



# "NORTHEAST AGENDA" UPDATE

**3/16/23**

**NERA:** Northeastern Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors  
**NEED:** Association of Northeast Extension Directors

**PIVOT CREATIVE & CONSULTING 2023**

**PRESENTED BY ERICA MIRICH**



# About PIVOT Creative & Consulting

**Our priority is understanding the specific needs of each client and applying them throughout the entire process. What we create is born from a collaboration with our clients, which is why we include them in each step of the process, in order to ensure that our work is exactly what they had in mind. The end result is an inspiring and functional design that will boost their company's performance.**

*Build Momentum. Gain Confidence. Grow Capacity.*



# Today's Session.

- **Why a Northeast Agenda?**
  - Need for a unified voice
  - Desire for collaboration
  - Guiding principles for NEED & NERA
  - Roadmap for the future
- **The Northeast Agenda Initiative**
  - Goals
  - The Challenge
  - Team and Timeline
- **Concurrent Project: agInnovation for ESS**
  - Website Walk-through
- **Review of work to date**
- **Key Findings**
  - Mission/Purpose/Vision
  - Unique Attributes
  - Critical Characteristics of the NE
  - Obstacles & Opportunities
  - Priorities for the future
- **Drafting the Document**
- **Final Outcomes & Deliverables**
- **Envisioned Use for NERA, NEED and more!**



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# **WHY A NORTHEAST AGENDA?**

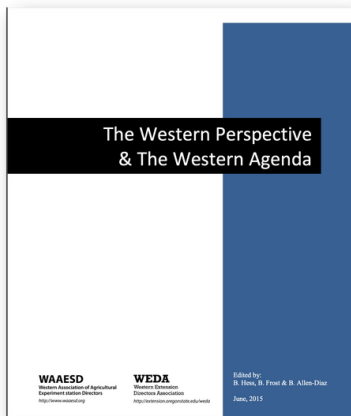
# Why is this needed?

## Current Pain Points for NERA & NEED

- Need for a unified voice
- Desire for improved collaboration
- Desire for guiding principles that apply to both NEED & NERA
- Goal to "get on the same page"
- Need a shared understanding of who we are individually, and collectively
- Roadmap for the future that ensures broader, more meaningful impact

## A Model to Emulate

- The Western Agenda





# Project, Team & Timeline



# The Project.

- Define unique attributes of the Northeast
- Define who NERA and NEED are, how they work together, and how there is strength in their collaboration.
- Define the purpose of “The Northeast Agenda”
- Settle on the mission of the “Northeast Agenda”
- Develop a vision for the “Northeast Agenda” including shared programmatic/organizational strengths
- Identify critical obstacles and opportunities facing the Northeast
- Identify/prioritize key strategic opportunities and areas of focus within the “Northeast Agenda”
- Develop a cohesive and collaborative set of priorities
- Establish a focused and cohesive direction for outreach



# The Goal.

- Unify NERA and NEED under a collaboratively developed set of guiding principles and priorities.
- Use these to create a roadmap for greater impact in the Northeast.
- Develop a print-ready document, and supporting collateral to share our new collaborative agreement and goals.





# The Team.

## Key Stakeholders & NE Agenda Committee

Committee meets regularly since September 2022.

### LEADERSHIP

**Rick Rhodes, Executive Director** - Northeastern Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors

**Ali Mitchell, Executive Director** - Association of Northeast Extension Directors

### KEY STAKEHOLDERS

#### NEED

Chris Watkins, Cornell University  
Brent Hales, Pennsylvania State University  
Katherine Cason, Pennsylvania State University  
Mike O'Neill, University of Connecticut  
Michelle Rodgers, University of Delaware  
Hannah Carter, University of Maine Coop Ext.  
Dennis Harrington University of Maine Coop Ext.  
Jinhee Kim, University of Maryland  
Jim Hanson, University of Maryland  
Bill Miller, University of Massachusetts Amherst  
Ken La Valley, University of New Hampshire  
Amy Loader, University of New Hampshire  
James McKane, University of New Hampshire  
Lisa Townson, University of Rhode Island  
Roy Beckford, University of Vermont Ext.  
Dan Lerner, University of Vermont Extension  
Jorge Atilas, West Virginia University  
Jennifer Williams, West Virginia University  
Ami Smith, West Virginia State University  
Rose Ozbay, Delaware State University  
Enrique "Nelson" Escobar, University of Maryland Eastern Shore

