

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



agInnovation Summer Business Meeting

Tuesday, July 15, 2025 8:00 am - 12:00 pm ET

Royal Sonesta Hotel, Washington DC

Attendance (in-person and virtual): Steve Lommel (Chair), David Leibovitz (Recorder), Cindy Morley, Clyde Bagley, Jennifer Alexander, Anton Bekkerman, Shibu Jose, John Hawley, Chris Pritsos, Jamie Larson, Kelly Dalton, Chandra Reddy, Darrin Dodds, Bret Hess, Elizabeth Stulberg, Jeanette Thurston, Alton Thompson, John Blanton, Vagner Benedito, Beth Gugino, Rick Rhodes, Manoj Nair, Bob Mattive, Ernie Minton, Stacy Simonich, Ami Smith, Amy Grunden, Christina Hamilton, Derek McLean, Erdogan Memili, George Smith, Gregory Goins, Hongwei Xin, Jeff Dean, Joleen Hadrich, Jose Toledo, Kang Xia, Lee Hecker, Lesley Oliver, Lloyd Walker, Marikis Alvarez, Mike Salassi, Nathan A Slaton, Radiah C. Minor, Renita Marshall, Robert Gilbert, Rod Johnson, Rodney Johnson, Roger Merkel, Sarah Hubbard, Scott Senseman, Tim Rials, Zaisen Wang, Olga Bolden Tiller, Troy Runge, Stephanie Pearl, Matt Petersen

Roadmap Communications Plan (Stephanie Pearl, Adaptive Roots Consulting)

- Big picture: this initiative will build on roadmap construction efforts to build on the long-term advocacy goal of advancing federal investment in research, education, and extension in the long term.
 - Adaptive Roots will be developing and implementing a strategic communications plan to promote the roadmap seeking to leverage communications within and outside LGUs
 - The roadmap has specific goals that complement the APLU “Decadal Visioning” work
 - The importance of our goals should resonate with “regular people” on the street.
- Concerns: guidance leading into the Research Roadmap led us to previously believe we needed to narrow down our message and that led us to the pillar format. Will more priorities beyond the pillars dilute our messaging with specific regard to research?
 - Adaptive Roots will develop custom, cohesive messaging that will cut across all elements of the roadmap; the case for increased federal investment is made in our pillars and the others that have been incorporated into the document.
- Concern: until we have the content with actual numbers to articulate the return on investment, we don’t have a strong case to be made. The value must be supported by actual numbers. The Directors of AES need to be hands-on in developing this hard number content. To use the example of academics, it’s more than “x number of papers and y number of grant dollars”; it’s critical to articulate real impact, e.g. number of healthier meals fed to children
 - “Part of mapping stakeholder relationships to guide outreach” addresses this concern
- Concern: What information is useful to congressional staffers/aides/decision makers? Should we target federal legislators with this effort and/or state legislators? What specific framing do we need to make legislators understand and appreciate what we do?
 - In California, prior to drafting impact statements, academics engaged in “What is the public value?” exercises to train them on better articulating impact
 - There is USDA ERS data to support the 20:1 return on federal investment in ag research, which we frequently use as an articulation of our impact.
- Concern: There has been a lot of retrospective ROI analysis of the work that has been done. How do we examine and convey the ROI of work to be done in the future?
- Concern: There is a matching requirement for capacity funds, shouldn’t we be targeting our state legislators simultaneously?

- We need to have interchangeable messages – e.g. “if the national ROI is 20:1, we need to have data to support a state level ROI.” There should be messaging that resonates at different scales; smaller institutions and states may feel lost in a broader nationally focused message.
- California has county-level, state level, congressional district level messaging ready to go. The academic inputs information once, then the messaging is tailored to different scales as needed.
- Concern: Is it worthwhile to “constrain” our message a bit? What if we came up with 3-4 questions for all AES to answer with respect to our station? This could create a more consistent bank of stories that can be more easily combined/repackaged and creatively tailored.
 - Big picture message idea. “We can reduce the cost of healthcare in the United States through agriculture” – plays into the current administration’s priorities.

agInnovation: The Next Big Thing (Rick Rhodes, Chandra Reddy, Steve Lommel)

- Thought questions:
 - What options should we consider for agInnovation’s “next big thing” and how do we build public confidence in what we do?
 - What should our approach be in an era where the current administration attacks higher education, science, and public education?
 - How do we employ our tagline “Science that feeds the world” effectively?
 - What initiative would increase visibility and stakeholder impact?
- President’s budget request made the unsupported claim that capacity funds are less impactful than competitive funds. Can we commission a study of our system that might refute that claim?
- Chandra Reddy offered thoughts on “What’s next”?
 - Promote ag engineering to meet this movement of technological revolution
 - Promote food science to address food-related health issues and solutions aligned with current administration priorities
 - Precision agriculture and technology can be a pathway to addressing climate change
- Increasing economic development is critical in this political and funding climate.
- We have a history of targeting producers – how do we target broader audiences and make our message resonate with regular people? Can we pursue high level media exposure opportunities for a constant presence in national media platforms?
- Research messaging could consider incorporating themes beyond “hard ag research” into its messaging. We can’t just assume that “extension has that covered.” We can articulate the value of positive youth development as a research outcome.
- agInnovation chairs serve one-year, which is not a lot of time to execute their priorities. Could re-examine chair term length or immediate past chairs could continue leadership of initiatives.

Joint agInnovation & Extension Meeting: September 15-18, St Louis (Alton Thompson)

- Theme “Empowering land-grant universities in navigating the future?”
- Awards luncheon - Joint awards program for Extension and agInnovation, one ceremony, Tuesday afternoon during the meeting.
- Evening event is planned – Fun, different, “Stress management activity” (TBD)

NRSP Review Committee (Steve Lommel)

- Met in Kansas City May 19-20, 2025
- A ballot for voting will be distributed to agInnovation voting members following this meeting by email

- Midterm review of NRSP1 was conducted and recommendations from the Review Committee have been implemented. No vote needed
- NRSP_TEMP14: Collaborative Network to Support Research Capacity in Digital Agriculture. Request to write was approved. No vote needed.
- NRSP_TEMP12: National Urban Research and Extension Center. Writing committee opted to reconfigure the project and resubmit for the upcoming year. No vote needed
- agInnovation will vote on the following new and renewing NRSPs in 2025:
 - NRSP4: Facilitating Registration of Pest Management Technology for Specialty Crops and Specialty Uses - *NRSP RC recommends renewing NRSP4 with a budget of \$409,005 per year*
 - NRSP9: National Animal Nutrition Program - *NRSP RC unanimously recommends renewing NRSP9 with the proposed budget*
 - NRSP_temp13: Artificial Intelligence for Agricultural Autonomy - *NRSP RC unanimously recommends funding NRSP_temp13 with the proposed budget*

