



North Central Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors

223th Meeting
 Hilton Columbus Hotel, Pierce A
 Tuesday, July 12, 2022
 10 am to 12 noon ET

Meeting AGENDA

Time (ET)	Agenda Item	Topic	Presenter(s)	Action Requested
10:00 am	1.0	Call to Order and Roll Call	Hector Santiago, 2022 NCRA Chair	
10:10 am	2.0	Approval of Spring 2022 Minutes: (https://www.ncra-saes.org/agendas-minutes)		Approval
	3.0	Adoption of the Agenda		Approval
10:15 am	4.0	NCRA ESS Chair Elect Ratification	Hector, Jeff, Chris	Approval
10:20 am	5.0	NCRA ED Search Update	Hector	For information/discussion
10:25 am	6.0	NCRA ESS Leadership Award Process Approval	Jeff	Approval
10:35 am	7.0	BP Discussion: Policy/procedures/guidelines/best practices for safety in field research activities	Jeri Barak	For discussion
10:55 am	8.0	LGU AES/ARS Contracts and Partnerships Update	Jeff, Ruth, Jeri, All	For discussion
11:10 am	9.0	ESS Foundation Concept	Hector, Jeff	For information/discussion
11:25 am	10.0	ESS/ESCOMP Branding Project Update	George, Chris	For information/discussion
11:40 am	11.0	Other Business, as needed	All	For information/discussion
11:45 am	12.0	CARET Report	Caron Gala, NC CARET	For information/discussion
12:00 pm	<i>Adjourn</i>			

Future Meetings/Events of Note:

- Joint COPs Meeting, July 19-21, 2022, Washington, DC. [Meeting website for agenda and registration](#)
- Fall Joint ESS-CES Meeting, Baltimore Waterfront Marriott, Baltimore, MD, September 25-28, 2022
- NCRA Spring Business Meeting. March 27-29, 2023, Hilton San Diego Airport/ Harbor Island, San Diego, CA

DRAFT

Meeting MINUTES

Attendees: Hector Santiago, George Smith, Bernie Engel, Shibu Jose, Anne Dorrance, Gary Pierzynski, Carolyn Lawrence-Dill, Marty Draper, Jeanette Thurston, Archie Clutter, Jeff Jacobsen, Chris Hamilton (recorder)

Agenda Item	Topic	Notes	Action Taken
1.0	Call to Order and Roll Call		
2.0	Approval of Spring 2022 Minutes: (https://www.ncra-saes.org/agendas-minutes)		Approved as distributed.
3.0	Adoption of the Agenda	Note that Jeri Barak is not present and will not be able to lead item 7.0., but discussion will proceed with those in attendance.	Approved as distributed.
4.0	NCRA ESS Chair Elect Ratification	The electronic vote sent via email to the NCRA directors approved George Smith as the NC ESS Chair Elect, effective 10/1/2022. We received a total of 10 votes and all were a resounding vote of approval. Hector will announce this nomination during the summer ESCOP meeting at Joint COPs.	None, for information.
5.0	NCRA ED Search Update	<p>The position announcement was distributed widely back in May. Deadline is August 1 and Hector indicated that we have received two applicants so far. We expect more after July 15. The search committee is on-track per the timetable and will meet initially via Zoom on August 5 to decide on which applicants to schedule for Zoom interviews. The group decided to hold the in-person interviews with 2-3 finalists on the Wednesday of Fall ESS, late afternoon/evening.</p> <p>The group also discussed the possibility of allowing remote work for the right person, provided they are</p>	NCRA directors should plan on in-person ED interviews late Wednesday afternoon, and possibly discussions in the evening at the Fall ESS, September 28, 2022. Departures should be scheduled for Thursday morning.

