

NERA Spring Meeting Minutes

March 24, 2020

In attendance: Ted Andreadis (CT-New Haven / Chair), Carol Thornber (Rhode Island / Vice-Chair), Gary Thompson (Pennsylvania / Officer-at-large), Jody Jellison (Massachusetts / Past Chair), Bill Miller (Massachusetts), Mark Hutton (Maine), Jon Wraith (New Hampshire), Fred Servello (Maine), Matt Wilson (West Virginia), Jan Nyrop (New York), Anton Bekkerman (New Hampshire), Brad Hillman (New Jersey), Puneet Srivastava (Maryland), Eric Wommack (Delaware), Kumar Venkitanarayanan (CT-Storrs), Jason White (CT-New Haven), Peter Bretting (USDA), Rick Rhodes (NERA Executive Director), David Leibovitz (NERA Coordinator)

Meeting Administration

- The 3/24 Zoom meeting agenda was approved unanimously.
- The minutes from December 6, 2019 were approved unanimously.

Issues discussions: The National Plant Germplasm Coordinating Committee and the Host Repositories – Peter Bretting, ARS Crop Production and Protection National Program Leader (slides enclosed in supporting materials)

- Germplasm centers frequently located at LGUs in the USA
- Multistate project supporting centers: S9 (Griffin, GA), NC7 (Ames, IA), W6 (Pullman, WA), NE9 (Geneva, NY), NRSP6 (Sturgeon Bay, WI)
- Three-way partnership: USDA, SAES, private sector
- Northeast germplasm center is in Geneva, NY
- NPGS: Average 2/3 domestic distribution, 1/3 international distribution of germplasm annually
- By 2020: Demand over time has increased, but lower budget in real dollars for the NPGS than in 2005 (~20% decrease)
- During COVID-19: Essential employees are able to check on plants and orchards, continue ongoing maintenance, keeping strict social distance
- Plant introduction centers are the most diverse centers in the NPGS
- NE9/Geneva received a \$500k ARS budget increase for hemp
- American Seed Trade Association (ASTA) has been an advocate and supporter of the NPGS for 30 years, instrumental in helping to secure budget increases
- Why is NRSP6 supported through NRSP rather than regional OTT?
 - Potato germplasm operation was initially an Inter-regional project (IR)
 - Funding mechanism shifted from IR to NRSP to recognize that Interregional is synonymous with national
 - The shift to from IR to NRSP exposed the project to the unintended consequence of needing to implement sunseting of OTT funding to Sturgeon Bay

NRSP Review Committee Report

- NERA recommendation on the renewal proposals of NRSPs 4, 6, 9
 - These projects are all renewals, focused on transitions away from OTT funding

- For previously submitted renewals, NRSP RC strongly supports a shift away from OTT funding
- NERA will consider a set of recommendations presented by Fred Servello on each of NRSPs 4, 6, and 9.
- Fred presented the discussion and recommendations of each NRSP. Expanded NRSP discussion is included in the enclosed MAC report.
 - NRSP4 (IR-4, Northeast AA Brad Hillman):
 - IR-4 is moving from Rutgers to NC State, the program supports specialty crops which is important in the Northeast
 - IR-4 is a \$20M operation overall, NRSP supports roughly \$500k
 - **Fred Servello introduced a motion: Recommend approval of NRSP4 by NERA, but require a transition plan in the final proposal.**
 - **Jody Jellison seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously**
 - NRSP6 (Sturgeon Bay, Potato Germplasm Center, Northeast AA Walter De Jong):
 - Decades of support for this NRSP, formerly existed as an Inter-regional project
 - Project leader in Wisconsin has largely ignored the ESS recommendations to transition away from NRSP funding and is pushing back
 - NRSP RC consensus is to keep pushing for the transition plan away from OTT funding
 - NRSP6 asked for \$750k over 5 years, we recommend the total budget of NRSP6 be cut to \$375k
 - **Fred Servello introduced a motion: Recommend approval of NRSP6 by NERA, requesting that the total 5-year budget be reduced by 50% and a clear message that NRSP6 is expected to develop a transition plan away from off-the-top funding.**
 - **The motion was approved unanimously**
 - NRSP9 (National Animal Nutrition Program, Northeast AA Rick Rhodes)
 - NRSP9 is aware of the need to consider alternative funding sources and a transition plan away from OTT
 - **Fred Servello introduced a motion: Recommend approval of NRSP9 by NERA, with a caveat that the total 5-year budget be reduced by 50% and a clear message that NRSP9 is expected to develop a transition plan away from off-the-top funding.**
 - **The motion was approved unanimously**

NERA Leadership turnover (Nomination of a slate of NERA officers)

- Ted Andreadis (current NERA Chair) is retiring on April 1, 2020
- Jason White will serve as the new CAES Director
- All new NERA Directors on the line introduced themselves (Jason White, Puneet Srivistava, and Anton Bekkerman)
- Other NERA Directors will be retiring or moving on in 2020 (Fred Servello, Brad Hillman, Jon Wraith)

- Chair Ted Andreadis recommends NERA develops a strategy for onboarding new Directors to get them involved and understand the association
- The Executive Committee will shift in the wake of Ted's retirement:
 - Carol Thornber (current NERA Vice-Chair) has agreed to step in early as the NERA Chair
 - Gary Thompson (current Officer-at-large) would become NERA Vice-Chair
 - Matt Wilson has volunteered to serve as the NERA Officer-at-large
 - Jody Jellison would continue as the NERA Past Chair
 - **Ted Andreadis introduced a motion to approve this slate of candidates for the NERA Executive Committee**
 - **The motion was approved unanimously**
 - **Per NERA guidelines, later in the year, NERA will vote once again on the same set of candidates (for FY21), dependent on Jody agreeing to continue as the Past Chair**

2020 NEED NERA CARET Joint Summer Meeting (Fred Servello)

- Currently slated for June 2020
- Heavy focus on participation in meeting sessions
- Urging Directors to bring ideas to talk about around Innovation
- Currently negotiating a combo keynote-workshop with a representative from Institute for the Future (ITFF)
- NEED Directors are enthusiastic about the summer meeting and program ideas as of their board meeting in early March 2020
- Topic submission guidance document has been developed
- COVID-19 creates great uncertainty for both meeting hosts and participants
- UMaine needs to make a call on holding / canceling / delaying the meeting
- If we moved forward with the meeting in June 2020, attendance would be low given travel restrictions across the region extending into May or beyond.
- Preference of the planning committee is to delay the meeting by one year if the venue agrees
- **NERA supports delaying the meeting by a calendar year.**
- **If the meeting is delayed by one year, the summer meeting rotation would also shift by one year: Maine hosting in 2021, Rhode Island/Massachusetts hosting in 2022.**
- **The planning committee will decide on how to move forward in April 2020**

Issues discussion: The Northeast agenda

- COVID19-How is that affecting our operations?
 - Connecticut: all out-of-state travel is prohibited indefinitely for state government
 - Massachusetts: general confusion, cancellations are currently extended through the end of May. Travel even within the state could be restricted.
 - Capacity fund deployment
 - Effort certification
 - Remote working and continuity of operation
 - NERA should hold other Zoom meetings during COVID-19, especially if the summer meeting is cancelled
 - Whether business meetings, short seminars, or talks on specific topics, the OED can set up and hold Zoom meetings anytime

- It's critical to provide everybody with regular and honest communication, and with an opportunity to share issues and practices across the region
 - NERA Zoom meetings could be held weekly, bi-weekly, monthly?
- Topics of interest
 - What are restrictions / what is allowed with regard to laboratory, farm, and field work?
 - UMaine researchers are prepared to go into the field and conduct research.
 - Penn State VPR has drafted language that addresses laboratory research, but not field (or farm) research. The college is trying to define what parameters to use for field work during COVID-19.
 - Rutgers is concerned with breeding programs and field research. On-campus facilities are accessible as of this meeting, but the policy could change today – be compared to completely ramp down on activity.
 - West Virginia has conflict between university policy and a Governor's order.
 - Connecticut is not allowing field workers to travel and work in teams. Units were forced to identify each employee as essential / non-essential, and anyone designated as non-essential is currently working from home.
 - New York: Only two types of laboratory activity allowed: directly related to COVID-19, or long-term preservation. Farm work is happening. Struggling with whether or not to allow any plant propagation and seed planting this season.
 - Delaware: Soil testing lab has been preserved; no researcher samples, just stakeholder samples so the growing season is not impacted. Activities related to food security are deemed essential and will continue.
 - Who decides what activities and personnel are essential? Not everything can be a top priority.
 - How do we communicate social distancing policy?
 - **NERA will work on a document for Directors to share critical policies and updates during COVID-19**

Summary Comments and Adjournment

- Rick Rhodes presented an award to Ted Andreadis for his service as the NERA Chair
- Carol Thornber rotated in as the NERA Chair and was presented with a cowbell, in keeping with NERA tradition.
- **NERA OED will be reaching out to Directors on a regular basis, considering regular opportunities for Directors to chat electronically and ring in on updates at home institutions.**

The meeting adjourned at 12:07 pm Eastern.

Agenda Brief: Communications and Marketing Committee (CMC)

Date: March 24, 2020

Presenter: Mark Rieger (Chair)

1. **Committee Membership** (as of March 2, 2020): See [Communications and Marketing Committee members](#)

2. **Meetings:**

- The CMC met face-to-face on November 10, 2019 in San Diego, CA.
- The second quarter call for the CMC is scheduled for March 31, 2020 at 11:00 AM EDT. Call in details: web/mobile: <https://zoom.us/j/5717743008> or phone: (646) 558-8656 (access code 571 774 3008).

