



Northeastern Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors

As we close out August, best wishes for a successful opening of the fall semester. We're a month away from the NERA fall meeting at ESS in Nashville. Check out the NERA business meeting agenda in action step one.

Scientists have become the bearers of the torch of discovery in our quest for knowledge. – Stephen Hawking addressing the Google Zeitgeist Conference, Hertfordshire, Great Britain, May 16, 2011.

Action items:

- The NERA [business meeting agenda](#) is posted for your consideration. Likewise, the supplementary materials are also posted ([Summer Business Meeting minutes](#), [NERA OED accomplishments](#), and NERA end of year budget [[NERA Lockbox](#)].)
- Deb Hamernik, ESCOP chair, met with NIFA officials recently and developed a list of [suggestions and reflections on NIFA operations](#). Of those, the item of critical interest is the potential for funding delays. Do you have a strategy in that event?
- NIFA director, Scott Angle is slated to speak to the ESS/CES directors in Nashville. If you have burning questions that you'd like to hear Director address, please [forward those to me](#).
- For your thoughts: The Communications and Marketing Committee is evolving under the leadership of chair, Steve Loring. As you recollect, the primary contractor for the system's communication and marketing project, kglobal, was terminated at the end of April. The CMC has suggested hiring a "strategist" to develop a marketing and communication plan for the LGU system. We've posted the [CMC's document](#) explaining the direction of the effort, the strategist position description, the scope of the strategist's work, and the budget for the effort. Last, this could be accomplished with the outstanding balance remaining from the former communications and marketing project. We're interested hear your thoughts by the end of the week. Do you support the new direction?

Reminders/Updates:

- NERA signed on to the [NCFAR letter](#) in support of the Durbin legislation that increases funding for ag research 5% annually for a period of 5 years. Of the comments that were submitted, the one that was most often shared related to preservation of capacity funds. Clearly, NERA members don't want to sacrifice capacity funds to support increases in competitive funds. I'd add that all the regional associations (South, North Central, West, and ARD) signed the letter as did ESCOP.

- You might have seen on August 13, 2019, Director Scott Angle shared a [fact sheet](#) on the USDA Office of Inspector General's audit report on [NIFA Formula Grant Programs' Controls Over Fund Allocations](#) to States. This audit reviewed 16 formula grant programs in FY15 and concluded that NIFA needs to ensure that calculations for determining grant amounts are accurate. On the Hatch side of the audit, the OIG reported that ~\$600,000 had been under-allocated to Hatch Multistate and over-allocated to Hatch regular. The bottom line here: there may be changes, albeit small, in future Hatch allocations.
- NERAOC is seeking a Northeastern institution to host the annual meeting slated for April 2022. As a heads up, the Northeast last hosted this meeting in 2016.
- Our Multistate Activities Committee is changing: Fred Servello is stepping down and Brad Hillman will be taking over as chair. Matt Wilson will be filling the vacancy slot. As a heads up, we're expecting 5 project renewals this fall, stay tuned!

Informational items:

- The [RFA for the Specialty Crops Research Initiative](#) has been issued. The closing date on the opportunity is October 12, 2019 and the initiative requires 1:1 Federal:non-Federal match.
- First Americans Land Grant Consortium (FALCON) is holding their [annual meeting](#) October 26-28, 2019 in Aurora, Colorado. They are hosting a workshop prior to the annual meeting titled "Culturally-Grounded Programming: Sharing and Learning among 1994 and 1862 Land Grant Institutions." If you are interested, please contact FALCON Executive Director [John Phillips](#).



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Northeastern Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors (NERA)

www.nerasaes.org

14 East Farm Road

Aquaculture Center

University of Rhode Island

Kingston, RI 02881

Executive Director, Dr. Richard C. Rhodes III: (401) 874-2468

Coordinator, David Leibovitz: (401) 874-4801

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Northeastern Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors (NERA) · 14 East Farm Rd · Aquaculture Center, University of Rhode Island · Kingston, Rhode Island 02881 · USA

