



## agInnovation Summer Leadership Business Meeting

Omni Providence Hotel, 1 W Exchange Street, Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Tuesday, July 16, 2024, 8:30 to 11:45 am ET

[ESCOPE members](#) are encouraged to participate in-person

For Zoom, contact [chamilton@wisc.edu](mailto:chamilton@wisc.edu)

### AGENDA

Time	Item #	Topic	Presenter	Action Requested
8:30 am	1.0	Chair's Welcome and Introductions	George Smith, FFY24 agInnovation Chair	None
8:40 am	2.0	Approval of <a href="#">March 14 Call Notes</a>	George Smith	Approval by Consensus
8:45 am	3.0	agInnovation Research Roadmap <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where we are and where we are headed</li> <li>• Budget strategy</li> <li>• Implementation plan</li> </ul>	George Smith, Jeanette Thurston	For information, discussion
10:15 am	4.0	<a href="#">agConnect Proposal</a>	Rick Rhodes	For information, discussion
10:35 am	5.0	Incoming Chair Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fall Meeting Update</li> <li>• Chair's Initiatives</li> </ul>	Steve Lommel, FFY25 agInnovation Chair	For information, discussion
10:50 am	6.0	agInnovation Committee Updates (new information only, 5 min each) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">BLC</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">DCC</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Finance</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">NPGCC</a></li> <li>• NRSP-RC</li> <li>• <a href="#">STC</a></li> </ul>	Committee Chairs	For information
11:10 am	7.0	agInnovation 501(c)(3) Update	Chris Pritsos, Bret Hess	For information, discussion
11:20 am		Open discussion--What is on your mind?/Other Business	All	TBD
<b>11:45 am: Adjourn</b>				

**Upcoming Meetings:**

- [Fall 2024 agInnovation Conference](#), September 22-25, 2024, Raleigh, NC
- [APLU Annual Meeting](#), November 10-12, 2024, Orlando, FL

#### **Item 4.0: agConnect Proposal**

**Presenter: Rick Rhodes**

### **agConnect Team: agInnovation's resource for communications, public relations, marketing, and management of its digital assets**

#### **The Challenge:**

agInnovation currently does not have an oversight strategy for its efforts dedicated to communications, public relations, marketing, and management of its assets (print or digital).

#### **Background:**

agInnovation operates two websites, [ESCOP.info](http://ESCOP.info) and [agInnovation.info](http://agInnovation.info). Both these websites are managed on an ad hoc basis. Clemson University provides the spine (WordPress) for the ESCOP website and content changes are made on that website by the assistant Executive Directors (AED) from the regional associations of agInnovation. (All the AEDs have Wordpress logins and are able to make changes to the ESCOP website.) The agInnovation site is built on a Wix backbone and all changes to the website are made by the Northeast's Assistant Executive Director. While there are three guides currently on the ESCOP website that describe [ESCOP Website Governance](#) (v3, January 3, 2017;draft), [ESCOP Website File Naming Protocol](#) (1/27/2020), and [ESCOP Publication Procedures](#), all three need updating to reflect the current agInnovation ecosystem and business practices.

A representative from agInnovation serves in a leadership role on the BAA standing committee, the Communications and Marketing Committee (CMC). The CMC oversees and guides the overall educational effort to increase awareness of the land-grant universities' agricultural and related programs, including the Agricultural Experiment Stations, and Cooperative Extension Services. However, there is no formal or informal relationship between the CMC or its agInnovation representative (currently Leslie Edgar) and agInnovation's organizational efforts dedicated to communications, public relations, and marketing.

Below is an outline describing the formation of an oversight group tasked with the management of agInnovation's inward ([ESCOP.info](http://ESCOP.info)) and outward facing ([agInnovation.info](http://agInnovation.info)) websites and public relations, marketing, and communications strategies. The team described below could exist as an ad hoc committee, a subcommittee, or standing committee of agInnovation.

#### **agConnect Team**

The agConnect Team has direct oversight of the digital assets of agInnovation, which include, but are not limited to, the [ESCOP.info](http://ESCOP.info) and [agInnovation.info](http://agInnovation.info) websites. The role of the agConnect Team is to regularly evaluate these websites. When needed, the agConnect Team will suggest changes (e.g., taking down outdated content, adding new content, and making style changes) and updates to ensure the websites reflect the current state and needs of the Section. The Team will provide semi-annual reports to agInnovation on the status and updates of the websites.