Budget and Legislative Committee (Steve Lommel)

- Matt Petersen (CGA chair), new BLC liaison member
- DC update meetings launched for the agInnovation full membership
 - Purpose: *Provide timely insights on:* Federal budget developments, agency activities and decisions, and congressional actions affecting ag research
- New administration impact briefs aligned with APLU CGA were developed outlining the impacts of the new administration on agricultural research.
 - Shared across agInnovation to support directors in their conversations with stakeholders and policymakers on Capitol Hill.
- Activities over the next 6 months
 - Learn more about USDA NAREE Board
 - Collaborate across agInnovation to advance roadmap

Science and Technology Committee (Nathan Slaton)

- Gregory Goins (ARD) and Fulya Baysal-Gurel (ARD), new members
- 2025 Excellence Award winners
 - Multistate Research - NE2334 Genetic Bases for Resistance and Immunity to Avian Diseases
 - Ag Research Innovation - Kaiyu Guan, University of Illinois
- Future discussions on awards – possibly develop criteria for two new categories for innovation awards (early and mid-career scientists)
- Evaluate the Sustainable Food Systems Outcome Goal
 - *Achieve national and local food security by producing 95% of our food domestically, increasing local and regional farm net incomes by 20%, and reducing food waste by 50%.*
 - Establish a 500-Series Rapid Response Multistate Committee with experts to: validate the outcome goal, evaluate research strategies, develop science focus areas

Finance Committee Report (Rick Rhodes)

- Three active agInnovation accounts:
 - APLU operating account 5800 – funded by annual assessments. CY 2025: Revenue - \$239,954.45; Expenses - \$95,000.00; Balance - \$144,954.45
 - TD Wealth - CY 2025: Current balance - \$694,198.82. 1st draw to support operating - \$24,000.00

- Chase for Business (agInnovation 501c3) - CY 2025: Revenue - \$79,928.86; Expenses - \$30,610.87; Balance - \$49,317.99

501(c)(3) Nonprofit Board Report (Chris Pritsos)

- Intent is to support activities of agInnovation and its regional associations
- Nonprofit board members just renewed their terms
- Board activities:
 - Contracted with PIVOT Creative & Consulting to modernize the agInnovation website
 - Adopted an SOP to clarify roles and responsibilities of the BOD
 - Approved issuing the RFP for strategic communication firms
 - Elected to use the 501(c)(3) as a conference service provider for the regional associations to establish a set of business practices
 - Established an SOP on thresholds for contract approvals by the 501(c)(3)
 - Engaged in a conversation with Chase about transferring TD Wealth account funds to J.P. Morgan investment accounts
 - Entered a contract on behalf of agInnovation Northcentral to host their regional spring 2026 meeting
- Highlights:
 - Non-profit is operating as proposed
 - Financially efficient, flexible, and responsive
 - Successfully transferred funds from the APLU 5800 to Chase for Business to support operating, accepted payments from regional associations
 - agInnovation bills are paid on time

Chair-Elect Comments (Chandra Reddy)

- Board activities were reviewed
- agInnovation's strategy should shift to the rest of the population – we have focused too acutely on the “ag stakeholder community”
- Capacity is key. Special callout to 1890s – if capacity funds were to go away, most programs at 1890 institutions would shut down.

National Research Support Project Review Committee (NRSP RC)

Agenda Brief

Chair: Steve Lommel (NCSU)

Membership: <https://escop.info/committee/nrsp-rc/>

The NRSP RC met on May 19-20, 2025, at the Kansas City Marriott Downtown Hotel in Kansas City, MO. A quorum of the committee was present in person or by zoom. The NRSP RC recommendations were presented at the agInnovation Summer Meeting (in person & zoom) that convened during the BAA Leadership Meeting in Washington, DC on July 15, 2025. A vote on the NRSP RC recommendations conducted by email was completed by 40 of the voting-eligible members of agInnovation on July 31, 2025.

The NRSP RC reviewed and provided recommendations for the following projects:

Midterm Review

- **NRSP1:** Multistate Research Information Management and Impact Communications Program

Request to Write

- **NRSP_temp14:** Collaborative Network to Support Research Capacity in Digital Agriculture

Renewing NRSPs

- **NRSP4:** Facilitating Registration of Pest Management Technology for Specialty Crops and Specialty Uses
- **NRSP9:** National Animal Nutrition Program

New NRSPs

- **NRSP_temp12:** Building Collaborative Research and Extension Networks to Advance the Research & Application of Science with Urban Communities
- **NRSP_temp13:** Artificial Intelligence for Agricultural Autonomy

NRSP1 Mid-Term Review: The committee was appreciative of the progress NIMSS has made and Clemson's responsiveness. There's strong appetite for: making the system more intuitive, encouraging broader institutional participation, and increasing the visibility and usability of impact data.

NRSP_Temp14 Intent to Submit: The committee is broadly supportive of allowing the proposer to move forward, but only with firm guidance to tighten focus, engage partners, and demonstrate how the work will fill gaps rather than duplicate them. A more defined scope and an integrated partnership model will transform a promising idea into a fundable and impactful project. **Recommendation – Approve to write**

NRSP4: The committee recommends renewing with a 15% budget reduction as recommended in the midterm review. The project must meet midterm review expectations and justify continued NRSP support. While the impact and relevance of IR-4 are not in doubt, NRSP-4 must evolve to fit the strategic framework of modern NRSPs.

