

# Report and Recommendations

## NORTHEAST MULTISTATE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE MEETING

November 28, 2017

8:00-9:30 am, Teleconference

**Roll Call:** Fred Servello - Chair (Maine), Brad Hillman (Rutgers), Eric Wommack (UD), Gary Thompson (PSU), Pat Vittum (UMASS), Dennis Calvin (PSU), Rick Rhodes (NERA), David Leibovitz (NERA)

Meeting convened at 8:03 am.

### ***Requests to Write***

1. NE\_TEMP1835: *Resource Management in Commercial Greenhouse Production* [Revision of NE1335, 10/2013-9/2018], AA-Adel Shirmohammadi

Comments:

- Ongoing project, evolved over time
- Focus on newer technology and advances in controlled environment facilities
  - Energy efficiency, irrigation, systems
- How many participating institutions?
- Higher focus in this area comes and goes over the years; sensors and controlled environments are relevant topics today
- **MAC recommends approval of this request**

2. NE\_TEMP1836: *Improving Quality and Reducing Losses in Specialty Fruit Crops through Storage Technologies* [Revision of NE1336, 10/2013-9/2018], AA-Chris Watkins

Comments:

- Positive project, ongoing opportunity and need
- Trying to stretch the postharvest project beyond apple-related issues
  - Currently ~70% apples / 30% other
- Strong support from former AA Brad Hillman
- Do other regions have postharvest projects?
- **MAC recommends approval of this request with encouragement to reach beyond apples**

3. NE\_TEMP1832: *Biological Control of Arthropod Pests and Weeds* [Revision of NE1332, 10/2013-9/2018], AA-Jan Nyrop

Comments:

- Seems arthropod heavy

- Dick Casagrande (RI) worked in conjunction with Jan Nyrop (NY), strong track record with arthropod pest control
- The proposal should represent the current state of knowledge with respect to recent literature, i.e., the provided list of references is clearly dated.
- Group needs to update their references in the proposal; they used the same references from the previous submission (e.g. economic reference from 1994)
- **MAC recommends approval of this request. The group should provide a proposal which represents the current state of knowledge with respect to recent literature, as the provided list of references was clearly dated.**

4. NEERA\_TEMP1806: *Management of the Brown Marmorated Stink Bug* [Revision of NEERA1306, 10/2013-9/2018], AA-Ted Andreadis

Comments:

- As brown marmorated stink bug became an issue, a USDA committee formed, but no multistate was in place
- Rutgers created a committee which evolved into an ERA
- For years this ERA coordinated the annual meeting around the USDA committee's meeting
- Spotted lantern fly pest affecting fruit production areas in PA – could there be an approaching overlap of the stink bug and this new pest?
  - Might be worth initiating a new, unique ERA for this other pest
  - A Penn State group might be interested starting this
- 80 participants with plans to grow – would a group any larger be effective?
- **MAC recommends approval of this request**

5. NECC\_TEMP29: *Northeastern Corn Improvement Conference* [Revision of NEERA1306, 10/2013-9/2018], AA-Margaret Smith

Comments:

- Brings out a lot of people in the Northeast, well attended
- Coordinating Committee is the appropriate mechanism
- Margaret Smith is a strong leader of this CC
- **MAC recommends approval of this request**

6. NECC\_TEMP1812: *Northeast Coordinating Committee on Soil Testing* [Revision of NECC1312, 10/2013-9/2018], AA-Rick Rhodes

Comments:

- Representation within and outside the northeast is strong
- Particularly active for a coordinating committee
- Soil Health Institute recently sought information and recommendation from NECC1312 on calibration of soil tests that took into account farming practices, plant genetics, and technologies

- Not many institutions with strong soil testing capabilities, this is worth approving
- **MAC recommends approval of this request**

### ***Administrative Adviser Assignment***

1. NRSP 9: *National Animal Nutrition Program*, 10/2015-9/2020 [Replace Cameron Faustman]
  - Currently seeking a Northeast AA for NRSP9
2. NRSP 6: *The US Potato Genebank: Acquisition, Classification, Preservation, Evaluation and Distribution of Potato (Solanum) Germplasm*, 10/2015-9/2020 [Replace Fred Servello]
  - Walter DeJong (NY) was asked to serve as AA after nomination by Jan Nyrop
3. NE1442: *Poultry Production Systems and Well-being: Sustainability for Tomorrow*, 10/2014-9/2019 [Replace Cameron Faustman]
  - Kumar Venkitanarayanan (CT) was asked to serve as AA after nomination by Cameron Faustman
4. NE1501: *Harnessing Chemical Ecology to Address Agricultural Pest and Pollinator Priorities*, 10/2015-9/2020 [Replace Pat Vittum]
  - Pat Vittum recently stepped down as AA, we currently seek a replacement
5. NE1602: *Explorations in the Turfgrass Phytobiome: Understanding Microbial Associations and Developing Tools for Management*, 10/2016-9/2020 [Replace Pat Vittum]
  - Pat Vittum recently stepped down as AA, we currently seek a replacement

**Motion to accept these proposed administrative adviser assignments 1-3 was introduced, seconded and approved. NERA will move forward with contacting these proposed AAs.**

**Administrative Adviser assignment items 4 and 5 were added to the report on 12/11/2017 for NERA's consideration.**

### ***NERA Planning Grants***

The MAC considered several action steps identified at a previous meeting including rebooting the NERA Planning Grant. Potential actions included:

- Poll faculty to discuss why few proposals are submitted
- Increase the amount of the grant
- Change how the funds can be deployed
  - Currently funds can only be used for travel
  - Preliminary data, website development, other

- Change the focus of the planning grants
  - Host a forum (larger than a small planning)
  - Support a regional meeting
  - Support a workshop
- Change NERA's management of the grant
  - Extend opportunities for consecutive, corrective reviews
  - Change deadlines or float deadlines
- What to do with NEED/NERA Seed Grants?

Discussion ensued on challenges associated with the planning grant and potential actions that could be taken by NERA. The following captures reflections of the MAC:

- We haven't received many recent submissions; those received weren't strong
- What needs to be done so that our faculty value this opportunity?
- We're focusing on the group first rather than the research problem
  - What are some innovative problems people would rally around?
  - Could we roll out a pre-proposal request?
- Not enough money to seek proposals to support preliminary data
- Websites may be expensive to maintain, especially going forward – website needs may extend beyond the planning grant cycle
- Submissions have been increasingly more Extension-based
- Could roll out Planning Grants on a topic area – NERA would set the focus area. For example:
  - Soil health
  - Invasive species
- Groups don't tend to spend the entire amount – no need to increase
- Can we roll out RFPs with shorter turnaround times and electronic NERA approval?
- Can NERA Directors identify a focus area for driving the RFP toward a research problem?
- Is this a NERA or a NEED/NERA RFP?
- Rick Rhodes will talk with Mike O'Neill and Bill Hare (NEED) about the future of NEED/NERA RFPs

**Recommendation by the MAC: The MAC will develop a planning grant RFP that identifies the challenge focus area: “Emerging Problems in the Northeast: Invasive species/pests”. This effort will support groups to come together to address and develop action plans around the identified challenge area. Potential outputs for the planning effort could include development of a regional action plan to address the challenge, development of a new multistate project, contributions to objectives in existing multistate projects and/or submission of competitive grant proposals. The RFP will include language about emerging pests (e.g., Spotted lantern fly) as well as provisions that allowed submission of innovative ideas outside the focus area. The RFP will be initially drafted by Rick and circulated to the MAC by December 1 in anticipation of sharing with NERA shortly thereafter.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 AM.

