



NERA News & Notes

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From the Office of the Executive Director

Seasons Greetings

We at the NERA office want to extend Seasons Greetings to all. As the year draws to a close may you find time to reflect on this past years accomplishments. We hope that this Holiday season brings you the joy of being with friends and family. We hope that each and everyone of you will have the most Joyous of Holiday Seasons and the Happiest of New Years.



U. S. AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

(From: Science: Volume 306, Number 5703, Issue 10, December 2004, Pg. 1879. Much discussion continues around this topic. Your Executive Director participated in discussions with the various members of the NASULGC family and on the National Institute for Food and Agriculture December 7th. I am reprinting this article that recently appeared in Science to let you know that discussions and interest continue, and more discussion is expected once the new Congress comes into session.)

Funding for agricultural and food research has traditionally been a dry patch compared to the well-watered scientific fields supported by the National Science Foundation (NSF) or the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Now its supporters are hoping that a recent report from a blue-ribbon panel will lead to a bumper crop of basic agricultural research. But first they have to figure out where to plant the seeds.

In 2002, on orders from Congress, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) asked a group of eminent scientists to ponder a national institute of food and agricultural science. This summer the panel, led by Chancellor Emeritus William Danforth of Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, concluded that the greatest need was for an institute that would award extramural, peer-reviewed grants for basic research. "We felt a whole new culture has to be created that is more similar to NSF and NIH," says Danforth.

Last month Senator Kit Bond (R-MO), who chairs the panel that sets NSF's budget, took Danforth at his word. He introduced a bill (S.3009) that would place the institute within NSF's biology directorate but give it an unusual degree of independence and its own advisory council. Although the bill has expired, Bond has said he acted quickly to stimulate discussion. And ag lobbyists are thrilled: "We've gotten to the starting line," says R. Thomas Van Arsdall, executive director of the National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research, an advocacy group based in Savoy, Illinois.

The task force found that basic research has been shortchanged. More than 90% of USDA's \$2.4 billion research budget is not awarded by peer review. Instead, funds are distributed directly to land-grant universities and spent on intramural, mainly applied, activities through the Agricultural Research Service. Even the \$180 million a year awarded competitively through the National Research Initiative (NRI) has its drawbacks: USDA grants are smaller and shorter than those of NSF or NIH and come from a much smaller pot (see chart). The task force recommended that the proposed new institute have an annual budget of \$1 billion after 5 years. In addition, the number of grants should be doubled, to 1000, and their size boosted by 187%, to \$225,000 per year.

Lobbyists say that they aren't worried about confusion over whether the new institute should be part of USDA or NSF. "Focus on the broader message: We need to boost federal support for basic research in the agricultural sciences," says Howard Gobstein, vice president for governmental affairs at Michigan State University in East Lansing, who also works on behalf of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, to which MSU belongs.

Advocates say that housing the new institute within NSF offers many advantages. "You could be sure that first-rate research would be done," Danforth says. However, NSF officials worry that it could lead to similar demands from other interests, such as transportation or energy, traditionally outside NSF's purview. That would squeeze a budget that shrunk by \$107 million this year and may erode further in 2006. Supporters have a quick answer: An agricultural institute, they say, could be a rallying cry for the foundation to seek a bigger budget.

USDA prefers another approach. It says that boosting the NRI budget, which will grow by 10% in 2005, would be a logical way to strengthen basic research in food and agriculture. The agency has already increased average grant size by 80% since 2001.

Bond is expected to reintroduce his bill, with some changes, after the new Congress convenes next month. Lobbyists are hoping for a companion bill in the House of Representatives, and Representative Bill Goodlatte (R-VA), chair of the House Committee on Agriculture, tops their list of desired sponsors. A spokesperson for the committee says that members will meet with Danforth in the coming weeks but declined to speculate on any possible legislation. David Goldston, staff director for the House Science Committee, says the panel, which has jurisdiction over NSF but not USDA, would welcome a discussion of how best to achieve the aims of the USDA report.

Erik Stokstad, Science



New Leadership Development Program - LEAD 21

In early 2003 the NELD Advisory Council and the ESCOP/ACOP Advisory Committee agreed that there should be a more concerted effort to plan and implement a single leadership development program that would serve the future needs of the land grant system and CSREES. A joint Leadership Planning Committee was established in November 2003 by ESCOP, ECOP, ACOP, and CSREES. In addition to research, academics, extension and CSREES, committee members also represented 1862, 1890, and 1994 institutions.

