



NERA News & Notes

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From the Office of the Executive Director

SAES - 422 Annual Report Forms: Has your Committee made an Impact?

Upon recent inventory of our files, the NERA office has noticed that many committees are not submitting their SAES - 422 Annual Reports in a timely fashion.

All NERA Committees should now be aware that the SAES - 422 form is a requirement of ALL committee types (NE -, NEC -, NEREAP-, and NEREC). This change was made effective during FY 2003, and has been updated in the Multistate Research Guidelines.

The annual report form briefly summarizes the meeting minutes, and identifies accomplishments and impacts of the committee. It is submitted electronically via the National Information Management and Support System (NIMSS @ www.nimss.umd.edu).

The NERA Office, as well as the MAC would like to stress the importance of filing these reports in a timely manner. The SAES - 422 form is more important than the meeting minutes (which can be attached to the form), and should be filed each year of the committee's existence, whether the committee has met face-to-face or not.

The SAES - 422 allows the reporting of all committee activities to be uniform in style and content. It also allows the NIMSS system to be utilized to its fullest potential, making the information easily accessible throughout the country.

In an effort to better track committee accomplishments and impacts, the NERA office will monitor SAES - 422 submissions. The form is to be submitted within 60 days (two months) of the annual meeting of the committee.

The most important parts of the form are the committee accomplishments and impacts. These sections should be separate from each other, not combined. Failure to separate these sections may result in the annual report being sent back to the committee for revision.

The NERA Office and the Multistate Activities Committee want to stress that filing the SAES - 422 annual report form is not the responsibility of the Administrative Advisor, but rather it is the responsibility of the committee members to make sure the annual report is in NIMSS, in time for the Administrative Advisor to authorize. NIMSS will prompt the AA that the report is ready to be submitted as final.

The NERA Office strongly recommends that all committees read the short document (*Preparing an Effective SAES - 422 Report*) on the NERA website. Specific questions about the SAES - 422 form should be directed to the NERA Office.



Upcoming Meetings and Dates

ESS / SAES / ARD Directors Workshop, and the Northeast Regional Association September Meeting, Oklahoma City, OK - September 26-29, 2004

2004 Northeast Managing Officers (NEMO) Meeting, Wilmington, DE - October 25-26, 2004

New Deans and Directors Workshop, Westin Embassy Row, Washington DC, December 8-10, 2004

The Captive Crowd

Given that many of us speak to various groups in our efforts to promote the impacts of our individual state AES, the following might be of interest.

To get your message across, a recent survey of 393 professionals who attended conferences last year by a New York conference management company, *Bedlam Entertainment* revealed that attendees' minds wandered during these key stages of a presentation:

After 8 minutes - 7%

After 18 minutes - 24%

After 30 minutes - 24%

After 45 minutes - 5%

Key strategies you can use to keep your audience engaged during a presentation include the following:

- Invite the audience to participate by posing questions, and take a hand count response;
- Ask the audience to keep a tally of a list you are verbally describing; and/or,
- Take a break from your script to recount a personal moment or a story



USDA Website on Biotech Regulations

A new website provides information about the U.S. oversight system for agricultural biotechnology. It includes information on the roles of the governmental agencies and links to relevant statutes and regulations. This website has a searchable database containing in-

formation on all genetically engineered crop plants intended for food or feed use that have completed the recommended or required reviews. For more information see the following:

<http://usbiotechreg.nbii.gov>



Views on Formula Funding

From a recently completed and published report of the extension directors on Formula Funding, and with the permission of Dr. Jack Payne, Utah State University Director of Cooperative Extension, I am copying the *Executive Summary* of the report on "Views on Federal Formula Funds" (see the following url for the full report, <http://www.extension.usu.edu>, look for quick links in the lower right hand corner) as I think that this speaks not only to the extension view of this matter, but also the needs that the research community has for continuation of the Formulas, and the impacts on our programs.

Views on Federal Formula Funds Smith-Lever 3(b) & (c) and 3(d) line items Utah State University Extension March 2004 Survey

Executive Summary

Smith-Lever Funds 3(b) &(c) and (d) provide the foundation upon which the national Extension system operates that allows program sharing, collaboration, and integration. These federal funds provide the foundational partnership upon which state and local government funding is built. State and local governments are willing to invest in this federal cooperative system because they know that there is underwriting support at the national level. Smith-Lever line item funds form a basis for continuing infrastructural support to Extension programs in the states and territories.