3. **Accomplishments/Upcoming Plans:**

- During the face-to-face meeting in San Diego, chair Steve Loring shared with the CMC that the sections that fund the Communications and Marketing Project (Administrative Heads, Cooperative Extension and Experiment Stations) recommended to the BAA Policy Board of Directors that the search for a strategist (individual or firm) to develop a communications and marketing plan be initiated. Chair Loring noted that he had reached out to all of the sections to seek their priorities.
- On February 26, 2020, the APLU released a request for proposals seeking a Strategic Planning Consultant or firm to develop a strategic communication, marketing and public affairs strategy. Proposals are due on March 31, 2020. The expectation is that a preliminary report will be delivered in July and a final report delivered in November at the APLU meeting.
- Rick Klemme shared with the CMC on February 28th that Karla Trautman, SDSU Extension Director, had agreed to accept ECOP's appointment as the Incoming Chair of the CMC.
- Incoming Chair (now Chair) Mark Rieger and Vice Chair Rick Rhodes met with members of the Council for Government Affairs and institutional communicators during the CARET/AHS meeting on March 2nd and March 3rd. During these sessions the CMC sought input from the two different groups on the strategist position and how to best engage the CGA and communicators in moving a strategic plan forward. The CMC anticipates collaborating and cooperating with the communicators and CGA in initiating this new effort.
- The new Executive Committee of the CMC now includes Chair Mark Rieger, Past Chair Steve Loring, and Incoming Chair Karla Trautman. The term changes coincided with the close of the CARET/AHS meeting.

4. **Action Requested:** For information only.

5. **Attachments:**

- a. RFP for CMC Strategist

Request for Proposals: APLU Board on Agriculture Assembly Strategic Planning Support

March 2020

Background

The Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) Board on Agriculture Assembly (BAA,) presents this request for proposals (RFP) for a Strategic Planning Consultant or firm to develop a strategic communications, marketing and public affairs strategy. The selected consultant or firm will provide the services outlined by the Scope of Work provided in Appendix A, with a primary focus on supporting the BAA's goal of promoting awareness of the impact, importance, and brand value of the Land-grant University (LGU) System.

The BAA anticipates engaging the selected consultant or firm beginning in mid-April with the expectation of reviewing preliminary findings in July 2020 and completing this work before the end of October 2020 so actions can be taken during the APLU annual meeting in November 2020.

For contractual and logistical purposes, the consultant or firm will report to Douglas L. Steele, Vice President for Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources. For purposes related to performing the scope of work, the consultant will report to the Communications and Marketing Committee.

Requested Services

The consultant or firm engaged for this work will focus primarily on building the BAA's capacity to develop, monitor, and implement a new strategic communication, marketing and public affairs plan. Emphasis will be on providing BAA staff and system leaders with the tools and resources to advance awareness of the impact of Land-grant university efforts, which include Cooperative Extension services and agricultural experiment stations. A key indicator of success will be the BAA's adoption of the strategic plan and the increased capacities that follow the end of the consultant's engagement. Primary consultant activities will include:

- Performing a landscape assessment of the organizational environment in which BAA operates;
- Hosting at least one facilitated strategic planning session with BAA members regarding national leadership structure; function and strategic communications purpose and portfolio;
- Providing periodic consultative advice to the BAA's Communications Marketing Committee as requested, including potential review of strategic plan drafts and related documents;
- Developing strategies, planning tools and resources for use by the BAA CMC, including an overall framework, timeline, and roadmap; and
- Sharing lessons learned from the strategic planning process to assist future capacity building endeavors.

Additional background of previous work already completed will be available as a resource. The estimated cost of this work should not exceed \$100,000.

Skill Set

Experience – Minimum of five years of public affairs, public relations, strategic planning, marketing and/or communication experience with demonstrated success in the portfolio of accomplishments. Experience in executive coaching, higher education or agriculture/natural resources preferred.

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities – Excellent research, data analytics, verbal and written communication skills required. Ability to efficiently manage multiple projects and work effectively in complex systems. Proficiency with word processing, analytic and database programs. Ability to work cooperatively with others.

Submission Guidelines

Applicants should submit a brief proposal of no more than three pages providing a summary of:

- Capacity and track record providing services similar to those requested;
- Personnel who will provide the requested services (include bio[s] of key person[s], not part of three-page limit);
- Applicant's approach to providing the requested services including a rationale that describes why the applicant is interested in working with the BAA;
- **Milestones anticipated for assessing success of managing this project;**
- Proposed budget to implement the scope of work and timeframe; and
- Three references familiar with the applicant's work in this area.

Applicant should also provide work samples illustrative of similar work or projects undertaken for other clients. These do not count towards the three-page limit.

Proposals are due by **5 pm Eastern on March 31st**. Please email all materials to Douglas L. Steele (dstele@aplu.org), with a copy to Suzette Robinson (srobinson@aplu.org), with the subject title "APLU/BAA RFP."

About APLU

The Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) is a research, policy, and advocacy organization dedicated to strengthening and advancing the work of public universities in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. The association's membership consists of 239 public research universities, land-grant institutions, state university systems, and affiliated organizations.

APLU's mission is to: expand access and improve student success to deliver the innovative workforce of tomorrow; advance and promote research and discovery to improve society, foster economic growth, and address global challenges; and build healthy, prosperous, equitable, and vibrant communities locally and globally.

The association's work is furthered by an active and effective advocacy arm that works with Congress and the administration to advance federal policies that strengthen public universities and benefit the students and communities they serve. For more information: www.aplu.org

Board on Agriculture Assembly

The Board on Agriculture Assembly (BAA) is a unit of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) Commission on Food, Environment, and Renewable Resources (CFERR). The purpose of the BAA is the promotion of agriculture in all of its phases (food, environment, agriculture, natural resources, and international) in the state universities and land-grant colleges of the states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the territories of the Pacific, and the U. S. Virgin Islands. Please visit:

<https://www.aplu.org/members/commissions/food-environment-and-renewable-resources/board-on-agriculture-assembly/>

Further Information

Please contact Douglas L. Steele (dstele@aplu.org) with questions about this RFP.

Appendix A: Scope of Work

Key Objectives

Create a strategic marketing communication and public affairs plan to promote awareness of the impact, importance, and brand value of the Land-grant University (LGU) System.

Support a strategic planning process for the BAA that builds upon past and current work. The work will entail undertaking an environmental assessment, facilitating a strategic planning session with staff, and providing the framework and tools for APLU to adopt a strategic plan. These efforts will be directed towards ultimately developing a clear vision and mission and multi-year strategy that advances and drives the organization forward to the benefit of the Land-grant University system. The strategy framework will provide coherence and priorities to advance APLU’s vision while maintaining flexibility to respond to relevant new challenges and opportunities.

Activities	Deliverable(s)
<p>Engage the Board on Agricultural Assembly (BAA) to gather necessary information to inform a strategic marketing and communications plan designed to convey priorities and impacts of the LGUs to strategic audiences where it is important to increase visibility and support for the LGU System.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify strategies to effectively influence target audiences. • Identify strategies that ensure consistency in messaging and promotion of brand value. • Collaborate with LGU communications units, APLU’s Office of Public Affairs, and Council on Government Relations to identify opportunities for consistent external messaging. • Identify opportunities and propose strategies for improved messaging that will engage agricultural allies, strengthen relationships and expand partnerships. 	<p>Review past efforts in social media (website content and social media presence) and make recommendations on development of social media campaigns within the strategic plan.</p> <p>Identify key elements necessary for the effective development of a short and long-term communications and marketing advocacy strategy.</p> <p>Environmental landscape map</p>
<p>Prepare, facilitate, and follow-up one strategic planning meeting.</p>	<p>Meeting agenda and materials</p>
<p>Develop BAA’s strategic plan roadmap: timeline and milestones for implementation of a communications and marketing strategic plan development.</p>	<p>Strategic Plan Roadmap</p>
<p>Provide tools, templates and resources for BAA to use in developing and advancing its own strategic plan.</p>	<p>Tailored tools, templates & resources</p>

Provide additional review and support services for strategic plan development as requested, including additional support services for strategic planning group as needed.

TBD

Agenda Item 10.3: Science and Technology Committee (STC)

Presenters: Bret Hess on behalf of Jody Jellison

Action Requested: For Information

Committee Members:

<p>Chair: Jody Jellison (NERA) Past Chair: Laura Lavine (WAAESD)</p> <p>Delegates: Alton Thompson (ARD) John Yang (ARD) Joe Colletti (NCRA) Bill Barker (NCRA) Indrajeet Chaubey (NERA) Mark Hutton (NERA) Susan Duncan (SAAESD) Nathan McKinney (SAAESD) Gene Kelly (WAAESD) Chris Davies (WAAESD)</p> <p>Executive Vice Chair: Bret Hess (WAAESD ED) Saige Zespy (WAAESD Recorder)</p>	<p>Liaisons: Wendy Powers (ECOP) Ann Hazelrigg/Danesha Carley (NIPMCC; ; Pest Mgmt Subc) Kristina Hains (SSSC; Social Sci Subc) Parag Chitnis and/or Tim Conner (NIFA) Robert Matteri (USDA ARS)</p>
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ESCOP Web: <http://escop.info/committee/scitech/>

<http://escop.info/committee/national-integrated-pest-management-coordinating-committee-nipmcc/>

<http://escop.info/committee/social-sciences-subcommittee-sssc/>

S&T Committee (STC)

Regular STC business encompasses reviews, reactions, and feedback to relevant national-level reports and findings. Most recently, STC began determining how well the State Agricultural Experiment Station's portfolio of multistate research aligns with the five main themes outlined in the report of the National Academy of Sciences Science titled "Breakthroughs 2030: A Strategy for Food and Agricultural Research." The microbiome was selected as the first topic to explore. The search function of NIMSS revealed that 20 multistate research projects include the term "microbiome" in their project outline. A comparison of these multistate research projects with NIFA's current RFA revealed that most of the multistate research projects do not align with NIFA 2020 RFA b. Agricultural Microbiomes Program Area Priority Code: A1402; only four multistate research projects address the main areas described in the RFA. Consequently, STC intends to learn about NIFA's impressions of the report to help guide future efforts.