The Leadership Planning Committee developed a proposal for a new leadership development program, which has recently been approved to replace the NELD and ESCOP/ACOP as the primary national-level leadership development program serving the needs of the land grant universities' colleges of agricultural, environmental and consumer sciences and CSREES. This program, designated "***Leadership Development for the 21st Century (LEAD 21) : Linking Research, Academics, and Extension***", is intended to meet the future needs for leadership development of faculty, specialists, program and team leaders, research station and center directors, district and regional directors, department heads and chairs, and others.

The first class of LEAD 21 will begin in June 2005, and I expect a formal call for applications in January 2005. Additional information on the vision, mission, goals, core competencies, and framework of this new leadership development can be found on the ESCOP webpage using the following url:

<http://www.agnr.umd.edu/users/NERA/home.html>



NIMSS Update!

The new NIMSS version is up and running. The programmers are still working on a few kinks here and there, but it is now fully functional. In addition to the basic functions in the old version the new version has numerous enhancements. Users are getting used to the new navigation format and the feedback in the past month has been positive.

Following the recommendation of the NIMSS Oversight Committee, the four regional system administrators and Judy Sun are now meeting regularly each month. The group had met twice and the notes are posted in the ESCOP website at URL—

<http://www.cals.ncsu.edu:8050/escop/index.html>

The objective of the group is to look closely into the new NIMSS and decide on how to improve certain processes. Notations are also being added were necessary to guide the users.

The User Manual for the new NIMSS version is now posted in NIMSS in the “Links” and “Help” sections. Thanks to Nikki Nelson of NCRA! Nikki was responsible for putting the manual together.

Some useful tips for users:

1. Guest users can search the database using the Guest Menu which includes the interactive map, the “Project Home” and “Search” keys on the NIMSS front page. If you want more access into the NIMSS database and to submit forms, such as the participation form Appendix E, you need to register in NIMSS. To register, click on “Member Login and Registration”. When registering, make sure you select the correct “Institution Category”. A dropdown will pop up for you to select the correct station. Use **ONLY** the “add station” if you could not absolutely find your institution listed anywhere

in the dropdown menus. NIMSS will send you a notification that you have successfully registered. Some users may receive messages that “the registration is pending approval” or has been “deactivated”. Not to worry! The system is merely informing you that you are already in the system but your registration need activation. Your regional system administrator gets a copy of the e-mail and will take the appropriate action to activate your registration. If you do not get a new confirmation, contact Rubie or Judy.

2. If you think you are already registered, but forgot your login ID and password, click on “Member Login and Registration”, and select “Track ID”, then enter your e-mail address. The system will send you a response with your login ID and password. Your station coordinator can also check if you are already registered and what e-mail address you used. Unfortunately he/she has no access to your password. You still need to use “Track ID” to retrieve your info. The station coordinators are the program assistants working in the Station Directors’ offices. These coordinators have been trained to use NIMSS and to manage the records of all the users in their institutions. [If there are directors in the station who are advising multistate projects, the coordinator also has access to records of non-AES participants to these projects.]
3. The menu bar is customized in the new NIMSS version based on the access given to you by the Station Director or the Advisor. If you think you are not able to view or access forms you need to use, first make sure that you are only registered in NIMSS once. Go to “Directory” and enter your last name in “Find Person”. If you see more than one entry under your name, contact your station coordinator so she/he can mark the extras for deletion. Your station coordinator can also add/delete your access by assigning you as editor or reviewer so you can submit forms in NIMSS.
4. If you are using NIMSS to draft an Appendix E to submit your participation to a multistate

project, be aware that the Station Director needs to approve that form before it is submitted to the next approval level. If the station coordinator is submitting the form on behalf of the investigator, this level is bypassed. Below is a list of the approval levels before a participation becomes officially recorded in the project's Appendix E:

For proposals with NE_temp#### (or NC_temp, S_temp and W_temp):

- Appendix E submitted by investigator ⇒ needs Station Director approval
- Appendix E submitted by station coordinator ⇒ goes directly into the proposal's Appendix E
- Appendix E submitted by a non-AES participant ⇒ needs Advisor approval before it becomes part of the proposal's Appendix E

For approved multistate projects:

- Appendix E submitted by investigator ⇒ needs Station Director approval, then the Advisor's and lastly CSREES' approval (an e-mail notification is sent to the investigator, station director and advisor when CSREES has approved the new station). If the station already has 1 or more participants in the project, and is merely adding a new person, CSREES approval is not needed.
- Appendix E submitted by station coordinator ⇒ if this is the first time the station is participating, it will need both the Advisor and CSREES approval. If not, only the advisor needs to approve.

[Note that submission and rejection/approval of Appendix E's are all done in NIMSS. E-mail notifications to station director/coordinator and advisor are all generated by NIMSS.]

More tips will be forthcoming in future issues of the *NERA News and Notes*. The functions are just too numerous to review at one time, but we will continue

to update you on new and changed functionality of NIMSS in future issues of *NERA News and Notes*.