Recommendation: renew with a budget of \$409,005 per year. agInnovation vote: approved the recommendation (36 approve, 4 do not approve)

NRSP9: The project is recommended for continued support. Recommendations include the project builds on their 501(c)(3) for sustainability, sets and adheres to a clear exit strategy from OTT funding, broadens stakeholder engagement across LGUs, and develops rigorous impact metrics to evaluate success. **Recommendation: renew with the proposed budget. agInnovation vote: approved the recommendation (39 approve, 1 do not approve)**

NRSP_Temp12 - New Proposal: The proposal raises a valuable and contemporary issue but lacks the clarity, research orientation, and alignment with NRSP objectives needed for current support. The committee recommends substantial revision, with a sharper research focus, better milestone definition, and stronger justification of NRSP alignment. **Proposal was withdrawn from consideration in this cycle and will resubmit a substantially revised proposal**

NRSP_Temp13 - New Proposal: The committee supports recommending funding of the proposed project. The project should address key refinements related to institutional clarity, stakeholder targeting, and academic integration to maximize impact and ensure sustainability. **Recommendation: fund NRSP_tem13 with the proposed budget. agInnovation vote: approved the recommendation (38 approve, 2 do not approve)**



New Directors, Retirees, Accepted New Positions

New Directors

Association of 1890 Research Directors

Dr. Johnnie Westbrook, Dean of the College of Agriculture, Environmental and Human Sciences (CAEHS) and the Cooperative Research & Extension Service, Lincoln University

Dr. Radiah C. Minor, Interim Dean and Research Director, College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University

Dr. Clyde Bagley, Vice Chancellor of Research at the SU Ag Center, Southern University and A&M College

Dr. Vagner A. Benedito, Associate Dean for 1890 Research and Associate Director of the UMES Agricultural Experimental Station, University of Maryland Eastern Shore

Dr. Jewel Bronaugh, Interim Dean of the College of Agriculture, Virginia State University

Dr. Ronald M. Howell, Associate Dean and Associate Research Director, Virginia State University

agInnovation North Central

Dr. Kang Xia, Associate Director of MSU AgBioResearch, Michigan State University

Dr. Dan Moser, Interim Eldon Gideon Dean and Director of K-State Research and Extension, Kansas State University

Dr. Danny Singh, Associate Dean for Research and Discovery and Associate Director of the Iowa Agriculture and Home Economics Experiment Station, Iowa State University

agInnovation South

Dr. Sushil Adhikari, Interim Associate Dean for Research, Interim Associate Director of the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station, Auburn University

Dr. Rami Dalloul, Interim Assistant Dean of Research, University of Georgia

Dr. Arash Rashed, Interim Associate Director of the Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station, Virginia Tech

Dr. Julia O'Hallorans, Assistant Dean for Research, University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez

Dr. Glen Gentry, Interim Director, Louisiana Agriculture Experiment Station Director, Louisiana State University

agInnovation Northeast

Dr. Kumar Venkitanarayanan, Interim Dean College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources and Director of the Storrs Agricultural Experiment Station, University of Connecticut

Dr. Ock Kyoung Chun, Interim Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education and Associate Director of the Storrs Agricultural Experiment Station, University of Connecticut

Dr. Antonio DiTommaso, Director, Cornell Agricultural Experiment Station, Cornell University

Dr. Jake Bowman, Associate Dean and Associate Director, Delaware Agricultural Experiment Station

Dr. Tsakani Ngomane, Cooperative Extension Administrator and Director of the Center for Urban Resilience, Innovation and Infrastructure, University of the District of Columbia

Dr. Lee Hecker, Associate Director, Maine Agricultural and Forest Experiment Station, University of Maine

Dr. Tyler Messerschmidt, Assistant Director, Maine Agriculture and Forest Experiment Station

Dr. Wendy Powers, Dean, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Director, Maryland Agricultural Experiment Station, Director, Maryland Cooperative Extension, University of Maryland

Dr. Lynne McLandsborough, Director, Center for Agriculture, Food and the Environment, Director, Massachusetts Agricultural Experiment Stations, Director, UMass Extension; Assistant Vice Chancellor, University of Massachusetts

Dr. Josh Kohut, School of Environmental and Biological Sciences Dean of Research, New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station Director of Research, Rutgers University

Dr. Troy Ott, Dean, College of Agricultural Sciences; C. Lee Rumberger and Family Chair in Agricultural Sciences; Director, Pennsylvania Agricultural Experiment Station

Dr. Jean VanderGheynst, Dean, College of the Environment and Life Sciences, Director, Rhode Island Agricultural Experiment Station, Director, Rhode Island Cooperative Extension, University of Rhode Island

agInnovation West

Dr. Mark Schmaedick, Acting Director, Research Program Coordinator Agriculture, Community and Natural Resources Division, American Samoa Community College

Dr. Michael Staten, Interim Dean for the College of Agriculture, Life and Environmental Sciences/Cooperative Extension, University of Arizona

Dr. Ashley Stokes, Dean, College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences, University of California – Davis

Dr. Jason Bond, Interim Executive Associate Dean, College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences, University of California – Davis

Dr. Carolyn Lawrence-Dill, Dean, College of Agricultural Sciences, Colorado State University

Dr. Amy Charkowski, Associate Dean for Research, College of Agricultural Sciences, Colorado State University

Dr. Rachael Leon Guerrero, Dean, College of Natural and Applied Sciences, Director, Western Pacific Tropical Research Center, Director, UOG Cooperative Extension & Outreach, University of Guam

Dr. Frank Camacho, Interim Associate Director, Western Pacific Tropical Research Center, University of Guam

Dr. Parwinder Grewal, Dean, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience, Director Research and Cooperative Extension, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

Dr. Kevin Olival, Associate Dean and Associate Director of Research, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

Dr. Matt Powell, Interim Associate Dean and Director, Idaho Agricultural Experiment Station, University of Idaho

Dr. Stanley Lorennij, Executive Director, College of Micronesia Land Grant

Dr. Manoj Nair, Director & Chief Scientist, Aquaculture Research, Extension, Training & Technology Development, College of Micronesia Land Grant

Dr. Darrin Boss, Associate Director of Montana Agricultural Experiment Stations and Research Development, Montana State University

Dr. Jay Lillywhite, Associate Dean and Director, New Mexico Agricultural Experiment Station, New Mexico State University

Dr. Grant Cardon, Interim Dean, College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences, Interim Director, Utah Agricultural Experiment Station, Utah State University

Dr. Paul Johnson, Associate Director, Utah Agricultural Experiment Station, Utah State University

Dr. Kelly Crane, Dean, College of Agriculture, Life Sciences and Natural Resources, University of Wyoming

Retirees

Association of 1890 Research Directors

Dr. Vernon Jones, Associate Dean and Associate Research Director, School of Agriculture, Langston University

Dr. Shirley Hyman-Parker Interim Dean and Research Director, College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University

agInnovation North Central

Dr. Ernie Minton, Eldon Gideon Dean and Director of K-State Research and Extension, Kansas State University

agInnovation South

Dr. Steven Lommel, Associate Dean for Research in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and Director of the North Carolina Agricultural Research Service, North Carolina State University

agInnovation Northeast

Dr. Margaret Smith, Director, Cornell Agricultural Experiment Station, Cornell University

Dr. Craig Beyrouthy, Dean, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources and Director, Maryland Agricultural Experiment Station, University of Maryland