The agConnect Team is responsible for formulating or reviewing recommendations to the agInnovation Chair as well as implementing the Chair's directives regarding public relations efforts, marketing endeavors, social media strategies and campaigns, and analytics. These efforts may include contracting external consultants to advance approved initiatives.

The agConnect Team shall draft and present recommendations to the agInnovation Executive Committee as often as needed for review and approval. For recommendations that require funding, the agConnect Team will develop a detailed budget for proposed services and activities. Finally, the agConnect Team will serve in an advisory capacity and provide counsel regarding public relations, marketing, and communications matters affecting the organization.

**Responsibilities of the agConnect Team include:**

- Regularly evaluating and updating the ESCOP.info and agInnovation.info websites.
- Making necessary changes to website content and style to ensure they reflect the current needs of the Section.
- Providing semi-annual reports on website status to the agInnovation Chair.
- Formulating and reviewing recommendations for public relations, marketing, and social media strategies.
- Developing and proposing budgets for related services and activities that require funding.
- Advising on matters related to public relations, marketing, and communications that impact the organization.
- Drafting and presenting recommendations to the agInnovation Executive Committee (EC) as needed for review and approval.
- Implementing public relations efforts, marketing endeavors, social media strategies and campaigns, and analytics directives of agInnovation.

**Team Composition:**

The members of the agConnect Team include:

- One agInnovation director, preferably the agInnovation representative on the CMC
- Two professional communicators, preferably from different regions
- Two regional coordinators/assistant executive directors
- One regional executive director (chair of the committee)

**Team Terms:**

The term of an agConnect team member would be dependent upon the type of committee under which agConnect is convened. Should agConnect be convened as an ad hoc or subcommittee, the terms of the team members are annual, with reappointment by the Chair. Should agConnect be established as a standing committee, the agInnovation director would serve a three-year term (coincident with the CMC term), the professional communicators serve a three-year term, the two regional coordinators/assistant executive directors serve as legacy members, as does the

regional executive director. Regional executive directors will assist in identifying professional communicators for agConnect.

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## **Agenda Brief: Budget and Legislative Committee (BLC)**

**July 16, 2024**

**BLC Chair: Anton Bekkerman**

**Action: For Information**

### **Budget and Legislative Committee (BLC, <http://escop.info/committee/blc/>)**

BLC meetings occur on the fourth Tuesday of every month from 4:00-5:00 ET. The committee alternates its meetings: one month the meeting is for voting members only to foster open discussion, and the alternating month includes more structured discussion and liaison reports. One of the outcomes of this revised structure is more time for in-depth discussions by the voting members that is valuable in reflecting on broader questions that the BLC needs to address, while still receiving timely input from the liaisons. Lewis-Burke Associates (LBA) regularly participates in our meetings with Dr. Elizabeth Stulberg serving as the liaison.

The BLC chair is a multifaceted leadership position given the multiple committee assignments (BAA-Budget and Advocacy Committee [BAC] voting member, BAA-Committee on Legislation and Policy [CLP] voting member, ECOP BLC liaison). Due to the BLC chair's involvement in many other parts of the BAA where liaisons provide updates, the chair can bring back information to the BLC in a timely manner even with liaisons joining the BLC meetings less frequently.

The predominant focus of the BLC is to create, adapt, monitor, and change agInnovation's input into the BAC, CLP, and infrastructure budget and legislative activities. Modification to existing processes, advancing new deadlines, and creation of new steps and requests make this an iterative process. The BAA Unified FY 2025 Appropriations Request was approved by the BAC and the BAA Policy Board of Directors and is summarized here ([FY25 Approps](#)). The BAA Farm Bill Request is summarized here ([BAA Farm Bill](#)). The BLC also presented information to CARET representatives for Hatch, AFRI, and RFA during the "All About the Request" webinar (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2SahCRJIVGA>) on January 31, 2024. The BLC continually monitors activities that impact FY2025 appropriations and the Farm Bill, including the recent Farm Bill drafts that include substantial funding for the Research Facilities Act.

