COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

EXTENSION COMMITTEE ON ORGANIZATION AND POLICY

Zoom Meeting Minutes

Fred Schlutt, Chair, presiding

Wednesday, September 27, 2017, 11:00 a.m. – Noon Eastern Time

Attachments: Minutes of July 2017 Meeting (URL); SoAR Farm Bill Recommendations (pp.4-6); A Working Summary of Opportunities in Soil Health (pp. 7-8)

OPENING BUSINESS – Fred Schlutt

Attendance is found on page 3. Ed Jones made a motion to approve the minutes of July 2017. Chuck Hibberd seconded and motion carried. Private Resource Mobilization Planning Oversight Committee was added to the agenda, 3. b.

1. ACTION: NEDA CES Business Meeting Agenda Approval –

Fred Schlutt – The following was shared. No changes were added.

Welcome by Fred Schlutt and Chuck Ross (University of Vermont)

Review of Contacts in DC in partnership with ESCOP – Fred Schlutt/Rick Klemme and Brett Hess

NIFA Relations – Time and Effort Reporting, and other

Focus on 3 or 4 key Partnerships that are expanding

Engagement Session by ECOP Committees, task forces, and others

EDEN – Steve Cain/Nick Place

Budget & Legislative Committee (CLP/Farm bill)

Current and future forecast (2019 and beyond) of ECOP Assessments

ECOP Topics

Engagement Session in Executive Director Search – Fred Schlutt

Summary of process to date

2 Candidates presentations – Resumes to be provided

Next steps

2. UPDATES

a. "Big Data" Project Update –

Rick Klemme: Groups from Iowa State and Virginia Tech are collaborating with Regional Rural Dev. Centers. Thinking and learning more about professional development component. Prefer to use term, Community Data Use and Analysis. Potential for language for farm bill is under exploration. Rick is visiting with Cathie Woteki and Cornerstone to move this along.

b. SoAR/RESOLVE Farm Bill (pp. 4-6) –

Rick Klemme/Doug Steele/Mark Latimore: Policy Board of Directors (PBD) met early this morning. SoAR and others pulled together the proposal for the farm bill without formal Board on Ag Assembly participation. Jay Akridge raised issues such as match, making programs permanent, lack of mention of Extension throughout the document. PBD is possibly on-board with it in general but with concerns. There

was discussion of an alternate letter of support but not signing on to the proposal. Doug will ask ECOP Budget & Legislative Committee for input. Deadline is to receive comment by Friday at noon. Appreciation for Rick for being there. The SoAR time frame is very tight, hence the urgency to get on board or not. In November, at the next PBD meeting at the conclusion of the APLU annual conference, Farm Bill priorities will be a topic of discussion. Ian and Jay will visit with Tim Fink next week.

c. NRCS Soil Health/CES Collaboration (pp.7-8) – Robin Shepard

Rick Klemme: Gratitude for Jeff Jacobsen and Robin Shepard for leadership. Track for next steps - 1) Gaps in Sciences, 2) Positive relationships and State/Local Level (examples of best practices), and 3) Training and professional development.

3. Other

a. NEDA Preparation www.goo.gl/6i7Smc (ECOP Strategic Agenda)

Chuck Hibberd: Conversation on 9/25/17 was very good, adjusted strategic agenda based on inpu, 25 participants. Will have 90 minutes on Oct. 4. Working with Mark Amaral, Lighthouse to help with facilitation. 1) Brief overview, better engagement, 2) what it means to be a membership organization, strengthening engagement, 98% completion for *The CES Strategic Agenda*. Next step is to continually engage members beyond ECOP. Format: 10-12 min. overview, 2 sets of table-top conversations. Q: What about the Agenda do you value? Messaging to use with partners add value? Conclude with asking Fred Schlutt request affirming the Agenda, noting that it is a "living document."

b. PRM Planning Oversight Committee

Rick Klemme/Fred Schlutt: Options about funding the effort. ECOP is interested in moving forward but not certain about approach to funding. Conversation will be set for ECOP meeting in Vermont. Will look back at budget scenarios that were worked up in 2016. Ready to look at all realistic options including reallocating 2018 budget, tapping into reserves, and exploring the possibility of a companion assessment increase. Hunt Shipman will be in Vermont to address the CMC investment. The time is right to have this conversation.

