



# NERA

Northeastern Regional Association  
of  
State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors Meeting

**The Grand Traverse Resort  
Traverse City, Michigan**

**September 22, 2008**

## Minutes

Mike Vayda, Acting Chair

### **In Attendance:**

Michael Vayda (VT), Acting Chair  
Tom Brady (NH)  
Tom Burr (NYG)  
Ian Hart (CTS)  
Bradley Hillman (NJ)  
Mike Hoffmann (NYC)  
Diane Hyman (DC)  
Ian Maw (NASULGC)  
Brenda McComb (MA)  
Bruce McPheron (PA)  
Daniel Rossi (NERA)  
Jon Wraith (NH)  
Gloria Wyche-Moore (DC)  
Rubie Mize (NERA), Recorder

### **MAJOR DECISIONS**

- Approved the draft agenda for this meeting as posted in url---  
<http://www.nera.umd.edu/workshop/NERAAgendaSept2008.html>

- Approved the minutes of the NERA meeting held at Bethesda, MD on July ,2008, as posted in url---  
<http://www.nera.umd.edu/workshop/NERAMinutesJuly2008.html>
- Approved the MAC recommendations, posted in this url, and as follows:  
<http://www.nera.umd.edu/workshop/MACReportSept2008.html>
  1. Award a NERA Planning Grant to NE0807-Biochar as a Beneficial Soil Amendment in Agriculture - Development, Performance and Environmental Impact.
  2. Recommend joining NE1028 multistate project for planning grant proposal NE0802-Use of Natural Antimicrobials for Controlling Mastitis, perhaps as a fourth objective.
  3. Recommend submitting as a multistate project, planning grant proposal NE0806-Environmental Impacts of Equine Operations.
  4. Approved the proposal, NE\_TEMP1523: Northeast Coordinating Committee on Soil Testing [NEC1007], 10/2008-9/2013. Submitted by Richard Rhodes III (RI).
  5. Approved the Request to Write a Proposal entitled, "Hydropedology: Genesis, Properties, and Distribution of Hydromorphic Soils (NE 1021). Submitted by M. Stolt through Steve Goodwin (MA).
  6. Noted the midterm review for NE1023: Improving Plant Food (Fruit, Vegetable and Whole Grain) Availability and Intake In Older Adults. Project can now proceed with writing the full proposal, NE\_temp1522.
- Approved the following recommendations by the Nominations Committee:  
New Advisor Assignment:
  - Jon Wraith (NH) for NE1024: Whole Farm Dairy and Beef Systems for Environmental Quality, 10/2005-2010
  - Margaret Smith for NRSP7: A National Agricultural Program for Minor Use Animal Drugs, 10/2004-9/2009

**THE JOB JAR**  
**(Work Assignments for the Executive Director)**

- Inform USDA-CSREES on actions taken by the NERA Directors.
- Send out notifications to those who submitted proposals for the NERA Planning Grant, with specific comments from the Review Committee.
- Share with the directors the winning proposal, "NE0807-Biochar as a Beneficial Soil Amendment in Agriculture — Development, Performance and Environmental Impact".
- Prepare for the second round of the NERA Planning Grant. Collect the list of proposals submitted from the region for the first round of the specialty crops grant. Identify which ones are strong contenders and need support. These proposals will be considered at the March 2009 meeting.
- Prepare for the NERA Spring Meeting in Baltimore, MD, on March 24-25, 2009.
- Facilitate the meetings of the 2009 Northeast Summer Joint Session Planning Committee.
- Follow-up actions from the proceedings of the 2008 Northeast Summer Joint Session - Urban Initiatives.

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**1. Call to Order - Acting Chair Mike Vayda**

The meeting was called to order at 10:02am. The directors briefly introduced themselves. New to the group is Dr. Jon Wraith, Associate Dean and Associate Director at the New Hampshire Agricultural Experiment Station.

