

## agInnovation Fall Business Meeting

Thursday, September 18, 2025 - 8:30 - 11:00 am

Sheraton Westport Chalet Hotel, St. Louis, MO

### AGENDA

Time	Item #	Topic	Presenter	Action Requested
8:30 am	1.0	Chair's Welcome Approval of the agenda Approval of 7/15/25 meeting minutes NRSP vote outcome Honoring agInnovation Colleagues	Steve Lommel	None Approval by Acclamation Approval by Acclamation For information For information
8:40 am	2.0	FANR Update	Doug Steele	For information
8:50 am	3.0	MAHA – Research Opportunities?	Elizabeth Stulberg	For information
9:00 am	4.0	STC Awards Proposal	Nathan Slaton	Straw vote
9:10 am	5.0	TD Wealth Investment Account	Rick Rhodes	For information
9:20 am	6.0	CY2026 Budget Recommendations	Chandra Reddy	For information
9:40 am	7.0	Pursue Effective Collaborations: 1862 and 1890 Research Insights	John Green	For information
<i>10:00 am – Break</i>				
10:15 am	8.0	Chair Reflections	Steve Lommel	For information
10:30 am	9.0	Incoming Chair's Initiatives	Chandra Reddy	Discussion
10:45 am	10.0	agInnovation Chair-elect vote and 2026 meeting announcement	Steve Lommel	Vote
10:50 am	11.0	Welcoming New agInnovation Leadership: Chandra Reddy, agInnovation Chair	Steve Lommel	For information
<i>11:00 am - Adjourn</i>				

### Upcoming Meetings:

- APLU Annual Meeting, November 9-11, 2025, Philadelphia, PA
- 2026 CARET/BAA Washington Conference, February 22-25, 2026, Washington, DC.
- 2026 agInnovation Annual Meeting, September 21-25, 2026, Grand Junction, CO

## Meeting Notes:

### Meeting Administration

- agInnovation-West requested two agenda additions:
  - Further discussion on the core message of the roadmap document. **This agenda modification approved for discussion following the break.**
  - Further discussion to clarify the process for the submission of a USDA reorganization comment letter by agInnovation. **This topic suggestion was approved and will be addressed by Doug Steele in the APLU FANR report.**
  - **The agenda for the meeting, with modifications, was approved by acclamation.**
- **The minutes of the July 16, 2025, agInnovation Executive Committee Business Meeting were approved by acclamation.**

### NRSP Vote Outcome Update

- NRSP4: approved for renewal at \$409,005 per year
- NRSP9: approved for renewal at proposed budget level
- NRSP\_TEMP13: new NRSP approved at proposed budget level
- There is capacity for additional projects in the NRSP portfolio based on currently funded projects.

### APLU Food, Agriculture, and Natural Resources Update (Doug Steele)

- Board on Agricultural Assembly (BAA) has launched a LinkedIn profile: <https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/aplu-board-on-agriculture-assembly-baa/>
- Waded Cruzado has started as President of APLU
- APLU is involved in four lawsuits with the federal government, revolving around F&A costs at different agencies
- APLU submitted comments on the USDA Reorganization plan, on behalf of the BAA. USDA has not received robust feedback, perhaps because this comment opportunity was not entered into the federal registry. The BAA has a longstanding relationship with USDA NIFA and desires to maintain the quality of this relationship as new regional USDA hubs are established.
- The comment period has been extended through September 30. The agInnovation Budget and Legislative Committee will be submitting a letter and is accepting input.
- Capacity funding: NIFA hears LGU concerns about the delivery of the FY2026 RFP and Research Facilities Act funding
  - Opportunities to ask for increased funding
  - Two strategies: Expand EFNEP since SNAP ED funding has been lost; Increase AFRI to the appropriated amount of \$700M.
  - Consider opportunities outside of USDA.
- November 5, 2025 – APLU to host “Homecoming on the Hill” with space for 25 exhibitors to set up displays that target capacity funds, and invitations to Directors and Congressional offices.
- **All are encouraged to showcase the physical footprint of LGU research (e.g. campus and beyond campus, branch stations, county/community offices)**
- BAA is examining Capacity funds ROI using the Impact Database and a landing page where impacts can be uploaded.