		<p>hosted/employed by an NC LGU. These will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>Jeff reminded the group that we now have contract templates at MSU for the ED role that could be used and customized, as needed.</p>	
6.0	NCRA ESS Leadership Award Process Approval	<p>Jeff thanked Gary for putting together the official paperwork for Dave Benfield's award this year.</p> <p>Jeff and the EC updated the NCRA leadership process document, and the office will maintain a library of possible recipients of the award.</p> <p>Chris will add Dave to the list of past awardees.</p>	Gary made a motion to approve, Hector seconded, motion passed/approved by the NCRA.
7.0	BP Discussion: Policy/procedures/guidelines/best practices for safety in field research activities	<p>Discussion Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frank Casey previously sent on the NDSU information via email. • Carolyn indicated that she had also sent Jeri information directly, although it was regarding international program safety. It was a useful exercise just to ask ISU departments if they had anything; many realized they needed to create policy. Carolyn also recommended the movie <i>Picture a Scientist</i> (https://www.pictureascientist.com/) on Netflix to increase awareness of the personal safety issues around research programs. • Hector indicated that UNL is also having these discussions and working to improve safety training. Greenhouse safety training class is already in place, but there's not much for field work. • Bernie: FieldWatch runs a nonprofit ag safety training, fieldwatch.org. Looks like all of NCR, but North Dakota is in. There is a worker protection piece for fields being sprayed. 	Jeff will follow up with the other EDs to see if there's useful policy we can distribute and consider how best to advance this topic for the group in a helpful manner.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marty: K-State faculty are required to go through safety training, but unsure how it applies to graduate students. • Gary: Students are the main issue because of rotation/turnover, especially summer undergraduate workers. • Shibu: MU has new graduate student research orientation that includes safety concerns. They must sign a form, as well, for liability. Facility needs to be informed when people are using the area. • George: Logo shirts/something to ID people as legitimate are helpful. We need to have a system in place to know who is where and when. • Archie: Industry policies would be a good resource, since they are so strict and safety focused. • Jeff will discuss with other ED on existing policies how best to share this information. 	
<p>8.0</p>	<p>LGU AES/ARS Contracts and Partnerships Update</p>	<p>Jeff first let the group know that this is Greg Cuomo's last week at UMN. Greg was an NC member on the LGU AES/ARS discussion group.</p> <p>Jeff has had helpful conversations with Larry Chandler at ARS Plains Region and NC and W region directors on this working group will begin addressing the topics outlined in the agenda brief.</p> <p>Discussion Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marty will be meeting with their Kansas ARS center director on some of these issues this week. • Carolyn: Iowa State has an USGS co-op agreement re-signed annually and something similar with ARS would be helpful. She also relayed that Dan Robison says all conversations should work to strengthen the 	<p>None, for information/discussion.</p>

		<p>relationships. Consistency on ARS faculty teaching opportunities and protocols would also be useful.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shibu: MU started talking about charging units for space a few years ago. One unit has an ARS facility, and ARS was very helpful and willing to pay, but then MU couldn't/wouldn't tell them how much to pay, so now no one will be charged after all, because MU didn't want to share cost information with the federal government. He also mentioned that relationships with ARS really depend on personnel at each location. • Many good long-term partnerships exist across the country with ARS and it's critical to maintain these. • The NCRA is very interested in this topic and would like the efforts to continue in this positive manner. 	
<p>9.0</p>	<p>ESS Foundation Concept</p>	<p>Currently, ESS via Chris Pritsos and Bret Hess is just asking if regions support creating an ad hoc committee to research the feasibility of creating a non-profit foundation; they are not currently looking for approval of the Foundation itself yet.</p> <p>Group discussion and questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this a solution to a non-problem? WAAESD is already a 501 3c, so why couldn't they accept the donations from the 2021 ESS meeting? There must have been at least one institution that could have used their own foundation for accepting donations. • If a foundation is formed, it should tackle much larger initiatives than just reducing registration fees for meetings, otherwise the effort and cost will not be worthwhile. • Wouldn't we have a conflict of interest if we accept donations as an organization and also as we solicit funds from individual institutions? 	<p>The NCRA decided by consensus that we do not support this initiative. However, if it goes forward, we refuse to be excluded. Marty Draper volunteered to serve as the initial NCRA representative to the committee if it moves forward. Jeff will communicate this information back to Chris P. and Bret, with several points supporting the NCRA decision.</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FYI that W and NE are supportive of exploring this further. S region is accepting of going slow and just looking into the idea further. • What's the cost of paying someone to manage the Foundation and do fundraising? Would it even be worth it? • How/will this conflict with our existing donors? Will we be competing with ourselves? • Are we just creating yet another bureaucracy? • We need to loop back with Chris P. and Bret and let them know that by consensus, NCRA is not supportive, with several points explaining why. If the initiative indeed moves forward, we refuse to be excluded and will still send a representative. Marty has volunteered to represent us. We need to still have a voice if this moves forward. 	
10.0	ESS/ESCOP Branding Project Update	<p>Chris gave a brief report on the status of the new ESS/ESCOP branding project. The committee has met a few times and has evaluated several possible logos and tag lines. The results of this feedback will be presented by Erika from Pivot at the ESCOP meeting next week during joint COPs.</p> <p>Anne Dorrance indicated that the soybean board is often asking for an ESCOP logo to use when presenting AES research projects, so having a more identifiable brand would be very useful for this and similar instances.</p>	None, information/discussion.
11.0	Other Business, as needed	None identified.	None, for information/discussion.
12.0	CARET Report	NC CARET reps in attendance, Caron Gala (CARET Executive Director), and Adam Ward (OSU CFAES Director of Government Affairs) joined the NCRA business meeting to discuss needs for the annual federal appropriations process. Introductions were conducted around the room with the attendees.	None, for information/discussion.