The BAC and CLP are jointly developing a "Decadal Visioning and Advocacy Strategy" to guide both advocacy and authorization activities over the next five-year period. Two fly-in meetings were convened with BLC and agInnovation leadership participating in Washington, DC for initial discussions. Discussions at both fly-in meetings informed proposed high-level topics to serve as pillars for the decadal plan. Below is the content provided by the BLC on January 12, 2024. This content was shared during the January 10 agInnovation Chairs Advisory Committee virtual meeting and revised.

#### **1. National Security and Resiliency**

Overcoming climate change and land access challenges, the United States produces 95% of its food domestically while reducing water, land, and energy inputs by 50%, capturing 75% more carbon and reducing agricultural greenhouse gas emissions by 60% through advanced food and biobased technologies—all helping ensure food price inflation is under 2%.

#### **2. Global Competitiveness and Leadership**

America will be the global leader by tripling its annual agricultural and food science innovations and high impact patents, underpinned by an increase of at least \$2.0 billion annual federal investment in capacity and competitive programs that support agricultural research and extension.

#### **3. Food and Diet-Related Diseases**

Food insecurity in America will be less than 5% and development of more nutritious food and safer food production and consumption will cut in half the number of Americans with diet and other food-related diseases, reducing national healthcare costs by 25%.

#### 4. **Rural Prosperity**

America's rural communities are revitalized through new biobased industries, diverse farming opportunities, and a high quality of life that reduces rural poverty by 50% and incomes grow by 30%.

On February 15, the BAC/CLP decadal visioning committee met to discuss the initial draft of a high-level overview, based on information received from different committee members. The document included three themes:

- The United States maintains a safe, abundant, and secure domestic food supply for the benefit of food safety and national security.
- Rural communities are economically and environmentally healthy places to live.
- Americans have better, more satisfying diets and longer, healthier lives.

A high-level overview document was presented at the 2024 CARET-BAA meetings. This document continues to evolve and most recently, the BLC provided impact statements relevant to each of the themes from the Multistate Research Fund Impacts and the National Impact Data Base (NIDB).

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**Agenda Brief:** agInnovation Diversity Catalyst Committee (DCC)  
**Date:** July 16, 2024  
**Chair:** Brian Raison (Ohio State)

- 1.) Committee Membership (as of July 16, 2024): see ESCOP Diversity Catalyst Committee (DCC) webpage – <http://escop.info/committee/dcc/>
- 2.) Meetings (since March 14): The DCC held the following meetings via Zoom. Minutes/notes from those meetings are available on the DCC’s page on the ESCOP website (see Past Events).
  - April 25, 2024
  - June 27, 2024
  - Upcoming Meeting: July 25, 2024
- 3.) Accomplishments / Upcoming Plans:
  - During the meeting of April 25, the DCC discussed sharing two resources with agInnovation Directors:
    - [“A Different Look at DEI in Higher Education”](#) (via Honorlock Online Proctoring), which could be used to inform future agInnovation programming.
    - [Colorado State Employee Climate Survey](#) regarding inclusive excellence that aims to assess the current working environment and to inform strategic decisions and investments that allow employees to work in alignment. Resulting data can strengthen commitments to institutional accountability, and inform policies, initiatives, and opportunities that will provide an equitable and exceptional work environment. **This instrument may be repurposed by other institutions if there is attribution given to Colorado State University.**
  - The nomination period for the 2024 National agInnovation Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Awards ended on June 30. Nominations were submitted for both the group and individual awards. The DCC intends to present two awards recognizing creation and implementation of inclusive efforts at the local, state, regional, or national levels. Award nominations will be reviewed during the meeting of July 25.
  - Further webinars arranged by the Diversity Catalyst Committee are anticipated to be held in 2024.