#### NERA

Anton Bekkerman, University of New Hampshire  
Wendie Cohick, Rutgers University  
Jane Kolodinsky, University of Vermont  
Kumar Venkitanarayanan, University of Connecticut  
David Leibovitz (NERA)  
Anna Katherine Mansfield, Cornell AgriTech  
Matt Wilson, University of West Virginia  
Jan Nyrop, Cornell AgriTech  
Lisa Townson, University of Rhode Island  
Diane Rowland, University of Maine  
Blair Siegfried (Penn State)  
Margaret Smith, Cornell University  
Puneet Srivastava, University of Maryland

#### PIVOT Creative & Consulting

Erica Mirich, Principal

### NE AGENDA COMMITTEE

**Rick Rhodes, Executive Director** - Northeastern Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors

**Ali Mitchell, Executive Director** - Association of Northeast Extension Directors

**Anton Beckkerman**, University of New Hampshire

**David Leibovitz**, University of Rhode Island

**Matt Wilson**, University of West Virginia

**Lisa Towson**, University of Rhode Island

**Puneet Srivastava**, University of Maryland

**Brent Hales**, Pennsylvania State University

**Bill Miller**, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

**Jane Kolodinsky**, University of Vermont

**\*NEED & NERA members presented to in September 2022.  
All have been invited to join regular committee meetings occurring bi-weekly.**



# The Timeline.

## NE Agenda for NERA & NEED

### Late July 2022

- NEED & NERA engaged PIVOT C & C
- Proposal submitted/approved

### September 2022

- Strategic Session for NEED & NERA members in Baltimore
- Feedback Received from COPS
- Further framework development

### January - February 2023

- Focus on Priorities
- Develop draft NE Agenda Outline and Table of Contents

### May+ 2023

- Presentation on NE Agenda in Annapolis Meeting
- Use NE Agenda to guide collaborative efforts and priorities for NEED & NERA

### August-September 2022

- Review of Western Agenda, Assessment, findings, discovery and Key Stakeholder Surveys

### October-December 2022

- NE Agenda Committee formed
- Socialization of ideas with NERA/NEED members
- Committee refinement of Goals/Mission/Vision/Purpose
- Obstacles/Opportunities

### March- April 2023

- Finalize TOC
- Collaborative writing of doc
- Finalize NE Agenda copy
- Develop print-ready public version of NE Agenda

