourage support in sign-on letters. (All)