		<p>Discussion Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the big problems we need to focus on right now when CARET goes to the hill? The environment, climate, sustainability, access to markets for sustainable products, and biosecurity were initially named. Biosecurity is critical for food security, so it was also mentioned that many of these topics are intertwined.• What about human sciences, beyond technology? Mental health is one. The mini Land-Grant forum on human nutrition on 7/11 also showed how much more we could be doing in this arena. What else can we do through our crops to improve health and nutrition? "Prescription food," for improving health was mentioned. We need more data on this one, as it's still very much just correlative.• What might be the first project/budget/program to go if we don't get funding? Probably human/social components. Also, non-strategic reduction of staffing when Hatch remains flat by not refilling vacant positions. We also can't replace those who retire without more funding.• "Smart shrinking" in rural communities, speak up when we see reductions in programs happening and consider ways we can still support people when this happens.• What about carbon sequestration measurements; what does the science say on this? We know how to do it, but how can we do it more remotely and extrapolate more effectively? Standardization of methods is needed, too.• Staffers tell us that no new money coming in with this new Farm Bill, can we push spending down and make	
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it more effective, efficient? No, we cannot continue to do more with less. We are at a critical tipping point.

- Ultimately, expectations of US agriculture cannot continue without funding increases. We need to message Congress to change politics because there is more money, it's just not coming to us. We need CARET to share the key message that we can no longer continue with significant declines in purchasing power, especially with inflation on top of degrading infrastructure, etc.
- Industry/producers cannot afford to fail, so they (CARET) need research stations to use Hatch to take the chances/risk and do constant baseline and long-term experiments needed to help producers advance agriculture.
- NCRA reminded the CARET group that Hatch supports our collaborative, multistate projects (we have about 80 in this region), which are incredibly impactful. The site www.mrfimpacts.org was mentioned specifically as how we showcase these projects. Caron said that more will be discussed about MRFImpacts at the advocacy session later in the day.

Meeting Adjourned at 12:15 pm ET

Item 6.0: NCRA ESS Leadership Award Process Approval

Presenter: Jeff Jacobsen

NCRA Excellence in Leadership Selection Process

(Approved 3/31/2015; Amended **xx/xx/2022**)

The NCRA will participate in the ESS (Experiment Station Section) Leadership Award process and recognize outstanding North Central Region leadership following the recognized annual national guidelines posted on the ESCOP website (<http://escop.info/about/>). NCRA is in the enviable position of reflecting on the contributions and accomplishments of many current and former leaders as potential candidates. NCRA has formalized the nomination and review with a more consistent and transparent approach to improve the process and ensure the highest caliber of awardees.

Nominations and self-nominations are encouraged. All nominations will be solicited from the NCRA Office in the fall and several times thereafter with designated deadlines. The Office will review the nominations for compliance and completeness with the published ESS Guidelines. In addition, the NCRA Office will solicit from all NCRA directors and allied leaders who are approaching retirement or have retired by capturing their contributions applicable to the Leadership Award for future NCRA consideration. All nominations must address the published Nominations Criteria in the annual ESS call such as: 1) SAES administrative leaders of varying titles, 2) contributions to the LGUs via active participation in regional associations and/or ESS, regional/national/international assignments advancing ESS or LGUs, 3) systemic efforts to advance DEI, and 4) record of accomplishments in up to two pages total. Any materials that have been previously submitted can and should be updated for each annual selection process. The final materials will be prepared for Committee review and selection prior to the spring meeting. The selection Committee will be comprised of the NCRA Chair, Incoming Chair, Past Chair (in practice, the Executive Committee) and a past award recipient. The Committee will be assisted by the NCRA Executive Director and Assistant Director.

