



We're about a month out from our scheduled teleconference. During the intervening period, I'm asking each of you to think about how you might re-imagine NIFA. If you could reconfigure NIFA, how would you do it? In the meantime, we'll continue to aggregate issues arising during the NIFA move and NIFA employee-repopulating effort.

“Every brilliant experiment, like every great work of art, starts with an act of imagination.” – Jonah Lehrer, **Proust was a Neuroscientist**, 2007, Houghton Mifflin Co., New York.

Action items:

- The MAC ballot is now closed and the association approved:
 - NECC2001 Integrating Genomics and Breeding for Improved Aquaculture Production of Molluscan Shellfish (new coordinating committee; 10–approve, 0–reject);
 - Bill Miller – NRSP1 AA, Matt Wilson AA – NE1544, Mark Hutton AA – NE1731, Matt Wilson AA – NE1962 (10–approve, 0–reject);
 - Funding for a NERA Planning Grant (Govoni, UCONN; 9–approve, 0–reject.)
- The MAC is still seeking nominations of a regional project for a writing workshop and for national recognition via the multistate research project award. Nominees?
- On October 29, 2019, the USDA issued a press release establishing the U.S. Domestic Hemp Program. An interim rule formalizing the program is available for comment. Areas in which comments are sought include: the archiving of information on the land that hemp is raised, the measurement of THC in the hemp plants, disposal of non-compliant hemp plants, and licensing requirements. While the comments sought primarily fall in the scope of a hemp producer or a hemp industry service provider (e.g., hemp testing laboratories), NERA directors should be aware that guidance is being sought by the USDA.
- Are you experiencing any untoward issues as a result of the NIFA move and workforce reduction? If so, please forward your issues to me, I'll aggregate on the part of the region.

Reminders/Updates:

- You'll recollect that NERA was a signatory on NCFAR's letter supporting S. 2458, America Grows Act, an effort that would authorize a 5% inflation-adjusted increase in the budgets of NIFA, ARS, ERS, and NASS. Two weeks ago, Representative Cheri Bustos (D, IL) submitted an identical bill in the house, H.R. 4174, America Grows Act. NERA is a signatory on NCFAR's letter supporting that companion legislation.

at 11:00 AM. The **NERA Spring Meeting**, our annual face-to-face get-together, is slated for **March 21-23, 2020 in Philadelphia** at the Bellevue at the Hyatt. (That is the same hotel that hosted the 2017 ESS meeting.)

- NEED and NERA are collaboratively planning a symposium on Ecosystem Agriculture and Services set for November 5-6, 2020 in Providence, RI. The planning team for the symposium is seeking input on interest in the symposium. We've posted a "[socializing document](#)" to the NERA website. Does this effort interest you? ...your faculty and staff? ...others (whom are you thinking of)?

Informational items:

- The [USDA Economic Research Service](#) and [National Institute of Food and Agriculture Career Opportunities Expo](#) will be held on November 6th from 9:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Kansas State University Olathe Campus.
- The University of Maryland is searching for three positions: a ***Project Coordinator, Rural Opioid Technical Assistance (ROTA)***, an ***Extension Educator (Agent Associate, ROTA Educator – position 125355)***, and a ***Watershed Restoration Educator (Agent Associate – position 125378)***.
- UMass Extension is hosting an all-day workshop called ***Cultural Proficiency: Developing Cultural Competency from the Inside Out*** on December 2, 2019. [Click here to visit the announcement](#) which includes a draft program and information on how to attend.



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