

ESCOP Executive Committee Meeting
January 20, 2022
Minutes

Attendance: Chris Pritsos, Matthew Wilson, Alton Thompson, Caroline Henney, Cindy Morley, Jan Nyrop, George Smith, German Bollero, Bev Durgan, Chris Hamilton, David Leibovitz, Glenda Humiston, J.F. Meullenet, Mark McGuire, Moses Kairo, Paula Agudelo, Rick Rhodes, Katie Frazier, Marshall Stewart, Doug Steele, Sreekala Bawja, Bret Hess, Jennifer Tippetts (recording secretary).

1. **Call to Order-** Chair Pritsos called the meeting to order and explained his desire to hold an Executive Committee meeting instead of a Chair's Advisory Committee meeting.
 - 1.1. **Approval of Agenda-** Mark moved to accept the agenda as presented, Glenda seconded. *The motion carried and the agenda was approved as presented.*
 - 1.2. **Approval of Minutes** (November 12, 2021)- *Upon a motion properly made, seconded and carried, the minutes were approved as presented.*
 - 1.2.1. **Interim Actions-** Chris has taken several interim actions since mid-November. As a follow-up to a conversation he had with NIFA Director Castille at the ESS meeting in Tahoe, he had his first quarterly meeting with the Director on December 15. They had a very productive meeting, which included making plans to attend each of the regional meetings together. He also had an opportunity to explain the ESCOP Priorities and Chair Initiatives plus the work plans of ESCOP standing committees that were approved at ESCOP EC meeting on November 12. This led to submission of the two documents attached to the interim actions. Thanks to the EDs for their help with the two documents, the attached letter was submitted to the Director on January 7. To be clear, the letter is by no means to subvert the BAA process, rather the letter was requested by the Director to place the ESCOP materials in a more concise form. The request to increase the agency's budget was founded on the arguments made by BLC and STC. An increase in research capacity funding is required to maintain our position as world leaders in agricultural research. The fact that our system conducts over 73% of the nation's publicly funded research is quite compelling, and barely keeping up with inflation is not enough. Upon Director Castille's encouragement, many of the attached talking points were lifted from the letter with the hope that she might encourage various entities like the American Farm Bureau Federation to elevate research on their list of priorities.
 - 1.2.2. *Upon a motion properly made, seconded and carried, the interim actions were approved as presented.*
2. **RRDC Proclamation-** As a longtime Board member of the Western Region Development Center, Pritsos explained he was pleased that ESCOP was approached by RRDC directors to sign a proclamation to recognize their 50th anniversary. The proclamation on pages 13 and 14 in the meeting packet was adapted from a template provided by RRDC.
 - 2.1. *Upon a motion properly made, seconded and carried, the RRDC proclamation was approved as presented.*
3. **ACE Sponsorship Request-** Chair Pritsos asked Bret Hess to present agenda item 3. The request was to create awareness of ESCOP among ACE members (see page 15 of the meeting packet for

sponsorship levels). Funding for this is not necessarily included in the approved budget ESS approved unless it is considered part of the communications and/or promotions campaign. ESCOP does not have a policy to handle such requests because they rarely come up, but the Executive Committee is authorized to approve such requests and pay up to \$5,000 without seeking approval of the entire Experiment Station Section. After discussion about the various sponsorship levels and the merits of supporting ACE, it was recommended to sponsor at the \$2,500 gold level. This sponsorship level would give ESCOP the opportunity to deliver a 45-minute professional development breakout session and receive recognition at the annual meeting.

3.1. Upon a motion properly made, seconded and carried, a gold sponsorship level was approved as presented.

- 4. DCC 2022 Plan and Award Call-** the Diversity Catalyst Committee wishes to follow the path taken by other ESCOP standing committees and asked the Executive Committee to approve their 2022 Work Plan. Henry Fadamiro was not able to join so Rick Rhodes presented the DCC plan as well as the edits to the Awards Call. See pages 16-18 in the meeting packet for the complete DCC plan.

4.1. Upon a motion properly made, seconded and carried, the DCC plan was approved as presented.

4.2. DCC requested an updated name from National Experiment Station Diversity and Inclusion award to National Experiment Station Diversity, Equity and Inclusion award.

4.3. Upon a motion properly made, seconded and carried, the updated name of DCC plan was approved as presented.

- 5. Regional Agricultural Innovation Hubs Concept-** Sreekala Bajwa joined the meeting to gain insight from the Executive Committee regarding a concept she is working on to establish Regional Agricultural Innovation Hubs. Sreekala is interested in creating more effective partnership pathways with universities to bridge the gap that exists between research innovations from university scientists and commercialization of these innovations so that they become useful to agricultural producers and companies. While universities are very successful at conducting cutting-edge research, many of them are less successful at translating agricultural research innovations into commercialized products. It is proposed to pilot five agriculture innovation hubs through public-private partnership to facilitate the incubation and scaling-up of agricultural innovations, coach innovators prior to entering the capital market, and market innovations. The innovation hubs aim to increase the number of agricultural start-up companies, expand business opportunities, create jobs, retain talent within the states, and increase the contribution of agricultural sector to the GDP in the regional economy. The proposed innovation hubs would accelerate the commercialization of research innovations to grow the agricultural economy.

5.1. Glenda noted the concept is like what California is doing. One difference is going out in large regions to bring pieces of a hub together to generate a collaboration. This approach has potential to expand partnerships.

5.2. The group discussed the possibility of authorizing language to create a funding mechanism in the Farm Bill. Glenda recommended securing the funding in a more innovative way instead of waiting on the Farm Bill.

- 6. Welcome & Introductions to Lewis-Burke-** Doug Steele introduced Lewis-Burke, Lewis-Burke representatives were not present.

- 7. Summary of ESS 2023 Farm Bill Recommendations-** Glenda reviewed the summary of ESS Recommendations. There is a meeting in early February, and Glenda asked for questions, concerns

or recommendations, and encouraged the committee to send emails if anything comes up after the EC meeting. Once a unified message is generated for BAA then we can take the next step.

8. **February Virtual CLP Meeting-** Marshall reminded people of the upcoming meeting February 7-8th. It will be an abbreviated virtual meeting.
9. **ESCOP Liaison Report-** Caroline asked members to review the report of what was accomplished in 2021. The information was included in the meeting packet.
10. **Final Remarks & Adjournment-** Chair Pritsos thanked everyone for attending and their engagement before calling the meeting adjourned.

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