**2. Review and Modifications to Agenda - Acting Chair Vayda**

Because the time allotted for the regional association business meetings is short, Acting Chair Vayda suggested that the OED and ESCOP reports be read by the directors at their own leisure. Important activities that need follow-up or decision will be highlighted. The draft agenda was approved without a motion.

**3. Approval of Minutes from the July 2008 Summer NERA Meeting - Acting Chair Vayda**

The motion made to approve the minutes posted at url-  
<http://www.nera.umd.edu/workshop/NERAMinutesJuly2008.html>, was seconded and passed.

**4. Executive Committee Report - Acting Chair Vayda**

Acting Chair Vayda reported that the Executive Committee met by teleconference to discuss the recommendation by the Multistate Activities Committee for the NERA Planning Grant, and the funding interpretations related to the implementation of AFRI. Dr. Vayda represented NERA at the meeting called by ESCOP Chair Bruce McPheron on Sunday, Sept. 21 at 7pm to discuss a draft letter to CSREES. The basic premise is to reiterate the ESCOP and ESS positions on the commitment to provide not less than 30% of funds to integrated programs. ESS also would like to clarify CSREES' interpretation that is inconsistent with the legislation. The draft letter to CSREES will be shared and discussed with the directors at the Experiment Station Section meeting.

ESS and ESCOP support the 60-40 split [60% fundamental research and 40% applied], with 30% of the total for integrated research. To be applied will be the broad definition of integrated 406 programs [projects should have at least two of the three functions: research, education and extension] found in the 1998 AREERA across the AFRI portfolio. USDA thinks that 30% of appropriated funds for AFRI should be spent on existing 406 programs. This interpretation could result in a loss of research money available for our scientists. Acting Chair Vayda noted the importance of having a roadmap for AFRI, as there may be a tendency to be extension-heavy on the priorities.

Issue areas were submitted by USDA to Congress without consulting with the system. The agency is also struggling with the definition of "hispanic-serving" institutions.

**5. Executive Director's Report - Dan Rossi****[Executive Director's Report \(PDF\)](#)**

ED Dan Rossi highlighted the Regional Rural Development Centers (RRDCs) Partnership Meeting meeting that he and Dr. Bruce McPheron attended in Washington, DC. The purpose of the meeting is to lay out a strategy to strengthen the investment of the USDA in the RRDCs. There was also a presentation on the **[Rural Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development \(REED\) Initiative](#)**, which grew out of listening sessions, and aims for increased investments in extension and research in the area of rural entrepreneurship.

**6. Northeast Renewable Energy Conference - Mike Hoffmann and Dan Rossi**  
[Conference Summary \(PDF\)](#)

The conference, jointly hosted by the NE Renewable Energy Working Group and NE Sun Grant, was a success with more than 300 scientists attending. The next step for the NE Renewable Energy Working Group is to prepare a White Paper outlining the strengths and gaps in our region. The objective is to promote the Northeast and be recognized for our strengths in the field of energy research. The paper can also be used as a reference by scientists applying for energy grants.

**7. Multistate Activities Committee Report – Acting Chair Vayda**

- [MAC Report and Recommendations](#)
- [2008 NERA Planning Grant Recommendations Summary](#)
- [NRSP Review Committee Recommendations \[PDF\]](#)

Eleven proposals were submitted for the NERA Planning Grant. Members of the Multistate Activities Committee and Dr. Bob Schrader, Extension Associate Director from UMASS, reviewed the proposals. Ten out of the eleven addressed the four Farm Bill initiatives. They were well written but most are simply meeting together without clear research objectives. The potential for sustainable funding was weak for majority of the proposals. This first round was a good learning experience. The directors agreed to have another round, but need to add more details on the RFA. What we need to do as directors is to create the situation in which the groups can meet together. It was difficult to ask for submissions when the RFAs for the Farm Bill grants have not been released.

Dr. McPherson noted that "excellent" science was funded in the first round of the Specialty Crops grant.

