# NCRALogo.JPGNorth Central Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors

## 225th Meeting Hilton San Diego Airport/Harbor Island March 27-29, 2023 (Note that all times listed are PT)

## FINAL AGENDA and [MINUTES](#MINUTES)

|  |  |  |  |  |
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| **Date/Time** | **Agenda Item** | **Topic** | **Presenter** | **Process or Action Needed** |
| ***Monday, March 27*** | | | |  |
| 2:00-5:00 pm | Multistate Research Committee (MRC) Meeting (for MRC members only, although others are welcome to attend if interested).   * New/renewal multistate proposals * Midterm reviews * NC Multistate Research Award * NC Emerging Issues Proposals Review * NCRA/KSU Seed Funding Agreement Review | | Bernie Engel, MRC Chair 2023 | Group Discussion, MRC passes seconded motions as recommendations for NCRA action on 3/28/2023.  MRC will also review and approve the NCRA/KSU Funding Agreement. |
| 5:30 pm | *Dinner on your own; meet in the lobby if interested in dining as a group.* | | | |
| ***Tuesday, March 28*** | | | |  |
| 7:00 am | *Breakfast provided in the meeting room - Spouses/partners/guests welcome to join!* | | | |
| 8:00 am | 1.0 | Call to Order and Introductions | Germán Bollero NCRA Chair 2023 |  |
| 8:05 am | 2.0 | Approval of Fall 2022 Minutes: (<https://www.ncra-saes.org/agendas-minutes>) |  | Approval of fall 2022 minutes |
|  | 3.0 | Adoption of the Agenda |  | Approval of agenda |
|  | 4.0 | Interim Actions of the Chair [4.1](#NCRA_office_FY24_budget) NCRA FY2024 Office Budget  4.2 Solicitation of MRC volunteers (three needed)  4.3 Other items, as needed | Germán Bollero | Discussion, then NCRA approval of: NCRA FY24 office budget |
| 8:20 am | 5.0 | NIFA Update/Q&A/Discussion | Deb Hamernik, via Zoom | For information and discussion |
| 9:05 am | [6.0](#ARS_report) | ARS Report/Facilities, Agreements and Areas of Collaboration | Larry Chandler/Steve Kappes (Associate Administrator for National Programs)/ Alberto Pantoja | For information and discussion |
| 10:05 am | *Break* | | | |
| 10:20 am | 7.0 | FFAR Update | Carolyn Lawrence-Dill | For information |
| 10:30 am | 8.0 | ESS Standing Committee Updates (only as needed) | Jeanette Thurston, ESCOP Standing Committee Members | For information and discussion |
| 10:45 am | 9.0 | NRSP-RC Report | Carolyn Lawrence-Dill | For information and discussion |
| 11:00 am | 10.0 | Advocacy Update and Training Session | LBA via Zoom | For information |
| 12:00 pm | *Lunch – buffet style, provided in meeting room. Spouses/partners/guests welcome to join!* | | | |
| 1:00 pm | 11.0 | NASA – Ag in Space/Earth/Collaborations | Bradley Doorn, NASA Water Resources/Ag Application, via Zoom | For information and discussion |
| 2:00 pm | 12.0 | NC 2023 Summer Mini LGU Update | Joleen Hadrich | For information |
| 2:15 pm | [13.0](#NCRA_action_plan) | NCRA Vision, Mission, Goals and Strategies | Jeanette Thurston, All | For discussion, revision (as needed) |
| 3:00 pm | *Break* | | | |
| 3:15 pm | [14.0](#MRC_report) | MRC Report and Recommendations Approval Votes   * [New/renewal multistate proposals](#MRC_renewals_table) * [Midterm reviews](#MRC_midterm_reviews) * NC Multistate Research Award Winner * NC Emerging Issues Climate Proposal Selection * NCRA/KSU Seed Funding Agreement Review | Bernie Engel, Chris Hamilton | Approval of all MRC recommendations as presented |
| 3:40 pm | 15.0 | Other Business, as needed | All | TBD |
| 3:50 pm | 16.0 | NCRA Spring Meeting 2024 Location/Format Ideas | Germán Bollero, Chris Hamilton, Jeanette Thurston | For discussion |
| 3:55 pm | [17.0](#activities_accomplishments) | NCRA Office 2022/2023 Activities and Accomplishments | Chris Hamilton, Jeanette Thurston | For information and discussion during Executive Session |
| 4:25 pm | 18.0 | Tour details/logistics for Wednesday, 3/29 | Chris Hamilton/Jeanette Thurston | For information |
| 4:30 pm | 19.0 | Reading of the Resolutions | Jeanette Thurston, Gary Pierzynski | For information and celebration |
| 4:45 pm | 20.0 | Executive Session | NCRA Directors Only | Group discussion |
| *5:00 pm Meeting Adjourns, meet in hotel bar for networking/social time, make dinner plans* | | | | |
| ***Wednesday, March 29*** | | | | |
| 6:00 am | *Breakfast provided in meeting room - Spouses/partners/guests welcome to join!* | | | |
| 7:45 am | Depart for tour at the [Beckman Center for Conservation Research](https://science.sandiegozoo.org/who-we-are/beckman-center), 15600 San Pasqual Valley Rd, Escondido, CA 92027 (located within the San Diego Zoo Safari Park, about 45 min from the meeting hotel) | | | |
| 12:00 noon | *Return to hotel/airport by 1 pm approximately* | | | |

**Future Meetings:**

* NC Mini LGU meeting, July 10-11, 2023, Hosted by UMN
* Joint COPs, July 18-20, 2023, Kansas City, MO
* Fall Joint ESS-CES Meeting, September 24-26, 2023, Grand Rapids, MI

## MINUTES

**Attendees:** Germán Bollero (Univ of IL), Alex Winter-Nelson (Univ IL), Tala Awada (UNL), George Smith (MSU), Larry Chandler (USDA-ARS), Bernie Engel (Purdue), Dana Infante (MSU), Gary Pierzynski (OH State), Joleen Hadrich (UMN), Shibu Jose (MU), Derek McLean (UNL), Marty Draper (KSU), Alberto Pantoja (USDA-ARS, via Zoom), Steve Kappes (USDA-ARS, via Zoom), Deb Hamernik (USDA-NIFA, via Zoom), Frank Casey (NDSU, via Zoom), Bill Gibbons (SDSU, via Zoom), Bradley Doorn (NASA, via Zoom), Jeanette Thurston (NCRA), Chris Hamilton (NCRA, recorder).