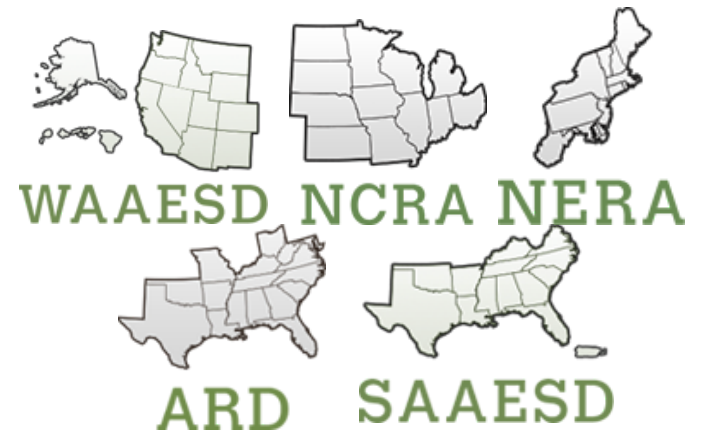
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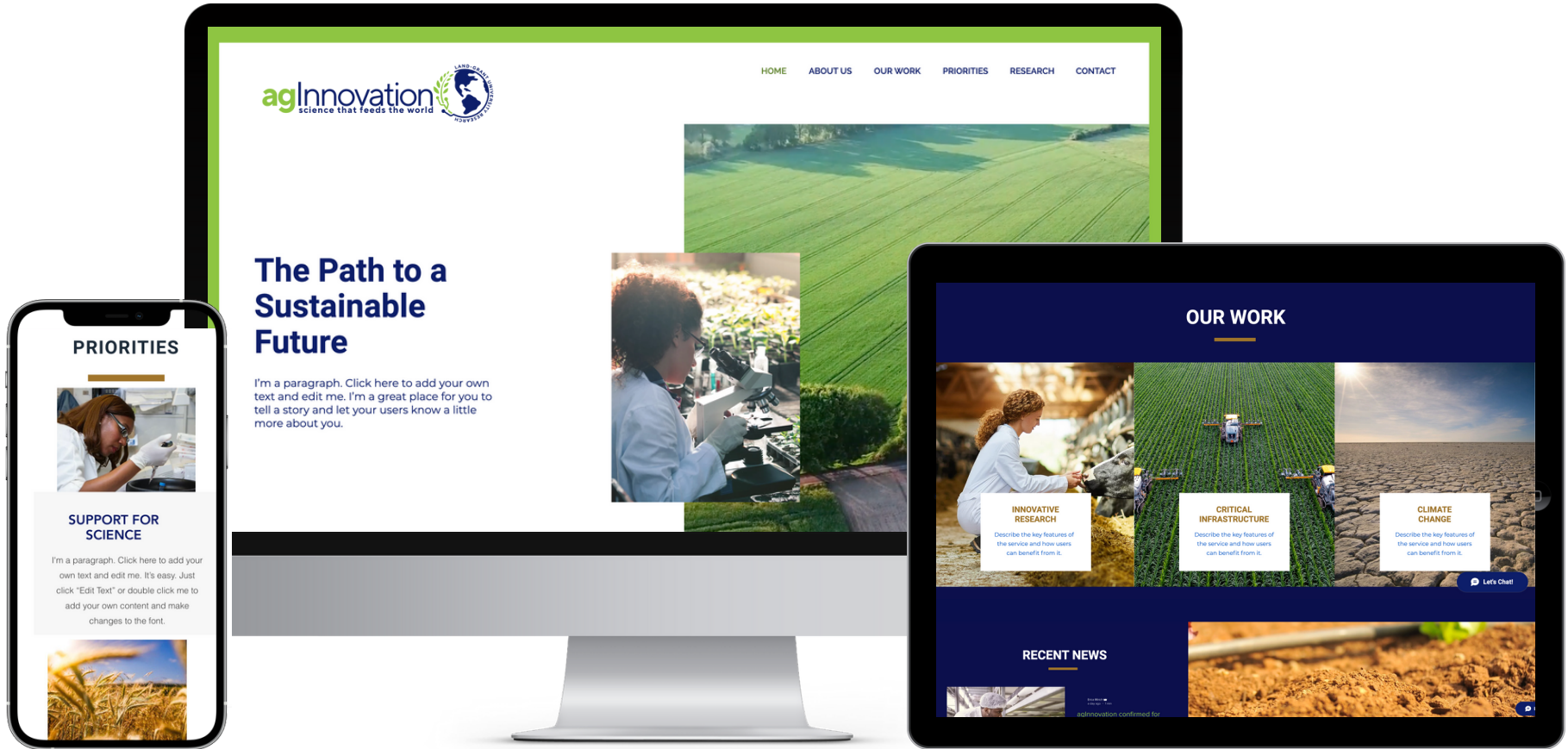
# **CONCURRENT PROJECT WITH ESS**