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**Agenda Brief:** agInnovation Finance Committee  
**Date:** July 16, 2024  
**Chair:** Matt Wilson (West Virginia University)

- 1.) Committee Membership: see agInnovation Finance Committee webpage – <https://escop.info/committee/finance-committee/>.
- 2.) Meetings (since March 14): The Finance Committee has not met since the agInnovation meeting of March 14.
- 3.) Accomplishments / Upcoming Plans:
  - Sponsorship of a session at the Agricultural Media Summit (\$5,000) was approved by the committee electronically. agInnovation chair George Smith was invited to serve on a panel with NIFA Director, Manjit Misra, to speak on behalf of ag research. The sponsorship provides agInnovation with industry-wide advertising and opportunities to hold interviews with multiple ag media outlets.
  - Electronic ballots were cast in June by agInnovation Directors on the [agInnovation Budget Strategy and agInnovation Investment Strategy](#). Approval of both strategies was sought as a single question on the ballot. The question passed by a large margin: 47 approve, 2 reject, 0 abstain. The 49 votes cast were from a possible pool of 76 (64% response rate from agInnovation). As a reminder, both strategies were presented as recommendations to agInnovation during the meeting of March 14.
  - As of July 10, agInnovation has incurred \$98,277 in approved expenses against an approved CY 2024 budget of \$183,000. The cash position of agInnovation is healthy. agInnovation’s TD Wealth account is currently valued at \$655,260. Per the approved agInnovation Investment Strategy, the risk profile of the TD Wealth account will shift from a moderately conservative approach to a moderate approach. In making the shift, we expect to withdraw approximately 4% from the investment account annually (~\$26,000) to augment the agInnovation budget.

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**Agenda Brief: agInnovation National Plant Germ Plasm Coordinating Committee (NPGCC):**

<https://escop.info/committee/national-plat-germplasm-coordinating-committee-npgcc/>

**Action: For Information**

**Committee Members:**

<p><b>Chair:</b> Bob Stougaard (SAAESD)</p> <p><b>Delegates:</b> Carolyn Lawrence-Dill (NCRA) Scot Hulbert (agInnovation- West) Olga Padilla-Zakour (NERA) Melanie Harrison (USDA- ARS) Gayle Volk (USDA- ARS) Larry Chandler (USDA- ARS) Jessica Shade (USDA- NIFA)</p> <p><b>Executive Vice Chair:</b> Bret Hess (agInnovation- West ED) Jennifer Horton (agInnovation- West Recording Secretary)</p>	<p><b>Liaisons:</b> David Baltensperger (NAPB) Sarah Wilbanks (AOSCA) Ksenija Gasic (PBCC) Tim Cupka (ASTA)</p>
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**Meeting:** An annual meeting was held virtually on May 28, 2024, 11:00 am-2:00 pm ET.

The meeting was attended by most NPGCC members and liaisons. The agenda for the annual meeting included presentations by several members and liaisons.

Gayle Volk, who is serving as the acting NPL for the USDA- ARS National Plant Germplasm System (NPGS), shared the release of the current document "[Synopsis of the National Strategic Germplasm and Cultivar Collection Assessment and Utilization Plan](#)", which is an abridgement of two companion documents that provide extensive details and supporting information for the congressionally mandated National Strategic Germplasm and Cultivar Collection Assessment and Utilization Plan: the "National Strategic Germplasm and Cultivar Collection Assessment and Utilization Plan: The Technical Details document, Analyses, and Approaches" and the "National Strategic Germplasm and Cultivar Collection Assessment and Utilization Plan: Supplemental Crop and Crop Wild Relative Collections Data." The synopsis hyperlink is posted on the NPGCC website. Discussion among the committee and liaisons revolved around sustainable funding for NPGS.

Melanie Harrison provided a report on behalf of each regional LGU plant germ plasm station. The regional stations continue to be important contributors to the U.S. National Plant Germplasm System. Discussion among the committee and liaisons revolved around the number of staff vacancies at the respective stations.

A guest speaker representing the Plant Breeding Coordinating Committee (PBCC), Mikey Kantar, continued the conversation about future preservation of plant germplasm. Mikey explained that a workshop on July 20 will lead to the development of a best practices guide for retaining plant germ plasm when an LGU plant breeder retires. The goal is to have a draft to all participants of the workshop

by the end of August and to publish the guide by the end of 2024. Members of NPGCC will be given an opportunity to review and comment before publishing the guide. NPGCC will also coordinate with PBCC on informing agInnovation members about the guide.