The financial management and use of Smith-Lever funds varies by states and territories but in general they support:

- (1) salaries and benefits of field staff, county advisors, campus departmental specialists, and Extension administration;
- (2) travel;
- (3) operation and maintenance costs;
- (4) provide leverage and matches for competitive grants;
- (5) and support program development and delivery expenses.

These funds may provide from 12-50% of the total salary support for state and territory Extension personnel. Smith-Lever funds provide the states and territories with financial flexibility to quickly respond to rapidly evolving critical and emerging issues. Further they provide a funding base of support to offset program startup costs. These funds form the foundation for many of the base programs conducted by states and territories. Smith-Lever funds are financially integrated into the total budgetary mix of states and territories and are an important component part of that mix. Many Extension units ensure that the salaries supporting Extension faculty are made up from the three sources of funds, federal, state, and local resources further demonstrating the integration between these cooperative entities. Smith-Lever funds are a catalyst for securing much needed extramural funding. These funds represent the foundation on which grants and contracts can be successfully won and implemented. The formula funds also provide flexibility to address new issues quickly and flexibly, that cannot be done within most grant funding.

States and territories utilize Smith-Lever line item funds to provide financial support to the CSREES national goal areas including Agriculture and Natural Resources, 4-H and Youth Development, Community and Economic Development, Family and Consumer Sciences. A plethora of outstanding Extension programs supported with Smith-Lever funds can be found addressing critical issues in states and territories. Unique programs in 3(b) & (c) formula funds support

exemplary activities in:

- Farms to Markets website to connect growers and buyers of agriculture and horticultural products
- 4-H After school initiatives
- Universal Design programs in cooperation with Lowe's Home Improvement Centers to facilitate design principles that makes homes safer
- CAMM (confined animal manure management) training for livestock and poultry farmers,
- City-wide Asthma & Health Initiative
- Diabetes & Nutrition- Health Care Providers train-the-trainer program
- Youth Literacy Program/Student Partnership
- Working Homeowners train-the-trainer Volunteer Program
- Returning Prisoners Outreach Education Collaborative
- *Natural Resources* TV programming to help the public understand the natural environment and science and policy issues surrounding it.
- Assisting Small-Scale Farmers and Landowners to Manage Change in Agriculture Enhancing Citizens' Capacity to Transform Their Communities
- Integrated Natural Resources and Environmental Education
- Entrepreneurial Initiative: A Strategy for Workforce Development
- Promoting Healthy Living Environments for Underserved and Hard To Reach Audiences and Promoting Healthy Behavior

Smith-Lever 3(d) funds also provide critical support to state and territory programs in Integrated Pest Management (IPM) which strive for harmony between production and the environment; ERRA renewable resources programs which support forestry and natural resource issues; Farm Safety funds which support an active program for health and safety efforts in the agricultural sector and EFNEP nutrition funds which support the nutritional educational needs of the underserved targeting citizens with limited incomes. These funds enhance and expand the outreach programs that could not be accommodated by 3(b) & (c) funds. Smith-Lever 3(d) funds provide a foundation for targeted national issues which impact citizens in states and territories. Most 1890 institutions

receive very little in 3(d) funding although the impacts that could be generated from added or increased funding to these institutions is potentially significant. There has never been a time when safety and security, resource and environmental management and nutritional information promoting healthy lifestyles are more critical to the citizens of states, territories and this nation. Yet these pleas for increased supportive federal funding have seemingly gone unheard as support dollars continue to diminish in critical 3(d) program areas. With the federal reduction in 3(d) funding the issues which they have traditionally supported will be measured against other state and territory priorities and may or may not be funded from sources in the future. These funds have allowed Extension to provide high impact programs to a very targeted clientele that meet critical public needs. Further erosion of the Smith-Lever funding for 3(d) programs will result in program reduction, personnel redeployment and unmet public need.

Over time Smith-Lever formula funding has been relatively flat resulting in shifts in program priorities and staff reallocated support. Program reduction has occurred in more than 85% of state and territory programs. Eight out of ten Extension programs have responded to this flat funding by eliminating positions or reducing the number of these positions. More than 60% indicate that they have discontinued programs as a result of flat funding. Three quarters of all institutions reported that the Extension organizational structure has changed due to funding challenges. More than 25% have reduced the number of county/extension unit offices resulting in fewer services in meeting national priorities and critical public needs. Six out of ten Extension programs have increased the geographic size area that Extension staff is required to service. Other impacts of flat and reduced funding has forced Extension to charge fees for service; counties have been asked to assume a larger share of the financial support for Extension programs; positions have been frozen with little chance of refilling lost positions; agents now cover multi-county areas; and state funding has been reduced as a result of lost or reduced federal funding.