It was brought to STC's attention that a one-page, double-side "leave-behind" could be developed to help describe what the collective body of State Agricultural Experiment Stations do. Members of STC were uncomfortable taking on the task without the assistance of a professional communicator. Thanks to Rick Rhodes, Faith Peppers and Sara Delheimer have agreed to develop the one-pager drawing from information presented in the 8 Grand Challenges documents published by STC and available at [A Science Roadmap For Food & Agriculture – Briefs \(Text version\)](#).

Members of STC look forward to reviewing regional nominations for the Excellence in Multistate Research Award.

National Integrated Pest Management Coordinating Committee (NIPMCC)

The NIPMCC held a meeting an in-person meeting in at APLU Washington, DC October 22-23, 2019. In addition to a presentation on the State of IPM Report and annual regional reports, NIPMCC continued discussing ways to integrate priorities and national activities and advocacy efforts. Attendees decided to meet in Washington, DC the third week of October 2020. Planning for the October 2020 has been initiated by coordinating with regional IMP Center directors.

Social Sciences Subcommittee (SSSC)

The traditional February ESCOP SSSC meeting in Washington, DC was postponed. The subcommittee is exploring the possibility of returning to Washington, DC the second week of May 2020. In addition to several organizations speaking to SCCC, the SCCC Executive Committee is interested in having a work session with presenters and NIFA leaders who remained in Washington, DC. The purpose of the work session would be to advance the development of products describing the importance of social and behavioral sciences in agriculture that are in various stages of development since last year's work sessions. Attendees of the upcoming meeting also expect to review membership and discipline team status with assignments made for recruitment and appointment. When these are complete, they will be sent to the STC Executive Vice-Chair for formal ESCOP appointment to SSSC. Lastly, updating the SCCC Rules of Operation remains on the SCCC radar.

Agenda Brief: Diversity Catalyst Committee (DCC)

Date: March 24, 2020

Presenter: Ali Fares (Chair)

1. **Committee Membership** (as of March 2, 2020): See [ESCOP Committee Diversity Catalyst Committee \(DCC\)](#)
2. **Meetings:**
 - The DCC met by teleconference on December 19, 2019.
 - The DCC is hosted a training session on March 3, 2020 in Washington, DC (see below.)
 - The second quarter call for the DCC is in planning and will be scheduled for early April.
3. **Accomplishments/Upcoming Plans:**
 - Henry Fadamiro was nominated as the incoming chair and will assume leadership of the DCC after the ESS/SAES/ARD Fall Meeting in Baltimore (September 28-30, 2020.)
 - The DCC issued the call for nominations for the National Experiment Station Diversity and Inclusion Award. Nominations are due on April 1, 2020.
 - The DCC hosted a training session dedicated to resolving conflict across cultural boundaries during the annual CARET/AHS meeting on March 3, 2020 from 8:30 – 12:00. The meeting was facilitated by Nehrwr Abdu-Wahid, a certified trainer for the [Intercultural Conflict Style Inventory](#). The DCC is proposing to extend a variation of this training to all station directors during the ESS/SAES/ARD Fall Meeting in Baltimore.
4. **Action Requested:** For information only.
5. **Attachments:**
 - a. none

Policy Board of Directors Meeting Notes
Washington, DC
March 3, 2020

1. Communications and Marketing Committee Update – Mark Rieger
 - Currently searching for a communication strategist to develop plan for Board of Agriculture Assembly Communication and Marketing
 - Plan will have measurable objectives so progress can be assessed
 - Year of pivoting from kglobal, \$230k remaining from terminated contract, \$120k for strategist for 6-8 months to help develop a communications plan
 - Initial plan due November 2020 – discuss for input – CMC will then update the plan based on input
 - Five responses to RFP for the communication strategist
 - CGA meeting: ideas to broaden constituency within APLU were discussed
 - Challenge to the system – communication for national brand identity (preferred) or advocacy
2. NIFA Update – Scott Angle
 - Need to start planning to request facilities funding when ARS pauses its infrastructure efforts in 2 or 3 years
 - Doug Steele – re-imagining discussion themes
 - Communicate value of Land-grant Universities
 - Reestablished points of contact
 - Uniform reporting
 - Release of funds
 - Contact list up to date
 - Value of capacity funding
 - Communication with other agencies
 - NIFA has received 150 pages of input, a consultant is currently analyzing the content
 - Low hanging fruit – lost entire communications team (website update and fixes)
 - What they can't do in the re-imagining process is anything illegal or against congressional intent
 - Reporting needs a lot of change
 - Michael and Lynn – eager to make changes in system...empowered
 - Doug – recent reports and initiatives have important goals, but don't identify any funding sources. Need to be careful these don't begin to earmark AFRI
 - Cornerstone needs to watch the Presidents Innovation Initiative; NIFA is mentioned in that report.
 - Budget – President budget \$600k; Scott is happy with the \$460k ask supported by the BAA
 - Start now for next year on facilities funding – ARS has received funds – break in use of funds and LGUs may be able to fall into that line with funds matched by states
 - AFRI could be a place to put money for the initiatives (theme areas expanded)

- AgARDA initiative could be within AFRI
 - Where are the growth opportunities? Not robbing one to pay for the other
 - Expects NIFA to be increased – ARS was cut significantly in President’s budget
 - Bring new faculty to DC for liaison visits – might bring some NPLs to DC to visit with large groups if notified well in advance
 - Smaller lines (Insular Institutions) – how can NIFA help us think about these lines
 - Amrit Bart (UGA) – taking a sabbatical to assist NIFA international programs
 - NIFA budget as one line – with report language to direct spending – more leeway or not? Depends on the language of the lines...limited eligibility, match, etc. – administrative complications – willing to study the implications
 - Doug – 2 new working groups to be established from this meeting:
 - Work Group - Strategic Realignment Implementation – probably 14 lines
 - Work Group – APLU 5-year advocacy strategy
3. APLU Updates – Doug
- Need to make sure Policy Board of Directors meetings and decisions on budgets are timed to get our requests out early enough, so other groups have the information when they develop their requests
 - Need to identify people who might serve on NIFA’s external advisory board
 - Action on realignment – continue with which of three strategies: 1 line, 6-7 lines, or 12-14 lines?
 - Recommend a multiple line model – Approved
 - Implementation group needs to develop a succinct statement on why we’re consolidating lines
 - Implementation committee will have a representative from each Section and one ED
 - **Motion for PBD Chair to appoint Realignment Implementation Committee with multiple lines and “why” - APPROVED**
 - Is CARET/AHS a good time for the PBD to meet?
 - APLU Annual Meeting with PBD will proceed as usual (extra day)
 - Face-to-face meeting in Sept or Oct prior to APLU Annual meeting?
 - FSLI has developed an infographic about impact of the program
 - LEAD 21 – Board has set a hard cap of 80 on class size and professional evaluation results have been published in a peer reviewed journal
 - Potential new advocacy strategy for FY2022
 - Discussions at Joint COPs – July 2020
 - Framework for multi-year advocacy strategy
 - Identify new opportunities (Ag Innovation, Science Blue Print, Climate)
 - Long-term Strategic Advocacy – working with Caron Gala on developing this plan
 - External LGU NIFA Advisory Committee – each section nominate someone or designate section chair
 - Assessments – slides (Eric will request slides)
 - BAA will have three new positions using existing funds
 - CMC would like to have an embedding position at APLU instead of using a contractor, this could reduce assessment by half

- Assessments are based on funding received during the federal fiscal year
- Incorporates a rolling 3-year average, 60% capacity plus 40% AFRI
- No assessment increases for FY2020 because formula is under review and will be presented to PBD for discussion
- Cap maximum amount of assessment at some level and don't penalize for one good AFRI grant

4. Budget and Advocacy Committee – Report

The BAC met by conference call on Feb. 12th just after the release of the President's Budget. This was a new, more responsive action by the BAC than in previous years.

- Increases of 8% across the 6 core lines (including AFRI) plus the 3 1994 lines was initially proposed
- The 1994 presidents had been to DC the week prior to the call and advocated for slightly higher amounts; those numbers were adopted
- President's budget of \$600M for AFRI was at the expense of ~\$75M in capacity funding; the BAC proposed \$460M for AFRI

The BAC met fact-to-face on Sunday, March 1st

- Sign-on requests for Ag-related initiatives was discussed as were criteria for APLU-BAA sign-on requests in the future; solicited criteria will be summarized
- Motion to sign-on to a support letter from the *Stakeholder Forum on Antimicrobial Resistance (SFAR)* passed
- Motion to not to sign-on to a support letter from *Agriculture Advanced Research and Development Authority (AgGARDA)* passed (considered duplicative to existing agencies such as AFRI)
 - AgGARDA is authorized in Farm Bill with a similar mission to DARPA & ARP Ae
 - AgGARDA creates a mini agency within the USDA to create teams for issue areas with expansive authority to address two focus areas: (1) critical research and technology for specialty crops and (2) prevent, protect and prepare for threats to the food system
 - AgGARDA is authorized for 5 years at \$50M per year; however, funds have not been appropriated
- APLU Unified Request one-pager document was reviewed
 - Discussion centered around the value and need for foot notes for budget areas outside of the core priorities
 - Working group will be formed to determine how best to advocate outside of the core priorities providing recommendations by July
- Advocacy Strategy Framework
 - A multi-year appropriations advocacy strategy would be beneficial to the system
 - Cornerstone presented several models that focus on three components: Data, people, and asks
 - Working group will be formed to propose a 5-year advocacy strategy framework that would include an environmental scan of other advocacy groups

5. ESS Section Report to PBD – Gary Thompson

- The primary issue that the members of ESCOP would like to bring to the board is the need to continue focusing on the “infrastructure” needs of the system. This issue is of

particular importance to conducting research at our institutions, but also impacts both our academic and Extension missions.

