



From Penn State's "Mask Up or Pack Up" to the University of Vermont's "Rally Together", NERA institutions are re-opening this fall. The good news is that our research operations appear to be largely re-engaged, albeit without assistance from undergraduates. While there is variation across the region, most institutions are reopening using a combination of in-person, on-line, and hybrid classroom strategies. We continue to solicit your practices or strategies that might be the secret sauces for success during COVID-19. I'm confident that your colleagues would love to hear those.

We also appreciate the challenging nature and uncertainty of the times. We extend our best wishes for success and our assistance as you might need it. Now is a good time to pull together!

"Education is preeminently a matter of quality, not amount." – Henry Ford, 1924. In *Ford News*, page 2, The Henry Ford Museum, Dearborn MI.

Action items:

- We'll be holding the NERA fall business meeting on September 22 from 8:30 – 10:30 AM EDT. To connect, use NERA's Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/5717743008>. The [agenda](#) of the meeting is posted on the NERA website. (This precedes the ESS Fall meeting slated for September 28 – October 1 from 6:00 – 8:00 PM EDT.)
- The National Research Support Project Review Committee (NRSP RC, an ESCOP committee) has recommended the questions that follow as the ballot to be considered by the Experiment Station Section at end of September. (A link to the ballot will be forwarded to each station, one vote per station.) You remember that NRSPs are supported by off-the top, MRF funding. We'll also discuss this at our NERA meeting on September 22.
 - Which station do you represent? (Survey logic settings will only allow a station to be selected once.)
 - Do you accept or reject the updated NRSP Guidelines as distributed? (Version [posted here](#), dated as 8/24/2020.)
 - Do you accept or reject the NRSP Review Committee recommendation to: Support the NRSP4 renewal request as written at the proposed funding level of \$481,182 per year for FFY2021 through FFY2025, while also including in the proposal a clear distinction of NRSP4 from IR-4 and a collaborative discussion for a future model to transition off NRSP funds, with progress on this effort to be reported back to the NRSP-RC no later than midterm review time.

- Do you accept or reject the NRSP Review Committee recommendation to: Reject NRSP6's renewal proposal as submitted. This will result in one additional and final year of funding at \$135,000.
- Do you accept or reject the NRSP Review Committee recommendation to: Support the renewal request of NRSP9 as written at the proposed funding level (\$199,000 for FFYs 2021, 2022, and 2025; \$219,000 for FFY2023, and \$249,000 for FFY2024) with the request to start a collaborative discussion for a future model that transitions off of NRSP funds, with progress to be reported back to the NRSP-RC no later than midterm review time. NRSP9 must also submit a more complete and comprehensive impact analysis than the previous version by midterm review time.
- We've created an on-boarding document that we've shared with our new directors that we said hello to in our last newsletter. [Check out the link](#), the resource may be of value to you. If we missed something that you think might be critical, please apprise.
- We are again seeking pictures of NERA institutions for the NERA website. Please forward those to [David](#).

Reminders/Updates:

- The USDA is introducing its new Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production on August 27th at 2:00pm EDT. To join, click [here](#).
- The 130th anniversary for 1890s Universities will be celebrated with a webinar on August 31, 2020 from 1:00-3:00pm EDT. Click [here](#) to register.
- The Annual ESS/ARD Meeting will be held virtually, September 28-October 1, in 2-hour slots in the evening (6-8 PM EDT) to enable all directors, from the East Coast to the Western territories, to join. Mark your calendars! Registration will be opening shortly.
- *Second time:* AFRI extends Strengthening Grants to small and medium-sized universities (total enrollment, 17,500 or less) and to state agricultural experiment stations or degree-granting institutions that are USDA EPSCoR eligible. FY2020 EPSCOR eligible states and districts in the Northeast include: Connecticut, District of Columbia, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, and West Virginia. The list shifts for FY2021 and includes: Connecticut, District of Columbia, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

Informational items:

- The [Northeast Climate Adaptation Fellowship](#) is open to commercial farmers in the Northeast U.S. who grow vegetables and/or small fruit and to agricultural advisors who work with vegetable/small fruit farms in this region. [Applications](#) are submitted online and the deadline for submission of an application is October 1, 2020. The 1-year program provides a peer-to-peer curriculum for farmers and advisors. Its framework is designed to integrate climate science with a land manager's knowledge.
- The USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) is seeking input about improved crop insurance coverage options for farmers and ranchers selling to local food markets using virtual listening sessions. This includes discussing how existing crop insurance programs can be improved, as well as exploring the possibility of a new crop insurance program. As "local" is an important endeavor in the Northeast, you might wish to share this opportunity with producers in your network. Northeast sessions are scheduled for August 31 – September 3 at 12:00 PM EDT. Click [here](#) for details on the sessions.
- The Council for Agricultural Science and Technology (CAST) has released its most recent issue paper, *Agriculture and the Microbiome*. The paper can be [downloaded](#); it's interesting reading.

- The University of Maryland College of Agriculture and Natural Resources is seeking applicants for a Manager position at its Forage Research Farm. Click [here](#) to view the position description.



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NERA and its member institutions are committed to the principles of affirmative action, diversity, and inclusion.

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