If you encounter problems with NIMSS or need immediate assistance, contact your regional system administrator, Rubie Mize (rgmize@umd.edu) or NIMSS programmer, Judy Sun (judysun@umd.edu).



Important Dates - Mark your 2005 Calendars!!!

Here are important dates to add to your 2005 Calendar:

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|------------|---|
| February 1 | USDA-CSREES Competitive Grants Workshop, Washington, DC |
| February 9 | Deadline for submitting proposals or requests to the Multistate Activities Committee. Proposals should have undergone Peer Review (at least 3) and has completed Appendix E for all participating stations. Off-the-top requests for NE9, NE59 and NRSPs for FY2006 should also be submitted. |
| March 1 | Multistate Activities Committee Meeting (12pm-2pm)
NERA Executive Committee Meeting (2pm-4pm)
7 th Annual Food and Agricultural Science Exhibition and Reception on Capitol Hill (5:30pm-8:30pm) |
| March 2-3 | NERA Meeting at USDA-BARC, Beltsville, MD. Draft agenda is posted at the NERA homepage at URL— |
| June 19 | Deadline for submitting proposals or requests to the Multistate Activities Committee. Proposals should have undergone Peer Review (at least 3) and has completed Appendix E for all |

participating stations. This is the last opportunity for projects expiring on Sept. 2005 to submit their final proposals.

- July 10-12 Northeast Joint Session, Peabody, MA
MAC and the Executive Committee will meet on July 10 in the afternoon. NERA will meet on July 11-12.
- July 24-26 Joint COPs Meeting, Embassy Suites Hotel – Kansas City International Airport, Kansas City, MO
- Sept. 2 Deadline for submitting proposals or requests to the Multistate Activities Committee. Proposals should have undergone Peer Review (at least 3) and has completed Appendix E for all participating stations.
- Sept.25-28 ESS/SAES/ARD Workshop NERA will meet for half a day on Sept. 25 (tentative).
- Nov. 13-15 118th NASULGC Annual Meeting, Hilton Washington and Towers, Washington, DC.



Thomas Burr Appointed Director of NYS Agricultural Experiment Station- Geneva

Dr. Thomas J. Burr has been appointed associate dean of Cornell University's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and director of the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station (NYSAES) in Geneva, NY, effective January 1, 2005. Dr. Robert Seem, who has served as Interim Director of the Station since January 1, 2004 will return to his faculty position in plant pathology. We wish Bob the very best at he returns to his faculty position

and to the very best position one can aspire to in the university – that of Professor!

A member of the Cornell faculty since 1977, Burr has served as chairman of the department of plant pathology at the NYSAES since 2001. Burr has made substantial contributions in advancing research on plant diseases that are of local and worldwide importance, conducting research and extension on the biology and control of bacterial pathogens that affect fruit crops, particularly grapes. His major interests have been the study and control of crown gall, a disease that infects grapevines especially after they have been injured by freezing temperatures. Researchers in his program examine traditional methods of control as well as biological control and genetic technologies that confer resistance to host plants.

Burr received a B.S. in agricultural science and a M.S. in plant pathology from the University of Arizona in 1971 and 1973, respectively. He received his Ph.D. in plant pathology from the University of California-Berkeley in 1977. He was appointed assistant professor at Cornell in 1977, associate professor in 1983, and professor in 1991. He is a member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and the American Phytopathological Society (APS). He was named a fellow of APS in 1997, having received the APS's Ciba-Geigy Award in 1986 and Lee M. Hutchins Award in 1990.

We look forward to meeting and working with Tom and to his participation in regional research activities.



Northeastern Regional Aquaculture Center – Request for Preproposals 2005

The Northeastern Regional Aquaculture Center (NRAC) has issued a request for preproposals (RFP) for the next round of funding.

NRAC's RFP for 2005 and complete instructions for preproposal submission can be found on the following url: <http://www.old.umassd.edu/specialprograms/nrac/>

With input and advice from the aquaculture industry in the NE region, the NRAC has targeted 5 areas for research:

- Genetic improvement of aquatic species
- Nutrition
- Effluent discharge management
- Improving the control and management of diseases in farmed aquatic organisms
- Other

Preproposals are due by 4pm on Friday December 31, 2004.



Web Additions

To assist Administrative Advisors with better understanding both their the role and responsibilities, and the background for the Multistate Research Fund, I have posted two new additions to the NERA web may be of interest.

- The Administrative Advisor's Challenge in Multistate Research
- Multistate Research Fund: A Research Program that Promotes Relevance, Excellence and Accountability

Both papers can be found on the NERA web at:

<http://www.agnr.umd.edu/users/NERA/advisortips.html>