- The 2015 Sightlines survey of capital infrastructure on our campuses estimated a need of \$8.4B, which has likely risen to \$9-10B today as shortages of labor and materials are increasing costs. We believe that significant opportunities exist for federal and state matching funds. A figure of \$100M per year of federal funding in addition to state matching funds would provide a significant beginning to address this expanding issue.
- What is the best way forward to advocate for these funds? According to Vernie Hubert, the Infrastructure Facilities Act in the Farm Bill provides existing authorization language; however, significant funds have yet to be appropriated. Furthermore, the system should be prepared to vigorously participate in infrastructure bills as they arise.
- ESCOP is requesting that the BAA engage the academic heads, provosts, and university presidents to advocate for the infrastructure needs of the system. A letter from ESCOP will be sent to the PBD in the upcoming weeks.
- Small team to help moving forward tactically, Caron Gala offered to help this team.

Report and Recommendations

NORTHEAST MULTISTATE ACTIVITIES

COMMITTEE MEETING

February 25, 2020
8:00-9:00 am Teleconference

In attendance: Brad Hillman (Chair/Rutgers), Matt Wilson (WVU), Eric Wommack (UD), Gary Thompson (PSU), Pat Vittum (UMASS), Amy Ouellette (UNH), Fred Servello (Maine/ex-officio NRSP RC rep), Rick Rhodes (NERA/ex-officio), David Leibovitz (NERA/ex-officio)

Approval of the agenda

- The February 25 agenda was approved by acclamation.

Approval of [MAC Report, November 20, 2019 \(click to view\)](#)

- The November 20 MAC report was approved by acclamation.

NRSP Discussion

1. NRSP_TEMP4: *Facilitating Registration of Pest Management Technology for Specialty Crops and Specialty Uses, 10/2020 – 09/2025* [Renewal of NRSP4, Northeast AA: Brad Hillman, Rutgers]
 - NRSP4 is a minor but relatively important component of IR-4.
 - NRSP4 contributes \$500k to IR-4's \$20M budget.
 - IR-4 is an individual USDA budget line item.
 - Currently IR-4 administrative offices are transitioning to NC State University (has been with Rutgers since 1963.)
 - The Northeast regional IR-4 office will remain at both Rutgers and Maryland.
 - NRSP funding has been leveraged to secure other sources of funding.
 - NRSP dollars are spread out to support regional IR-4 offices across the country.
 - NRSP guidelines call for a transition plan to decrease off the top funding and increase support from other alternative sources of funding. Can the current level of NRSP support be decreased?
 - IR-4 would not disappear without NRSP funding, but NRSP funding helps stations across the country to organize and helps to showcase the value of IR-4 at a national level.
 - The MAC expressed general support for NRSP4.
 - **Matt Wilson introduced a motion to recommend approval of NRSP4 by NERA, with a caveat that NRSP4 should draft a transition plan for inclusion in the final proposal.**
 - The motion was seconded by Gary Thompson and approved unanimously.

2. NRSP_TEMP6: *The US Potato Genebank: Acquisition, Classification, Preservation, Evaluation and Distribution of Potato (Solanum) Germplasm*, 10/2020 – 09/2025 [Renewal of NRSP6, Northeast AA: Walter De Jong, Cornell]
 - NRSP6 supports the potato germplasm center in Wisconsin.
 - The NRSP provides unique services and has received decades of off-the-top funding support.
 - The budget request for the project is “the status quo funding level” at \$150k/year, and no transition plan was included – the technical team expressed that they’re comfortable with the current NRSP arrangement and are requesting the same.
 - ESS voted to decrease NRSP6 funding to \$135k in 2019.
 - NRSP6 is the strongest case for the need for alternative sources of funding.
 - NERA could recommend a significant funding cut for the next 5 years and a full funding stop in the next 10 years. Rejecting the NRSP outright in 2020 may be too extreme.
 - A transition plan to sunset the project is critical and should be required for submission by NRSP6 team.
 - **Gary Thompson introduced a motion to recommend approval of NRSP6 by NERA, with a caveat that the total 5-year budget be reduced by 50% and a clear message that NRSP6 is expected to develop a transition plan away from off-the-top funding.**
 - **The motion was seconded by Brad Hillman and approved unanimously.**

3. NRSP_TEMP9: *National Animal Nutrition Program*, 10/2020 – 09/2025 [Renewal of NRSP9, Northeast AA: Rick Rhodes, NERA]
 - NRSP9 supports animal nutrition research, focused on the expansion of databases related to animal nutrient requirements.
 - Interfacing with the National Academies of Science in the development of the widely used database is critical.
 - Years 1, 2, and 5 budget requests are level at \$199k/year.
 - Year 3 includes a budget increase to support mid-term review.
 - Year 4 includes an increase to support a national animal nutrition summit in Washington, DC.
 - 2020 is the second renewal cycle for NRSP9 (project was initiated in 2010.)
 - National Animal Nutrition Program is truly research support, and shows heavy leverage of the off-the-top funding – meeting the expectations of an NRSP.
 - NRSP9 should draft a transition plan away from off-the-top funding, whether short or long term
 - **Gary Thompson introduced a motion to recommend approval of NRSP9 by NERA, with a caveat that the total 5-year budget be reduced by 50% and a clear message that NRSP9 is expected to develop a transition plan away from off-the-top funding.**
 - **The motion was seconded by Matt Wilson and approved unanimously.**

NERA Planning Grant Proposal

1. [2020-01] Rojas (UMass) submission: *Consumer Preferences for Diet Quality, Innovation and Market Structure*
 - This proposal was submitted by Bill Miller (UMass) to the NERA OED on behalf of PI Christian Rojas (UMass) and co-PI Ted Jaenicke (Penn State.)
 - The team intends to apply for a NIFA Foundation grant (~\$500k.)
 - Proposal supports a graduate student to work on literature review and preliminary data assembly, cleaning, and analysis.
 - NERA has carryover from previous years to support more grant development work.
 - The proposal would look stronger with involvement of more than two institutions and the team can be encouraged to invite more participants.
 - To increase the number of submissions, NERA OED can send the RFP out regularly, at least quarterly.
 - **Matt Wilson introduced a motion to approve NERA Planning Grant proposal 2020-01.**
 - **Gary Thompson seconded the motion and the planning grant proposal was approved unanimously. (Note: UMASS AES will support the project and the next UMASS NERA assessment will be reduced by an identical sum up to the requested amount of \$6,986.)**

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm Eastern.

**NERA Budget Workbook
FY20 YTD March 2020**

	FY20 Approved (6/4/19 NERA Mtg)	FY20 YTD
Income		
FY20 Assessments	\$384,294	\$323,417
2019 Summer Registration revenue (Lighthouse)		\$21,909
Carry-Forward	\$163,950	\$159,672
Total Income	\$548,244	\$504,998
Expenditures		
Salary & Benefits		
Salary	\$243,507	\$165,703
Benefits	\$85,928	\$55,129
Total Salary & Benefits	\$329,435	\$220,833
Operating		
NERA Travel	\$25,000	\$19,755
Meeting Expenses	\$9,500	\$1,117
Telephone and Teleconferencing (Zoom)	\$900	\$610
Postage	\$100	\$178
Printing / Award Services	\$500	\$703
Office Supplies/Equipment/furnishings	\$3,000	\$1,901
Website	\$228	\$249
Memberships	\$500	\$500
Planning Grants	\$31,000	\$7,000
Total Operating	\$70,728	\$32,011
Total Expenditures	\$400,163	\$252,844
Net Balance	\$148,081	\$252,154

Notes:

* Assessment income reflects institutions with outstanding FY20 balances

The National Plant Germplasm System: 2020 Status, Prospects, and Challenges

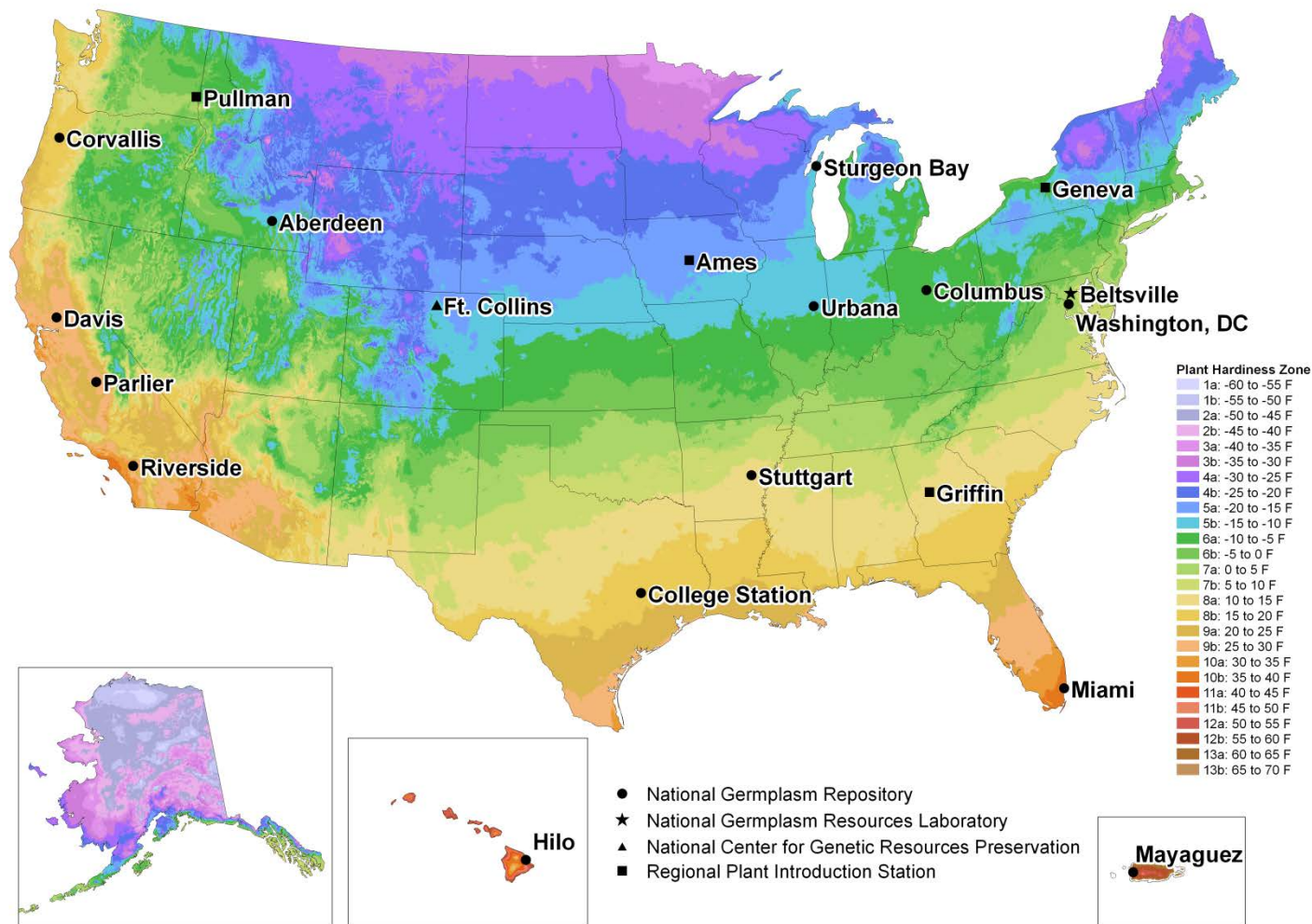
Peter Bretting

USDA/ARS Office of National Programs

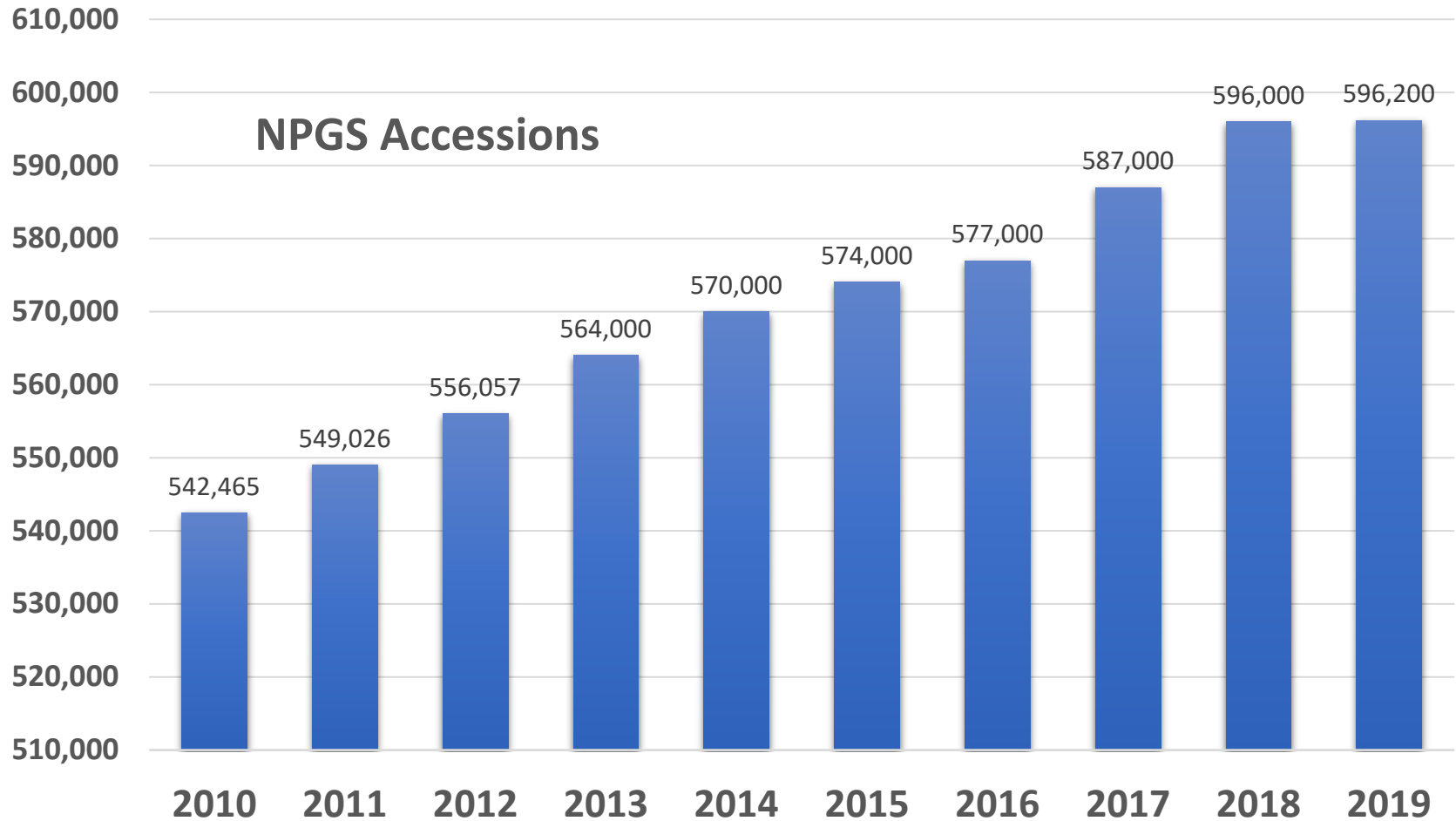
Peter.bretting@ars.usda.gov

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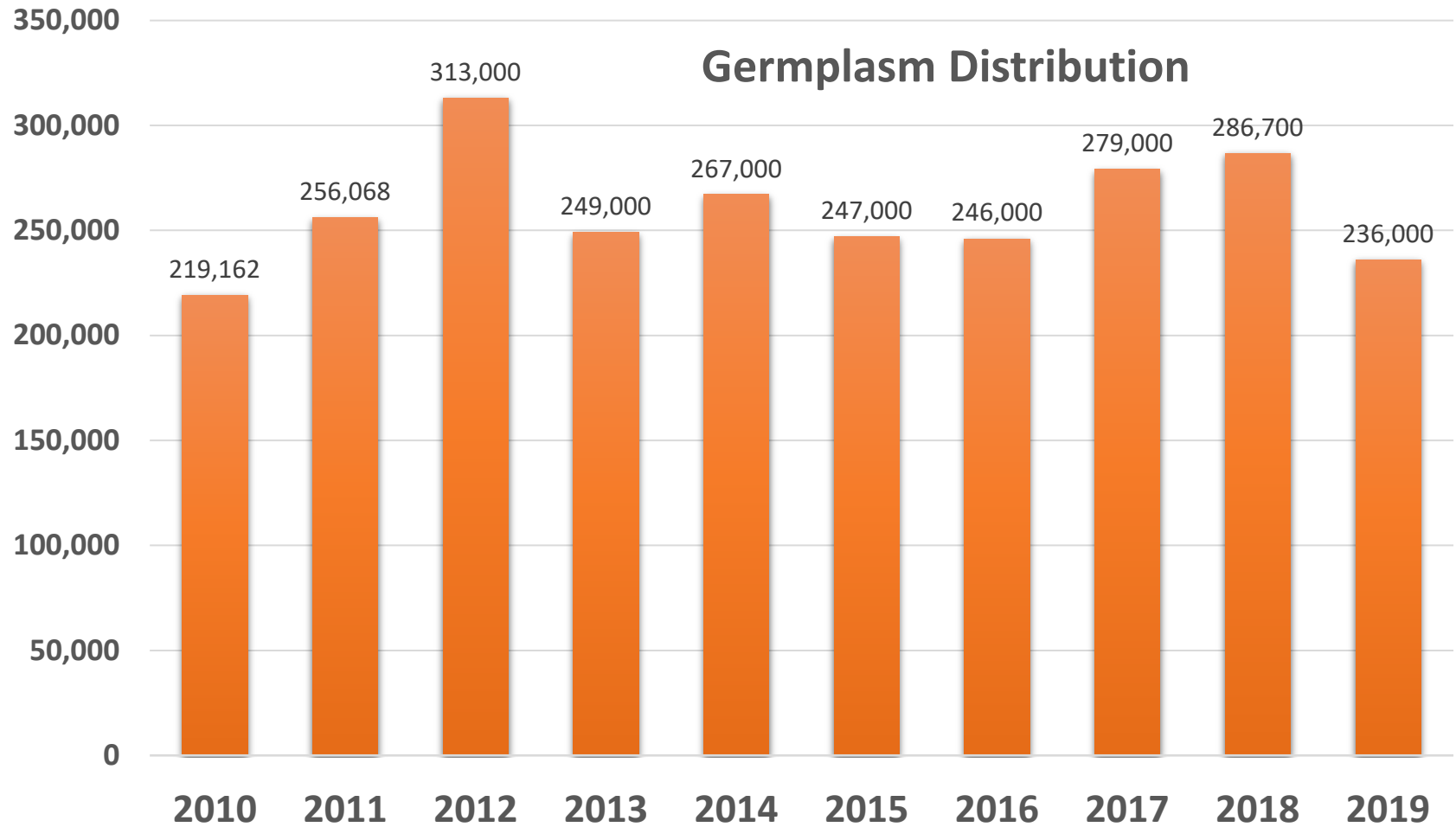
USDA National Plant Germplasm System (NPGS)