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| **Agenda Item** | **Topic** | **Notes** | **Actions Taken** |
| 1.0 | Call to Order and Introductions | Germán Bollero, NCRA Chair 2023, led introductions around the room. | None, for information only. |
| 2.0 | Approval of Fall 2022 Minutes: (<https://www.ncra-saes.org/agendas-minutes>) |  | Fall 2022 minutes approved as presented in the weblink. |
| 3.0 | Adoption of the Agenda |  | Meeting agenda approved as distributed. |
| 4.0 | Interim Actions of the Chair [4.1](#NCRA_office_FY24_budget) NCRA FY2024 Office Budget  4.2 Solicitation of MRC volunteers (three needed)  4.3 Other items, as needed | Germán Bollero, Jeanette Thurston, and Chris Hamilton presented the NCRA FFY24 office budget and walked the group through each table presented below in the agenda brief. NCRA FY24 budget was approved unanimously by the NCRA business meeting attendees. Chris will work with KSU to send out the state assessment invoices after the meeting in early/mid-April.  At the MRC meeting on 3/27/2023, Derek McLean, Joleen Hadrich, and Carolyn Lawrence-Dill volunteered to join the MRC for the next review cycle starting 10/1/2023. The NCRA approved these new MRC members. | 4.1 NCRA FY24 office budget was approved as presented.  4.2 Derek McLean, Joleen Hadrich, and Carolyn Lawrence-Dill were all approved as incoming MRC members starting 10/1/2023. |
| 5.0 | NIFA Update/Q&A/Discussion | Deb Hamernik joined by Zoom and presented a USDA NIFA update.    George Smith asked what NCRA can do to better communicate the importance of NIFA and ag research facilities/infrastructure needs? Deb suggested:   * Continue to Share APLU Sightlines study to showcase LGU research facilities and infrastructure deficits/deterioration. * Make sure to get AES leaders in front of Dr. Jacobs-Young and new NIFA director often and push the importance of agricultural research and NIFA.   When will the new NIFA director start? Unsure at this time but should be within the next week or two.  Will new areas be added to AFRI in response to the elimination of smaller programs? Likely, these programs will be absorbed into AFRI to keep administrative burden down. Most indirect cost rates will remain the same, at 30%.  What’s the future of AGARDA; will it be in the Farm Bill? It is important and needs to be reauthorized in the next Farm Bill. Unsure where the advocacy for AGARDA falls though. It’s led by REE, Office of the Chief Scientist, so those would be the people to ask for more information. Jeanette noted that she sent the AGARDA strategic plan out via email to NCRA today, 3/28/2023. Great concept, but there are concerns that its funding would be at the expense of smaller, critical programs.  NIFA state liaisons/representative discussion: NCRA would like to see them come visit the states to understand fully who we are and what we do and build good contacts. Also, we’d like them to include AES leadership when reaching out and coordinating visits so they can have a full context as to what we do.  NIFA still has a few people based in DC. Deb will send those names to Jeanette/Chris so that when going to DC for other business, AES directors can visit with them, as well. Virtual meetings are always welcome too. Reach out to the NPLs and get to know them, let them meet your faculty.  NIFA grantsmanship workshop coming up soon. More information to come.  Everyone thanked Deb for joining the meeting; her update was very much appreciated. She would like feedback on whether the information she provided was useful and/or what other information NCRA directors would like to hear in the future. | None, for information and discussion.  Deb wants to make sure that the information she provides in her updates is useful, so if NCRA members have any feedback, please let Jeanette and Chris know, to share with Deb. |
| [6.0](#ARS_report) | ARS Report/Facilities, Agreements and Areas of Collaboration | Introductions were made around the meeting space (Zoom and in-person), then Steve Kappes, Alberto Pantoja, and Larry Chandler gave brief summaries of their ARS Midwest and Plains regions and went over the included ARS update agenda brief.  ARS Discussion Topics and Notes:  **We value our partnership as there is great benefit in ARS and LGU scientists being co-located on our campuses.** *(NCRA Directors and ARS leadership share NCR examples of the synergies/impacts of our partnership)*  It was noted that ARS and LGU scientists are seamless; you can’t tell the difference between ARS and LGU Scientists, especially when co-located in the same buildings. Relationships are strong and successful.  NCRA greatly appreciates ARS leadership--Our collaborations and relationships are synergistic.  Open conversation with leadership, safety teams, etc., is always welcomed and helps work through issues, builds strong relationships. Communication is strongly encouraged, both ways. Suggestion to include ARS members in faculty, college meetings and emails whenever possible.  **Co-location of LGU and ARS scientists on our campuses is the preferred model but there are financial challenges to departments and other units who provide space to ARS scientists due to university budget models**. *(NCRA Directors share specific challenges; ARS leadership share policy and whether there is one policy for all ARS regions; open discussion on issues and ways to alleviate these financial challenges)*  What is the official policy on ARS paying for space on campuses/another model for recouping campus costs? Many colleges are now starting to have to pay for space they occupy, so it’s getting tricky. Individual, case-by-case discussions would be the best, as there’s no central agreement on this, but ARS wants to help. The best solution is to talk through it and find mutually beneficial solutions.  Is there a standard agreement for ARS at LGUs? ARS has an overarching agreement that covers collaborative activities, but no guidance for financial issues/topics. Most agreements are old (50+ years), vague, and all very different.  UMN is working on 3-year agreements to make sure everything is covered and accounted for. IA and MU are also working on this. Having conversations on these agreements locally can be very helpful for both ARS and LGUs.  One suggestion was to identify standard components that are valid to everyone is a good place to start, then become more specific as needed for different locations. Assessments every 3-5 years could be helpful in case changes need to be made.  **Limited access of LGU scientists to ARS buildings has been a challenge, would it be possible to allow scientists who work in these spaces broader access?** *(NCRA Directors share specific examples; ARS leadership share facilities access policy; open discussion)*  Open access is the intention and plan, even for new ARS facilities. Larry Chandler cited the plan for new Nebraska ARS facilities; collaboration space is included in the design; and access for faculty and graduate students.  It was noted that there can be a barrier to collaboration when LGU and ARS scientists are in separate buildings. Co-location really is the best model for full integration.  **Due to high administrative fees at some of our institutions and a requirement for a cash match for some ARS agreements, entering into ARS agreements can be very costly.  Could ARS help defray this financial burden by contributing to the payment of administrative fees and consider an in-kind match for ARS funds provided for collaborative research?** *(NCRA Directors share specific examples; ARS leadership shares policy (same policy across regions?); open discussion on issues and ways to alleviate these financial challenges)*  Larry Chandler indicated that the answer is complicated. Several types of ARS agreements exist, all with different costs. He recommended that Directors talk to agreement staff within the area offices and see what solutions might exist. Open communication is key and the best solution!  Take time and come up with good mutual solutions together. ARS is happy to work with LGU campuses!  **ARS Unit and LGU Advisory Committees/Boards—benefit and opportunity for university and ARS scientists to participate?** *(ARS leadership shares the background on the formation and use of ARS advisory groups, which ARS units utilize advisory groups, and if university scientists can be included; NCRA Directors share background on the formation and use of various advisory groups for LGU colleges/units/programs and the inclusion of ARS scientists; open discussion on the benefits to participation on each other’s advisory groups)*  Suggestions is to include ARS in faculty/college/department meetings and email lists whenever possible to build relationships and make strong connections. | Please keep ARS/LGU communication open and active. |
| 7.0 | FFAR Update/Discussion | Carolyn Lawrence-Dill indicated that she is on the FFAR board but doesn’t have a direct connection to that organization. Perhaps we might consider inviting an FFAR member speak at a future meeting/call to obtain a better full picture of what they do and better clarify to them the challenges LGUs face, especially around their matching requirement and policies.  Matching: FFAR matching is 1:1 cash match, and it’s often hard for researchers to meet this. FFAR doesn’t want match to come from colleges, they prefer and encourage industry/external sources and will choose proposals that have industry match over those with internal, college matching. Carolyn has shared this with her researchers, as they’ve been skeptical in the past and thought the college should be providing it. FYI that the original intent of FFAR was that they would find the industry match, but that’s not the case. Also, IA State Office of Sponsored programs (and other NCRA LGUs) doesn’t allow over-matching (which FFAR encourages from industry), so this would restrict funding from FFAR. Universities are concerned that industry start-ups could go under or not fund subsequent years, so universities end up having to pay the remaining match amount. It’s hard for PIs to negotiate these higher industry matches. Carolyn will ask FFAR to clarify the industry over match – are they encouraging it or not? Different institutions are hearing different messages on this. The FFAR request is to clarify this in their RFA.  Does FFAR take away from Capacity? No and yes; it’s funded from different sources, but there is a finite pot of money from which all sources are funded.  Derek requested Jeanette reach out to the EDs to have more conversations about our concerns directly with FFAR. Perhaps then form a national committee to help address issues for all the Experiment Station Section. | Jeanette will reach out to the other regional EDs and discuss a path forward for opening communications with FFAR over LGU concerns on matching. |
| 8.0 | ESS Standing Committee Updates (only as needed) | STC, Bernie: Nothing significant to report at this time.  DCC, Tala: There is a new committee chair. DCC is working on their mission and vision. The committee is also planning on having monthly webinars to address specific issues states are dealing with, with a key speaker/topic and a panel of directors who would share ways they are dealing with that topic/issue. This would be an interactive effort. Tala also reminded the group of the DCC DEI National Award deadline approaching April 1, so please nominate your people and teams. Note that Chris sent a reminder about this award and submission instructions to the NCRA lists on 3/31/2023.  BLC, Marty: (text from email to Chris during the meeting) *On the BLC call today, I heard that the BAC wants units to provide guidance for advocacy priorities. For us, we would channel our thoughts through the BLC. Anton hopes that the BLC can begin that conversation at our April 25 meeting. The strategy remains to be confirmed, but the thought is that topical stories can be used to provide relevance in the messaging. Once we settle on priorities, we will need to pull together topically relevant stories. If it’s a capacity program/capacity programs, we will need to show how the CAPACITY built by the program leveraged greater outcomes/more timely outcomes/more nimble responses for society. It’s not the grant that resulted, it’s the outcome/impact that resulted.*  Group Discussion then ensued around advocating better to support capacity funds, specifically Hatch.   * How can we share why capacity matters? We need clear examples of how we’re saving the world with this funding. * Why is food, ag, natural resources different from other topics? Other colleges do not understand why colleges of ag receive these funds, while they do not. We need to tell our stories better. * All big ag impacts at LGUs can be linked back to Hatch somehow – it’s the slow magic. * Perhaps we need to connect and link to Extension better to better share our value/impacts? * How are we measuring our outputs, could we do a better job?   Visit <http://escop.info/committees/> to access ESCOP committee pages and files. | Please consider making nominations from your institutions for the ESS Diversity Catalyst Committee Award before the April 1 deadline. |
| 9.0 | NRSP-RC Report | Carolyn mentioned that she is new to the NRSP-RC, but Don Latham, the CARET rep on the committee, sent her all the past meeting minutes for her to read through and get up to date on the committee’s activities over the past few years.  There are two proposals up for approval, NRSP8’s renewal and NRSP\_temp\_11. Please review the materials for both sent out a few weeks ago and if you have comments, send to Carolyn by May 1 to share with the NRSP-RC at their June meeting. NRSP-RC will make recommendations for the vote to take place at the Fall 2023 ESS meeting in Grand Rapids, MI.  Please see <http://escop.info/committee/nrsp-rc/> for NRSP RC meetings and minutes. | None, for information. |
| 10.0 | Advocacy Update and Training Session | Elizabeth Stulberg presented her advocacy and budget 101 training session slides and answered the group’s questions. | None, for information. |
| 11.0 | NASA – Ag in Space/Earth/Collaborations | Bradley Doorn shared his NASA Ag presentation slides with the group.    NASA has been reaching out to producers to let them know that they do agricultural research. Co-development of products is their goal, focusing on applied research partnerships for solutions through:   * NASA Harvest, international ag and global food security * Climate-Smart Ag with USDA * NASA Acres – domestic ag program.   Some current collaborations/programs:   * IL partnership on nutrient management and drought forecasting through satellite measurements of soil moisture. * Western water applications office (WWAO) assesses needs for water management using OPENET, filling data gap in water management by linking satellite data with irrigation management. * Disaster assessment example of mapping corn damage after 2020 Iowa derecho.   NASA has 28 earth observing satellites providing free data. NASA’s Earth System Observatory (ESO) focused on key ag indicators of precipitation, vegetation, soil moisture to help producers with crop models.  Space for Ag Tour provides outreach on NASA’s ag programs.  Group Discussion and Questions:  Regarding limitations for LGUs when working with NASA and vice versa, how can we improve and make the relationship more seamless? Some points mentioned by Bradley:   * Super star researchers come from LGUs. * Since NASA’s focus is on the applied research side and they want an impact on society over publications, perhaps NASA’s work might not be considered cutting edge. * LGUs work well with end users and have trust, have strong existing relationships. NASA appreciates this and would like more access working with LGUs, if possible. * LGU researchers may have more limited software skills, in comparison to what NASA needs around the big data they collect. * Open science requirement – software needs to be publicly available, which can be challenging for LGU scientists’ intellectual property. * Sustainability of the work over the long term can be an issue, e.g., one PI’s program works on it, but then moves on somewhere else and the work ends.   Where should LGUs direct their scientists for opportunities/RFPs? The programs mentioned today are open, but also very different. Recommend starting by directing new scientists to NASA ROSES. Schedule comes out each February. <https://science.nasa.gov/researchers/sara/grant-solicitations>  What informs NASA funding opportunities? In general, it’s the Decadal survey, which is largely informed by university researchers and other scientists to outline the 10-year plan for scientific mission and goals.  Is NASA working on plant/animal biosecurity issues, such as measuring movement because of threats, disease? They’ve been asked and have done some work with the military and APHIS, testing some ideas, but there may be programs Brad is not yet aware of.  Is data standardization of meta data still lacking for remote sensing images? Yes, it is a weakness that we need to improve on at NASA. NASA needs to hear this more from universities to move efforts forward more.  Please email Bradley with other questions or information needs. | For information and discussion |
| 12.0 | NC 2023 Summer Mini LGU Update | Joleen Hadrich shared the UMN Mini LGU Meeting plans, July 10-11, 2023. Please visit <https://cfans.umn.edu/2023-mini-land-grant-university-conference> for details on the meeting and registration. The NCRA will have a 2-hour business meeting on the afternoon of July 11. | None, for information. |
| [13.0](#NCRA_action_plan) | NCRA Vision, Mission, Goals and Strategies | Jeanette presented her updated NCRA Vision, Mission, Goals, and Strategies and the directors provided feedback on text change suggestions. Jeanette recorded these and will present an updated version via email to the NCRA for review. Chris suggested the NCRA review and update the document each year, as needed. The group agreed that, at a minimum, revisit our goals each year. | Jeanette will send the revised version of the document via email for review. The NCRA plans to review at least annually (i.e., spring meeting). |
| [14.0](#MRC_report) | MRC Report and Recommendations Approval Votes   * [New/renewal multistate proposals](#MRC_renewals_table) * [Midterm reviews](#MRC_midterm_reviews) * NC Multistate Research Award Winner * NC Emerging Issues Climate Proposal Selection * NCRA/KSU Seed Funding Agreement Review | Bernie discussed the MRC recommendations for project renewals and midterms as presented. MRC meeting notes from 3/27 here:    The MRC recommends NCERA137 move forward as our NC nomination for the 2023 ESS Excellence in multistate research awards.  The MRC recommends choosing the Rose/Rice proposal as the recipient of the NC Emerging Issues Seed Funding grant, after requested clarification on how the graduate students’ efforts align with this multistate project objectives and how the objectives of other funded projects differ from this project. We will give them two weeks to respond, one page maximum. MRC will take two weeks to review and then respond. We expect to keep the timeline the same as in the RFA. Jeanette will reach out to the proposal team regarding this request and potential award. | All renewal proposals were approved as presented in the MRC report.  All midterm reviews were approved as presented in the MRC report.  NCERA137 was approved as our NC nomination for the 2023 ESS Excellence in multistate research awards.  The Rose/Rice proposal recommendation was approved as the grant recipient pending an acceptable response to the MRC requested clarification on how the graduate students’ efforts align with this multistate project objectives and how the objectives of other funded projects differ from this project.  Jeanette will contact the Rose/Rice team regarding this request. |
| 15.0 | Other Business, as needed | Jeanette asked Directors: Who should be allowed to attend NCRA meetings? All agreed that they trust each other’s judgement on participation and that our meetings are open and inclusive. Going forward, Directors will have the discretion in identifying those on their teams who need to participate in our monthly and other NCRA meetings.  Fall 2023 ESS Meeting in Grand Rapids: George Smith shared that the fall meeting is currently scheduled 9/24 to 9/26, but since dates conflict with Yom Kippur. MSU is looking into availability of changing the dates. Draft program has been developed and the theme will be: Catalyzing Solutions to Climate Change Impacts on Food Security through Partnerships. George’s goal is to have discussions with non-traditional partner speakers/panel members. George asked for panelist recommendations. The fall meeting will also include a virtual reality DEI session called “A Mile in My Shoes,” to help people get a feeling of what it’s like to exist outside of their usual perspective. This will be a small group and interactive session.  Derek McClean shared UNL’s handout “Midwest Ag: An Economic Powerhouse” with the group. He suggested that this may be a good addition to the NCRA one-pager. Derek will work with UNL to make this NCRA specific. | None, for information only. |
| [16.0](#meeting_location2024) | NCRA Spring Meeting 2024 Location/Format Ideas | The group discussed Jeanette’s proposal for Pismo Beach, CA, as described below in the brief. The group was favorable to that location and generally fine with this time of year. The current location here in San Diego would be an acceptable alternative, as well.  Special Topics/Session Ideas:   * Public/private partnerships might be an interesting to address as a topic. * FFAR might be another good option, unless we want to do that sooner. Either way we should prepare them in advance with questions. * Venture capitalist groups and how they work with LGUs on climate smart agriculture. | Chris will investigate venues at Pismo Beach. Jeanette will reach out to Dean Thulin at Cal State San Luis Obispo, once we confirm the location, to explore tours for our group during our visit. |
| [17.0](#activities_accomplishments) | NCRA Office 2022/2023 Activities and Accomplishments | Chris and Jeanette presented their activities and accomplishments as presented below to the directors, showcasing highlights from the agenda briefs.  Jeanette requested feedback from the directors on performance and whether she is spending the right amount of time on the right topics and what works regarding communications from her. Also, is the NCRA supportive of sharing the cost of Jeanette’s professional coach?  Discussion and Comments:   * Directors appreciate the descriptions and accomplishments reports and stated that these really helped them understand their roles. * Directors expressed their appreciation for all of the excellent work and responsiveness Chris provides throughout the year. * Jeanette is approachable and compassionate, which members appreciate. * New administrator checklist, with roles and responsibilities of being in the NCRA would be wonderful to help with on-boarding. Jeanette and Chris shared that they are already working on this. * Overall, the NCRA is very favorable towards the performance of Jeanette and Chris. | The NCRA directors will conduct formal reviews of Jeanette and Chris during the executive session this afternoon. |
| 18.0 | Tour details/logistics for Wednesday, 3/29 | Jeanette summarized the plan for Wednesday’s Beckman Center tour and where to meet – 7:45 am in the lobby, then we’ll drive to the site. Breakfast provided in the Skyline room starting at 6 am. | None, for information only. |
| [19.0](#resolutions) | Reading of the Resolutions | Jeanette read the resolutions of appreciation for Marty Draper and Bill Gibbons, as provided in the attached resolutions below. Anne’s and Bill’s (since we are unsure if he was present at the Zoom at the time) will be read during a future NCRA monthly call or meeting. The group applauded both Marty and Bill for their work with the NCRA and wished them well with their future endeavors and a Happy Retirement. | None, for information only. |
| 20.0 | Executive Session | NCRA Directors Only – Jeanette and Chris left the room for this discussion. | Group discussion and annual review of Jeanette and Chris. |