**Future Meetings:** NPGCC members are interested in switching from a virtual annual meeting to meeting in person for at least the next two years. Tentative plans are to meet at Iowa State University June 8-12, 2025. For 2026, the plan is to hold the NPGCC meeting in conjunction with the 15th anniversary meeting of the National Association of Plant Breeders at Texas A&M.

**Membership and Liaison Changes:** A number of changes in the composition of NPGCC have taken place since last year's annual meeting. Notably, Dr. Peter Bretting retired at the end of 2023. Dr. Bretting served as the NPL for the USDA- ARS National Plant Germplasm System (NPGS) for decades. He provided invaluable leadership to NPGS and NPGCC during his tenure. Dr. Gayle Volk was named as Dr. Bretting's replacement.

Dr. Jessica Shade with USDA- NIFA is stepping in for Ann Stapleton while Ann is on detail.

Attempts to reach Tim Cupka have failed. NPGCC will be reaching out to ASTA leadership to confirm Tim's role and/or to seek a replacement.

Dr. Carolyn Lawrence-Dill has accepted a new position as Dean of the College of Agricultural Science at Colorado State University. Congratulations to Carolyn and thank you for your service on NPGCC. A replacement for Carolyn is pending.

NPGCC Chair, Dr. Bob Stougaard, stepped down as assistant dean for research at the University of Georgia effective July 1, 2024. Bob was an outstanding Chair and his leadership was greatly appreciated by all. A huge thank you is extended to Bob for several years of service on NPGCC.

A replacement for Dr. Stougaard, as well as a new NPGCC Chair, is pending.

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**Agenda Brief: Science & Technology Committee (STC)**

**Action: For Information**

**agInnovation Science & Technology:** <http://escop.info/committee/scitech/>

**Committee Members:**

<p><b>Chair:</b> Nathan Slaton (SAAESD) <b>Past Chair:</b> Bernie Engel (NCRA)</p> <p><b>Delegates:</b> Alton Thompson (ARD) John Yang (ARD) Frank Casey (NCRA) Shibu Jose (NCRA) George Criner (NERA) Jason Hubbart (NERA) Vacant (SAAESD) David Monk (SAAESD) Gene Kelly (WAAESD) Greg Cuomo (WAAESD)</p> <p><b>Executive Vice Chair:</b> Bret Hess (WAAESD ED) Jennifer Horton (WAAESD Recording Secretary)</p>	<p><b>Liaisons:</b> Tara McHugh (ARS) Kevin Kephart (NIFA) Roger Magarey (NIPMCC) Tim Killian (SSCC)</p>
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**Meetings:** Virtual meetings are scheduled 1-2 pm PT/2-3 pm MT/3-4 pm CT/4-5 pm ET the first Monday of the month. Zoom connection information is:

<https://unr.zoom.us/j/81036274718?pwd=OHIHYXhkWIEvekI3NjcwREZ1dDJpZz09>

Meeting ID: 810 3627 4718 Passcode: STC

**Activities Since the Report to the agInnovation on March 14, 2024**

Long-term member of STC, Nathan McKinney retired leaving a vacancy in membership from SAAESD. Dr. McKinney was recognized by STC for his long-term service and commitment to STC.

The following voting members represent STC on the agInnovation Chair’s Research Strategy Roadmap working group: Nathan Slaton, John Yang, Shibu Jose, George Criner, and Gene Kelly.

**Open Access**

Plans to begin working on development of guidelines to recognize the use of capacity funds in publications and making data publicly available via Data Commons resumed with a presentation by Dr. Cynthia (Cyndy) Parr, USDA REE Assistant Chief Data Officer and Senior Research Data Policy Analyst at the National Agriculture Library. Cyndy was joined by three members of her team.

The following details from the presentation are an initial step towards STC’s efforts to help educate fellow directors about open access policies and requirements. One future deliverable might be the development of guidelines for data management, especially for long-term experiments.

The progression of public access policies in the U.S. has been marked by significant memos and regulations. The Holdren Memo of 2013 initiated a movement towards increased public access to federally funded research. This was further advanced by the [2022 memo](#), which introduced additional requirements for federal science agencies. These policies align with the Open Government Data Act of 2018, emphasizing transparency and accessibility of government data. The [Departmental Regulation 1020-006](#), which is currently being revised, will incorporate these new mandates. The implementation of these policies is a coordinated effort across federal agencies, with full implementation of the revised regulations expected by 2025. This ongoing process reflects a commitment to open science and the equitable dissemination of research findings to the public.