# Brand Development for ESS.

## THE GOAL

- Position ESS as the global leader in agricultural research, innovation & discovery.
- Unify messaging, priorities, and visual identity for ESS member associations
- Modernize current ESS-ESCOP Brand

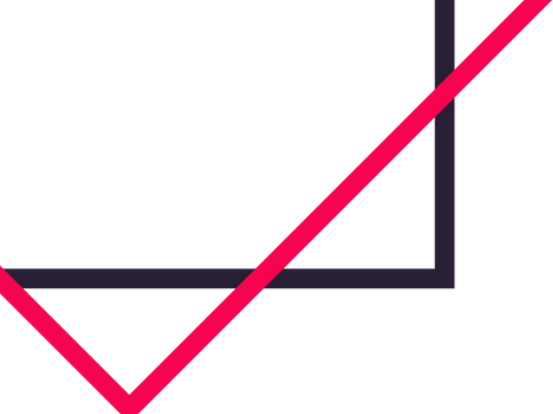




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# **WORK TO DATE & KEY FINDINGS**

# Resources:

- [DRAFT Northeast Agenda](#)
- [Mission/Purpose Statement Working Document](#)
- [Baltimore Strategic Session Presentation](#)
- [Northeast Agenda Strategic Survey & Presentation Report](#)
- [NE Agenda Committee Survey: Mission, Vision, Purpose](#)
- [NE Agenda Committee Survey: Solidifying Our Purpose](#)
- [NE Agenda Committee Survey: Next Steps](#)
- [NE Agenda Committee Survey: Defining Our Priorities](#)

**NORTHEAST AGENDA**  
IDENTIFY YOUR PRIORITIES

**NORTHEAST AGENDA: Defining Our Priorities**

Happy New Year Northeast Agenda Strategic Plan Committee!

Today, we build further upon our strategic work and focus on areas of greatest need and our priorities.

\* Required

Email \*

**TOP PRIORITIES FOR THE NE AGENDA**

For the Northeast Agenda to be a functional and meaningful document, we need to identify the key priorities for focused work. The feedback from the Strategic Session in Baltimore offered the following insights (see [Summary: Northeast Agenda Strategic Session/Survey Outcomes](#) for details).

**NORTHEAST AGENDA**  
DEFINING YOUR IMPACT

**NORTHEAST AGENDA: Solidify Our Purpose**

Welcome Northeast Agenda Strategic Plan Committee! Thank you for your involvement in this important process.

Today, we build further upon the work both NEED and NERA members completed at our strategic session in Baltimore, the work you initiated earlier this year in Portland, ME and the survey responses provided by NEED/NERA members post-Baltimore. Links to all documents produced at those sessions are below for reference.

Please take moment to review the three links below, with special focus on the Survey Responses. Then, take a moment to write your preferred Mission, Vision and Purpose statements. We will attempt to land on a final statement for each at our meeting.

The "Northeast Agenda" will provide a common framework and language outlining the critical needs, obstacles and opportunities the Northeast region faces - and how the collective efforts of both NEED and NERA plan to address them.

For reference, please see the two documents produced from your time together in June in Portland and September in Baltimore as well as the responses to the Mission/Vision/Purpose survey.

[Mission/Purpose Statement Working Document](#) (Portland, ME)  
[Summary: Northeast Agenda Strategic Session/Survey Outcomes](#) (Baltimore, MD)  
[Mission/Vision/Purpose Survey Responses](#) (Post Baltimore)

erica@pivotcandc.com [Switch account](#)

\* Required

**NORTHEAST AGENDA**  
DEFINING YOUR IMPACT

**NORTHEAST AGENDA: Purpose, Mission & Vision**

This exercise builds on the work both NEED and NERA members completed at our strategic session in Baltimore and work you initiated earlier this year in Portland, ME. Links to both documents produced at those sessions are below for reference.