## 4.1 NCRA FY2024 Office Budget Presenter: Germán Bollero Action Requested: Discussion and Approval of FY24 Office Budget



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| **FY2022 and FY2023 NCRA Assessments Distribution by State** | | | |  |  |
| **State** | **60% State Equal Share Assessments** | **40% Proportional to State's Share of MRF\*** | | **FY23 Assessment** | **FY24 Assessment (Proposed)** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Illinois | $24,192 | 9.85% | $19,070 | $43,296 | $43,263 |
| Indiana | $24,192 | 8.32% | $16,107 | $40,256 | $40,300 |
| Iowa | $24,192 | 10.50% | $20,313 | $44,586 | $44,506 |
| Kansas | $24,192 | 7.60% | $14,710 | $38,961 | $38,903 |
| Michigan | $24,192 | 8.59% | $16,634 | $40,997 | $40,827 |
| Minnesota | $24,192 | 8.68% | $16,790 | $41,048 | $40,982 |
| Missouri | $24,192 | 7.75% | $14,999 | $39,251 | $39,192 |
| Nebraska | $24,192 | 9.32% | $18,037 | $41,583 | $42,230 |
| North Dakota | $24,192 | 5.84% | $11,302 | $35,539 | $35,495 |
| Ohio | $24,192 | 9.40% | $18,196 | $42,460 | $42,388 |
| South Dakota | $24,192 | 5.89% | $11,399 | $35,636 | $35,591 |
| Wisconsin | $24,192 | 8.26% | $15,981 | $40,237 | $40,174 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **TOTAL** | **$290,309** | **100.00%** | **$193,540** | **$483,849** | **$483,849** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| \*Proportion of State share of MRF based upon rolling 3-year actual average (FFY1-22) as provided by NIFA. NRSP and NC off-the-top allocations (IA, MI, NE, WI) not included. | | | | |  |

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## Item 6.0: USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS), Report to NCRA State Agriculture Experiment Station Directors

March 2023

**Area Leadership**

**Midwest Area**

Area Director: Alberto Pantoja

Associate Area Directors: Jay Johnson; Jeff Vallet

**Illinois**, **Indiana**, **Iowa**, Kentucky, **Michigan**, **Minnesota**, **Missouri**, **Ohio**, **Wisconsin**

**Plains Area**

Area Director: Larry Chandler

Associate Area Directors: Bryan Kaphammer; Joseph Rich

Colorado, **Kansas**, Montana, **Nebraska,** New Mexico, **North Dakota,** Oklahoma, **South Dakota**, Texas, Wyoming

