

**ESCOP Chair's Advisory Committee  
Teleconference Notes  
Monday, May 17, 2010– 4:00 pm EDT**

**Participants:**

Clarence Watson- ESCOP Chair  
Eric Young – ESCOP Executive Vice-Chair, SAAESD  
Steve Pueppke – ESCOP Past-Chair  
Mike Harrington - WAAESD  
Arlen Leholm – NCRA  
Carolyn Brooks – ARD  
Orlando McMeans – ARD  
Jerry Arkin – Communications & Marketing Committee  
Dan Rossi – NERA  
Jim Richards – Cornerstone  
Donna Pearce – SAAESD, Recorder

**Action Items:**

Who	Action	Status
ED's	Develop a draft of the AFRI response	Done
Budget & Legislative Committee	Will take the lead in collecting input for the 2012 Farm Bill process	
Eric	Send out letter to Beachy	Done
Eric	Put together a presentation and written comments for Clarence to present at the June 2 listening session	
Mike	Save survey as a PDF and send out as an attachment, so people won't have to go to the website to access the survey	Done
Eric	Send out letter of invitation to Catherine Woteki and Ed Knipling on behalf of Clarence inviting them to the ESS Meeting in September	

1. Report from the Chair – Clarence Watson
  - Appointed Michael Hoffmann to the ESCOP Communication & Marketing Committee
  - Appointed Stephen Herbert to the ESCOP Communication & Marketing Committee
  - Appointed Jonathan Pote to the ESCOP Science and Technology Committee
2. Review of Action Items from April 19 CAC call –Clarence Watson

3. AFRI letter to Beachy and presentation at June 2 listening session (**attached**) – Dan
  - The section on young investigators was edited out at one point, but after conversations with several people we decided it was important to put that back in under the headings that were provided
  - No additional comments have been received from the writers
  - Eric will send the letter to Beachy and cc Sheeley, Payne, Maw, ESCOP Members and us-directors list serve
  - Eric will put together a presentation and written comments for Clarence to present at the June 2 listening session
4. Nominees for new liaison to ECOP – ED's
  - No nominations at this time
  - Will add item to CAC agenda for next month
5. Approval of the ESCOP Agenda at Joint COPS Meeting (**attached**) – Clarence/Eric
  - Agenda approved
  - Donna will post draft agenda on the ESCOP website
6. Budget and Legislative Committee Update –Mike Vayda/Mike Harrington
  - Farm Bill input status
    - 8 people have provided responses
    - Deadline is June 28
    - Mike will save survey as a PDF and send out as an attachment, so people won't have to go to the website to access the survey
7. Science and Technology Committee Update –Bill Ravlin/Dan Rossi
  - Multistate Award
    - Committee met last week and will recommend NE1033 “Biological Improvement of Chestnut through Technologies that Address Management of the Species, its Pathogens and Pests”
  - Roadmap
    - Some committees have completed their initial white paper drafts
    - We received one nearly completed white paper and will share with the ED's so they can use as an example when writing their white papers
    - Final white papers should be submitted by mid-June
8. Communication & Marketing Update –Jerry Arkin/Arlen Leholm
  - Working with Podesta Group
  - Have 2 documents – Best Practices and Metrics & Evaluation of their activities
  - Will share the documents with our committee for feedback before the Joint COPS meeting
9. 2010 ESS/SAES/ARD Workshop (**program attached**) – Orlando McMeans
  - Eric will send out letter of invitation to Catherine Woteki and Ed Knipling on behalf of Clarence inviting them to the ESS Meeting in September
10. Other business
  - Next call Monday, June 21

Respectfully submitted by:  
Donna Pearce  
May 19, 2010, 2010



## EXPERIMENT STATION COMMITTEE ON ORGANIZATION AND POLICY

Experiment Station Section  
The Board on Agriculture Assembly  
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities

May 19, 2010

Dr. Roger Beachy, Director  
United States Department of Agriculture  
National Institute of Food and Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue SW, Stop 2201  
Washington, DC 20250-2201

Re: National Institute for Food and Agriculture AFRI Program

Dear Dr. Beachy:

The Experiment Station Committee on Organization and Policy (ESCOP) recognizes and applauds NIFA's development of an AFRI program that focuses on solving specific societal needs and issues and supports encouraging interdisciplinary teams to address such issues. The system's ability to address societal issues will lead to continued Congressional support. Increasing the resources available to support agricultural research is critical and we applaud these efforts and those to integrate the 1890 and small 1862 institutions and Cooperative Extension.