Today, we ask for your insights regarding the purpose, mission and vision of the collective "Northeast Agenda". The "Northeast Agenda" will provide a common framework and language outlining the critical needs, obstacles and opportunities the Northeast region faces - and how the collective efforts of both NEED and NERA plan to address them.

Please take a few minutes to share your thoughts about defining purpose, mission and vision for the collective work of NEED and NERA defined in the Northeast Agenda.

Your input serves NEED, NERA and the communities and people of the Northeast.

For reference, please see the two documents produced from your time together in June in Portland and September in Baltimore.

[Mission/Purpose Statement Working Document](#) (Portland, ME)  
[Summary: Northeast Agenda Strategic Session/Survey Outcomes](#) (Baltimore, MD)  
[Detail: Northeast Agenda Strategic Session/Survey Outcomes](#) (Baltimore, MD)

\* Required

**NORTHEAST AGENDA'S STRATEGIC DIRECTION EXERCISES**

**MISSION** (draft)  
A mission statement describes what you do and for whom.

Which of the statements provided below (crafted by NEED/NERA colleagues) do you prefer. Check up to three or pull from these to craft a new... collective mission of the Northeast Agenda is to...

Responses:

1. Provide research education.	3 (60%)
2. Provide support and guidance.	1 (16.7%)
3. Empower businesses and...	1 (16.7%)
4. Continue unbiased, research.	1 (16.7%)
5. Advance research research.	1 (16.7%)
6. Improve people's lives by...	3 (60%)
7. Use our unique assets, ex...	1 (16.7%)
8. We increase the value of our...	2 (33.3%)
9. Be the trusted, science ba...	2 (33.3%)
10. Create and disseminate...	0 (0%)
11. Provide research, educat...	0 (0%)
12. Preserve and promote a...	0 (0%)
13. Seek to discover solutio...	0 (0%)
14. Conduct research and o...	0 (0%)
15. Make available informatio...	0 (0%)
16. Improve Northeastern la...	1 (16.7%)
17. Empower the collection...	0 (0%)

Your statement? Any other thoughts? Ideas that must be included? Words that you like/dislike? responses

I also like the sentiment contained in the statement #7: Use our unique assets, expertise and position to prepare society for coming food system, health and natural resources challenges

**"NORTHEAST AGENDA" STRATEGIC SURVEY & SESSION REPORT**

NERA: Northeastern Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors  
NEED: Association of Northeast Extension Directors

[NEED](#) [NORTHEAST EXTENSION DIRECTORS](#) [nera](#)

PREPARED BY:

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**THE NORTHEAST AGENDA**

Ali Mitchell Dunigan-NEED/Rick Rhodes-NERA

# Mission/Vision/Purpose.

## MISSION

To inspire research, education, and Extension collaborations that create vibrant communities, resilient food systems, and working lands in the Northeast.

## VISION

A regenerative, livable, and vibrant Northeastern United States.

## PURPOSE

For research and Extension to collaboratively advance the Land-grant mission to improve lives and the environment in the northeastern United States.



# Who We are & Critical Concerns.

## WHO WE ARE

- Collaborative
  - Diverse
  - Sustainable
  - Innovative
  - Creative
  - Resilient
  - Resilient
  - Knowledgeable
  - Equitable/Inclusive
- *Current: traditional, rural-focused, lumbering Future: innovative, representative, dynamic, responsive, urban*
  - *Current: Diverse, non-conformist, urban Future: Sustainable, connected, relevant*
  - *Futuristic, Sustainable, Climate Smart Farming, Innovative*
  - *Diverse, large cities, in need*
  - *Current: Metropolitan, Rural, Historic, Diverse, Innovative. Future: Metropolitan, Rural, Historic, Diverse, Innovative*
  - *Small, urban, diverse, not an agricultural powerhouse, wealthy*
  - *Current: relatable; diverse; land constrained; cool climate*
  - *Communication limited*
  - *Agricultural close to consumers; agricultural not seen as critical Future: mission-driven; increasing opportunities for small and young farmer growth through science; more*
- *diverse farming population; leading on-farm alternative energy generation; increasing influence in national policy;*
  - *Current: small, collaborative, broadly focused Future: Innovative, impactful, diverse*
  - *Current: rural-urban mix, boutique agriculture, climate conscious Future: regional food system innovations, carbon negative, out-of-the-box innovation*
  - *diverse, multiple layers of economic wealth, food insecure*
  - *Current: non-agricultural, populated, urban, stressful*
  - *Future: resilient, opportunity-laden, food secure, technology-driven, climate smart*
  - *Liberal, small farm, small institutions*
  - *Current: small, irrelevant, liberal, boutique Future: innovative, entrepreneurial, ahead of the times, relevant*