**Budget Information**

**FY 2023 Enacted Budget for ARS**

* Salaries and Expenses:
  + $1,774,279,000
  + Increase of $111 million from the FY 2022 appropriation
  + Increases
    - Program Increases 80,000,000
    - Salary Costs 31,200,000
  + Decreases 0
    - Proposed Location/Laboratory/Worksite Closures
    - Proposed Project Terminations
* Buildings and Facilities. 74,297,000
  + Community Project Funding 56,700,000
    - Capital Improvements (Urbana, IL) 500,000
    - Capital Improvements (Peoria, IL) 3,500,000
* Facility Cost Overruns 58,500,000
  + Prairie du Sac Overrun (Madison, WI) 10,000,000

**FY 2024 President’s Proposed Budget for ARS**

* Release of the FY24 budget proposal is expected in March

**New Leadership and Vacancies**

***Midwest Area***

* Illinois
  + Peoria, National Center for Agricultural Utilization Research
    - Bioenergy Research - vacant; Nancy Nichols, Acting RL
    - Crop Bioprotection Research – Ephantus Muturi, RL
    - Plant Polymer - vacant; James Kenar, Acting RL
  + Urbana
    - Soybean/Maize Germplasm and Pathogen Genetics Research – Adam Mahan, Acting RL
* Indiana
  + West Lafayette
    - Livestock Behavior Research - Jay S. Johnson, RL
    - National Soil Erosion Research – Chris Renschler, RL
* Iowa
  + Ames, National Laboratory for Agriculture and the Environment
    - Center Director, Thanos Papanicolaou
    - Agroecosystems Management Research - vacant; Brian Kerr, Acting RL
    - Soil, Water, and Air Resources Research - vacant; Daniel Olk, Acting RL
* Missouri
  + Columbia
    - Biological Control of Insects Research – Kent Shelby, Acting RL
* Wisconsin
  + Marshfield, WI (Part of the Dairy Forage Research Center)
    - Environmentally Integrated Management Research, Matthew Akins, RL, Marshfield, WI
  + Madison
    - Cereal Crops Research - Ramamurthy Mahalingam, RL

**New Leadership and Vacancies**

***Plains Area***

* Kansas
  + Manhattan, Center for Grain and Animal Health Research
    - Stored Product Insect and Engineering Research – vacant; Erin Scully, Acting RL
  + Manhattan, National Bio- and Agro-defense Facility
    - Zoonotic and Emerging Disease Research – Lisa Hensley, RL
* Nebraska
  + Clay Center, US Meat Animal Research Center
    - Animal Health Genomics Research – vacant; Carol Chitko-Mckown, Acting RL
* North Dakota
  + Fargo, Edward T. Shafer Agricultural Research Center
    - Sunflower and Plant Biology Research Unit, – vacant; Louis Hesler, Acting RL
* Grand Forks, Grand Forks Human Nutrition Research Center
  + - Healthy Body Weight Research Unit – vacant; James Roemmich, Acting RL
    - Dietary Prevention of Obesity-related Disease Research Unit - vacant; Jay Cao, Acting RL

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# NCRA Spring Meeting 2023 USDA-ARS Leadership and NCRA Discussion Topics and Notes

**We value our partnership as there is great benefit in ARS and LGU scientists being co-located on our campuses.** *(NCRA Directors and ARS leadership share NCR examples of the synergies/impacts of our partnership)*

It was noted that ARS and LGU scientists are seamless; you can’t tell the difference between ARS and LGU Scientists, especially when co-located in the same buildings. Relationships are strong and successful.

ARS leadership is excellent and the NCRA gratefully acknowledges this. Our collaborations and relationships are synergistic.

Open conversation with upper leadership, safety teams, etc., is always welcomed and helps work through issues, build strong relationships. Communication is strongly encouraged, both ways. Perhaps include ARS members in faculty, college meetings and emails whenever possible.

**Co-location of LGU and ARS scientists on our campuses is the preferred model but there are financial challenges to departments and other units who provide space to ARS scientists due to university budget models**. *(NCRA Directors share specific challenges; ARS leadership share policy and whether there is one policy for all ARS regions; open discussion on issues and ways to alleviate these financial challenges)*

What is the official policy on ARS paying for space on campuses/another model for recouping campus costs? Many colleges are now starting to have to pay for space they use, so it’s getting tricky. Individual, case by case discussions would be the best, as there’s no central agreement on this, but ARS wants to help. The best solution is to talk our way through it and find solutions.

Is there a central agreement for ARS at LGUs? ARS has an overarching agreement that covers collaborative activities, but nothing specifically financial. Most agreements are old (50+ years), vague, and all very different.

UMN is working on 3-year agreements to make sure everything is covered and accounted for. IA and MU are working on this. Even just having these conversations on agreements locally can be very helpful for both ARS and LGUs.

Perhaps standard components that are valid for everyone would be a good place to start, then become more specific as needed for different locations.

Assessments every 3-5 years could be helpful in case changes need to be made.

**Limited access of LGU scientists to ARS buildings has been a challenge, would it be possible to allow scientists who work in these spaces broader access?** *(NCRA Directors share specific examples; ARS leadership share facilities access policy; open discussion)*

Open access is the intention and plan, even for new facilities. Larry cited the plan for new Nebraska ARS facilities; collaboration space is included in the design.

Sometimes though, there’s a just social barrier when facilities are separate, and each must sign in. Both ARS and LGU are less likely to visit in person. Co-location really is the best model for full integration.

**Due to high administrative fees at some of our institutions and a requirement for a cash match for some ARS agreements, entering into ARS agreements can be very costly.  Could ARS help defray this financial burden by contributing to the payment of administrative fees and consider an in-kind match for ARS funds provided for collaborative research?** *(NCRA Directors share specific examples; ARS leadership shares policy (same policy across regions?); open discussion on issues and ways to alleviate these financial challenges)*

Larry indicated that the answer is complicated, and the summary is that several types of ARS agreements exist, all with different costs. Talk to agreement staff with area offices and see what solutions might exist. Open communication is key and the best solution!

Take time and come up with good mutual solutions together. ARS is happy to work with us!

**ARS Unit and LGU Advisory Committees/Boards—benefit and opportunity for university and ARS scientists to participate?** *(ARS leadership shares the background on the formation and use of ARS advisory groups, which ARS units utilize advisory groups, and if university scientists can be included; NCRA Directors share background on the formation and use of various advisory groups for LGU colleges/units/programs and the inclusion of ARS scientists; open discussion on the benefits to participation on each other’s advisory groups)*

Again, include ARS in faculty/college/department meetings and email lists whenever possible to build relationships and make strong connections.

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## Item 13.0: NCRA Vision, Mission, Goals and Strategies Presenter: Jeanette Thurston Action Requested: For discussion, revision.

**Discussion for identifying an NCRA Vision and Mission**

**and**

**5-year Goals and Strategies**

**For DISCUSSION/REVISION**

**Vision:** *Innovate food and agriculture systems for a more healthy, profitable, equitable, and sustainable world.*

**Mission**: *Advance, enable, and promote NCRA member institutions to deliver innovations and technologies that transform food and agriculture systems.*

***Below is a merging of goals and strategies presented to NCRA Directors during my interview (I built it using some of the action plan items you all agreed to and that was shared on our website) and the “NCRA Priorities and Key Initiatives” that is currently posted on the NCRA Website. These goals and strategies are not set in stone and should be revisited at least 1x/year. Some of these may change, for example, after I complete my institution visits and gather information, strengths, opportunities, and needs across the NCR. Our next step should be to identify high priority goals and strategies to tackle in the next year, along with specific actions (perhaps a topic for discussion at our miniLGU meeting?).***

***5-year NCRA Goals and Strategies (2023-2027)***

1. ***Enhance NCR Multistate Research***

* Identify regional strengths and synergies that inform the establishment of NCR science themes/priorities and that provide direction to multistate projects and other collaborative research efforts across the NCR.
* Ensure NC multistate portfolio aligns with regional priorities.
* Provide regular training and information for multistate research members and leadership (i.e., AAs, researchers, reviewers) to ensure project success.
* Encourage strong interstate and regional collaborations, such as building new partnerships and collaborations and leveraging external funding, shared facilities, and students.
* Through effective partnerships, inform and influence science priorities dialogue and policy to increase size and diversity of funding sources that address food and agriculture system challenges.

1. ***Catalyze and strengthen awareness, reputation, and effective and inclusive partnerships across region, nation, and globally.***

* Strengthen current and *identify new partnerships* across the region and nation, including minority serving institutions, regional associations, USDA and other federal agencies, APLU, industry, NGOs, CARET, LBA, existing LGU centers, and nontraditional organizations. Coordinate and promote collaboration across NCR institutions including, communications, government relations, Extension, diversity, equity and inclusion and academic programs. Continue strong partnership with NC Cooperative Extension Association (NCCEA) through regional and national programs and efforts.
* Identify and share new and encourage seeking out opportunities for NCR scientists to actively participate in regional and national science task forces, initiatives, panels, and committees.
* Boost numbers of nominations of NCR scientists for professional society, regional, national, and international honors, awards, and recognitions.
* Celebrate and promote NCR recognitions and other successes using multiple communication pathways.

1. ***Strengthen NCRA: Develop and promote best practices, tools, and strategic direction.***

* Create NCRA vision, mission, and 5-year shared goals and strategies. Continually assess relevancy, identify gaps and redundancies, and evaluate progress.
* Promote and enhance best practices and professional development programs for NC administrators.
* Identify, develop, and maintain a resource library of tools, best practices, and guides available via NCRA website or a collaborative information sharing application.

1. ***Strengthen NCRA Institutions: Develop and promote best practices to recruit, develop, and retain human capital.***

* Engage with minority serving institutions to foster collaborative opportunities among faculty, and for postdoc and graduate student development, exchange, and networking opportunities.
* Promote and enhance strategies for graduate student and postdoctoral scientist development, advising, and recruitment.
* Promote and enhance best practices and approaches for faculty hiring, retention, and replacement (e.g., startup packages, succession planning, educational opportunities, professional development, retention programs).