NUMBER OF NPGS ACCESSIONS 2010-2019



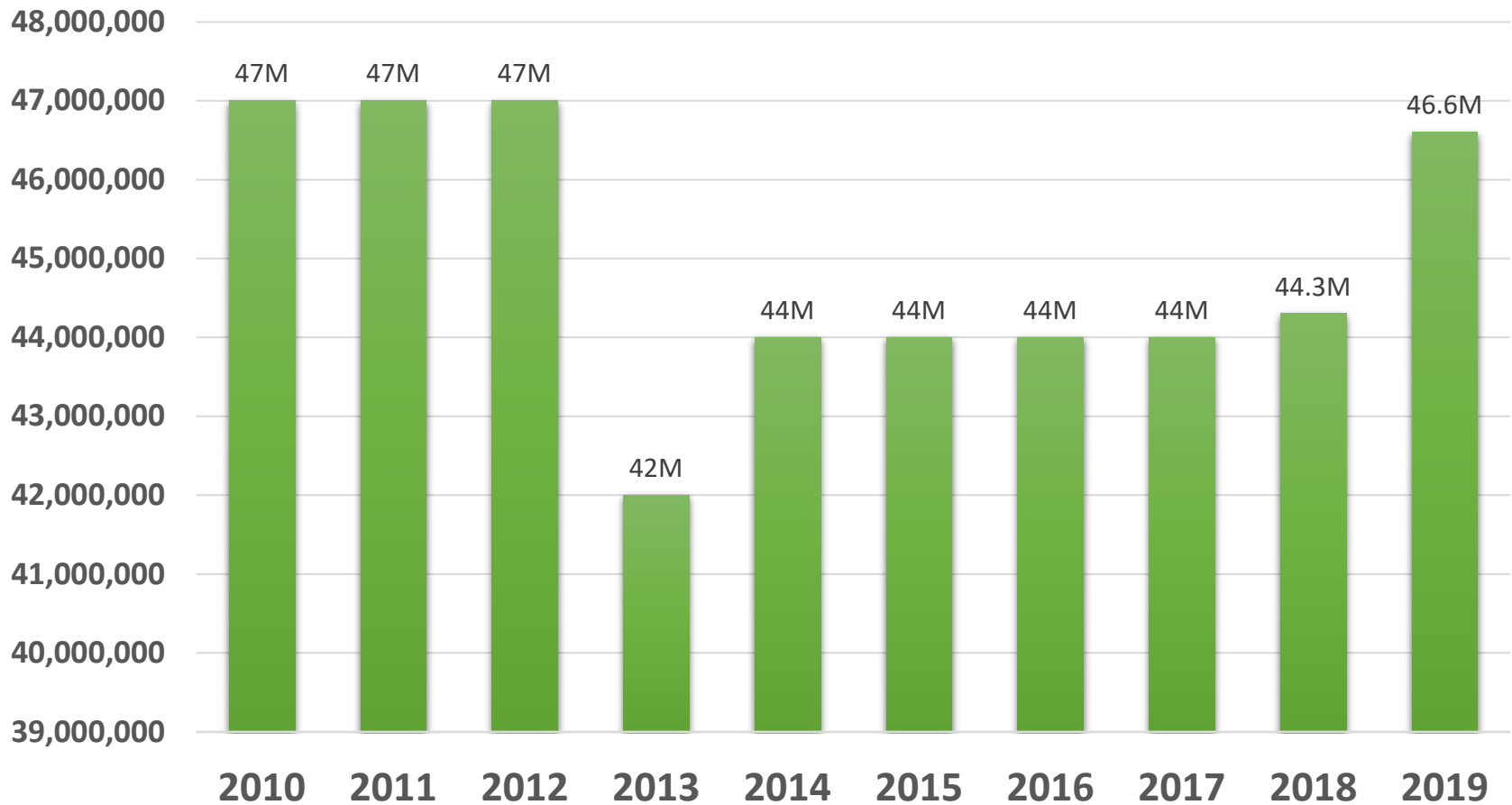
DEMAND FOR NPGS GERMPLASM 2010-2019



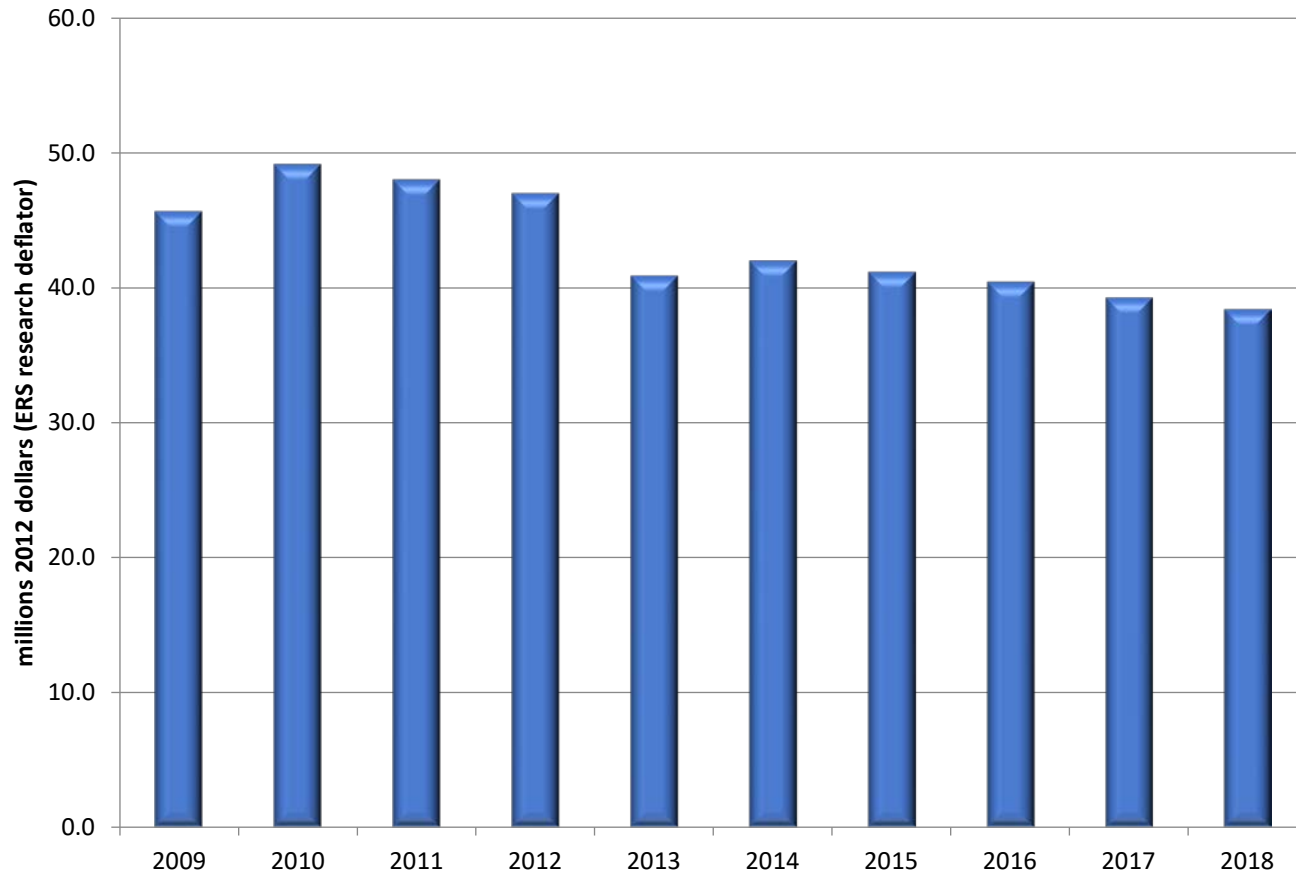
ARS NATIONAL PLANT GERMPLASM SYSTEM

BUDGET

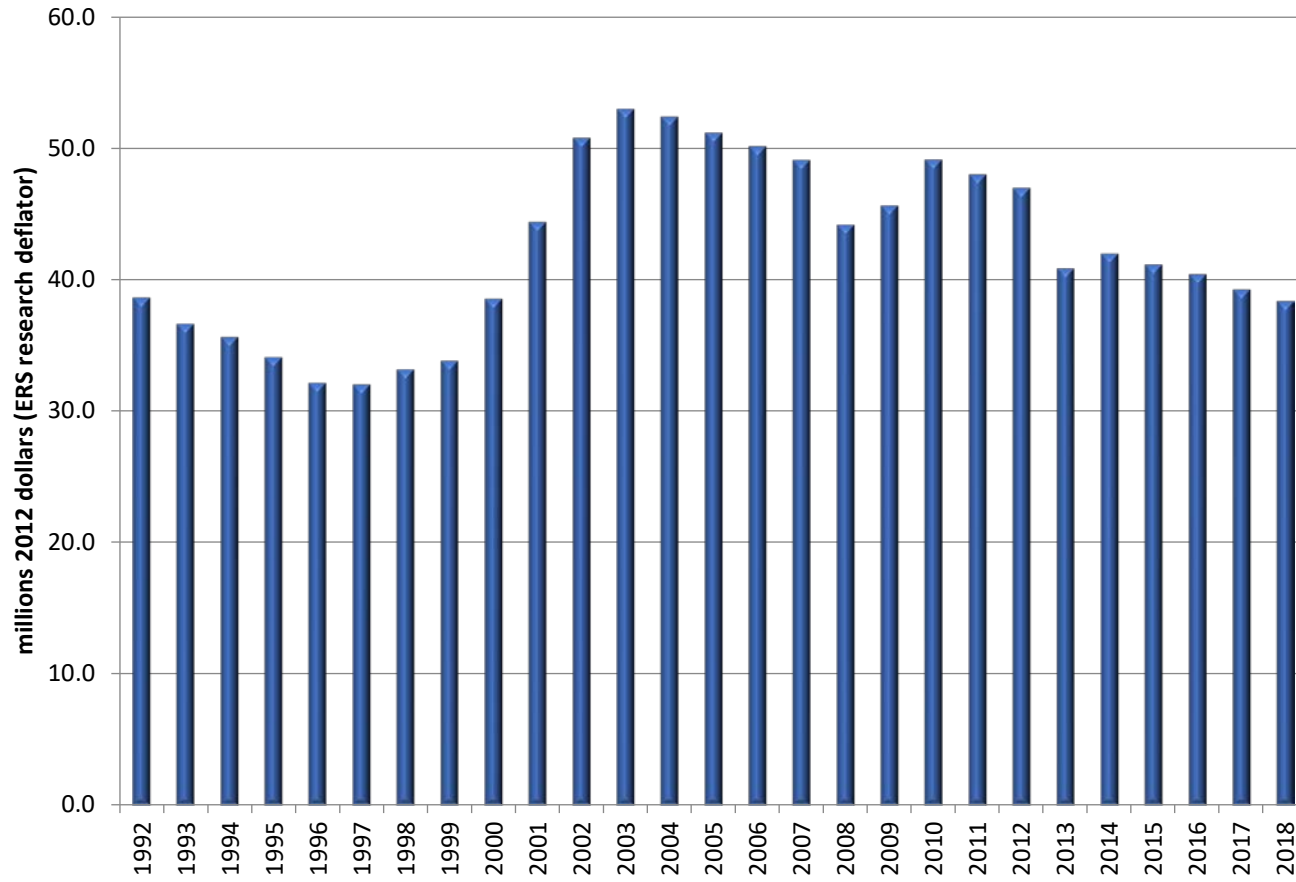
2010-2019



ARS NPGS real (deflated) budget, 2009-2018



ARS NPGS real (deflated) budget, 1992-2018



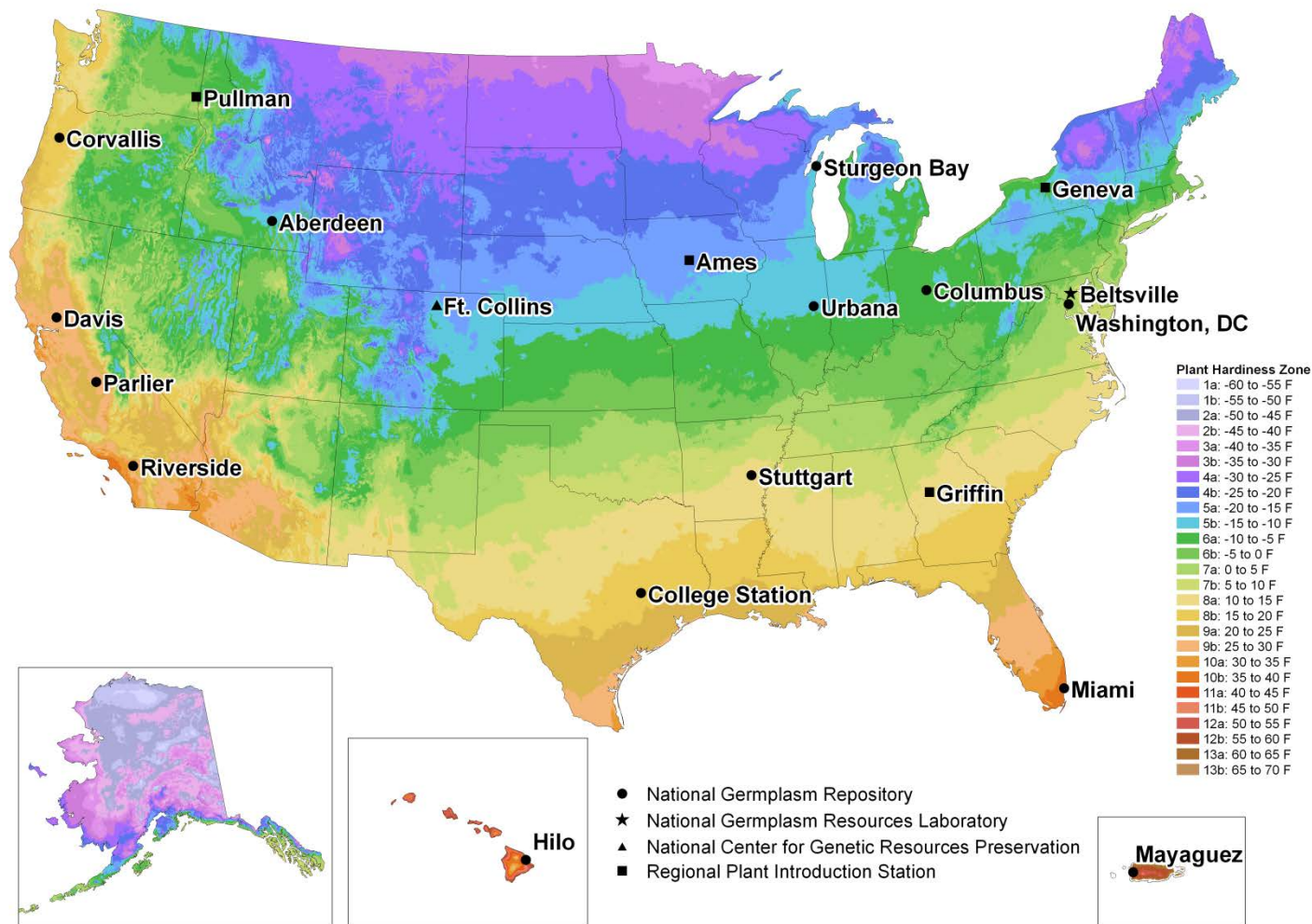
Some key challenges for the NPGS

- **Managing and expanding the NPGS operational capacity and infrastructure to meet the increased demand for germplasm and associated information.**
- **Recent and upcoming NPGS personnel retirements; hiring and training new staff.**