Dr. John Kirby, Dean, College of the Environment and Life Sciences, Director, Rhode Island Agricultural Experiment Station, Director, Rhode Island Cooperative Extension, University of Rhode Island

Dr. George Criner, Associate Director, Maine Agricultural and Forest Experiment Station, University of Maine

agInnovation West

Dr. Anita Oberbauer, Executive Associate Dean, College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences, University of California – Davis

Dr. Jan Leach, Associate Dean for Research, College of Agricultural Sciences, Colorado State University

Dr. Walter Bowen, Associate Dean and Associate Director of Research, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

Dr. Eric Webster, Associate Dean and Director, Wyoming Agricultural Experiment Station, University of Wyoming

Accepted New Positions (current position titles and institutions)

Association of 1890 Research Directors

Dr. Douglas D. LaVergne, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Alabama A&M University

Dr. Robert Corley III, Senior Advisor to the President, Virginia State University

Dr. Derrick C. Scott, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Fort Valley State University

Dr. Johnnie Westbrook, Dean, College of Agriculture, Environmental and Human Sciences, Lincoln University

agInnovation South

Dr. Kang Xia, Associate Director of MSU AgBioResearch, Michigan State University

Dr. Michael Toews, Associate Dean for Extension, University of Georgia

Dr. David Monks, Associate Dean and Director of NC State Extension and Vice Provost for Outreach and Engagement, North Carolina State University

agInnovation Northeast

Dr. Indrajeet Chaubey, Provost, University of Arkansas

Dr. Wendie Cohick, Vice Provost for Research, Rutgers University

Dr. Blair Siegfried, Professor of Entomology, Penn State University

agInnovation West

Dr. Shane Burgess, Professor, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, University of Arizona

Dr. Greg Cuomo, Director, Advanced Agriculture and Biotechnology Initiatives, Research & Innovation Office, University of Minnesota

Dr. Leslie Edgar, Dean, College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, University of Idaho

Dr. Wendy Powers, Dean, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Director, Maryland Agricultural Experiment Station, Director, Maryland Cooperative Extension, University of Maryland

Dr. Ken White, Professor, Animal, Dairy and Veterinary Sciences, Utah State University



Science & Technology Committee (STC): <http://escop.info/committee/scitech/>

Committee Members:

<p>Chair: Nathan Slaton (South)</p> <p>Incoming Chair: Gregory Goins (ARD)</p> <p>Delegates: Alton Thompson (ARD) Fulya Baysal-Gurel (ARD) Frank Casey (NC) Shibu Jose (NC) Diane Rowland/Lee Hecker (NE) Jason Hubbart (NE) Tom Zimmerman (South) David Monk (South) Gene Kelly (West) Lara Prihodko (West)</p> <p>Executive Vice Chair: Bret Hess (agInnovation- West ED)</p>	<p>Liaisons: Tara McHugh (ARS) VACANT (NIFA) Ada Szczepaniec (NIPMCC) Kristina Hains (SSCC)</p>
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Science and Technology Committee Meetings: Virtual meetings are scheduled the 2nd Monday each Month (1 pm PT/2 pm MT/3 pm CT/4 pm ET).

STC Activities Since the Oral Report to agInnovation on July 15, 2025

Point Distribution for the Excellence in Research Innovation Awards

The current distribution of points is 50% of points for high impact research, 40% for researcher achievements, and 10% for cultural sensitivity and inclusivity. The committee debated whether to adjust these percentages to better reward impact. Future calls for nominations will likely indicate that nominations will be disqualified if they fail to address Grand Challenges and the 20 points previously assigned to Grand Challenges will be distributed to impacts (30 points), mentorship (10 points), and collaboration (10 points).

Future Awards

To account for the Excellence in Research Innovation Award favoring scientists with more experience, STC proposes the creation of two additional award categories, Mid-career and Early Career. The committee wishes to maintain the same monetary award structure (\$500 for regional winners, silver-level membership to AAAS, and an additional \$500 for national winners) across all award categories. Travel support would likely only be offered to national award winners, with regions having the option to fund travel for their winners to attend the annual awards ceremony.



W525: Evaluation of Outcomes-Driven, Aspirational Goals to Achieve National Food Security

A proposal to form a Rapid Response Multistate Committee has been submitted, revised, and approved by STC. The proposed integrated multistate project will refine the aspiration goal and research strategies related to producing 95% of our food domestically, increasing local/regional farm net incomes by 20%, and reducing food waste by 50%. Materials will be developed to demonstrate public value and return on investment.

National Integrated Pest Management Coordinating Committee (NIPMCC)

<https://escop.info/committee/nipmcc/>

Support for New IPM Coordinators

Identify success factors and challenges across coordination structures.

- Emphasis on streamlining and improving onboarding for IPM coordinators.
- Ongoing efforts include:
 - Coordinated outreach at national meetings (ESA in Portland, APS in Hawaii).
 - Creation of informal surveys to assess new coordinators' needs and seasoned IPM Coordinators experiences and insights.
 - Leveraging an existing onboarding document as a baseline resource.
 - Strategic Planning Committee tasked with integrating existing tools (e.g., stakeholder database) and clarifying ownership and usage.
 - Outreach/interviews across IPM-related networks (e.g., SARE, IR-4).

Follow-Up from Joint Meeting with FIPMCC

- Continue joint meetings to improve collaboration.
- Action items to remain a focus:
 - Enhancing communication between committees.
 - Promoting shared research and collaboration.
 - Possibility of pursuing small grants to support coordination.

Communications and Advocacy

- Proposal to create **state-specific and regional success sheets** for public awareness and advocacy.
- Consideration of standardized templates to ensure consistency.
- Engage communicators to assist with message targeting.

Proposed NIPMCC-(semi) Annual Meeting

- A virtual NIPMCC-only meeting is proposed for early fall to maintain engagement and prepare for the February or March 2026 in-person meeting.

Agenda Brief from agInnovation 501(c)(3)

Date: September 18, 2025

Subject: TD Wealth Investment Account

Background

agInnovation oversees three accounts:

- **5800 Account (APLU):** operating (assessment funds)
- **Chase for Business (501c3):** operating (transfers from 5800 Account)
- **TD Wealth Account (APLU):** endowment (pre-2020 carryover funds)

Endowment objectives:

- **6% return, 4% annual drawdown, preservation of corpus, and reliable access to assets.**

Challenges with TD Wealth

- agInnovation is **not a signatory** on the account.
- **Liquidity delays:** withdrawals may take up to a month.
- **Structural limits:** banking laws prevent direct transfers to Chase for Business.
- **Restricted oversight:** account is passively managed with limited engagement.

