

agInnovation Summer Business Meeting

The Royal Sonesta Hotel

July 15, 2025

8:00 am – 12:00 pm ET

Time	Item #	Topic	Presenter
8:00	1.0	Chair's Welcome and Introductions	Steve Lommel
	1.1	Approval of the agenda	Acclimation
	1.2	Approval of 3/5/25 Business Meeting minutes	Acclimation
8:15	2.0	Roadmap Communications Plan	
	2.1	Adaptive Roots Consultants engagement	Stephanie Pearl
	2.2	Discussion	
9:00	3.0	agInnovation: the next big thing	
	3.1	Discussion of transition of agInnovation leadership, continuing initiatives, and new initiatives	Rick Rhodes
10:00	Break		
10:30	4.0	Committee Reports	
10:30	4.1	NRSP RC Recommendations	Steve Lommel
11:00	4.2	BLC Report	Steve Lommel
11:10	4.3	STC Report	Nathan Slaton
11:20	4.2	Finance Committee Report	Rick Rhodes
11:30	4.5	Nonprofit Board Report	Chris Pritsos
11:50	5.0	Other Business	
		Comments from chair-elect	Chandra Reddy
12:00		Adjourn	

Upcoming agInnovation Meetings:

- July 27-30, Ag Media Summit, Rogers AR
- September 15-18, agInnovation Annual Meeting (Joint with Extension)
- November 9-11, APLU Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA

agInnovation Spring Business Meeting

Wednesday, March 5, 2025 - 2:00 to 4:00 pm ET (Zoom)

MEETING NOTES

Attendees: Alton Thompson, Amir Ibrahim, Beth K. Gugino, Blair Siegfried, Brent Hales, Bret Hess, Carrie Schumacher, Chris Smart, Christina Hamilton, Cindy Morley, Claus Tittiger, Chandra Reddy, Damian Adams, David Leibovitz, David Monks, Derek McLean, Desmond Mortley, Dominique Foster, Donkin, Shawn, Doug Steele, Dr. Shirley Hymon-Parker, Elizabeth Stulberg, Erdogan Memili, Frank Camacho, Gary Pierzynski, Gary Thompson, Gene Kelly, George W Smith, Glenda Humiston, Greg Cuomo, Gregory Goins, Holly Neiberghs, Hongwei Xin, Hector Santiago, Harsha Thippareddi, James Averill, James Matthews, Jane Schuh, Janine Woods, Jason Hubbart, Jeanette Thurston, Jeffrey Dean, Jennifer Horton, JF Meullenet, Jodie Anderson, John Blanton, John Davis, Joleen, Joleen C Hadrich, Jose U. Toledo, Kevin Kephart, Kristel Smith, Lara Prihodko, Laura Carson, Lee Hecker, Lesley Oliver, Leslie Edgar, Lisa Williamson, Lisa Townson, Mano Nair, Marikis N Alvarez, Mary Burrows, Matt Powell, Mike Salassi, Moses Kairo, Nathan A Slaton, Nina Lyon-Bennett, Obadiah Njue, Paula Agudelo, Puneet Srivastava, Renita Marshall, Rich Bonanno, Rick Rhodes, Robert Gilbert, Rodney Johnson, Ron Turco, Rubella Goswami, Scott Senseman, Scott Willard, Shafiqur Rahman, Shibu Jose, Shirley Hymon-Parker, Siddhartha Dasgupta, Sreekala Bajwa, Steve Zeng, Steven Lommel, Sushil Adhikari, Tim Rials, Tommeron D. Timmons, Troy Runge, Vagner Benedito, Vonda Richardson, Walter Bowen, Wendie Cohick, Wendy Fink, Zhao

Key Takeaways

- The research roadmap has evolved into 3 pillars (sustainable food systems, resilient lands, water resilience) with cross-cutting themes of workforce development and national security
- A unified approach integrating research, extension, and academic programs is needed to create a cohesive "ask" and messaging strategy
- The Diversity Catalyst Committee recommended pausing DEI-specific activities and language due to current political climate
- Updated rules of operation were approved, including changes to committee structures and decision-making processes

Topics

Research Roadmap Development

- Originally initiated by George Smith to reorient funding discussions around societal issues
- Extensive stakeholder engagement (60+ meetings) to refine pillars and goals
- Current pillars: sustainable food systems, resilient lands, water resilience
- Cross-cutting themes: workforce development, national security
- Specific, measurable outcome goals defined for each pillar
- Risks of inaction articulated to strengthen case for investment

Extension Integration

- Extension developed parallel roadmap with 6 priority areas
- Significant overlap with 3 research pillars
- Opportunity to integrate extension priorities into unified land-grant roadmap
- 4-H highlighted as key component of workforce development pipeline

Academic Programs Alignment

- USDA projecting 59,400 new ag/natural resource job openings annually through 2025
- Gap between graduates and job openings expected to grow
- Challenge in directly mapping academic programs to roadmap pillars
- Need to determine the relative proportion of new graduates needed for each pillar's goals

Unified Messaging Strategy

- Elizabeth Stulberg (LBA) emphasized the importance of single, cohesive message
- Recommended focusing on hope, demonstrable impact, and a singular ask
- Suggested framing around societal benefits (e.g. health, economic impact)
- Need to tailor messaging to different stakeholders while maintaining core themes

Implementation Planning

- Governance committee formed to integrate research, extension, academic components
- Communications consultant to be hired to develop messaging strategy
- Stakeholder roundtables planned for Q2/Q3 2025
- Science & Technology and Budget & Legislative committees to support implementation

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Considerations

- Diversity Catalyst Committee recommended pausing DEI-specific activities/language
- Decision made to protect funding and partnerships in current political climate
- Core values of access, unity, equality remain fundamental but less explicitly stated
- Hope expressed to reactivate these initiatives when political landscape shifts

Next Steps

- Complete integrated roadmap documents in Q1 2025
- Hire communications consultant and develop unified messaging strategy
- Conduct stakeholder roundtables in Q2/Q3 2025
- Present unified roadmap at BAA Summer Leadership meeting
- Launch advocacy efforts at CARET/AHS meeting in February 2026
- STC to validate aspirational goals and develop ROI information
- BLC to incorporate roadmap into budget justifications and funding strategies

Approvals and Votes

Agenda distributed on February 19 & 27 was modified by the chair moving the agInnovation Rules of Operation discussion and vote to the end of the agenda following the DCC discussion.

Agenda was approved by acclamation

Minutes from September 25, 2024, agInnovation Fall Business Meeting hosted by North Carolina State University were distributed with the agenda on February 27.

Minutes were approved by acclamation

Motion made by the Diversity Catalyst Committee and seconded by Sreekala Bajwa to accept the “Recommended Actions” in the following document entered into the minutes of this meeting.

Motion was passed unanimously

Motion made by Chris Smart and seconded by Glenda Humiston to suspend the rules to allow the modification of the Rules of Operation to the Diversity Catalyst Committee from the agInnovation Rules of Operation without the 30-day notification.

Motion was passed unanimously

Motion was made by JF Meullenet and seconded by Shirley Hymon-Parker to accept the modifications and updates of the agInnovation Rules of Operation (distributed January 2025).

Motion was passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 ET.