

State Departments of Agriculture and Relationships with NERA (v3)

February 13, 2020

Background

Matt Wilson (WVU) has asked if NERA members had formal, collaborative and/or embedded relationships with state departments/divisions of agriculture. Here are the responses:

Summary

The NERA institutions that responded to Matt's question each shared unique, institutional characteristics that typified the college's/experiment station's relationship with state Departments of Agriculture and state Commissioners of Agriculture. Alternatively, each of the institutions reported close working relationships that were characterized by mutually beneficial partnerships.

Institutional responses

Cornell: Cornell CALS and the College of Veterinary Medicine have very close relationships with NYDAM. Because the colleges have a close relationship, the experiment stations do as well; however, there are no formal linkages between NYSDAM and the Cornell Agriculture Experiment Station or the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station. Remember, that in New York, the experiment stations do not hire faculty or pay for faculty salaries and this is the reason why we don't have a formal relationship with NYSDAM. As I said earlier, Cornell CALS and Cornell AgriTech (more than NYSAES) work closely with NYDAM. NYDAM administers checkoff funds that flow to faculty via a competitive process. NYDAM commissioners sit on our Advisory Councils. By statute, Cornell CALS performs services of importance to NYDAM and provides advice on issues that NYDAM must manage. Overall, there is a close working relationship between the colleges and NYDAM and we generally pull in the same direction to sustain and grow the food and agriculture economy in New York.

University of Massachusetts: We do not have a formal relationship with the Mass. Dept. of Agricultural Resources, but do have a close working relationship with them and partner with them on many issues/projects. The relationship is stronger on the Extension side than the research side. The commissioner serves on our Board of Public Overseers for Extension and also is on the Cranberry Oversight Board which helps fund and prioritize research and outreach at our Cranberry Station.

University of New Hampshire: Similar to what Jody mentioned for UMASS, the NHAES has no formal or embedded (if I understand what that means) relationship other than those below but an ongoing very good working relationship.

The NH Commissioner of Agriculture and the COLSA Dean co-manage the NH Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, which by statute is housed in the NHAES. Funding for the NHVDL

comes from diagnostic revenues, UNH/COLSA, and the NH DAM&F. The NH State Veterinarian within the DAM&F is also closely involved in this.

The Commissioner is an ex-officio member of the NH University System (USNH) Board of Trustees. Former Commissioner Merrill was a member of our Thompson School of Applied Science (2-year degrees) Leadership Council, comprised of a half-dozen external individuals and which reports to the Dean. UNH Extension has very strong relationships also, but similarly no formal/embedded relationship that I'm aware of.

Penn State: The entire dean's group has formal meetings with the PDA twice a year and informal meetings all the time. We have a close, long-standing relationship with the secretary and his staff that goes beyond changes in administrations. The PDA is primarily a regulatory agency (versus granting) but has been more politically active under the Wolfe administration. Sec. Russell Redding is a good friend of the college and has recently developed and got funded the PA Farm Bill. Most of that money goes to economic development.

Rutgers: The New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station (NJAES), which includes research and extension, has a close relationship with the New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA). The NJ Secretary of Agriculture is the Executive Director of the Department and the Secretary to the State Board of Agriculture. A representative from NJAES attends monthly meetings of the State Board of Agriculture to keep abreast of important agriculture-related issues and to report on NJAES activity and programs. Reciprocally, the NJ Secretary of Agriculture or his/her designee attends the NJAES Board of Managers meetings that occur 5 times per year. We are in regular contact with the Secretary and with specific units within the NJDA.

Much of the official agricultural agenda for the State is discussed, and recommendations for specific actions are made, at the annual State Agricultural Convention. Convention delegates also select appointees to be proposed to the Governor to fill current/upcoming vacancies on the State Board of Agriculture. Convention delegates represent a wide range of agricultural interests in New Jersey and include two delegates from each County Board of Agriculture, as well as delegates from a host of organizations associated with agriculture in New Jersey. The Executive Dean (SEBS)/Executive Director of NJAES (or his/her designee) attends the convention as a delegate, as does a member of the NJAES Board of Managers. At the convention, the Executive Director of NJAES (or his/her representative) is asked to report on NJAES activities and future plans.