## AREAS OF GREATEST NEED

- Collaborative voice (internal)
  - Improved systems level thinking (internal)
  - Coordination of resources (internal)
  - Behavioral Community Health
  - Food Access & Security
  - Climate Resilience
  - Diversity in Leadership (internal)
  - Working Agricultural landscape
- *Developing regional voice, mission, priorities and goals*
  - *Systems level thinking/working*
  - *Improved use of technology and innovation*
  - *Focus on impact for behavioral health (mental health and substance abuse)*
  - *Food security for all*
  - *Coordination of resources to better meet all needs*
  - *Preserving working agricultural landscapes*
  - *Sustainable sources of meaningful funding*
  - *Diversity in leadership*
  - *Relevant workforce development for economic growth and stability*
  - *Climate impact adaptations*
  - *Alternative energy*
  - *Innovative infrastructure*

# Obstacles & Opportunities.

## GREATEST OBSTACLES

- *Lack of funding*
  - *Lack of diversity in funding*
  - *Urban engagement*
  - *Bureaucracy*
  - *Change adverse*
  - *High cost of living*
  - *Competing priorities*
  - *Lack of unified voice*
  - *Stuck in past*
- *Stuck in traditional powerbase with traditional audiences*
  - *No robust funding streams to support wider impact/outreach*
  - *Traditional interaction with rural communities, but need for urban outreach is needed*
  - *Complexity due to highly diverse demographics and socioeconomics of Northeast which makes it challenging to have a unified voice*
  - *Limited land for agricultural experimentation*
  - *Lack of institutional incentive to work regionally*
  - *Lack of understanding about Land-grant mission by essentially everyone*
  - *Lots of small states with large bureaucracy*
  - *High cost of living/food/agricultural space*
  - *Change adverse (leadership, communities, institutions...)*
  - *Competing priorities between institutions, leaders, states*

## IMPORTANT OPPORTUNITIES

- *New Audience (more urban)*
  - *Changing public perception of climate change*
  - *Large, diverse & educated population*
  - *Non-traditional funding (internal)*
  - *Innovation*
  - *Community Diversity*
- *Improve our relevance to non-traditional audiences*
  - *Growing public interest in climate change*
  - *Innovation as the Ag of the Future/opportunity to lead the way*
  - *Improved community health through investment in sustainable food systems*
  - *Population size is stable and large*
  - *Tap into non-traditional funding sources beyond USDA*
  - *Demographic diversity*
  - *Highly educated workforce to implement innovative solutions*
  - *Geographical proximity of communities, institutions, governments and leaders*

# Essential Priorities.

## PRIORITIES FOR GREATEST IMPACT

- Sustainable funding
  - Equity in programming
  - Equity in access
  - Workforce Development
  - Climate resilience
  - Urban Engagement
  - Alignment/Unification of purpose/goals
  - Innovation/Technology
- Larger scale/higher capacity sustainable funding sources to enable greater impact
  - Equitable, sustainable food for improved community health
  - Climate Change mitigation and preparedness
  - Behavioral Health (substance abuse and mental health)
  - Defining an identity for messaging, leveraging relationships for relevance
  - Workforce development for economic growth
  - Improved equity in Northeast programming and research
  - Civil Discourse
  - Tech/innovation
  - Automation
  - Synthetic bio
  - Entrepreneurship



