

agInnovation Northeast Business Meeting Minutes December 12, 2024, via Zoom

In attendance: Wendie Cohick (Chair-New Jersey), Jason Hubbard (Vice Chair-West Virginia), Anton Bekkerman (Past Chair-New Hampshire), Blair Siegfried (Pennsylvania), Beth Gugino (Pennsylvania), Margaret Smith (New York-Ithaca), Chris Smart (New York-Geneva), Angela Jagiello (Massachusetts), Brian Farkas (Delaware), Puneet Srivastava (Maryland), Eric Bishop von Wettberg (Officer-at-large-Vermont), Jason White (Connecticut-New Haven), George Criner (Maine), Kumar Venkitanarayanan (Connecticut-Storrs), Kal Kalavacharla (USDA NIFA agInnovation Northeast Liaison), Rick Rhodes (agInnovation Northeast Executive Director), David Leibovitz (agInnovation Northeast Assistant Director)

Meeting Administration / Updates

- The group went through a series of introductions.
- George Criner was interested in hearing what policies are in place regarding hunting on Experiment Station properties. Rutgers, Cornell, Maryland, and other institutions have had experience with this. The OED will collect and share best practices and examples of hunting policies on AES lands from across the region. It was suggested that this could grow into a larger database of state AES policies.
- The US Patent and Trademark Office has approved the registered trademark of the agInnovation “Land Grant University Research / Science That Feeds the World” brand image. This brings legitimacy to agInnovation and provides nationally recognized identification of our organization.
- **The agenda for this meeting was approved unanimously.**
- **The minutes of the September 23, 2024, agInnovation Northeast meeting in Raleigh were approved unanimously.**

agInnovation Northeast Chair’s Comments – Wendie Cohick

- Rutgers is searching for a new President, with the goal of hiring for a July 1, 2025, start date.
- Rutgers Executive Dean Laura Lawson has been successful at promoting the work and value of the Experiment Station across the university. The hope is that these promotion efforts at the institution won’t have to be retread with an incoming administration.
- Community engagement, impact documentation, and investment in climate mitigation are key priorities for Rutgers to promote to the new administration.

Multistate Activities Committee (MAC) – Puneet Srivastava, MAC Chair

- The [MAC report was posted on the website](#) and shared with Directors during the call.
- Administrative Adviser vacancies
 - NE2101: Eastern White Pine Health and Responses to Environmental Changes (current AA – George Criner, Maine)
 - NE2201: Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals (current AA – Matt Wilson, West Virginia)
 - NE19225: Current Status and management of herbicide-resistant weeds in Northeastern U.S. currently drafting renewal proposal (New proposal in 2025)

- Projects ending 9/30/2025 and status updates
 - NECC2001: Sustainable Farm Energy Production and Use (AA – Puneet Srivastava, Maryland) **interested in renewal**
 - NE2001: Harnessing Chemical Ecology to Address Agricultural Pest and Pollinator Priorities (AA – Blair Siegfried, Pennsylvania) **currently drafting renewal proposal**
 - NE2045: Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems: Assessing the Impact of Soil Variability and Climate Change (AA – Lisa Townson, Rhode Island) **interested in renewal**
 - NRSP4: Facilitating Registration of Pest Management Technology for Specialty Crops and Specialty Uses (Regional AA – Moses Kairo, Maryland Eastern Shore) **currently drafting renewal proposal**
 - NRSP9: National Animal Nutrition Program (Regional AA – Rick Rhodes, agInnovation Northeast) **currently drafting renewal proposal**
- Northeast Activities / National Research Support Projects new in 2025
 - NE19225: Current Status and management of herbicide-resistant weeds in Northeastern U.S. **currently drafting renewal proposal**
 - NRSP_TEMP_12: Building Collaborative Research and Extension Networks to Advance the Research & Application of Science with Urban Communities (Regional AA – Bill Miller, Massachusetts)
 - NRSP_TEMP_13: Artificial Intelligence for Agricultural Autonomy (Regional AA – Margaret Smith)
- Several mid-term reviews will be assigned to Northeast projects in 2025, those are listed on the MAC report.
- Award nominations: Leadership, Multistate research, Outstanding scientist
- New NE projects: **Directors are encouraged to work with faculty to identify gaps in the Northeast Multistate Project Portfolio and consider drafting other new multistate project proposals.** Agri-voltaics, aquaculture, artificial intelligence/robotics, woody invasive species were all suggested topics.
- **Encourage interested faculty to join NE2401 Urban Agriculture: Equity, Sustainability, and Community Development** <https://nimss.org/projects/view/mrp/outline/19111>.

The “West Virginia University Agenda” and thinking about the Experiment Station – Jason Hubbard, Associate Director and Associate Dean of Research, WVAFS

- **Jason’s slides are [posted on the agInnovation Northeast Website](#).**

Chair’s Initiatives – Wendie Cohick

- **The OED will set up a Google Doc with some pre-seeded suggestions for initiatives; all are invited to add more ideas and comment on the doc.**

Discussions that require agInnovation Northeast input:

- Capacity funds white paper update – Rick Rhodes
 - **To support the capacity funds white paper, Northeast Directors will be asked to complete a questionnaire with help from business office staff. Questions will**

revolve around institutional state appropriations, federal capacity appropriations, and total sponsored project expenditures.

- Northeast Agenda asset mapping – Anton Bekkerman
 - Working with a computer scientist at UNH, an AI Large Language Model algorithm will be developed to topically sort all northeast AES projects (~1,000) to determine strengths, gaps, and overlaps in expertise across institutions. The results will help to quickly identify and leverage regional expertise for any identified topic area.
 - **The model is anticipated to be completed in Spring 2025 and an expanded discussion will be held at the spring meeting.**
- Spring Meeting (face-to-face) – Puneet Srivastava
 - **The 2025 agInnovation Northeast meeting will be held in Clarksville, Maryland March 24-26, 2025. Details on registration, programming, and lodging are forthcoming.**
 - **CMREC Clarksville MD: <https://agmr.umd.edu/research/research-and-education-centers-locations/cmrec/clarksville/>, 4240 Folly Quarter Road, Ellicott City, MD 21042**

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 am ET.

Future agInnovation Regional and National Meetings

- agInnovation National Business Meeting (virtual) – March 5, 2025, 2:00-4:00 PM
- agInnovation Northeast Face-to-face Spring Meeting – March 24-26, 2025, Ellicott City, MD
- NEED/agInnovation Northeast Joint Summer Session – June 2-4, 2025, Princeton, NJ
- BAA Summer Leadership Meeting – July 2025 (Location TBD)
- 2025 Joint agInnovation/CES-NEDA Meeting – September 15-18, 2025, Milwaukee, WI