4. Executive Session (optional)

5. **ADJOURN**

KEY

ECOP 2017 Emphasis Areas:

Private Resource Mobilization.....

Urban Programming .....

Innovation.....

National System .....

Capacity Funding.....

Internal Communications .....

ECOP Core Themes:

Build Partnerships and Acquire Resources .....

Increase Strategic Marketing and Communications ....

Enhance Leadership and Professional Development ..

Strengthen Organizational Functioning .....

<u>ECOP Membership</u> Attendance is indication with ☑ and ●

Voting Members

☑ Fred Schlutt, *Executive Committee Chair*, University of Alaska
☑ Chuck Hibberd, *Executive Committee Chair-elect,* University of Nebraska
☑ Michelle Rodgers, *Executive Committee Past-chair, 2017 NEDA Planning Committee Chair, and Chair of ECOP/ESCOP Health Implementation*, University of Delaware
☑ Chris Boerboom, *Program Committee Chair*, North Dakota State University
☐ Tom Dobbins, *Personnel Committee & Chair of Private Resource Mobilization Program Oversight Committee,* Clemson University
☑ Beverly Durgan, *Personnel Committee Chair*, University of Minnesota Extension
☐ Bill Hare, *Program Committee*, University of District of Columbia
☑ Ed Jones, *Executive Committee, 4-H Leadership Committee Co-chair*, Virginia Tech
☑ Mark Latimore, *Executive Committee,* Fort Valley State University
☐ Gary Lemme, *Program Committee,* University of Kentucky
☑ Scott Reed, *Program Committee*, Oregon State University
☑ Vonda Richardson, *Personnel Committee,* Florida A&M University
☐ Louis Swanson, *Personnel Committee,* Colorado State University
☐ Chris Watkins, *Personnel Committee*, Cornell University
☐ Carolyn Williams, *Program Committee Vice-Chair,* Prairie View A&M University

Ex-officio/Non-voting members

- Louie Tupas, Denise Eblen, Mike Fitzner, USDA-NIFA
- Doug Steele, *Chair, ECOP Budget and Legislative Committee & ECOP Representative (Alternate) to Policy Board of Directors*
- Rick Klemme, Executive Director, Cooperative Extension/ECOP

Liaisons to ECOP

- Susan Crowell, Council for Agricultural Research, Extension and Teaching
- Linda Kirk Fox, Board on Human Sciences (indefinite)
- Chris Geith, CEO, eXtension Foundation (indefinite)
- Vernon Jones, eXtension Foundation Board Chair, Langston University
- Jennifer Sirangelo, National 4-H Council (indefinite)
- Clarence Watson, Experiment Station Committee on Organization and Policy (indefinite)

Executive Director and Administrator Team

- Ron Brown, Southern Region
- Lyla Houglum, Western Region
- Rick Klemme, DC Office
- L. Washington Lyons, 1890 Region
- Sandy Ruble, DC Office
- Robin Shepard, North Central Region
- To be determined, Northeast Region

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To: Congressional Ag Committee Leadership
CC: Other members

Dear _____,

As organizations concerned about the future of food and agricultural research, we thank you for your leadership and for your continued support of research. We are writing with a series of shared policy recommendations designed to strengthen the next Farm Bill Research Title which are the result of extensive discussion among a diverse set of stakeholders.

As you well know, agriculture remains a pillar of the U.S. economy, accounting for nearly $1 trillion of our GDP, 1 in 10 jobs, and a significant contribution to our nation's trade balance. Underlying the hard work and success of our nation's producers is a firm foundation of science and innovation. This foundation, however, is cracking.

The U.S. has been second to China in total public agricultural research funding since 2008. By 2013, China's spending on public agricultural R&D became nearly double that of the U.S. Though public funding for other forms of domestic research has risen dramatically, the U.S. agricultural research budget has declined in real dollars since 2003. This is an area of R&D where return on investment is estimated at 20 to 1.