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| Item 14.0 MRC Report Presenters: Bernie Engel, MRC Chair; Chris Hamilton Action Requested: Approval of MRC Renewal and Midterm Review Recommendations **Projects** **Renewing 10/1/2023** | | | |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Proj #** | **Title** | **MRC Lead Reviewer** | **MRC Recommendations** |
| NCERA210 (NCERA\_temp210) | Improving the management and effectiveness of cooperatively owned business organizations | Shibu | **Recommendation: Major revision requested.**  For detailed MRC review, please visit <https://www.nimss.org/mrc_reviews/20067> |
| NCCC308 (NCCC\_temp308) | Nutrition and Management of Feedlot Cattle to Optimize Performance, Carcass Value and Environmental Compatibility | Anne | **Recommend approval pending minor revision.**  Several thoughts on this proposal - overall 2 of the 4 objectives are very clear -but in the introduction the potential impact of the changes in fuels for cars on the ethanol based co-products use in this industry was not fully fleshed out in the objectives - both the reviews were very interested in pursuit of this topic by this committee. Secondly with the level of collaboration among states on similar objectives and the level of outreach/extension - should this committee become an NCERA - this would better reflect their activities and also be a better means to highlight their accomplishments. |
| NCCC307 (NCCC\_temp307) | Biochemistry and Genetics of Plant-Fungal Interactions | Anne | **Recommendation: Approve as-is**  The activities are primarily reported through the publication list. This group in all of their reporting could point to the accomplishments via bullet points as their achievements are really only known to this internal audience. the accomplishments have become boiler plate and do not give specific examples. Participation is excellent and their transfer of knowledge sharing is done through workshops. Graduate students & Post Docs are encouraged to attend. There is a long list of participants who obviously are not all members - some encouragement to correct this. Collectively this group touches on many genera of fungi, including model species - the exchange of ideas is excellent and this is a very good example of what a coordinating committee should be. |
| NC3169 (NC\_temp3169) | EFNEP Related Research, Program Evaluation and Outreach | Jeanette | **Recommendation: Approve as-is**  This is a well-written proposal that includes a strong case for an interdisciplinary and multistate team to realize success. The outreach and governance plans are sound. This project is clearly in line with NIFA goals in that EFNEP is a NIFA funded program that supports the development and delivery of programming to improve the quality of life for low-income families. |
| NC2172 (NC\_temp2172) | Household financial and health decision-making under economic uncertainties | Shibu | **Recommendation: Approve as-is**  No revisions needed, proposal is recommended for approval. View <https://www.nimss.org/mrc_reviews/20066> for detailed review narrative. |
| NC213 (NC\_temp213) | Marketing and Delivery of Quality Grains and BioProcess Coproducts | Bernie | **Recommendation: Approval pending minor revision.**  The project is a renewal. Historically this has been a highly productive multistate project. The group has been successful in moving research into application with their strong ties to industry. The prior effort has been highly collaborative and this project renewal reflects this is likely to continue. The statement of issues and justification is appropriate and makes case for continued efforts in this project. The proposal overviews related and previous work. The project does not duplicate work from other multistate projects. The objectives are clear and appropriate. Methods are somewhat intertwined with objectives and should be consolidated in methods section. Given this is a project renewal, few participants have signed on to date. In the past this was a broad group and included significant industry involvement as well as USDA ARS involvement. The project includes an outreach plan that is appropriate and reasonable. This group has been successful with outreach efforts in past projects. This project has a strong record of doing appropriate science to support decision making. This proposal continues to advance science in support of decision making within the industry. |
| NC2042 (NC\_temp2042) | Management Systems to Improve the Economic and Environmental Sustainability of Dairy Enterprises | Bernie | **Recommendation: Approval pending minor revision.**  This project renewal builds on past successes in this area and includes new as well as returning participants. Overall goal of the project focuses on improving the economic, social, and environmental sustainability of dairy production. The team has historically worked well together in accomplishing the research and communicating this to those who need the information; this project is expected to continue this successful model. Areas of planned work will focus in emerging areas, such as the growth, health, and welfare of calves and heifers, the exploration of alternative feedstuffs, the applicability of management practices and strategies to organic production, the impact of long-distance transportation on animal health, the management of dairy x beef crossbreds for optimal growth and carcass composition, the merits and feasibility of pair-housing of dairy calves, the possible impacts of climate change, and the use of machine learning and artificial intelligence algorithms. The objectives of the new proposal are the same/similar to the previous proposal but are well justified; needs in these three objectives remain with projects and tasks evolving to represent state-of-the-art techniques, technologies, practical industry questions, and emerging concepts of sustainability. Plans for Objective 3 needs to better address how stations will work together. The list of participants in Appendix E has expanded from the current project, but it is unclear if the new participating stations are included in the plan of work. The section on expected impacts should be more specific. |
| NC2040 (NC\_temp2040) | Metabolic Relationships in Supply of Nutrients for Lactating Cows | Bill G. | **Recommendation: Approve as-is** |
| NC1170 (NC\_temp1170) | Advanced Technologies for the Genetic Improvement of Poultry | Bill G. | **Recommendation: Approval pending minor revision.**  Approve pending minor revision - addition of CRIS search statement and milestones section. |

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**Midterm** **Reviews - 2023**

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| **Proj #** | **Title** | **NCRA AA** | **Chris' Comments** | **MRC Recommendations** |
| NC1023 | Engineering for food safety and quality | D. Jackson, NE (10) | Midterm review assigned 9/1. Good reporting in NIMSS, efforts appear to be moving forward well and with a multistate focus. This AA does a great job communicating collaborative/multistate reporting requirements to project members and will not approve reports until they are prepared properly. Excellent AA review, recommend continuation. | Recommend continuation. Thanks for following the NCRA meeting and reporting guidelines! Be sure to share https://www.ncra-saes.org/multistate-handbook with future committee leadership. Consider adding externally leveraged funding to annual reports whenever possible. |
| NC1183 | Mycotoxins: Biosecurity, Food Safety and Biofuels Byproducts (NC129, NC1025) | D. Jackson, NE (11) | Good AA review. Recommend continuation. | Recommend continuation with the stipulation that going forward they more closely follow NCRA reporting guidelines as described in our virtual handbook (see #7 here: https://www.ncra-saes.org/multistate-handbook). Consider adding externally leveraged funding to annual reports whenever possible. |
| NC1184 | Molecular Mechanisms Regulating Skeletal Muscle Growth and Differentiation | T. Awada, NE (20) | Midterm review assigned 9/1. Meeting regularly and reporting in NIMSS. I would like to see more evidence of multistate collaborations and accomplishments, rather than station listings, going forward. Show us why this project should be a multistate committee. AA review was similar: This is a talented and productive team, they continue to make progress towards accomplishing their objectives. My suggestion to them is to continue to increase inter - university collaborations and be intentional about reporting these collaborative projects. | Recommend continuation with the stipulation that going forward they more closely follow NCRA reporting guidelines as described in our virtual handbook (see #7 here: https://www.ncra-saes.org/multistate-handbook). Consider adding externally leveraged funding to annual reports whenever possible. |
| NC1186 | Water Management and Quality for Ornamental Crop Production and Health | J. Thurston, NCRA (23). Was D. Buhler, MI (10) | Good AA review. Meeting regularly and reporting in NIMSS. Perhaps more evidence of multistate activities and collaborations would be useful. Recommend providing more specific details on grant funds obtained for this project. Reporting on grant funding is the only real area that this committee could be faulted. Though there is significant grant activity it is unclear how much the committee itself contributes beyond the individual work of the members. Good NCAC reviews. | Recommend continuation. Thanks for following the NCRA meeting and reporting guidelines! Be sure to share https://www.ncra-saes.org/multistate-handbook with future committee leadership. Consider adding externally leveraged funding to annual reports whenever possible. |
| NC1187 | The Chemical and Physical Nature of Particulate Matter Affecting Air, Water and Soil Quality | T. Awada, NE (22) | Midterm review assigned 9/1. Good meeting activity and reporting in NIMSS showing multistate collaborations. Keep up the good work. AA review excellent but would like to see externally leveraged funding in the reports. Recommend continuation. | Recommend continuation. Thanks for following the NCRA meeting and reporting guidelines! Be sure to share https://www.ncra-saes.org/multistate-handbook with future committee leadership. Consider adding externally leveraged funding to annual reports whenever possible. |
| NC1209 | North American interdisciplinary chronic wasting disease research consortium | D. Infante, MI (21) | Midterm review assigned 9/1. Two good reports in NIMSS for 2020 and 2021, but no meeting listed yet for 2022. Chris reached out to the AA about this, group is moving meeting to the spring to be joint with CWD symposium. Good AA and NCAC2 reviews. Recommend continuation if the group will continue to meet annually and submit thorough reports to NIMSS. | Recommend continuation with the stipulation that going forward they more closely follow NCRA reporting guidelines as described in our virtual handbook (see #7 here: https://www.ncra-saes.org/multistate-handbook). Consider adding externally leveraged funding to annual reports whenever possible. |
| NC1210 | Frontiers in On-Farm Experimentation | G. Bollero, IL (20) | Good AA review. Only one report in NIMSS, but Chris spoke with the AA and they have a meeting set for Jan 23, so hopefully that report will be submitted on time and following the guidelines in the NCRA virtual handbook. | Recommend continuation with the stipulation that going forward they more closely follow NCRA reporting guidelines as described in our virtual handbook (see #7 here: https://www.ncra-saes.org/multistate-handbook). Consider adding externally leveraged funding to annual reports whenever possible. |
| NC1213 | Sources and fate of ammonia across the landscape | J. Thurston, KS (21) | Two meetings/reports in NIMSS, AA review good. Recommend continuation. Excellent NCAC1 review. | Recommend continuation. Thanks for following the NCRA meeting and reporting guidelines! Be sure to share https://www.ncra-saes.org/multistate-handbook with future committee leadership. Consider adding externally leveraged funding to annual reports whenever possible. |
| NC214 | Increased Efficiency of Sheep Production | E. Minton, KS (20) | Midterm review assigned 9/1. Good reporting in NIMSS, efforts appear to be moving forward well and with a multistate focus. Good AA, NCAC6 review. Recommend continuation. | Recommend continuation. Thanks for following the NCRA meeting and reporting guidelines! Be sure to share https://www.ncra-saes.org/multistate-handbook with future committee leadership. Consider adding externally leveraged funding to annual reports whenever possible. |
| NC246 | Ecology and Management of Arthropods in Corn | J. Ruberson (19) | Midterm review assigned 9/1. Good reporting in NIMSS, efforts appear to be moving forward well and with a multistate focus. NCAC1 review good, request for more linkages with proposal. Excellent AA review. Good NCAC 15 review. | Recommend continuation. Thanks for following the NCRA meeting and reporting guidelines! Be sure to share https://www.ncra-saes.org/multistate-handbook with future committee leadership. Consider adding externally leveraged funding to annual reports whenever possible. |
| NCCC134 | Applied Commodity Price Analysis, Forecasting, and Market Risk Management | A. Hallam, IA (04) | Midterm review assigned 9/1. Committee met twice and has two short reports in NIMSS. Excellent NCAC12 review. | Recommend continuation with the stipulation that going forward they more closely follow NCRA reporting guidelines as described in our virtual handbook (see #7 here: https://www.ncra-saes.org/multistate-handbook). Consider adding externally leveraged funding to annual reports whenever possible. |
| NCCC211 | Cover crops to improve environmental quality in crop and biofuel production systems in the Great Lakes and Upper Mississippi basins | K. Lamkey, IA (10) | Midterm review assigned 9/1. Meeting regularly and reporting annually in NIMSS. 2021 report was a good example of multistate, collaborative. Keep reminding the group of our NIMSS reporting guidelines from the virtual handbook. | Recommend continuation with the stipulation that going forward they more closely follow NCRA reporting guidelines as described in our virtual handbook (see #7 here: https://www.ncra-saes.org/multistate-handbook). Consider adding externally leveraged funding to annual reports whenever possible. |
| NCCC31 | Ecophysiological Aspects of Forage Management | J. Kells, MI (10) | Meeting regularly and reporting in NIMSS, but reports are still huge lists of station reports. Chris reached out to AA on 10/14 requesting that he share the multistate, collaborative reporting guidance from our virtual handbook with the group at each annual meeting. Excellent AA review. Recommend continuation with the caveat that future reports following the collaborative model. | Recommend continuation with the stipulation that going forward they more closely follow NCRA reporting guidelines as described in our virtual handbook (see #7 here: https://www.ncra-saes.org/multistate-handbook). Consider adding externally leveraged funding to annual reports whenever possible. |
| NCCC52 | Family Economics | C. Jasper, WI (09) | Committee has met twice since inception in 2020 and submitted two very short reports to NIMSS. AA review was good and stated: Overall, although slowed down by COVID, the NCCC52 committee continues to make progress in achieving the goals set out for the project. | Recommend continuation with the stipulation that going forward they more closely follow NCRA reporting guidelines as described in our virtual handbook (see #7 here: https://www.ncra-saes.org/multistate-handbook). Reports should be a bit longer and include more substance than what's been presented so far. Consider adding externally leveraged funding to annual reports whenever possible. |
| NCERA197 | Agricultural Safety and Health Research | A. Dorrance, OH (21) | No AA review as of 2/15. Meeting regularly and reporting annually in NIMSS. 2021 report was a good example of multistate, collaborative. AA should keep reminding the group of our NIMSS reporting guidelines from the virtual handbook. Good NCAC16 review with the suggestion to add a more comprehensive list of outputs and activities with direct linkage to the objective in the annual reports. | Recommend continuation with the stipulation that going forward they more closely follow NCRA reporting guidelines as described in our virtual handbook (see #7 here: https://www.ncra-saes.org/multistate-handbook) and link outputs/activities to stated project objectives. Consider adding externally leveraged funding to annual reports whenever possible. |