We, however, also feel that some of the procedures for implementing the AFRI program may lead to unintended consequences and would like to provide some suggestions to enhance the program:

### **Land Grant institutions wish to be engaged in NIFA planning ---**

ESCOP encourages NIFA to actively seek broad-based input to future program development, not only AFRI, but also capacity programs. While ESCOP is confident that NIFA has attempted to balance the needs of their many stakeholders and partners there is a concern that the long-held partnership between the Land Grant system and USDA may erode and this will constrain the U.S.'s ability to address local, regional, national, and international issues.

### **Single investigator and small-team grants are ALSO critical to answering agriculture's needs ---**

ESCOP recognizes the importance of large interdisciplinary, multi-institutional projects. We agree that this approach is essential for addressing broad societal issues. However, we have grave concerns over

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the de-emphasis of single or small-team investigator projects. Radically new innovative discoveries usually arise out of single-investigator projects. Small teams tend to clearly understand the abilities and contributions expected from each other resulting in significant productivity for a relatively small investment. Additionally, they encourage creativity and attract young brilliant minds to the agricultural sciences and underpin sustainable agriculture. Young investigators begin their careers with smaller individual projects and often are selected to participate on large teams only after proving themselves with individual efforts. If junior (tenure track) faculty members perform most of their research as part of large multi-disciplinary, multi-institutional teams, it will be very difficult for them to establish themselves as individual researchers within their disciplines. It is imperative that junior faculty establish a record of being lead investigators on successful grants and first authors on peer reviewed publications in order for senior faculty to evaluate the quality of their performance for tenure and promotion decisions. A change in emphasis toward the larger projects may impact promotion and tenure rates and ultimately the number of bright young scientists progressing through U.S. higher educational systems, especially in agriculturally-relevant disciplines.

### **Basic discovery and exploratory grants are important ---**

Focusing large team grants primarily on outcomes and solutions may discourage aspects of basic discovery research. This will drive researchers in areas like genomics and bioproducts away from AFRI to funding sources like NSF and NIH. These funding sources do not normally encourage research directly on agricultural products or systems but rather model systems that are more easily controlled. This leaves a critical gap in funding sources for basic, high risk research on agricultural crops, livestock, and food products. The result will be a lack of scientists and science to address issues of importance to our clientele in the agricultural industry. ESCOP encourages NIFA to develop programs that encourage young scientists and ideas that fall outside the mainstream (and outside the small number of prescribed target foci).

### **Small institutions can contribute great ideas ---**

Small institutions (both 1862 and 1890) have fewer resources than larger institutions. Some are remotely located from the heart of traditional agricultural production, processing, and distribution. This may lead to not being included in AFRI project teams and/or not being competitive; in short, not having access to AFRI funds. Even though small, these institutions employ scientists with significant expertise that can contribute to addressing AFRI issues. There is a need to find a means to provide and facilitate their contribution. While there is an attempt to address this issue, it is important to recognize that the infrastructure in smaller institutions is not always conducive to supporting participation in larger grants. There is a need to include language that speaks to capacity building in small institutions.

### **Planning grants can yield improved quality of large-scale team proposals ---**

Another concern is the relatively short time-line for both, letters of intent and for developing multi-institutional proposals in the current round of RFA's. The development of meaningful partnerships across disciplines and institutions requires sufficient time to develop systematic approaches and to build the trust upon which successful partnerships must be based. There are very significant transactional and management costs associated with these partnerships. Greater emphasis needs to be placed initially on planning grants particularly, if we transition to a new way of doing business.

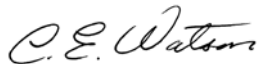
### **Local issues are excellent models to address national and international concerns ---**

Like politics, agriculture's concerns target what is happening on the ground and in the industry. Encouraging the use of regional and local specific agricultural issues to model national and international concerns will lead to greater commitment from agricultural clientele and create significant buy-in and political support for our research efforts.

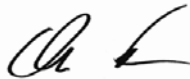
ESCOP is very supportive of your vision to emphasize a problem solving approach to meeting societal needs and your efforts to increase resources to support agricultural research. Selected changes in the AFRI program will greatly strengthen it and decrease any potential negative impacts. We want to be a part of this effort. Our involvement is critical to making the transition to the new vision for funding of agricultural research as smooth and productive as possible. We look forward to working with you to develop a shared agenda. We want to help you succeed. Your success will lead to our success.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide input into the NIFA AFRI program.