Engagement with JP Morgan

- Initiated through Chase, agInnovation's banking partner.
- Multiple consultations with JP Morgan advisors.
- Strong alignment with nonprofit investment and philanthropic management needs.

Case for Transfer

Similarities

- Fees: ~1%
- No guaranteed returns (our goal remains 6% return / 4% drawdown).

Advantages with JP Morgan

- **Active, research-driven investment strategy** with broad asset access.
- **Dedicated relationship manager** with ongoing reviews and rebalancing.
- **Improved access:** agInnovation owns the account; 3-day liquidity.
- **Integrated services:** investment, banking, trust, and philanthropy under one institution.
- **Local support** available.

Next Steps

1. **Socialize proposal** within agInnovation (501(c)(3), Finance Committee, Executive Committee, APLU, committee chairs, agInnovation).
 2. **Vote for approval**
 - 30-day notice, electronic referendum.
 - Requires 2/3 majority.
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Finance Committee Report

Chair: George Smith

August 15, 2025

agInnovation finances are sound as we pass through the third quarter of agInnovation's fiscal year, the calendar year. Herein, we report agInnovation holdings from three sources including our APLU account 5800 (the agInnovation operating account), TD Wealth Account (the agInnovation investment account, part of the APLU portfolio), and Chase for Business (agInnovation 501(c)(3) account).

APLU account 5800

Currently, **CY 2025 revenue is \$240,557.85**. To date, agInnovation has incurred **\$95,000.00 in expenses** from the APLU account. Hence, agInnovation holds a **cash balance of \$145,557.85** in the APLU account.

TD Wealth

The current value of the TD Wealth account is **\$706,145.77**. For the first time since opening the account, agInnovation withdrew \$24,000 (approximately 4% of the value of the assets and per the approval of the Section) to support the operations of agInnovation. The withdrawal was deposited into the Chase for Business account.

Chase for Business

Currently, **CY 2025 income/revenue is \$79,928.86**. To date for **CY 2025**, agInnovation 501(c)(3) has incurred **\$33,278.48 in expenses** from the Chase Business account. Hence, agInnovation holds a **cash balance of \$46,650.38** in the Chase Business account.



501(c)(3)

[agInnovation Nonprofit 501\(c\)\(3\) – ESCOP](#) or <https://escop.info/committee/nonprofit/>

Activities Report: August 22, 2025

Original Board members and officers agreed to serve for one more year while the fledgling the 501(c)(3) non-profit discovers its niche in the agInnovation ecosystem.

Despite its infancy, the 501(c)(3) non-profit has made significant strides to serve the national and regional organizations. Clarifying the roles of the Board of Directors and financial responsibilities of the 501(c)(3) non-profit was necessary to understand how the 501(c)(3) non-profit interfaces with the national organization. Upon adopting [standard operating procedures](#) for committing financial resources, the 501(c)(3) non-profit contracted with a firm to modernize the outward facing [website](#). Following a successful testcase for assisting a regional association with meeting expenses, it became necessary to develop [guidelines](#) for the 501(c)(3) non-profit to make financial commitments on behalf of other parties (e.g., regional associations). Details of activities enabled by those actions were provided in the oral report to agInnovation at the BAA leadership meeting on July 15, 2025.

The financial independence afforded by establishing the 501(c)(3) non-profit has proved invaluable. Expenses incurred by NRSP-RC were paid directly, saving at least two additional layers of paperwork associated with reimbursing another entity for each transaction. Purchase of awards, guest registrations, and hotel accommodations have been made in single transactions leading up to the 2025 Joint agInnovation and Cooperative Extension Meeting. Similarly, reimbursing award winners' travel expenses will be relatively seamless compared with previous years. An overview of the 501(c)(3) non-profit's financial position is provided in the following report by Treasurer, Rick Rhodes.

Respectfully submitted by the Secretary, Bret Hess, August 22, 2025



Financial Report: August 15, 2025

Expense/Income Report:

The agInnovation 501(c)(3) currently holds a **cash balance of \$46,650.38** in its Chase Business Account. For the calendar year 2025, the non-profit has had **\$79,928.86 in income/revenue** and **\$33,278.48 in expenses**.

At the time of the last report on June 5, 2025, the 501(c)(3) held a cash balance of \$53,644.57. Since that time, we've had **\$8,249.01 in expenses** in the following budget categories: Awards , Meeting Support, Membership Training, and Operating.

Since June 5, 2025, the 501(c)(3) has received **\$1,254.82 in income** from a reimbursement for Meeting Support from agInnovation Northeast.

Comments:

We've launched a conversation with Chase/JP Morgan on the prospect of closing the TD Wealth account and transferring the balance (currently \$705,963.16) to a wealth management account at JP Morgan. This proposal was shared with agInnovation directors attending the BAA Summer Leadership Meeting.

The APLU has certified agInnovation's carry-over from calendar year 2024 to 2025, \$114,126.21. The 501(c)(3) intends to invoice the APLU and transfer the balance to the nonprofit's Chase Business Account.

Submitted by the Treasurer: Rick Rhodes, August 15, 2025

Proposed Calendar Year 2026 Budget

		CY26 Proposed	CY25 Approved	CY25 Actual/Encum
INCOME				
	Previous CY Carryover (estimate)	\$100,000	\$149,223	\$114,126
	agInnovation Assessment	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
	Other	\$24,000	\$24,000	\$24,000
	TOTAL INCOME	\$224,000	\$273,223	\$238,126
EXPENSES				
Eliminated Budget Lines	Strategic Advocacy--Facilitator	\$0	\$2,500	\$0
	Roundtables with Stakeholders	\$0	\$35,000	\$0
	AG-NGINE	\$0	\$50,000	\$50,000
Unchanged Budget Lines	NCFAR Membership	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
	NRSP RC Stakeholder (travel)	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$540
	agInnovation 501(c)(3)	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$2,284
	agInnovation Awards	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$1,195
	Communications and Advocacy	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$57,250
Funding Line Increases	agInnovation Committee Meetings	\$10,000	\$5,000	\$6,293
	Meeting Support (Annual Meeting)	\$20,000	\$15,000	\$8,149
	Website (agInnovation and ESCOP)	\$25,000	\$20,000	\$5,770
	Promotion (chair travel, printing, promo	\$30,000	\$20,000	\$610
	Professional Development	\$30,000	\$15,000	\$3,920
New Funding Line	Operating	\$1,500	\$0	\$590
	TOTAL EXPENSES	\$192,000	\$238,000	\$137,601
	PROJECTED BALANCE-END OF CY	\$32,000	\$35,223	\$100,000

CY 2026 agInnovation Budget Explanation

Budget Notes:

Approval of the attached budget, as presented at the agInnovation Business Meeting on September 18 in St. Louis, MO, and amended as suggested, will require two votes. The first vote will be a referendum on the assessment. The [agInnovation Rules of Operation](#) require that decisions made on assessments be completed by a referendum. A two-thirds (2/3) majority of those voting is required for adoption of an assessment referendum. Should the assessment referendum pass, a simple majority is required for budget approval.