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## Item 16.0: NCRA Spring Meeting 2024 Location/Format Ideas Presenters: Germán Bollero, Jeanette Thurston, Chris Hamilton Action Requested: Location/format suggestions and/or discussion/feedback/approval of Pismo Beach/San Luis Obispo location.

**Suggestion: Pismo Beach or somewhere nearby San Luis Obispo:**

* Pismo Beach is a city on California's Central Coast. It's known for its wineries and many beaches. The Monarch Butterfly Grove shelters monarch butterflies that migrate to Pismo State Beach in the cooler months (BUT from October through February).
* In March, average high is 67 and low 45, rains 5 days on average.
* Things to do: tours to local farms and/or processing facilities, California State San Luis Obispo Campus (a lot of great ag research at the campus which is about 20 minutes from Pismo beach), winery/vineyard tours.
  + Dean Andy Thulin at Cal State San Luis Obispo is someone George and I met during our FSLI trip (he arranged an amazing day of ag tours/experiences) and we can reach out to him to help identify a half to full day activity/activities to explore agriculture in central California.
* Downside is getting in and out of San Luis Obispo—small airport. More adventurous colleagues may wish to fly into LA and drive up the coast (I believe this is what George did).
* There many hotels along the coast that may be pricey, however I just did a quick search and found hotels for under $200/night.  Prices in San Luis Obispo are considerably cheaper.
* Chris submitted an RFP for The Cliffs Hotel and Spa on 3/21/2023, more info to come. See <https://cliffshotelandspa.com/>.

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## Item 17.0 NCRA Office Activities and Accomplishments for 2022-2023 Presenters: Jeanette Thurston, Chris Hamilton Action Requested: For information and discussion.

**Chris Hamilton, NCRA Assistant Director***(new items for this cycle are highlighted below)*

**Challenges and Opportunities I Faced in 2022/2023:** This was a year of change for the NCRA, with Jeff retiring and Jeanette starting as the new ED later in the year. Although I have interviewed and hired staff before in previous positions, I had not ever served formally on a high-level executive search committee before; I really appreciated being included and involved in all aspects of the process, while learning a lot. Throughout the year, Jeff and I worked together to transition his duties, both with ESCOP and the NCRA off to the other regional EDs and Jeanette. Like any major change, this process came with challenges and uncertainty, but I feel strongly that Jeanette and I are working well together and getting to know each other to be able to maximize the success of the NCRA. With her leadership, we are taking a closer look at many processes and seeing if and now they can be improved from a fresh perspective. Having experienced an ED transition previously when Arlen Leholm retired, I am hoping to use that experience to expedite the early stages of team building and jump quickly into high-level performing. I’m informing Jeanette on the NCRA traditions, while she provides me with a fresh perspective.

**Goals for 2023/2024:** This coming year will include the dual challenges and opportunities of supporting a new ED as well as helping George Smith as ESCOP chair-elect, then ESCOP chair starting this fall. We’ll all work together as a team to develop and execute George’s priorities, while continuing to follow the NE region’s lead of eliminating unnecessary ESCOP bureaucracy, while increasing communication to the Section through efficient CAC calls and more frequent, shorter, and virtual ESS meetings. Since I have many years of experience as the NCRA AD, I expect to be able to efficiently continue to provide a high level of support to our multistate projects, NIMSS users, the NCRA, and the ESCOP committees we support, along with the ESCOP chair. Aside from ESCOP support and daily NCRA/multistate project activities, I am especially excited to continue working with the ESS non-profit foundation exploration committee. As time allows, I have been taking online non-profit management courses so that should the foundation concept be approved, I will have the ability to play an active role in its daily operation. Finally, although in 2023/24 supporting the ESCOP chair will be one of our main priorities along with daily NCRA activities, I look forward to assisting Jeanette in continued efforts to improve the Association through activities such as clarifying our standing committee roles and responsibilities, continuing to engage and improve the activities of our multistate committees (especially improving the activities of our NCACs), assist with NIFA partnerships through continued LGU2U efforts and beyond, and help energize regional efforts of our communicators.

As always, I welcome input from the NCRA directors on ideas for my professional development and other activities to assist with improving my service to the NCRA and ways to potentially advance my career. My professional interests include data analytics, research administration, program/project management, and of course, water quality and sustainable management.