If it is determined by the NCRA Office that a conflict of interest exists, at-large director(s) will be solicited for participation. The Incoming Chair will serve as chair of the Committee and make the recommendation(s) to the selection Committee. The Committee recommendation will be forwarded to the NCRA directors for final approval at the Spring meeting. This award will be presented as deserving nominees are made known to and accepted by the Committee and will not necessarily be presented every year.

Normally, one award may be presented annually during the spring NCRA meeting. However, under extraordinary circumstances as defined by Committee, and pursuant to the meritorious achievements of the nominees, as many as three awards may be issued in any given year. Only one national award may be awarded in a given year.

Prior Excellence in Leadership Awardees include: Deb Hamernik (2021), Marc Linit (2020), Joe Colletti (2019), Doug Buhler (2018), Ernie Minton (2017), Steve Slack (2016), Fred Cholick (2015), Arlen Leholm (2014).

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Item 8.0: LGU AES/ARS Contracts and Partnerships Update
Presenters: Jeff Jacobsen, Ruth MacDonald, Jeri Barak, All

Potential Topics for LGU and USDA ARS Discussions

Financial

- Estimated overhead costs to LGUs for co-located ARS units on their campuses.
- Flow-through dollars that do not pay for costs of doing business. These individuals show up as LGU employees, yet have no responsibility (training, procedures, etc) to the LGU.
- The multiple Continuing Resolutions mean putting employees and expenses on LGU funds then transferring them back when the CR has ended. The burden (and potentially risk) is significant.
- Budget management side of these partnerships - how others deal with the long delays associated with the federal process of purchase, repair, etc (we have contractors who prefer to work with state than feds).
- How the costs (in our case, maintaining a livestock operation for ARS) are split, and making the partnership work for both parties.

Space

- Types of facility use policies and agreements that are currently in place.
- Existing ownership/rental of land, buildings, and equipment agreements.
- List of units, space, types of space at each unit, and key issues that need to be addressed from the University side at each site. From ARS, staff in each unit, issues and plans for the future for these spaces.
- **Aged infrastructure and facility repairs needs.**
- **Inflationary repair and construction costs for facilities.**
- **Community Projects.**

Agreements

- Categorization of the types of associations/agreements that exist.
- Personnel agreements or policies that exist (USDA employee's integration with academic programs/access to departmental support staff, mentoring grad students, etc).
- Agreements where an academic department hires students who then work in a federal building for a federal supervisor with almost no connection to the LGU. To their credit, USDA ARS is working with us to develop an MOU/SOPs that would ensure for the care of students in such situations (e.g., safety, Title IX, etc.).
- Leasing valuable land and buildings at \$1/yr is frustrating when maintenance is needed. Partnerships were supposed to allow benefit to the LGU owner, but in many instances partnerships disappear with changes in RLs.
- **Guidance on foreign nationals – could be concerns from university staff housed in ARS on campus facilities such as proposed shared lab space in new buildings. A discussion on our policies could be helpful.**

- **ARS contributions to Academic Programs** (guess lectures, participation in graduate committees, graduate students paid through RSA; student workers program, access to equipment not available at the University).

Other

- Benefits to LGUs associated with existing partnerships.
- Is there the need for a comprehensive inventory of land, buildings, facilities, equipment, personnel, etc., owned/rented/used by USDA on each campus? Would this also require defined agreements to be updated and/or created?
- Would having such an inventory negatively impact collegiality and impair the relationship between USDA and LGU – or would it clarify roles/responsibilities?
- As LGUs become increasingly financially strapped, is USDA willing/able to compensate for operational costs on our campuses? If not, will our relationships need to change due to budgetary constraints?
- I also would like to hear about how others are leveraging co-location to grow research/outreach collaborations, particularly what types of research/teaching/outreach partnerships are there.
- How well a partnership works is very much dependent on the leadership at both places and attitudes towards such partnerships. I would like to hear thoughts or ideas on how to remove some of the uncertainties and pains that come with leadership change on both sides.