Extension programs are applying many other strategies to cope with reductions in Federal Cooperative

Extension formula funds. Most are now relying more heavily on outside contracts and grants to augment the loss of federal funds. Some units are considering reprioritizing the issues they address including the elimination of staff support to CSREES goal areas, time and effort in reporting those efforts and limiting the program scope of other such initiatives. Extension programs are increasingly targeting state and territorial legislative funding bodies to provide much needed support to traditional Extension programs. The impact of such efforts results in a closer alignment with state and local priorities and the ultimate breakdown of the national network and shared opportunities. Introspective restructuring is occurring at some institutions that are eliminating, downsizing, merging, and reinventing what Extension is and can be in their respective states and territories. Still others are relying on electronic technology through web-based resources to reach traditional audiences albeit with less face to face interaction.

State funding support for Cooperative Extension Programs has grown significantly over the past ten years. In 2003 more than 85% of Extension programs reported receiving at least 65% or more support funding from state or territorial resources. Of significance is the fact that 20% received more than 80% of program funding from state or territorial resources. Legislative governing bodies are clearly supporting the Extension outreach program as never before and at the same time are demanding more accountability in meeting state and territory priorities at the expense of national CSREES goals and initiatives. More than 30% of the states and territories reported that their funding allocation from Smith-Lever 3(d) funds had decreased by at least 10% with most of this group reporting reductions in the 15-30% range. Four out of ten reported however, that they had received from 1-9% increase in federal 3(d) funding when compared with the 1993 benchmark year. Smith-Lever 3(b) & (c) funding was reduced by at least 19% at 32% of institutions reporting. Nearly half reported an increase in 3(b) & (c) funding by a percentage growth of 1.5 -2.9% when compared with the 1993 benchmark year.

The winds of change are clearly evident in Smith-Lever line item formula funding. States and territories have

set a course which will ultimately result in reduced numbers of CSREES goal and initiative program impacts. States and territories will demand that plan of work priorities are more closely associated with their needs and directions. A revised adage of the “Golden Rule” is truly coming to fruition. That new adage is “he who provides the gold makes the rule.” States and territories as they reinvent Extension must pay heed to this admonition to insure survival.



The Meaning of a Research - Land Grant University

I found the following in a campus email and thought that there was great meaning and value in repeating. Written by the Chair of the Physics Department at UM, it was meant to encourage all faculty engaged in the teaching endeavors, as many of our research faculty are, to take an opportunity to acquaint our undergraduate students about the value and purpose of our university, what makes these land grant research (and I might add extension) universities so unique. Thought that you might want to share.

Dear Colleagues:

On this the rapidly approaching first day of classes for the fall semester, I want to take a moment and not only wish you luck on your first day back in the classroom, but to encourage you to, at some point in the semester take time out to talk with your students about the research that is underway here at the University. A surprisingly large number of students on our campus do not truly understand what it means to be part of a land grant research university. Non-science majors, whose experience with research is often limited, are especially unaware of the fact that faculty at a research university do more than just disseminate knowledge, they create knowledge. This idea is something that all of our students should un-

derstand before they graduate. As students (and future alumni, neighbors, and maybe even legislators) it is important for them to realize that research and outreach is a significant part of the University and that it benefits both their educational experience and the community.

A good way to introduce them to this idea is to share a little bit about yourself, about your research and about the research and outreach (extension) that we do in the department. Share with your students your enthusiasm for your work, and show them that it is exciting and interesting. For most undergraduate classes, technical details will most likely be lost on them, but general ideas and possibilities and impacts for how your work might affect our world in the future has a better chance of capturing their attention. It also provides a framework for sharing how you are using some of the concepts you are teaching in your research and possible in your extension or outreach efforts. Also be sure to acquaint those in your undergraduate classes with the research opportunities for undergraduates at the university and encourage them to become involved in research either in your department if they are a major or in the department of their choosing.

The land grant research university with its outreach activities is an exciting place. Share the enthusiasm with your students.



DOE Funding Opportunity

As a result of the emerging NASULGC DOE Partnership I thought that you might find the following RFP of interest to faculty in your AES. Please note the relative short time frame in which to develop the consortiums required.

University Research in Biomass Technologies: Basic and Applied Understanding of Biomass Conversion and process for Fuels, Chemicals/Materials and Heat and Power. Applications due October 13, 2004

The full announcement can be found at the following site: <https://e-center.doe.gov>