If the assessment referendum fails, the budget would not be approved as presented. If this occurs, an electronic meeting of agInnovation would be convened, and an alternative assessment and budget would be discussed. If an alternative assessment was suggested, a second referendum would be held along with a vote on the budget.

As a reminder, the Rules of Operation allow the Chair of agInnovation to authorize the expenditure of assessed funds up to \$5,000 per request (up to \$20,000 over a calendar year) with approval by a simple majority of the agInnovation Executive Committee.

CY2025 Approved and CY2025 Actual/Encumbered: As a grounding and comparison exercise, we've included on the budget sheet columns that show the CY 2025 approved budget and CY 2025 actual expenditures/encumbrances.

CY 2026 Income

With an assessment to the Section of \$100,000 (identical to the assessment of CY 2025), cash carryover of \$100,000, and \$24,000 in income from the TD Wealth account, the CY2026 budget will have a total of \$224,000 in income.

- *Previous CY Carryover:* While the fiscal year has not yet been closed out, we're estimating a cash carryover of approximately \$100,000.
- *agInnovation Assessment:* The budget includes a \$100,000 assessment to agInnovation to be invoiced through the APLU. Assessment payments will be due by June 30, 2026.
- *Other:* We plan to withdraw \$24,000 from agInnovation's TD Wealth account, per the guidance of the agInnovation directors who approved a 4% annual draw.

CY 2026 Expenses

Below is a line-by-line explanation of each anticipated expense.

Eliminated Budget Lines

- *Strategic Advocacy—Facilitator:* This line in CY2025 was intended to support additional facilitation for the "Research Roadmap" initiative.

- *Roundtables with Stakeholders:* The roundtables effort was to be used to direct and ensure impact of the “Research Roadmap” initiative. Once the initiative was adopted as a multi-sectional effort (Cooperative Extension, Academic Programs, and agInnovation), this exercise was no longer needed.
- *AG-ENGINE:* CY2025 marked the third and last year of support of AG-ENGINE, Agriculture National Graduate Institutional Name Exchange, hosted by the University of Florida.

Unchanged Budget Lines

- *NCFAR Membership:* agInnovation has been a long-time member of the National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research (NCFAR) and seeks renewal of the NCFAR membership (\$1,000). NCFAR is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, consensus-based, and customer-led coalition that brings together food, agriculture, nutrition, conservation, and natural resource stakeholders to serve as a forum and unified voice supporting increased federal investment in USDA Research, Education, and Economics (USDA REE).
- *NRSP Stakeholder (travel):* agInnovation budgets \$1,500 to reimburse the stakeholder member of the NRSP Review Committee for travel expenses to attend the annual face-to-face meeting of the committee, typically held in the late spring.
- *agInnovation 501(c)(3):* This line at \$3,000 provides support for annual legal and accounting expenses associated with the agInnovation 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.
- *agInnovation Awards:* This line covers the projected costs, \$20,000, associated with the presentation of one \$1,000 national research award; and four \$500 regional awards. The balance of this line, \$18,000, will be dedicated to offset plaque and engraving costs, miscellaneous award costs, and reimbursement of travel expenses of the award winners. (We present 11 awards: 1 Multistate Research award, 5 Leadership awards, and 5 Research Innovation awards.)
- *Communications and Advocacy:* This line seeks \$50,000 to complete the communications efforts of the “Research Roadmap”, an initiative started in CY2024. The Section has currently engaged an external consultant, Adaptive Roots (in collaboration with Extension), to draft a plan for strategic communications per the CY2025 budget. This funding line anticipates ancillary and ongoing expense to complete and implement the strategic communications strategy.

Funding Line Increases

- *agInnovation Committee Meetings:* This budget item (\$10,000) assists with defraying meeting costs (e.g., meeting rooms, A/V, food and beverage, etc.) and some travel for standing agInnovation committee members to meet face-to-face. While these meetings are typically associated with the annual agInnovation meeting, the standing committees are invited to meet when it is convenient for committee members.

- *Meeting Support (Annual Meeting):* \$20,000, an increase from \$15,000 in CY2025, is requested to provide direct support to the agInnovation annual meeting as a means to offset escalating registration fees.
- *Website (agInnovation and ESCOP):* This line requests \$25,000 to support maintenance of the two websites of the Section including the [ESCOP website](#) (hosted by Clemson University), the Section's inward-facing digital archive, and the [agInnovation website](#), our outwardly-facing, promotional, digital gateway. In CY2025, the Section approved \$20,000 for website updating, an exercise currently underway. As a follow-on to the website updating, we propose recruiting an external consultant to assess the reach of the website and awareness of the "agInnovation brand". A goal of the agInnovation website is to serve as a hub where people can explore, engage, and connect with the community of agricultural experiment stations and research units.
- *Promotion (meeting travel, printing, etc.):* This coming calendar year, we propose dedicating \$30,000 to support the travel of the agInnovation chair and assist in the implementation of his initiatives. The chair expects to travel to Washington, DC on a regular basis to support the best interests of the Section to the APLU, Federal agency partners, NGO partners, decision makers, and other influencers. Also included in this budget line is support for the development of all collateral materials (brochures, fact sheets, infographics, email campaigns, videos, press kits, merchandise, etc.) to be deployed during CY 2026.
- *Professional Development:* The proposed budget includes \$30,000 (up from \$15,000) to support professional development opportunities for all station/research directors. This includes bringing in external speakers. Typically, the minimal cost to bring in an outside professional speaker is \$5,000 plus travel expenses (\$2,000). Likewise, providing travel (\$2,000) and a modest honorarium (\$1,000) to internal speakers is a minimum of \$3,000 each.

New Funding Lines

- *Operating:* \$1,500 is proposed to support agInnovation operations (e.g., Google listservs, Fathom, etc.)

TOTAL EXPENSES CY 2026

- The budget for CY 2026 estimates \$192,000 in expenses.