The results of this trend are directly translating to farms where growth in agricultural productivity has leveled over the last decade. While research funding has been cut, the threats to our production system are mounting. Whether it be droughts, flooding, or an avian flu epidemic costing producers and consumers millions of dollars, many of the short- and long-term challenges facing agriculture can only be solved through additional research and strengthened collaborations. At stake is our national security, economy, health, and environment. The next Farm Bill represents a crucial opportunity to reverse these trends and reassert our nation's leadership in agricultural research.

Proponents of food and agricultural research have consistently heard from Congress that our community's success has been hamstrung by the lack of a shared stakeholder vision. We have individually pursued advancements in specific programs at times to the detriment of the bigger picture. We have taken this message to heart, engaging in collaborative deliberations over the course of multiple months to develop a series of shared Farm Bill Research Title policy recommendations.

The following policy recommendations are not comprehensive of all participating organizations' priorities and by no means preclude participating organizations from pursuing additional legislative goals. Rather, they reflect the areas where our priorities overlap. Our recommendations are aimed at not just raising overall research funding, but also maximizing each additional dollar through increasing the coordination, oversight, efficiency, competitiveness, and responsiveness of our public research system.

Our shared recommendations are as follows:

1) Establish an annual $6 billion goal (in FY 2019 dollars) for USDA food and agricultural research over FY 2019-2023.

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a) This figure would be expressed in the Farm Bill as the sum total funding of the following agencies and their respective programs: Agricultural Research Service (ARS); National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA); Economic Research Service (ERS); National Agriculture Statistics Service (NASS).
b) This goal of $6 billion for USDA REE would double the baseline of each agency from the 2017 enacted appropriations. Each agency would work with Congress to allocate their respective budgets across their programs/lines using measures of increased efficiency and high impact as guiding principles.

2) Renew and make permanent USDA competitive grant programs currently receiving direct mandatory Farm Bill funding.
   a) Renew the permanently-funded Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI) at no less than its current $80 million annual direct funding level.
   b) Renew both the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) and the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative (OREI) with permanent direct funding set at no less than $50 million annually.

3) Renew the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research (FFAR) with direct funding of $250 million in FY 2019 for the period FY 2019-2023.

4) In order to increase the competitiveness and quality of applications, eliminate across the board matching requirements for competitive grants programs within NIFA currently selectively applied on some institutions.

5) Continue the current law designation of the REE Under Secretary as the Chief Scientist of the Department.

6) Establish a Strategic Investment Fund (SIF) to be under the direction of the REE Under Secretary / Chief Scientist to improve collaboration in addressing emerging opportunities with respect to pressing social challenges, especially those requiring urgent emergency responses, those that may be high risk but with extraordinary potential impact, or those that require interdisciplinary systems approaches that involve more than one agency.
   a) The SIF shall be funded via a one-half of one percent (0.5%) assessment on all NIFA and ARS funding, with the exception of NIFA capacity funding and ARS buildings and facilities, the National Agriculture Library, and trust funds.
   b) SIF funding shall start in the first fiscal year in which the total funding increase (relative to FY 2017 enacted levels) for the to-be-assessed funding lines exceeds the dollar amount of the assessment.

7) Retain the staff positions authorized by current law for the Office of the Chief Scientist as a means of increasing oversight, efficacy, and avoiding potential research duplication. Clarify that these positions shall be filled through transfer of personnel from the program planning and evaluation offices and other appropriately trained personnel within the four REE agencies, with a term of service of at least three (3) years, or through advertising and hiring through regular channels.

8) Establish enhanced stakeholder engagement opportunities on a no less than annual basis to strengthen the functioning and utility of the National Agricultural Research, Education, Extension, and Economics Advisory Board (NAREEEAB) and reinvigorate engagement of researchers and end users.
   a) Expanded stakeholder sessions should be held on a rotating basis in different regions of the country, and the recommendations of the stakeholder sessions should be reviewed by the Board, forwarded to the Secretary along with additional recommendations of the Board, and responded to by the Secretary or Deputy Secretary within 60 days of submission as well as in person at the next Board meeting.
   b) Establish a new Science and Technology Assessment standing committee of the NAREEEAB to undertake the current law duty of the Board. The Science and Technology Assessment Committee should include no

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fewer than two members of the Board, but also draw additional members from among experts in the field of science and technology assessment.