The plan for implementing changes based on the 2022 memo is accessible [online](#), detailing compliance with the Office of Science and Technology Policy's requirements. The approach is to affirmatively respond to the White House's directives, providing a framework for how these will be executed. The scope of the departmental regulation extends to USDA employees, awardees, and contractors involved in scientific research, applicable to projects funded from fiscal year 2023 onwards, starting October 1, 2022. The regulation does not retroactively apply to historical data but focuses on current and future research activities.

The policy requirements for scholarly publications mandate that peer-reviewed journal articles must be freely available to the public upon acceptance. Previously, a 12-month embargo was permitted, but this will be eliminated in 2025. Authors can submit the final published version to [PubAg](#) if they have the rights to it, often associated with gold open access fees. Otherwise, the final version of the accepted manuscript post-peer review, which is not under the journal's copyright, should be uploaded to PubAg. Data associated with publications must be publicly available when a manuscript is published. Published data is required to be in a machine-readable format in a recognized repository that offers public access, a persistent identifier, and ensures data preservation.

Data preservation is a critical aspect of research, ensuring that valuable data remains accessible and usable over time. Best practices for data preservation include documenting ownership and responsibility, restricting access to sensitive data, and following the 3-2-1 rule for backups. Data should be stored in non-proprietary formats with adequate metadata for future use.

The current 12-month embargo policy for data release is set to change, with new policies aiming for immediate and equitable access to federally funded research data, eliminating the embargo period. This shift is intended to prevent data from being withheld indefinitely, particularly data with negative results or long-term datasets that may not produce research papers for years. Not all data is required to be publicly accessible; exceptions include concerns over national security, endangered species, or data irrelevant to research validation. These measures balance the need for open science with the protection of sensitive information.

The Ag Data Commons serves as a research data catalog and repository for public access to data produced during research funded or co-funded by the USDA. This ensures that USDA-funded research data is findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable, aligning with the FAIR principles of Open Science.

Additionally, researchers are required to create and adhere to data management plans that align with the policies of their agency or the USDA's departmental guidance. This framework aims to maximize the practical accessibility of research data while maintaining necessary protections and standards for its use.

Creating a Data Management Plan (DMP) is a critical first step in managing research data effectively. A DMP outlines how data will be handled both during the research process and after the project is completed, ensuring that data is stored, archived, and accessible for future use. Funding agencies like NIFA require a DMP as part of the project proposal, with specific requirements detailed in the Request for Applications (RFA). Applicants must adhere to these guidelines, which often include selecting a suitable data repository to store and share their research data. This ensures that data is preserved in a way that facilitates scientific inquiry and advances further research.

Selecting the right data repository is crucial for the preservation and dissemination of research data. It's important to consider domain-specific repositories as they often have the infrastructure and expertise to maximize the data's discoverability and reuse. Generalist repositories are also an option, especially for data that doesn't fit into a specific category. These repositories should provide a stable, unique identifier like a DOI to enhance the data's visibility and citation. The Ag Data Commons, supported by the USDA, exemplifies a generalist repository that also acts as a catalog for USDA-funded research, ensuring data is FAIR—findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable. Submissions to Ag Data Commons are meticulously reviewed by data curators to ensure the integrity and accuracy of the data before it becomes publicly available.

### **Awards**

Several strong nominations were received for the 2024 Excellence in Research Innovation Award. Following the scoring matrix published as part of the call for nominations, voting members of STC were pleased to name Dr. Barbara Valent as the inaugural winner of this prestigious award.

An outstanding slate of nominations for the 2024 Excellence in Multistate Research Award were scored by voting members of STC. Following extensive evaluation of the scores and much deliberation by the committee, NCERA101: Controlled Environment Technology and Use was named the winner. Both NE2334: Genetic Bases for Resistance and Immunity to Avian Diseases and S1089: Advanced Understanding and Prediction of Pollutants in Critical Landscapes in Watersheds received honorable mention and are encouraged to resubmit nominations for the 2025 Excellence in Multistate Research Award.

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