PROJECTED BALANCE-END OF CY 2026

- A carry forward of \$32,000 is estimated for CY 2026.

Overview

2025 is the third year of a 3-year pilot of AG-NGINE, the Agriculture National Graduate Institutional Name Exchange. This pilot is funded by agInnovation and the Academic Programs Section of APLU. The primary purpose of AG-NGINE is to assist colleges of agriculture and related sciences in identifying and recruiting top U.S. domestic students for graduate programs.

In January of 2025, 81 colleges of agriculture and related sciences were invited to participate. This included all 1862 and 1890 institutions and the six non-land-grant institutions that are full members of APS. The AG-NGINE team received an inquiry about participation from the School for Environment and Sustainability (SEAS) at the University of Michigan in early April of 2025. SEAS was familiar with and participating in ENGINE (Engineering National Graduate Name Exchange) and made contact through that program. We invited SEAS to participate, bringing the total number of invited institutions to 82.

The AG-NGINE student database was opened on March 1 and will close on October 1. Participating institutions will be able to download the student database beginning October 8. Downloaded data can then be used by institutions for graduate student recruitment. The 2025 database will be locked and stored on December 12.

2025 Participating Institutions' Information

Email invitations to participate were sent to the APS and agInnovation representative at each institution with copy to the AHS representative. Of the 82 institutions invited to join AG-NGINE in 2025

- 52 returned a signed Member Agreement - this is a 10% increase from 2024
- 24 **never responded** to the initial announcement and invitation or three follow-up emails

Of the 52 institutions with signed Member Agreements:

- 39 are 1862 institutions
- 7 are 1890 institutions
- 4 are non-land-grant institutions
- 12 are AAU institutions

2025 Student Data

As of August 18, 2025, 2,312 have entered their data into AG-NGINE representing 38 of the participating institutions. This is nearly a 20% increase from the same time point in 2024. However, 20 institutions have two or fewer students in the database and 12 have none. We anticipate a significant increase over the next few weeks as fall semester begins. Of the current students in the database, 1,816 are undergraduates and 496 are graduate students.

1015 AG-NGINE Activities

Additional activities of the AG-NGINE team in 2025 included:

- Short video to describe how AG-NGINE works
<https://ag-engine.cals.ufl.edu/content/AG-NGINE-101.mp4>

- Information session for prospective institutions (2 total)
<https://ag-ngine.cals.ufl.edu/content/AG-NGINE-Info-Session-2025-Recording.mp4>
- Webinar for undergraduate students (8/7/2025; 100 attendees)
<https://cals.ufl.edu/content/AG-NGINE-GSWebinar.mp4>
(also posted here: <https://ag-ngine.cals.ufl.edu/students/web-resources/>)
- Resource page for undergraduate students (103 hits to date)
<https://ag-ngine.cals.ufl.edu/students/web-resources/>
- A webinar/workshop for students focusing on turning a resume into a CV and preparing a personal statement for graduate school applications is being planned for late October.

Future Funding

With the pilot funding set to end this year, we have been actively pursuing other funding to keep AG-NGINE going and to also assess the platform's effectiveness and impact.

- In 2024, we applied for a USDA-NIFA Higher Education Challenge Grant together with Tennessee State University (PI), Virginia Tech (co-PI) and APLU (Wendy Fink, co-PI), but were not successful in garnering funding.
- Early in 2025, Wendy Fink and Elaine Turner approached LaKisha Odum of FFAR with a proposal for a Summit on Graduate Education in FANR that included one year of funding for AG-NGINE. While this proposal was included by LaKisha in projects to be considered by FFAR leadership, it has not yet been funded.
- We have revised the 2024 HECG proposal in anticipation of a new RFA, but one has not yet been released. The proposal not only continues AG-NGINE for 3 years, but assesses program effectiveness and impact, investigates sustainable funding models, and develops resources for prospective students to enhance readiness for graduate education and resources for participating institutions to promote best practices in graduate recruitment.

Because of conservative fiscal management, University of Florida has enough residual funds from the pilot funding to continue AG-NGINE for one more year (2026) but will not be able to expand the pool of invited institutions (e.g., colleges of natural resources and human sciences) or complete a program assessment; both of which were part of the HECG proposal.

Budget and Legislative Committee (BLC)

2025 agInnovation Fall Meeting

Agenda Brief

Chair: Steve Lommel (NCSU)

Membership: [Budget & Legislative Committee \(BLC\) – ESCOP](https://escop.info/committee/blc/) (<https://escop.info/committee/blc/>)

Executive Vice-Chair: Jeanette Thurston (agNC)

Assistant Executive Vice-Chair: Christina Hamilton (agNC)

2025 BLC Activity To Date

CGA Representation on BLC – Matt Peterson (NCSU) is serving as the inaugural representative from the APLU Council on Government Affairs (CGA). He also chairs the CGA Agricultural Appropriations Committee.

DC Update Meetings – Launched recurring update sessions for all agInnovation members to provide timely insights on federal budget developments, agency activities, and congressional actions affecting agricultural research. These sessions are led by Elizabeth Stulberg (LBA) and Matt Peterson to provide updates and respond to directors' questions.

New Administration Impacts Brief – Advanced and shared a brief outlining the potential effects of the new administration on agricultural research, including personnel changes and program impacts. The document supports directors in discussions with stakeholders and policymakers. BLC is exploring opportunities to collaborate with APLU CGA and other partners to update and expand the brief.

Upcoming BLC Activities

agInnovation [Input to USDA Reorganization Plan](#)— Discussion on whether agInnovation should submit comments on the USDA reorganization plan, given its significant implications for agricultural research and our partnerships with USDA agencies and scientists.

[USDA National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics \(NAREEE\) Advisory Board](#) – Assess the role and responsibilities of the board as a potential avenue for elevating agInnovation's visibility and influence, and to help inform USDA policies and programs.

LGU Roadmap Collaboration – Partnering across agInnovation committees, including the Science and Technology Committee (STC), and with newly engaged consultants, to advance the LGU Roadmap—particularly in shaping a cohesive budget strategy.