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# **DRAFTING THE NE AGENDA**



# Writing the Agenda.

- **NE Agenda Writing Team**
  - Lisa Towson
  - Puneet Srivastava
  - Brent Hales
  - Anton Bekkerman
  - Jane Kolodinsky
  - Rick Rhodes
  - Ali Mitchell
- **Currently in Process!**
  - Draft copy due next week!
- **Draft of NE Agenda ready by 4/1/2023**
  - Will be reviewed and approved by Committee
- **Design and layout of report**
  - Ready by mid-April
  - Ready for publishing by late April
- **Plan for launch with committee**
  - Ongoing
- Identify accompanying supporting materials
- **Start using broadly within NERA & NEED as guideposts for discussion, programming and goal setting**



# Guiding Initiatives.

## TO ACHIEVE OUR MISSION/VISION WE MUST...

- Enhance collaboration across research, education, and Extension enterprises
- Advance innovation and technology-focused research and Extension programs
- Communicate our impact both internally and externally
- Engage in intentional diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility opportunities
- Secure sustainable funding for scientific research, education, and Extension priorities



# Table of Contents.

## PART I: THE NORTHEASTERN PERSPECTIVE

- **Introduction**
- **Unique Attributes of the Northeastern United States**
  - Diverse Peoples, Communities, and Landscapes
  - Grounded in History with a Vision for the Future
  - Urban-Rural Juxtaposition
  - Compact and Collaborative
- **Critical Concerns Affecting the Northeast**
  - Water
  - Climate Change
  - Population Growth
  - Science Literacy
- **The Purpose of This Effort: A Collaborative Approach to Solving Real Issues**

## PART II: THE NORTHEAST AGENDA

- **Our Promise to the People of the Northeast**
  - **Guiding Initiatives**
    - Enhance collaboration across research, education, and Extension enterprises
    - Advance innovation and technology-focused research and Extension programs
    - Communicate our impact both internally and externally
    - Engage in intentional diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility opportunities
    - Secure sustainable funding for scientific research, education, and Extension priorities
  - **Key Priorities**
    - **Develop sustainable and equitable food systems**
      - **Local and regional food systems**
      - **Innovative agriculture**
        - Urban agriculture
        - Organic agriculture
        - Specialty crops
        - Agricultural technologies
        - Controlled-environment agriculture
      - **Conventional production agriculture**
      - **Cultivating the next generation of our agricultural workforce**
    - **Lead effective adaptation and mitigation for our changing climate**
      - Water quality
      - Coastal Resilience
      - Extreme weather
      - Invasive pest migration and expansion
    - **Promote environmental, human, animal, and community health and well-being**
      - Community Health
      - Sustainable animal agriculture
      - Biodiversity
      - Consumer literacy
      - Enhanced nutrition
      - Food safety

## PART III: CONCLUSION

# Next Steps

## March 2023 and beyond

- **Draft of NE Agenda ready by 4/1/2023**
  - Will be reviewed and approved by Committee
- **Design and layout of report Ready by late April**
- **Plan for launch with the committee: Ongoing**
  - Identify accompanying supporting materials
- **Present at NEED Annual meeting on 3/31/ 2023**
- **Start using broadly within NERA & NEED as guideposts for discussion, programming, and goal setting**
- **Launch the NE Agenda and begin using it widely! Starting after 5/1**
- **Development of Supporting collateral- As needed**
- **PRESENT AT ACE MEETING IN ASHEVILLE, NC IN JUNE 2023**
- **Get busy sharing all of our amazing work!**





**THANK YOU!**

**Contact me anytime!**  
**[erica@pivotcandc.com](mailto:erica@pivotcandc.com)**