9) Mandate the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM) produce a periodic report to identify scientific opportunities in food and agriculture and to institutionalize the long-term strategic planning and priority setting for food and agricultural research.
   a) This report should be undertaken every ten (10) years and include a midpoint assessment.
   b) This report should be developed in conjunction with the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board (NAREEEAB) and effectively engaged end-users and other stakeholders.
   c) NASEM's current *Breakthroughs 2030* study shall be considered the first such ten-year assessment.

10) Establish a committee (Agricultural Cyberinfrastructure, Data and Statistics Committee) within the Secretary of Agriculture's office for the purpose of building a national strategic vision for cyberinfrastructure, data, and statistics that enables using the data for the benefit of producers, consumers, and taxpayers. The committee should include USDA leadership, subject matter experts in economics and other sciences, and strategic stakeholders.

The participating organizations also recognize the global nature of agriculture in the 21st Century and fully support U.S. efforts towards greater international collaboration to leverage R&D resources and expertise. We encourage the participation of USDA and U.S. scientists in partnerships with international research institutes where there are mutual benefits for U.S. agriculture and other nations, such as addressing emerging plant and animal diseases or improving crop varieties and animal breeds.

Finally, we recognize the critical need for agricultural research infrastructure improvements and maintenance in the United States. We fully support the efforts of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), the ARS, and others to identify, prioritize, and address these needs, ensuring our nation's research facilities, equipment, and workforce are preeminent and remain globally competitive. The group recommends the inclusion of research infrastructure as part of any broader federal efforts related to improving our national infrastructure.

Attached to this letter are more detailed descriptions and rationales for each respective policy recommendation. We would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you and your respective staffs to discuss these recommendations further as soon as possible.

Thank you for your consideration and for all of the work you do on behalf of agriculture and agricultural research. We look forward to working with you in developing a Farm Bill Research Title that serves the vital needs our nation and restores our status as the world leader in agricultural research and innovation.

Sincerely,

List of Signing Organizations

NOTE: Consider letterhead designed to include each of the participating signatories

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State and Regional Collaboration with Land-grant Universities

A Working Summary of Opportunities in Soil Health

Land-grant Universities (LGUs) are a well-positioned partner for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) in meeting national goals pertaining to soil health. In an effort to identify potential opportunities for enhancing collaboration among these entities the following examples are provided.

- **Local application of soil heath and conservation practices through science-based information.**
  - Management practices have profound impacts on the economic, environmental and the sustainability of crop and livestock production systems. Individually and collectively, through research and extension efforts, they are designed for specific local or state conditions and are utilized by various stakeholders to improve soil health. LGUs work with state and federal agencies to tailor standards and management recommendations to the unique characteristics of a locale, which results in viable short- and long-term economic gains, while improving and sustaining resources.
  - New and revised BMPs are constantly being developed and integrated into field practice guides for implementation. LGU experts often assist in the development and review of local engineering standards and improved best management practices.
- **Collaborations -- and sharing positions in agronomy, soil conservation, and outreach-education.**
  - LGU educators and scientists on campuses and in communities (cities, counties and parishes) provide valuable professional expertise and experience that is science-based, unbiased, and trusted. This expertise is part of state delivery network, yet connected to a nation-wide system of LGUs.
  - LGU faculty and staff often work in interdisciplinary teams that incorporate issues of practicality, sustainability, resiliency and economics into the development of recommendations for producers.
  - The North Central Region Water Network, NC-SARE, and the Soil Health Nexus have initiated conversations with the NRCS Division of Soil Health, NRCS Deputy Chief of Programs, and others to help ensure that NRCS and LGUs are working together in the North Central Region. While partnerships in the field are ongoing, a planning meeting at the next National Conference on Cover Crops and Soil Health (December 7-8 in Indianapolis) will discuss how to strengthen working relationships and increase adoption of practices to enhance soil health.
  - Several states (e.g., California and Tennessee) have entered into joint staffing arrangements to enhance interagency collaborations and increase the leveraging of expertise with agronomy, agricultural/biological engineering, crops and soil management, manure management and conservation outreach.
- **Linking to science-based information.**
  - LGUs have tremendous amounts of basic and applied research information about soils and crop production. This information is often used in the development of crop management standards and recommended best management practices. This has been the basis for development of standards that reflect local characteristics, making them more effective and implementable. Peer reviewed science-based information also supports decisions by producers as they balance production goals with resource conservation goals.
  - Numerous LGUs have long-term field sites that reflect cropping and management practices with environmental, soil, and crop performance data. These field studies commonly evaluate changes, and assess methods in capturing biological, physical and chemical changes over time within the lens of soil health.
  - Soil analytical support provided by LGUs includes methods and procedures with calibrations to quantitatively measure and characterize soil properties. These approaches focus on utilizing the latest analytical equipment and data interpretation tools. The results can then be compared to historical analytical approaches which can, in turn, enhance routine soil testing by private and public laboratories. These laboratories also participate in collaborative research and education efforts while collectively maintain QA/QC standards with national certification protocols, and training programs of LGUs.
  - Nationally, LGUs have been an essential and fundamental partner in the development, refinement and use of soil surveys - emblematic of our on-going successful partnership.