- **Developing and applying cryopreservation and/or in vitro conservation methods for clonal germplasm.**
- **BMPs and procedures for managing accessions (and breeding stocks) with GE traits and the occurrence of adventitious presence (AP).**
- **Acquiring and conserving additional germplasm, especially of crop wild relatives.**

Genetic Resource Management Priorities: Foundations for Crop Innovation

- **Acquisition**
- **Maintenance**
- **Regeneration**
- **Documentation and Data Management**
- **Distribution**
- **Characterization**
- **Evaluation**
- **Enhancement**
- **Research in support of the preceding priorities**

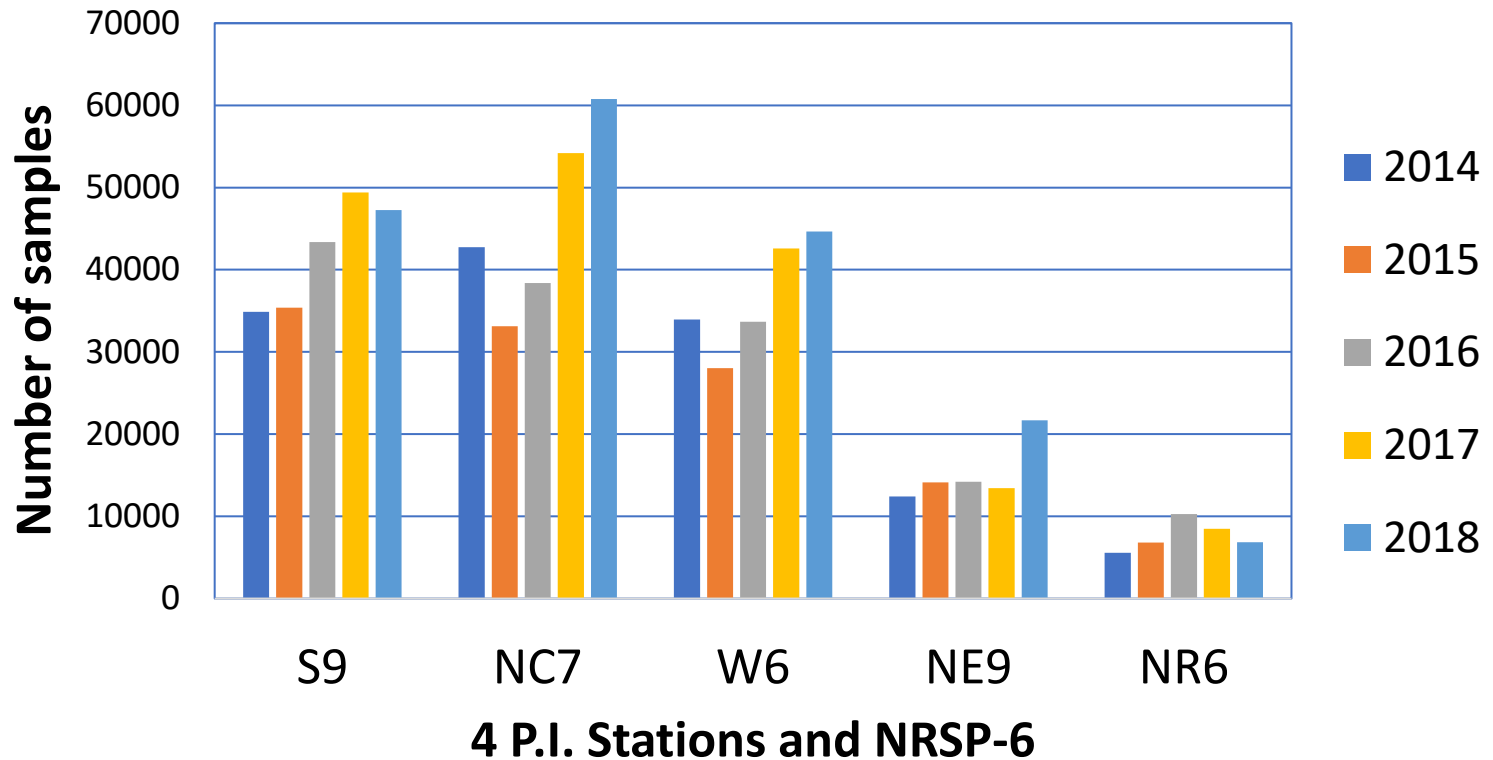
USDA National Plant Germplasm System (NPGS)