**2022/2023 Activities:**

1. **NCRA ACTIVITIES** (Jeff/Jeanette, too)

* Manage all aspects of the NCRA office (meetings, financials, website maintenance, etc.), working closely and effectively with UW’s CALS business services, MSU, and now K-State (NCRA and ED budget).
* Worked with NCRA ED and Executive Committee on the FY2024 NCRA budget with new implementation options.
* Participate in monthly NCRA Executive Committee calls and quarterly calls with Deb Hamernik at NIFA.
* Participate in monthly full NCRA director calls, prepare agenda, take/distribute notes, and post notes and call recordings to the NCRA MS Teams site.
* New NCRA MS Teams: Work with Jeanette to provide a shared (across NCRA members) repository of NCRA documents, tracking activities and priorities, etc.
* Assisted Jeff and Robin with behind-the-scenes technical support for the five LGU2U sessions hosted regionally with representatives from USDA NIFA and NC LGUs. Backed off a bit from this to allow Extension to take the lead, but I attended the sessions and continue to update the LGU2U page.
* Plan and participate in monthly NCRA discussion calls (previously our bi-weekly COVID-19 calls) and capture individual institution best practices and data for sharing across NCRA.
* Partner with Robin Shepard of NCCEA to maintain strong communications between NCRA and NCCEA. I maintain NCCEA.org and the NCCEA Twitter account (@NCCEA) and can coordinate social media activities to maximize our joint regional research and Extension social media impact. (Note: I transferred maintenance of NCCEA.org off to Robin Shepard’s team February 2023)
* Create reports and spreadsheets useful to the NC region, as needed and upon request (salary data, AES allocations, facilities inventories, etc.).
* Maintain NCRA and NCCEA Twitter accounts (@NCRegionalAssoc; @NCCEA).
* (On hold for now but stay tuned) NC Admin Boot Camp planning committee with AES and EXT directors and our regional EDs.
* Solicit regional nominations and coordinate the selection of the NCRA Leadership and Multistate Research awards. Helped create the NCRA Certificate Award for our top multistate project.
* Provide project assignments and guidance to NCAC AAs for NCRA multistate project reviews. Updated and streamlined the NCAC review process and communications with NCAC AAs.
* Provide high-level technical services to the NCRA and other regions, upon request, and maintain friendly and close working relationships with NC AES staff on NIMSS and other multistate issues. They often contact me first with questions and I either have the answer or direct them to someone who does.
  + Maintain NCRA website (www.ncra-saes.org).
  + Zoom video conferencing and screen shares for conference calls, NIMSS help, and other training as needed.
  + Regular cloud back-ups of all NCRA office files at UW-Madison using local CALS servers and Box.com accounts.
  + File and data sharing through Google Drive and Box.com.
  + Online Qualtrics Survey creation.
  + Manage all NC email lists and NCRA Directories.
  + Continue to host virtual NIMSS Q&A workshops. Held a general one in May and a new AA-specific one in November.
* Served on the NCRA Executive Director search committee, reviewed applications, checked references, participated in the interview process.
* On boarding/providing overviews/information/guidance to new NCRA director.

**North Central Region Multistate Research Portfolio**

* **Regular Support:** Regularly provide support and technical assistance to users navigating NIMSS and interpretation of national and regional multistate guidelines.
* **FY2024 New/Renewing NC Projects**: Facilitated the renewal of 19 NC multistate projects expiring in 2023 and 15 midterm review evaluations, reminding and assisting AAs and committees with submitting on-time, quality, collaborative reports to NIMSS. Coordinated project assignments and review activities of the NC AAs, NC ACs, and the MRC. See the March 2023 MRC report for details.
* Assisted with updating and distributing the NC Seed Funding RFA (Climate for 2023), answered applicant questions, and reviewed submitted proposals with the MRC.
* As time allows, I attend and provide NCRA updates to the virtual meetings of NC multistate projects.

1. **NATIONAL ACTIVITIES** (Jeff/Jeanette, too)

* NRSP1: Provide administrative leadership and assistance to NRSP1. I also serve as the NIMSS lead Regional System Administrator.
  + Assist users with NIMSS issues, often several times a day, depending upon where we are in each renewal or reporting cycle.
  + I communicate regularly through emails and monthly calls with the Clemson NIMSS development team and the other regional NIMSS admins to solve issues, improve efficiency, and enhance the user experience within the NIMSS database. These efforts enable us to solve NIMSS issues quickly and efficiently and avoid the need for tedious software versioning issues, since changes are made in real time.
  + I schedule the quarterly NRSP1 calls, solicit and distribute quarterly updates from NIMSS team and Sara Delheimer, the Impact Program Manager, take call notes, and lead the calls as requested by the NRSP1 chair.
  + Finalized the approval process for NRSP1’s renewal (10/1/2022 to 9/30/2027)
  + Prepared a performance evaluation narrative for Sara Delheimer, our Impact Program Manager.
  + Provide quarterly call leadership as requested by the NRSP1 chair.
* Provided administrative leadership and assistance to the ESCOP Budget and Legislative Committee (BLC). Schedule calls, take meeting minutes, participated on calls, and coordinate committee activities. Rotated off BLC as of 1/1/2023.
* Member of the ESS Finance Committee, scheduled meetings, participated on calls, and then helped transfer leadership over to the S region. I will continue to join the calls as an at-large member.
* Serve as the Assistant Vice Chair to the ESCOP Social Science Subcommittee.
* Serve on the ESS Non-Profit exploration ad hoc committee. Secured call speakers from the Tri-Societies and their associated Foundation.
* Participate in the ESS branding/new website effort. We review branding materials and drafts of the updated site.
* Assisted with the migration of the ESCOP email lists to Google groups. I also now am the lead for management of the ESCOP email lists, so I make membership changes and process/pay the monthly invoices through my UW p-card.
* Assist Dave Leibovitz (NERA AD) with updates to the ESCOP website ([www.escop.info](http://www.escop.info)).
* Provide general NIMSS support to NRSP3 and NRSP8 AAs (Doug Buhler and Archie Clutter, respectively) by authorizing annual meetings, uploading reports.
* Creator and owner of the online NIMSS manual, a living document outlining all functions, tips, and tricks to make using NIMSS easy. The NIMSS manual is located at <https://www.ncra-saes.org/nimss-manual>, and I update it, as needed.
* Partner with the NIFA multistate research office to coordinate NIMSS project/participant approvals, occasionally serve as the NIMSS liaison for NIMSS/REEport issues, and other regional-USDA administrative tasks, as needed.
* Continue to serve as a NIMSS representative on the NIFA Research Reporting Group team, which meets monthly via Zoom to discuss updates to the new NIFA reporting tool. Coordinate communications between the NIFA development team and the NIMSS team at Clemson.
* Participate in the monthly NIFA communications town halls.

1. **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

* In 2022 and early 2023, I attended the following conferences and workshops:
  + 2022 UW Madison Diversity Forum
  + UW-Madison CALS Monthly Diversity and Inclusion Lunch & Learns
  + Women and Leadership Symposium - UW Madison
  + Cybersecurity Awareness Training 2022
  + Prevent Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence at UW-Madison
  + Building Stronger Communities and Research Programs with Equity and Inclusion
  + Symposium for Research Administrators
  + It’s Not the Destination, But the Journey: Intentionally Creating a Workplace Culture that Values Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
  + Managing Up
  + Facilitating Effective Meetings, UW Continuing Education course
  + REDux Symposium Series - What, More Work? How to find your most efficient self when faced with an increased workload.
  + UW-Madison’s Research Education Development (RED) Series for Administrators:
    - Introduction to Research Administration at UW-Madison – 2022
    - Introduction to Agreement Types – 2022
    - Introduction to Proposal Preparation, Including Budgets – 2022
    - Introduction to Cost Share – 2022
    - Sponsored Project Audits – 2022
* From Nonprofitready.org (to better assist with the ESS Non-profit Exploration ad hoc Committee and in preparation for possible creation/management of the ESS non-profit):
  + Non-profit Financial Management Essentials Certificate
  + Grant Seeking Essentials Certificate
* Phosphorus: Lessons from 10+ Years of Numeric Standards for Wisconsin’s Waters Symposium (2/7/2023)
* Served for my fifth year in a row April 2022 as a presentation session observer/moderator for the World Food Prize – WI Youth Institute at UW Madison. We review all the high school applicant papers and presentations and decide which will be nominated to go forward for the national prize. The 2022 session was held virtually again. I plan to volunteer for this activity again, if asked.
* Attend all required UW Madison and monthly CALS financial staff trainings (travel, p-card, purchasing, etc.).
* Going forward in 2023, I have already or plan to attend the following professional development opportunities:
  + UW-Madison CALS Monthly Diversity and Inclusion Lunch & Learns (on-going).
  + 2023 Diversity Forum.
  + 2023 UW-Madison’s Leadership and Management Development Conference.
  + 2023 UW-Madison Women & Leadership Symposium.
  + Academic Staff Institute, an annual professional development conference for UW-Madison academic staff
  + 2023 Cybersecurity Awareness Training (completed on 2/6/2023)

1. **TRAVEL (other meetings attended in 2022/2023)**
   * NCRA Spring Meeting
   * NC Mini LGU Meeting
   * Fall ESS/AES/ARD Meeting and Workshop
   * ESCOP CAC Virtual Meetings
   * ESS Virtual Meetings
   * ESCOP Social Sciences Subcommittee (SSSc) Virtual Meetings (schedule TBD)
   * Spring 2023 NCRA meeting
   * NCRA Office Planning Meeting (Chris and Jeanette), Chicago, June 2023
   * Summer 2023 NC Mini LGU Meeting

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**North Central Regional Association (NCRA) of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors**

**J. Thurston Accomplishments Report--November 28, 2022, to March 24, 2023**

**Overview**

I have truly enjoyed my first 3 months as NCRA Executive Director, it’s been productive and rewarding. I am grateful for and have worked with the KSU Budget Office on NCRA account management, setting up my office, and drafting a funding agreement for NCRA’s Climate Change Research Seed Funding Opportunity. I have also reengaged with colleagues and established new relationships across NCR and nationally (other 4 regions, APLU, USDA, new partners). I have been doing a lot of listening, asking questions, and learning. This includes setting up and participating in regular meetings with Chris Hamilton, Robin Shepard, the other regional Executive Directors (EDs), and meetings with other leadership across the north central region (NCR), APLU, and USDA. I greatly appreciate everyone’s time (and patience) to bring me up-to-speed on so many topics . My requests for information and procedural questions have led to some new efforts to better communicate (e.g., quarterly meetings with NCR Center for Rural Development (NCRCRD)), share and document activities (i.e., MS Teams for NCRA and EDs), and develop needed guidance (e.g., Experiment Station Section (ESS) chair, NCRA committees). It’s been a great first 3 months and I look forward to continuing these efforts and tackling new goals as directed by the NCRA Directors in the upcoming year.