- LGUs through multistate research committees address different facets within the soil health framework. For example, NCERA3 Soil and Landscape Assessment, Function and Interpretation; NCERA59 Soil Organic Matter: Form, Function and Management; NE1038 Hydromorphic Soils; SERA6 Methodology, Interpretation and Implementation of Soil, Plant, By-product and Water Analysis; and W3147 Managing Plant Microbe Interactions in Soil to Promote Sustainable Agriculture.

➢ **Collaborative efforts in farmer education and training.**

- Many states have collaborative relationships among local community-based extension educators and Conservation District personnel to teach producers and provide information.
- Examples of previous high-profile and successful efforts include farmer workshops on: nutrient and pest management, confined animal feed operations, manure storage and handling, and basic tillage and soil conservation practices.

➢ **Collaborative efforts to providing training and professional development to NRCS Staff.**

- Some states have joint efforts led by the LGUs that provide professional development directly to conservation professionals and technical service providers (TSPs). In some states there is a strong and strategic effort to assist in engineering certification, nutrient management certification and also the certification of TSPs.
- Some states have State Interagency Training Committees, of which the LGUs may be direct participants.
- In the North Central Region, the University of Wisconsin has a multistate program that has offered over 100 conservation courses ranging from conservation and nutrient management planning to healthy soils and forestry. This training program is currently supported by NRCS.
- Internationally recognized certification programs through professional societies such as the American Society of Agronomy's Certified Crop Adviser program have baseline competencies and on-going mandatory training to maintain certifications in conservation, crop and soil management practices, sustainable outcomes and similar subject matter areas. LGUs directly participate in these state/regional/national committees of professional societies to: assist in development and refinement of standards; provide high quality training; promote the integration of new/improved innovations; and establish relevant professional competencies to help ensure the best practices and options are available that 'fit' the locale.

➢ **Core workforce development.**

- Undergraduate students, graduate students and others are the future workforce. Whether direct employment, internships, or through shorter assignments with state and federal agencies, LGUs offer a quality source of human resources that maybe be uniquely qualified to assist in support the agency's workforce needs.

➢ **Collaboration efforts that integrate the LGUs into NRCS programs (beyond soil health).**

- The integrated response of LGUs can be part of the package of services to local producers under various USDA programs. While this varies greatly from state-to-state, there are many successful examples where state-partnerships have made programs more effective and efficient.
- Examples include: conservation planning, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Regional Conservation Projects and Conservation Priority Areas, the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), and Conservation Innovation Grants.

This summary is offered by Land-grant University representatives:

Arthur Allen – University of Maryland Eastern Shore
Frank Casey – North Dakota State University
Gene Kelly – Colorado State University
John Lawrence – Iowa State University
Chris Watkins – Cornell University
Fred Schlutt – University of Alaska
Jeff Jacobsen – NCRA Executive Director (ESCOP)
Robert Burns – University of Tennessee
Glenda Humiston – University of California System
Rick Klemme – Executive Director ECOP
L. Washington Lyons – 1890 Extension
Saied Mostaghimi – Virginia Tech
Jon Wraith – University of New Hampshire
Robin Shepard – NCCEA Executive Director (ECOP)

August 17, 2017