AS ALWAYS, FEEL FREE TO REACH OUT TO STEVE (slommel@ncsu.edu) OR JEANETTE (jthurston@ksu.edu) ON TOPICS OR ACTIVITIES YOU BELIEVE BLC SHOULD BE ADDRESSING.

agInnovation Chair's Activities

Agenda Brief

Finalize and implement the agInnovation Research Roadmap (Chair's Initiative 1)

Roadmap Document Completion

- Presentation at 2024 APLU Annual Meeting
- agInnovation Research Roadmap roll-out at the 2025 agInnovation Virtual Spring Meeting
- Update of the Integrated LGU Roadmap activities at the 2025 BAA Leadership Meeting

Established and Convened the Roadmap Governance Committee

- 14-member committee with representatives from agInnovation, Cooperative Extension, Academic Programs, FANR/LBA, and at large members whose role is to advise on roadmap activities

Hired and On-boarded Communications Consultant

- Prepared and distributed the Request for Proposals
- Pre-interviewed potential consultants
- Interviewed The Estipona Group and Adaptive Roots Consulting
- Contracted with Adaptive Roots Consulting
- Engaging Adaptive Roots in Phase 1 communications development plan

Continued Partnership Engagement

- Foundation for Food and Agricultural Research (FFAR): Saharah Moon Chapotin, Director, Sara Goldberg, Angela Records
- Farm Journal Foundation: Katie Lee, Kelsey Barnes, Justin Zenk
- International Fresh Produce Association: Max Teplitski, Chief Scientist

Discussion topics:

- Incorporation of the research roadmap into a broader LGU roadmap and timeline
- Communications consultant and stakeholder roundtables
- Emphasis on engaging the farming community and commodity groups
- Assistance in sponsoring a farmer/commodity-group stakeholder roundtable

Facilitate Research Collaborations Among 1862, 1890, and 1994 Institutions (Chair's Initiative 2)

- Evaluated 1890 participation in multistate projects
- Evaluated the feasibility of engaging 1994 institutions
- Engaged ARD in discussions about creating multistate projects in aquaculture, food insecurity, small scale ag profitability

DC Activities

May 3, 2025, NCFAR Hill Visits

John Boozman [R]: Jeremy Witte, Kate Covington - Raphael Warnock [D]: Claudia Whit - Tommy Tuberville [R]: Patrick Hump

Discussion topics:

- Food and agricultural research support US competitiveness and national security
- Role of Land-grant Universities and Research Facilities Act
- Annual appropriations and DOGE cuts

May 5, 2025, USDA Meetings

NIFA: Jaye Hamby, Director, Brent Elrod, Gary Mayo, Rubella Goswami, Kal Kalavacharla, Rachel Melnick
REE: Ricki Schroeder, Chief of Staff and Halee Fisher, Senior Advisor

Discussion topics

- agInnovation who we are and how we have evolved from ESS/ESCAP
- Regional associations and multistate programs
- Roadmap priorities and advocacy approach
- NIFA priorities under development
- NIFA changes and implications for our Land-grant Universities

July 16, 2025, Hill Visits

Deborah Ross [D]: Bardia Asefnia - Greg Murphy [R]: Adam Littleton - Thom Tillis [R]: Harrison Walker -
Don David [D]: Nathaniel Dullea

Discussion topics

- Appreciation for RFA and SCRI funding
- NIFA administration of funds
- Concern about 15% F&A from granting agencies
- Concern about zero Hatch funding (capacity in general) in PBR
- Appreciation to Congress for restoring Hatch funding levels
- Overall LGU Roadmap strategy focusing on Critical Societal Issues rather than lines
- Concern about Sec Ag memo of July 8 to ARS regarding international students

Promotion Activities

- Op-Ed: Agriculture cuts hurt specialty crops important to NC. Raleigh News & Observer. July 8, 2025
- Op-Ed: Will China control the global food supply. Farm Futures.
<https://www.farmprogress.com/commentary/us-risks-food-security-by-cutting-agricultural-research-funding-expert-warns>
- Ag Media Summit – July 27, 2025, Rogers AR. Silver Sponsor – Exhibitor Table and Session presentation

Chair Interim Actions

- Signed on to NCFAR FY26 Community Support Letter to USDA Secretary Rollins on agriculture innovation urging USDA to prioritize investments toward agricultural innovation and highlighting its value proposition for American farmers, ranchers and foresters
- Signed on to the AFRI Community Support letter to House and Senate Ag Appropriations Subcommittee members regarding FY26 AFRI Funding
- Signed on to the Nobel and World Food Prize Laureates issue letter Hunger's Tipping Point: An Urgent Call to Transform Food and Nutritional Safety
- Signed on to the APLU letter that opposes the SPARE Act and emphasizes the importance of animal research for agriculture and human health
- Agri-Pulse interview titled "Ag research community worries about staffing, funding cuts"
- Shibu Jose appointed as the agInnovation representative to the LEAD21 Board of Directors
- Katherine Hancock appointed as the agInnovation representative to the CMC
- NRSP approvals were completed in August and OTT submitted to NIFA September 3.

2025 – 2026 agInnovation Priorities

1. **Build a Healthier Nation Through Prevention Research and Innovation**
 - **Role of diet in preventing chronic diseases (MAHA Report)**
 - **Ensuring a safe and nutritious food supply**
 - Innovations in low/minimum processed foods
 - Innovations in minimizing chemicals/food additives
 - Extending shelf life through natural/alternate means
2. **Transform Agriculture Production System through new Technologies**
 - **Labor Shortages & Rising Costs**
 - AI, automation, and robotics address persistent labor shortages and reduce reliance on manual labor, which is becoming more expensive and scarcer.
 - **Precision Agriculture using sensors, drones, and AI**
 - Low and precise application of farm inputs and optimization of planting, irrigation, and harvesting to improve farm profitability and soil health.
3. **Finalize the Roadmap**
4. **Create a formal framework to facilitate research collaboration between 1862 and 1994 Land-grant universities with 1890 Centers of Excellence**
 - **Use the multistate project portfolio** as a tool to facilitate research collaborations across the land-grant system, institutional relationships among all LGUs.
 - **Leverage 1890 Centers of Excellence** as platforms to foster systemwide collaboration across the land-grant system.

2025 – 2026 agInnovation Chair's Initiatives

5. **Build a Healthier Nation Through Prevention Research and Innovation**
 - **Role of diet in preventing chronic diseases (MAHA Report)**
 - **Ensuring a safe and nutritious food supply**
 - Innovations in low/minimum processed foods
 - Innovations in minimizing chemicals/food additives
 - Extending shelf life through natural/alternate means
6. **Transform Agriculture Production System through new Technologies**
 - **Labor Shortages & Rising Costs**
 - AI, automation, and robotics address persistent labor shortages and reduce reliance on manual labor, which is becoming more expensive and scarcer.
 - **Precision Agriculture using sensors, drones, and AI**
 - Low and precise application of farm inputs and optimization of planting, irrigation, and harvesting to improve farm profitability and soil health.
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