¹ Collection of various discussion topics from LGUs (regular font) and USDA ARS (bold) leaders.

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Item 9.0: ESS Foundation Concept

Presenters: Hector Santiago, Jeff Jacobsen

Experiment Station Foundation Concept

Purpose: The Experiment Station Section (ESS), a unit of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) Commission on Food, Environment, and Renewable Resources (CFERR), Board on Agriculture Assembly (BAA) seeks to explore the establishment of a 501(c)3 non-profit organization (Foundation) to support national and regional activities of the section's members throughout the United States and U.S. protectorates.

Reasoning: Offer the ability to accept donations, sponsorships, and grants from corporations, organizations, and grant makers seeking tax deductible charitable contributions. For example, many corporations and organizations identified as potential sponsors for the 2021 ESS Annual Meeting did not provide sponsorships because their programs were restricted to making charitable contributions to 501(c)3 non-profit organizations. There are also grant opportunities from entities seeking tax deductible charitable contributions in which eligibility is limited to 501(c)3 non-profit organizations.

Objective: Create a Foundation responsible for securing funds to support program services to benefit members of ESS. The magnitude of funding will ultimately depend on the Foundation's ability to identify and persuade relevant sponsors to make charitable contributions. As a point of context, the list generated when sponsorship for the 2021 ESS Annual Meeting was pursued had 124 possible sponsors offering donations ranging from \$500 to \$5,000. Sponsorship levels up to \$25,000 are possible for non-profits successful at raising funds.

Program Services: The Foundation's primary benefit to members will be to support educational and professional development opportunities through a variety of current and future events offered by ESS and the regional associations, such as conferences, meetings, seminars, webinars, workshops, and other forms of training. A secondary benefit will be to expand overall capacity to support education and advocacy efforts which enhance the section's position as a global leader in agricultural and food systems research.

Membership: The Experiment Station Section is comprised of members who belong to one of five regional associations. Each 1862 land-grant agricultural experiment station director and 1890 land-grant research director participates in a regional association: Northeastern Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors (NERA), the official representative body of the agricultural experiment station directors in the Northeast Region; North Central Regional Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors (NCRA), the official representative body of the agricultural experiment station directors in the North Central Region; Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors (SAAESD), the official representative body of the agricultural experiment station directors in the Southern Region; Western Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors (WAAESD), the official representative body of the agricultural experiment station directors in the Western Region; and Association of Research Directors (ARD), the official representative body of the agricultural research administrators of the 1890 Land-grant institutions.

Foundation Board Membership: Board members are most likely to be hosting or otherwise planning the ESS annual meeting and annual meetings of regional association. Potential Board members for

consideration may, for example, include the Past-Chair, Chair, and Chair-elect of ESS and the Chairs, Treasurers and/or other suitable elected officers appointed by each regional association as rotating board members. Sustaining board members should be the Executive Directors of the regional associations to maintain consistency and continuity across multiple years.

Establishment: ESS Chair Pritsos will introduce the concept to each regional association's Executive Committee. If the response is positive, Chair Pritsos will request approval from ESCOP to charge an *ad hoc* committee to develop recommendations for establishing the Foundation. In addition to considering the above information, the *ad hoc* committee will provide recommendations for the following next steps and required actions:

- Choosing an official name of the Foundation.
- Hiring and paying a firm to assist with the application processes.
- Determining the composition of the Foundation Board.
- Filing articles of incorporation.
- Applying for IRS tax exemption.
- Applying for state tax exemption if applicable.
- Drafting bylaws.
- Obtaining licenses and permits as applicable.
- Hiring and paying for appropriate staff to execute the functions of the Foundation.
- Financing the short-term and longer-term operations of the Foundation.
 - Determine if an assessment should be utilized to support the start-up of the Foundation, and if so, the duration and amount of the assessment should be indicated.
 - Evaluate the use of ESS accounts, including the annual operations account held at APLU and/or some ESS investment funds from the TD Wealth account to support the start-up of the Foundation.

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