**Accomplishments and Activities Highlights**

* **Regional Activities**
  + *NCRA /NCR 101*(i.e., regular meetings with Jeff Jacobsen, Chris Hamilton, Robin Shepard, NCRA directors)
  + *Regular/ongoing activities* 
    - NCRA Spring Meeting (worked with Chris Hamilton, Executive Committee)
    - LGU2U—Session 3-priority setting (working with Robin Shepard, NIFA science program leadership)
    - Promotion, review, and support of NCRA awards and activities.
    - ARS discussions
      * *National level*--Jeff J., Bret H. and I held meetings with ARS to discuss a draft on-boarding document. This document is under ED review.
      * *NCR-specific*--spring meeting discussion with ARS leadership (worked with Executive committee and NCRA Directors on discussion topics).
  + *New Efforts Initiated*
    - NCR Communicators—Robin Shepard and I are bringing NCR communicators together to share best practices and discuss how we can work together to better communicate our NCR impacts.
    - NCRA Committee descriptions (roles and responsibilities) drafted (Chris Hamilton, select Directors, and me). This document will be incorporated into our Rules of Operations (after approval), shared with new committee members, and posted on our website.
    - [NCRA 1-pager developed](#info_flyer) (attached)—brief to widely share who we are, what we do, and why others should pay attention 😊.
    - Established a shared location (MS Teams) for NCRA documents and lists of meetings, awards, etc. I initiated a similar effort for regional EDs.
    - NCR Aquaculture Center (NCRAC) Board Member activities-- I am working with 2 other NCRAC Board members (extension and industry representatives) on recommendations for post award management of NCRAC funded projects. The Board agreed that this guidance is needed due to concerns with demonstrating impact of funded work, identifying research priorities, and funding being drawn down in a timely manner. I am also participating in the NCRAC Director search.
    - Developed NCRA Funding Agreement for our Climate Change Research Seed Funding Opportunity (alongside KSU business staff, Shibu Jose, Carolyn Lawrence-Dill, Chris Hamilton).
    - Initial meeting with NC Regional Center for Rural Development leadership (Maria Marshall and Mike Wilcox) via Zoom. I offered and arranged quarterly meetings between NCRCRD leadership, Robin Shepard, and myself.
* ***National Activities***
  + *ESS Chair planning (alongside George Smith, Chris Hamilton)*
    - ESS Fall Meeting Planning (alongside George Smith, Chris Hamilton, EDs, and ESS Fall Meeting Planning Team). We now have an agreed upon theme and framework for the fall meeting.
    - Initial discussions on ESS Chair Initiatives.
    - Began discussions on engaging nontraditional partners to build connections and strengthen relationships.
    - Engaged regional EDs and current ESS Chair on tips/guidance.
  + Co-Vice Chair Social Science Subcommittee (alongside Alton Thompson).
  + Documenting/developing guidance alongside regional EDs (e.g., multistate program guidance, ESS Chair guidance, MS Teams).
  + Participates in APLU/ESS committees (Ag Facilities, BAC, BLC, CAC, CLP, ESCOP, ESS, NMCC, Nonprofit organization, S&T).
  + Climate Change Roadmap Core Team Member (APLU/ESS).
  + Agriculture, Food, Nutrition, and Health initiative preplanning team member (regional ED representative) (APLU).
  + USDA—Meetings held with ARS leadership (national and regional levels) and NIFA (Deputy Directors, NPLs), to share information on our organization and how I can assist them in my new position. Beginning conversations with NRCS.
  + Participated in the National Multistate Coordinating Committee (APLU leadership, regional Extension and Research EDs).
  + Reached out to Caron Gala (APLU) and discussed and provided written input on FY24 advocacy documents alongside NCRA Directors.

**List of Other Activities**

* *Mini LGU Planning—*Robin Shepard and I offered our assistance and arranged conversations with Joleen Hadrich and Mike Schmidt to discuss CARET member Mini LGU recommendations. In response to a CARET member’s questions, we recommended that Joleen and Mike participate in the regional CARET meeting. Joleen and Mike did a great job providing an overview of the upcoming mini LGU meeting, appreciated by our CARET colleagues.
* Robin Shepard and I have just begun *conversations with NIFA’s Erin Riley* in March. We discussed developing a webinar series to share and discuss partnerships between NCR institutions and tribal communities (e.g., MSU’s Miles program). One of the goals of these activities will be to identify effective ways to build trusted relationships between 1862s and 1994s and examine how to best work in partnership to make a difference for tribal communities.
* Addressed *NIFA policy issue*—gathered information across a few NC universities and across 4 regions. Worked together with NCRA and regional EDs to provide input to a request sent to NIFA’s OGFM leadership. NIFA has recently responded that they are working to resolve the issue.
* Beginning engagement with nontraditional partners (e.g., NASA (spring meeting guests), Beckman Center (spring meeting tour), registered for NCFAR annual meeting, NRCS (beginning discussions)).
* Participated in AA training and provided updates to AA training slide set (alongside Chris Hamilton).
* Assists with questions and requests from NCR CARET members.
* Assisted with one of the multistate research award nomination write-ups (NCERA137).
* Reviewed manuscript for Journal of Infection Control.
* Working with University of Wisconsin-Madison on a new Cooperative Agreement for NCRA/Chris Hamilton.
* Regular meetings--weekly meetings with Chris Hamilton—weekly planning and updates on activities; monthly NCRA Director and EC meetings-- provide suggested agenda topics and prepare written and oral updates; bi-monthly meetings with Robin Shepard; Bi-monthly ED meetings; quarterly NC Regional Center for Rural Development leadership; participant on APLU FANR and ESCOP committees (see previous list); NIFA’s monthly Tribal meeting.
* **Travel--***Nov 28-March 24 Travel*
  + National Multistate Coordinating Committee Meeting (APLU, D.C.)(Nov 28-30).
  + IA State visit—Carolyn Lawrence-Dill; ARS Plant Introduction Station (Feb 2).
  + NC-Advisory Committee participation (Ames, IA) (Feb 7-9).
  + University of WI-Madison visit—Robin Shepard and Troy Runge (Feb 13).
  + NCR Aquaculture Center Board Member (Eau Claire, WI) (attended annual meeting Feb 14-16).
  + Bioeconomy WH Listening Session (IA State) (Feb 23).
  + CARET/AHS (D.C.) (March 12-15).
    - George Smith and I also attended meetings with Josh Stull, NIFA Stakeholder Relations and Steve Kappes, ARS Associate Administrator for National Programs.
  + **Committee Participation and Leadership**
    - Co-Vice Chair Social Science Subcommittee (Alton Thompson co-chair).
    - LGU2U planning team participant alongside Robin Shepard, NIFA Science Program and OGFM leadership for two different efforts—LGU2U Session 3 and Conversation Coffees. Robin and I plan to engage other EDs (extension and research) and encourage them to work with NIFA on all future sessions and conversation coffees.
    - NCR Integrated Pest Management steering committee.
    - NRSP1 Vice-Chair.
      * In January, I met with Sara Delheimer over ZOOM to understand how I can help her in her role and provided multistate projects for impact statement consideration.
    - NCRA resolutions committee member.
    - NCR Aquaculture Center Board Member (NCRAC).
  + AA responsibilities for:
    - “Sources and Fate of Ammonia Across the Landscape” (NC1213) (began 2021).
    - “Water Management and Quality for Specialty Crop production and Health” (NC1186) (began 2023).

**Goals and activities for next 12 months**

* Identify strategic direction and high priority NCRA goals, strategies, and specific actions alongside NCRA Directors.
* Gain a solid understanding of the breadth of topics, general activities, expected outcomes, breadth of participation (LGUs, federal agencies, Extension, others), etc., to better identify effective approaches to addressing multistate project/committee challenges and identify opportunities.
* Continue creating and building relationships across region and nation. Educate and inform on NCRA and our national multistate activities and impact.
  + NCR institution visits (at least 6 comprehensive visits).
  + Make connections with ARS, 1890 and 1994 LGUs, Extension, and other scientists and organizations to cultivate interactions/collaborations that bolster multistate research efforts, enhance team expertise and collaborations, leverage resources, and elevate impacts.
* Continue to support George Smith with ESS chair responsibilities.
  + Help manage ESS Fall Meeting (alongside Chris Hamilton, MSU team, and Planning Team).
  + Develop, plan, and implement ESS Chair initiatives, budget, and meetings.
* Develop, plan, and implement NC-Administrator’s Bootcamp (alongside Robin Shepard).
* Engage NCR communicators to share best practices and develop a strategy for regional and national communications.

**Challenges**

* Ensuring I am spending my time on activities of high importance to NCRA Directors. I have a collaborative style and I encourage and seek your feedback.
* Identifying communication approaches that work for our team.

**Professional Growth - Key Areas**

* *Request to NCRA Directors:* professional development budget--$1500/year?
* Participate in activities to expand knowledge base, foster new relationships, and build new partnerships (e.g., FALCON, NCFAR, NERAOC, MANRRS).
* Continue Executive Coaching
  + Strengthen leadership and professional skills—e.g., reflective and proactive with challenges/issues, facilitation.
* Continue to be engaged in some activity in my area of expertise.
  + attend conference/webinars, peer review activities, co-author publications (NIFA grant ends this summer).

**Upcoming Travel**

University of Missouri—AES Statewide Advisory Board Meeting (April); *AIM4Climate*—Climate Change Summit that brings together industry, government and academic partners to enable solutions at the intersection of agriculture and climate (May); Will schedule visits with Doug Steele (APLU VP FANR) and Sana Baig (USDA Deputy Undersecretary REE) for George Smith and I; National Extension and Research Officials Conference (NEAROC) (May); Association of Communication Excellence (ACE) (June); NCRA Office Retreat (June) (NCRA office planning for Chris Hamilton and I); Mini LGU (July); Joint Cops (July); ESS Fall Meeting (September).

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## Item 19.0: Reading of the Resolutions Presenter: Jeanette Thurston

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