



agInnovation Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 08, 2023, 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm

In attendance: **Matt Wilson (West Virginia-Chair), Chris Pritsos (Nevada, Reno-Past Chair), Rick Rhodes (NERA-Executive Vice Chair), David Leibovitz (NERA-Coordinator and recorder),** Vernon L. Jones, Chunquan Zhang, Bob Stougaard, Steven Lommel, Saied Mostaghimi, Jeanette Thurston, Bret Hess, Gary Thompson, Fulya Baysal-Gurel, Gary Pierzynski, Orlando McMeans, Jose Toledo, Jodie Anderson, Scott Willard, Lesley Oliver, Aufa'i Areta, Nathan Slaton, Robert Corley, Lisa Townson, Cindy Morley, Jean Francois Meullenet, Mark McGuire, Olga Padilla-Zakour, Christina Hamilton, Scot Hulbert, Gregory Goins, Leslie Edgar, Ami Smith, Jody Jellison, Conrad Bonsi, Wendie Cohick, Shibu Jose, Amanda Lombardo, Alton Thompson, Joleen Hadrach, Martin Draper, Moses Kairo, Puneet Srivastava, Eric Webster, Jennifer Tippetts, Douglas Steele, Cliff Lamb, Carolyn Lawrence-Dill, Hector Santiago, Mary Savin, Bernie Engel, Blair Siegfried, Anton Bekkerman, Morakinyo Kuti, Scott Senseman, David Monks, Janine Woods, Sreekala Bajwa, Diane Rowland, Alex Winter-Nelson, Keith Howard, Christopher Mathis Jr, Erica Mirich (PIVOT Creative and Consulting), Bridget Krieger (Lewis-Burke Associates)

Introductions & opening comments – Matt Wilson, agInnovation (ESS) Chair

- Matt welcomed the group and framed this meeting as an opportunity for the full section to check in and engage in on-going business. This is a follow-up to our virtual ESCOP meeting in December.
- Upcoming meetings: ESCOP meeting in July (face-to-face, Joint COPs / Kansas City, MO), agInnovation (face-to-face, ESS) meeting in September (Grand Rapids, MI)
- **The agenda was approved by acclamation.**
- **The agInnovation (ESS) Business Meeting minutes of September 27, 2022, were approved by acclamation.**

Website domain and launch of the new website – Erica Mirich, PIVOT Creative and Consulting

- Erica shared a presentation on the agInnovation (ESS) Strategic Branding Initiative. The [slide deck](#) is available on the ESCOP website, our internal archive.
- A review of the brand refresh process to date:
 - Early 2022 – examine the existing brand of ESS/ESCOP
 - Mid 2022 – creative development of new brand
 - Fall 2022 – approval of new brand at ESS (now agInnovation) meeting
 - Late 2022/Q1 2023 – website development, training, and launch
- Walkthrough of Brand Toolkit Guidelines
 - agInnovation logo approved at 2022 ESS Meeting.
 - New brand concept includes logo, colors, fonts, and tagline.
 - Google drive asset library serves as a repository for logo files, social graphics, and fonts.
- Website and Domain Name
 - The agInnovation website is hosted on the Wix platform.
 - www.aginnovation.info is the website URL – all are invited to look around.
 - The ESCOP website (escop.info) is not going away and will be used to host archival/business materials for our internal audience.
 - agInnovation site can be used to engage external audiences to showcase our work.

- ADA Compliance widget and language accessibility are fully incorporated into the website.
- The clickable map on the website is under development.
- agInnovation Website Training
 - David Leibovitz (NERA) has been trained and will serve as the primary editor/webmaster of the agInnovation website. David is comfortable making changes in Wix and all are encouraged to send feedback on the website to David.
- Future activities
 - Trademark of agInnovation name (more to come in April 2023).
 - Launch of website decision making.
 - **Identifying one article from an institution each quarter to feature on the “News” section of the website – all Directors are encouraged to submit articles for featuring on the website. Those articles can be sent to David Leibovitz (david_leibovitz@uri.edu).**
 - Socialization of new site with key stakeholders (ongoing).
 - Development of supporting collateral (ongoing).
 - **Vote to Adopt website: The agInnovation website launch was approved by acclamation. Visit www.aginnovation.info**

Finance Committee proposal: change to the Rules of Operation and revision of the agInnovation (ESS) investment policy – Matt Wilson

- Matt Wilson presented the proposed changes to the Rules of Operation to reposition the ESCOP Finance Committee as a standing committee of ESCOP. *(Formerly the finance committee was a subcommittee of ESCOP’s Budget and Legislative Committee [BLC].)*
- Matt Wilson also formally proposed the agInnovation (ESS) Investment policy for approval.
- Background documentation on changes to the guidelines and the agInnovation (ESS) Investment Policy were shared 30 days prior to this business meeting.
- The Finance Committee will be instrumental in developing the annual budget for agInnovation.
- BLC Chair Anton Bekkerman expressed his support for this change.
- **The changes to the Rules of Operation to reposition the ESCOP’s Finance Committee as a standing committee were approved by acclamation.**
- **The agInnovation (ESS) Investment Policy was approved by acclamation.**

Farm Bill, Appropriations and Ag Research Infrastructure – Bridget Krieger, Lewis-Burke Associates and Anton Bekkerman, Budget and Legislative Committee chair

- BLC represents the section on making recommendations and communicating agInnovation (ESS) priorities for the Federal Budget.
- Currently there is chaos on Capitol Hill due to partisan leadership in the House and Senate – a lot of scrambling to get appropriations started.
- No current agreement in place on top line spending numbers for FY2024.
- Budget request is anticipated for release on March 13.
- **Dear Colleague stakeholder sign-on letter to support the RFA as part of FY24 appropriations has been circulated.**
- **Regarding requests for Hatch, AFRI, RFA – Directors are encouraged to approach key influencers at their institutions and emphasize that these are hugely consequential for our universities and for ag research. Advertise the sign-on letters widely.**

- Visit <https://www.land-grant.org> to view collateral materials on the Farm Bill/RFA recommendations and requests.

agInnovation (ESS) Non-profit Concept update – Chris Pritsos, ad hoc Foundation Concept committee chair

- This is a follow-up to the discussion which started in Fall 2022 about the establishment of a non-profit entity for agInnovation (ESS) to support regional associations and accept donations/sponsorships/financial support from external parties.
- A subcommittee with representation from all regions has met to discuss this concept and gather information from other nonprofit organizations on the benefits and burden of operating a nonprofit entity.
- The committee will develop a full report with recommendations at the ESCOP meeting in July during Joint COPs.
- **Directors are encouraged to ask questions and share recommendations with Chris Pritsos.**

National Climate Change Roadmap –Rick Rhodes, Executive Director, NERA

- The capacities to address climate change among agInnovation (ESS) institutions were identified in a 2020 survey of all directors.
- Gene Kelly (Colorado State University) is now leading an effort funded by NIFA to perform a “Horizon Scan” and develop a National Climate Change Roadmap.
- A core group of representatives from within and outside of agInnovation (ESS) are currently identifying the working-group-climate-change-experts who will be tasked with performing the Horizon Scan and drafting the National Climate Change Roadmap. **Nominations for the working group are being accepted by core members until 3/8/2023 at 8:00 pm ET.**

The meeting adjourned at 5:10 pm ET.