Sincerely,



Clarence Watson  
ESCOP Chair



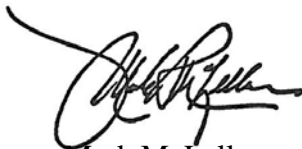
Orlando McMeans  
ARD Chair



Doug Buhler  
NCRA Chair



Thomas Burr  
NERA Chair



Mark McLellan  
SAAESD Chair



Carol Lewis  
WAAESD Chair

CC: Deborah Sheely  
[RFP-OEP@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:RFP-OEP@nifa.usda.gov)  
Jack Payne  
Ian Maw  
ESCOP Members

# Experiment Station Committee on Organization and Policy Meeting

*Red Lion Hotel  
Seattle, WA*

*July 21 - 22, 2010*

<b>Time</b>	<b>Agenda Item #</b>	<b>Draft Agenda</b>
<b><i>Wednesday, July 21</i></b>		
8:30 am		Call to Order and Introductions – Clarence Watson
8:30 am	1.0	Approval of the Agenda
	2.0	Approval of ESCOP Minutes of February 22, 2010
	3.0	Interim Actions of the Chair – Clarence Watson
8:35 am	4.0	BAA-PBD Report – Nancy Cox/Eric Young
8:45 am	5.0	Advocacy Report – Cornerstone
9:15 am	6.0	Budget and Legislative Committee – Mike Vayda/Mike Harrington
9:30 am	7.0	2012 Farm Bill Input – Mike Vayda/Mike Harrington
10:00 am	<i>Break</i>	
10:30 am	8.0	Communications and Marketing Committee – Jerry Arkin/Arlen Leholm/John Scofield
11:00 am	9.0	Science and Technology Committee and Science Roadmap – Bill Ravlin/Dan Rossi
11:30 am	10.0	2010 SAES/ARD Workshop Program – Orlando McMeans/Carolyn Brooks
11:45 am	<i>Adjourn for Lunch and Joint Program</i>	
12:00 – 1:30 pm	<i>Lunch and Speaker – Roger Beachy, NIFA Director</i>	
1:30 - 5:00 pm		All COPs Joint Program (TBD by ICOP)
5:30 - 6:30 pm	<i>Reception</i>	

<b>Thursday, July 22</b>		
8:30 am	11.0	NIFA Report – ???
9:00 am	12.0	APLU Report – Ian Maw
9:20 am	13.0	NRSP Review Committee – Mike Vayda/Dan Rossi
10:00 am	Break	
10:30 am	14.0	National Plant Germplasm Coordinating Committee – Lee Sommers/Eric Young
10:45 am	15.0	Other Items
11:45 am	<i>Adjourn</i>	

<b>Written reports only</b>	
ECOP	Paul Coreil
ICOP	Chris Pannkuk
CARET	Dina Chacon-Reitzel
ARS	Ed Knipling

# 2010 ESS/SAES/ARD Meeting and Workshop Schedule

September 27 – 30, 2010  
Nashville, TN

<b>MONDAY, September 27, 2010</b>	
3:00 – 6:00	Regional Meetings
6:00	<b>Opening Reception</b>
<b>TUESDAY, September 28, 2010</b>	
7:00 – 8:00	<b>Breakfast</b>
8:00 – 10:00	<b>Welcome – TBD</b> <b>Collaboration</b> – (Designed by 1890's region)
10:00 – 10:30	<b>Break</b>
10:30 – 12:00	<b>ESS Business Meeting</b> – Clarence Watson, Oklahoma State University
12:00 – 1:30	<b>Lunch – REE's Vision</b> – Catherine Woteki, REE Under Secretary
1:30 – 3:00	<b>ESS Business Meeting</b> – Clarence Watson, Oklahoma State University
3:00 – 3:30	<b>Break</b>
3:30 – 5:00	<b>Best Practices Session – Documenting Impacts, How &amp; Why</b> – Bob MacDonald, NIFA, and (one or two directors)
	<b>Dinner on your own</b>

<b>WEDNESDAY, September 29, 2010</b>	
7:00 – 8:00	<b>Breakfast</b>
8:00 – 10:00	<b>Science Roadmap Challenge Areas</b> – Speaker from each Challenge Area Writing Group (10 min overview of gaps & needs w/discussion, designed by S&T Committee)
10:00 – 10:30	<b>Break</b>
10:30 – 12:00	<b>NIFA's Vision</b> – Meryl Broussard <b>ARS's Vision</b> – Ed Knipling
12:00 – 1:30	<b>Lunch</b>
1:30 – 3:00	<b>Developing and Managing Large Integrated Grants</b> – Sanjiv Singh
3:00 – 3:30	<b>Break</b>
3:30 – 5:00	<b>ESS Farm Bill Input</b> – (Designed by B&L Committee)



5:30	Walk to .....
6:00 – 10:00	<b>Banquet</b>
<b>THURSDAY, September 30, 2010</b>	
7:00 – 8:00	<b>Breakfast</b>
8:00 – 10:00	Meeting room available if needed