### MAHA Research Opportunities (Elizabeth Stulberg)

- **Capacity RFAs should be released sometime between now and the first two weeks of October 2025. “Q2 delivery” of RFA was an allusion to the Research Facilities Act and not Capacity funding.**

- Elizabeth has developed a “Nutrition Landscape” document examining all elements of the current iteration of the Executive Branch’s “Make America Healthy Again” initiative and the opportunities that come along with this plan. The report will be distributed in the APLU FANR Focus newsletter. Contact Elizabeth for more information on the Nutrition Landscape report.
- The strategy of “Make America Healthy Again” does not frequently call out USDA. Some topic areas to target and key words to use in proposals to address “Make America Healthy Again”:
  - *Water Quality*: use the word “contaminants”
  - *Nutrition research and ingredient assessment*: “Make America Healthy Again” is examining what is *wrong* with our food, and how to minimize or reduce those elements from our food
  - *Increasing soil health*: perhaps a proxy for climate mitigation
  - *Gut microbiome research*: NIH was specifically told to target this research)

#### Science and Technology Committee Awards Proposal (Nathan Slaton)

- Two new proposed categories for Excellence in Research Innovation:
  - Early Career Scientists (Assistant Professional Rank)
  - Mid-career Scientists (Associate Professional Rank)
- Proposed budget for awards increases to \$21,840 (\$4.5k net increase due to travel reductions for regional awardees)
- Expenses include cash awards, silver-level AAAS memberships, award plaques, national awardee travel reimbursement
- Award scoring metrics are being changed
- STC has been engaging with roadmap work, using rapid response multistate projects populated with experts across the country. Example: *W525-Outcomes driven aspirational goals to achieve national food security*

#### TD Wealth Investment Account (Rick Rhodes)

- agInnovation currently has 3 accounts: 5800 APLU operating account; Chase for Business account; TD Wealth account
- \$706K in TD Wealth account.
  - agInnovation is not a signatory on the TD Wealth account (APLU is signatory).
  - Propose transferring funds in the TD Wealth account to JP Morgan Chase to provide direct control of a more highly managed portfolio that is linked with the Chase for Business account.
- agInnovation vote of approval:
  - 30-day notice followed with an electronic vote requiring a 2/3 majority to pass.

#### CY2026 Budget Recommendations (Chandra Reddy) *Refer to slides*

- Maintains the assessment at \$100,000.
- Introduces new and expanded lines to strengthen communications, professional development, promotion, and digital outreach.
- Eliminates completed initiatives.
- Leaves a modest \$32,000 carryover balance.

#### Pursue Effective Collaborations: 1862 and 1890 Research Highlights (John Green)

- Presented highlights on collaborations between 1862 and 1890 researchers, based on a survey of 39 administrators and interviews with 19 researchers.
- Findings showed that administrators often focused on researcher challenges, while researchers pointed to barriers such as limited confidence, inadequate infrastructure, and lack of travel funding.

- Effective collaboration strategies included acting as a joint system and holding regular meetings.
- Administrators emphasized incentivizing collaboration through policies, strengthening support offices, and adjusting faculty appointments, while researchers stressed proactive engagement, open communication, valuing existing groups, and using networking opportunities.
- Key next steps include creating time and space for relationship building, encouraging administrators to attend multistate meetings, and building long-term capacity to sustain partnerships.

#### Roadmap Process (Gene Kelly, agInnovation-West)

- agInnovation West discussed the current form of the roadmap and how it has changed from the clear vision of supplemental advocacy as envisioned by George Smith in 2023.
- **The Western region has expressed concerns and called for meaningful integration of agInnovation's voice into the roadmap initiative.**
- The Roadmap Governance Committee will be more active in the upcoming year, working directly with Adaptive Roots Consulting, and agInnovation will be meaningfully involved in that process.

#### Chair's Reflections (Steve Lommel) *see agenda brief for full list of accomplishments*

- To ensure continuity and the full realization of the Chair's vision, a one-year term feels abrupt and presented the idea of reimagining the terms of the chair.
  - Possible options: 2-year chair terms or more meaningful integration of the executive leadership (incoming chair, chair, past chair) in agInnovation strategy.

#### Incoming Chair's Initiatives (Chandra Reddy) See slides for full list of initiatives.

- Build a healthier nation through prevention research and innovation
- Transform agriculture production system through new technologies
- Finalize the roadmap
- Create a formal framework to facilitate research collaboration between 1862 and 1994 institutions with 1890 Centers of Excellence

#### agInnovation Chair-elect Vote and 2026 annual agInnovation meeting announcement

- **agInnovation West nominated Gene Kelly (Colorado State University) as Chair-elect of agInnovation. Gene's nomination was approved unanimously.**
- The 2026 agInnovation National Meeting will be held September 21-25, 2026, in Grand Junction, Colorado.

#### Passing of the Gavel

- Steve Lommel transitioned his leadership and presented a gavel to Chandra Reddy; a recognition award was presented to Steve Lommel for his service as Chair of agInnovation.