Elements found in the successful specialty grants proposals are---

- The scientists are already working together.
- There is substantial stakeholder input.
- Extension is built in as a component so there is smooth integration.
- There is clear social science economic component.

Dr. McPherson suggested that in the NERA Planning Grant RFA, stakeholders should be part of the group. Acting Chair Vayda requested the directors to submit the list of proposals that were submitted from their stations and which ones they think are strong. These proposals will then be considered in the next round of the NERA Planning Grant.

The motion made to approve the Review Committee's recommendations as follows, was seconded and passed:

- Award the NERA Planning Grant to NE0807-Biochar as a Beneficial Soil Amendment in Agriculture - Development, Performance and Environmental Impact.
- Recommend joining NE1028 multistate project for planning grant proposal NE0802-Use of Natural Antimicrobials for Controlling Mastitis, perhaps as a fourth objective.
- Recommend submitting as a multistate project, planning grant proposal NE0806-Environmental Impacts of Equine Operations.

A motion was made to accept MAC's recommendations for items 2, 3 and 4 in the MAC Report. The motion was seconded and passed.

## 8. **Proposed ESS Rules of Operation Amendments - Acting Chair Vayda and Dan Rossi**

[Current ESS Rules of Operation](#)  
[Amended ESS Rules of Operation](#)

The amendments, dealing with committee membership and terms of appointments, will be discussed and voted on at the ESS Meeting.

## 9. **Nominations Committee Report - Acting Chair Vayda**

The nominations were as follows:

- Jon Wraith (NH) for NE1024: Whole Farm Dairy and Beef Systems for Environmental Quality, 10/2005-2010
- Margaret Smith for NRSP7: A National Agricultural Program for Minor Use Animal Drugs, 10/2004-9/2009

There was discussion on NRSP7 regarding appointing advisors who are not AES directors or do not have AES appointments. The other NRSP7 regional advisors are veterinarians. ED Dan Rossi clarified that in NERA's Rules of Operations, only AES directors or associate directors can be appointed as advisors. Moreover, it is not always a requirement to be in the same field or specialization. The advisor simply provides administrative guidance to the technical committee. In some cases, a new perspective can be a refreshing addition to the committee.

A motion was made to accept the nominations. This was seconded and passed.

## 10. **Resolutions Committee Report - Tom Burr**

There were no resolutions at this meeting.

## 11. **Future Meetings - Dan Rossi**

- 2009 NERA Spring Meeting: Admiral Fell Inn, Baltimore, MD (March 24-25, 2009)
- 2009 NERA Summer Meeting Planning Update:  
University of Maine will host. The Planning Committee will have its first meeting on Sept. 26.

Topics suggested were:

1. Continue urban theme - update on the follow-up actions
  2. Farm Bill and its implications -- on our funding stream, roadmap, new Secretary, new NIFA Director. When can we have meaningful role in defining the national structure?
  3. Issue-driven vs. budget lines driven priority setting
  4. Water - how to link rural-urban supply of water as it relates to energy, food production, and land use/preservation. Rural providing water for urban needs. Water issues, compared to the other regions, are different in the Northeast. How do we frame these issues in terms of the Farm Bill? Where can we compete well?
- 2009 ESS Fall Meeting: Oklahoma City, OK.  
The directors were polled whether they would prefer a Sunday (Sept. 27-30, 2009) or Monday travel (Sept. 14-17, 2009). The preference of the other regions is for a Monday travel, with meetings starting late Monday afternoon or Tuesday morning. The NERA directors preferred sticking to the same schedule of Sunday travel (Sept. 27-30, 2009) so as not to lose another work day.

## 12. **Closing Remarks - Acting Chair Vayda**

Acting Chair Vayda thanked the directors and reminded them to cast their votes on the NRSPs after the discussions at the ESS Meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:32am.

**Written Reports Only:**

- [ESCOP Report \(PDF\)](#)
- [NIMSS Report \(PDF\)](#)



[Back to Workroom](#)

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