FY 19 budgets and budget trends for 4 P. I. Stations and NRSP-6 Potato Station

Genebank	ARS FY 19 budget	ARS budget for last 5 yrs.	FY 19 Regional or NRSP-6 budget	Regional or NRSP-6 budget for last 5 yrs.
Ames	\$2,382,616	Stable	\$522,980	Stable
Geneva	\$2,235,620	\$500,000 hemp increase	\$247,409	2.2% increase per FY until FY18, stable
Griffin	\$2,410,521	Stable	\$490,742	% increases for UGA salaries
Pullman	\$2,794,588	Stable	\$446,257	3% increase per FY since FY15
Sturgeon Bay	\$664,948	Stable	\$150,000	Cut by 10% to \$135,000 in FY20

Germplasm Distributions



1/3 of NPGS distributions to SAES/LGU, single largest user group

Potato Genebank (NRSP-6)

-- *Service basics*--

Preservation, evaluation and distribution of ~5,000 botanical seed accessions of about 100 species and ~1,000 cultivated *in vitro* clones

Collected 33 new populations from Arizona in cooperation with CIP and received 9 new cultivars and breeding clones from cooperators

Increased 222 accessions as botanical seed populations and did 18,436 *in vitro* transfers to preserve and distribute clonal stocks

Performed virus tests of over 740 accessions, germination tests of 1,582 accessions, and ploidy determination of 35 accessions

Distributed 6,802 accessions... 6,018 in USA and 784 abroad



Potato Genebank (NRSP-6)

-- *Research and Development* --

Thousands of field plots, and screenhouse and greenhouse plantings supported cooperative research with a broad array of state, federal, industry and foreign collaborators on a full spectrum of topics.



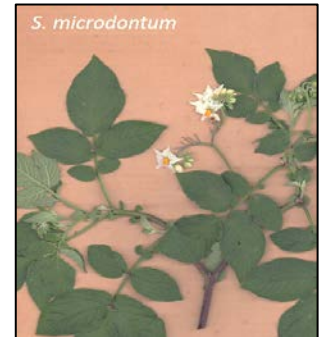
Potato Genebank (NRSP-6)

-- *Impact highlights*--

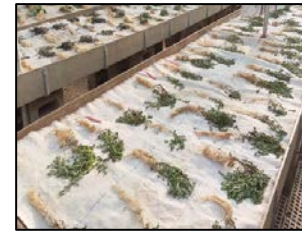
Joint release of new cultivar *Wiñay* with Peru



Discovered great tuber rot resistance in *S. microdontum*



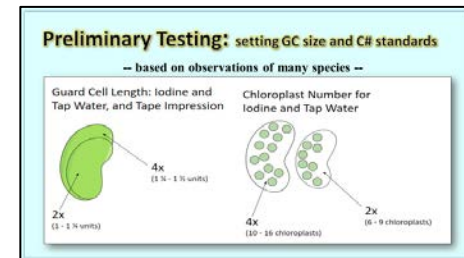
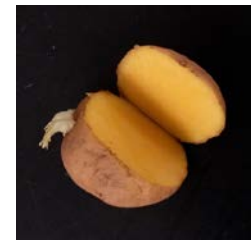
Discovered high root vigor in core collection



Validated new methods for rapid ploidy estimation

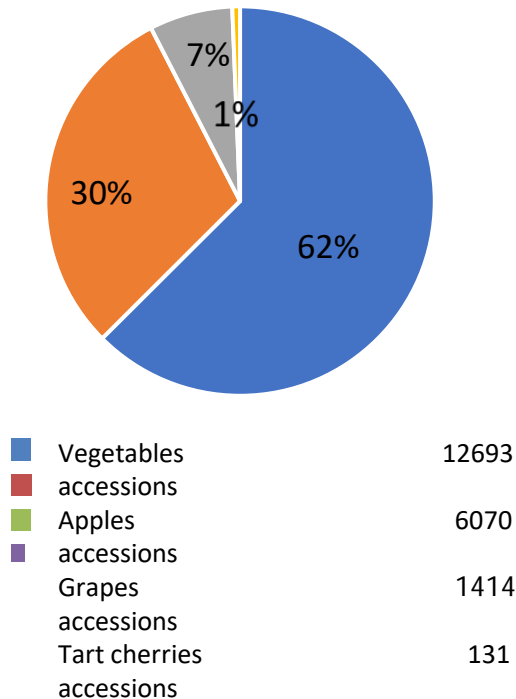
Created inbred form of "egg yolk" potatoes

All cultivar and breeding stocks published in 2018 had NRSP6 species in their pedigrees



Northeast Regional PI Station (NE9, Geneva)

Crops conserved



Two curatorial programs:

- ❖ Vegetable Crops (Joanne Labate & one vacancy) tomato, onion, radish, winter squash, cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, other cole crops, celery, tomatillo, asparagus, buckwheat and other vegetables
- ❖ **The major crops managed by this project represent approximately 40% of the combined dollar value of fresh and processing vegetables in the US.**
- ❖ **Hemp germplasm collection to be established.**
- ❖ Clonal Crops (Vacancy & Ben Gutierrez) apples, grapes and tart cherries
- ❖ Apples, grapes, and tart cherries are among the most valuable fruit crops worldwide, with US production valued at
 - \$ 6.3 billion for grapes
 - \$ 3.5 billion for apples
 - \$ 89.4 million for tart cherry

Northeast Regional PI Station (NE9)

Germplasm regeneration, collection, and outreach highlights:

- Successful regeneration of 705 accessions from 2014 – 2018 (average 141 seed lots produced/yr), 231 regenerations planned in 2018 for seed production of vegetable germplasm to distribute and replenish stocks.
- PGRU continues to support organic farming by providing germplasm and demonstrations for small-scale seed production as part of the Northern Organic Vegetable Improvement Collaborative (NOVIC3).
- Foreign exploration to Viet Nam for tropical apple species, *Malus doumeri*.



tomato seed cleaning demo

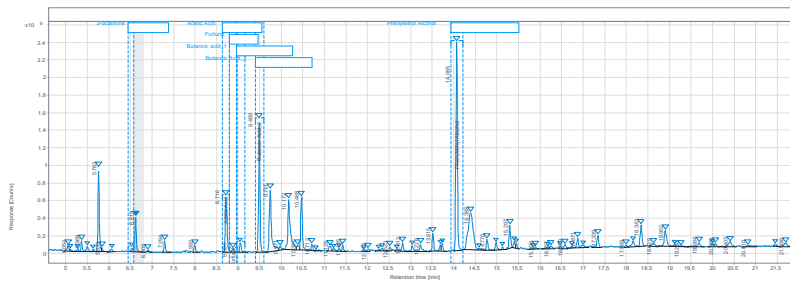
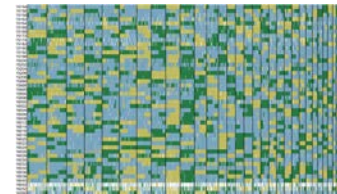
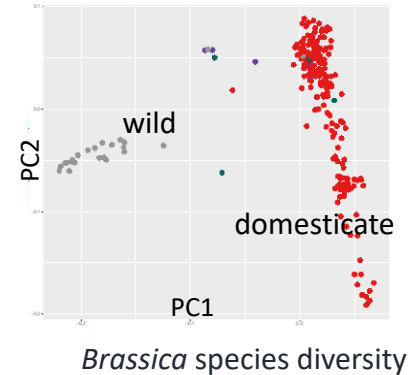


Malus doumeri fruit

Northeast Regional PI Station (NE9)

Germplasm research highlights:

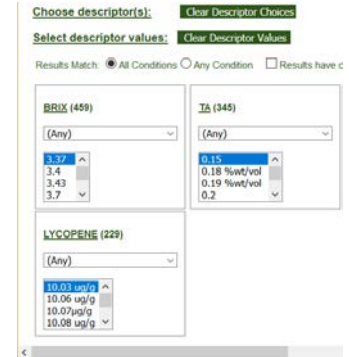
- The closest wild relatives to *Brassica oleracea* were elucidated using RNA sequencing. Results suggested a Mediterranean origin of domestication.
- Molecular markers in onion were developed, mapped, and used to estimate genetic diversity in PGRU accessions.
- Acquisition of GCMS for chemical profiling of crops



Northeast Regional PI Station (NE9)

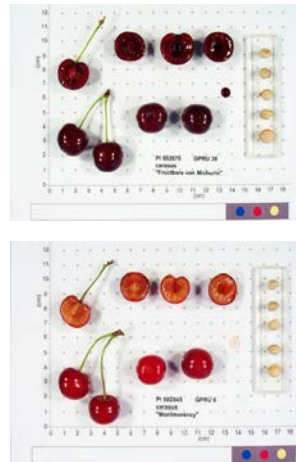
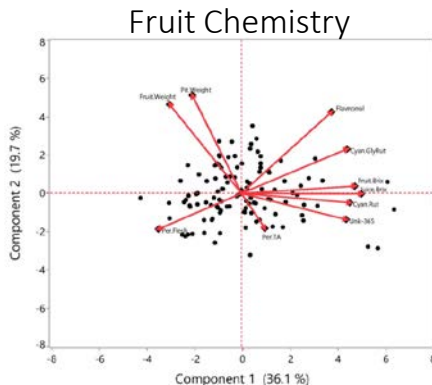
Germplasm research highlights:

- A backlog of more than 70,000 observations and 787 images collected during vegetable crop regenerations were uploaded into GRIN-Global during 2018.
- The tart cherry collection was characterized for chemical and molecular diversity. PGRU identified rich anthocyanin diversity within the collection.



tomato data in GRIN

Anthocyanin diversity



Genetic Diversity

