

ESCOP Communication and Marketing Committee

**NASULGC – Kellogg Room, Washington, DC
September 14, 2004**

Draft Minutes

Jerry Arkin, Chair

In Attendance:

Jerry Arkin (GA), Chair
Wendy Wintersteen (IA), Chair-Designate
Tom Fretz (NERA), Executive Vice-Chair
Cameron Hackney (WV)
William Ravlin (OH)
Ron Lacewell (TX)
Colin Kaltenbach (AZ)
Ron Pardini (NV)
Lee Sommers (CO)
Michael Harrington (WAAESD)
Terry Meisenbach (CSREES)
Fred Hutchison (BRT)
Mark Rokaki (BRT)
Fred Clark (BRT)
Jefferey Weintraub (BRT)
Rich Harpel (NASULGC)
Rubie Mize (NERA), Recorder

Action Items and Decisions Made:

1. Request to ESCOP Executive Committee authorization for \$5,000 for a full-color printing of the Counterfactual publication (***DONE & APPROVED***). BRT will give the material a “political read” to assess its acceptability at the Hill. Reference and contact information will be added on the back cover. The EDs will be used for contact info. Targeted deadline for distribution is the NASULGC meeting in November.
2. T. Fretz will send an e-mail to the members asking for further input on a distribution plan for the Counterfactual Study publication.
3. Discussed strategies for development of a database that will be used for supporting and justifying budget lines. T. Meisenbach of CSREES will re-design their database to allow search other than by year. A task force was formed headed by R. Pardini. Members are W. Wintersteen and R. Lacewell. This group will

- report back to the committee on impact reporting and analyze if investments can be made to measure impacts of issues with national significance.
4. The committee supported having an ESCOP exhibit at the Ag. Exhibit on the Hill, March 1, 2005. M. Harrington will take responsibility for putting the exhibit together. Exhibit will feature the Science Roadmap and the Counterfactual publication will be available as a giveaway.
 5. T. Fretz will meet with Ed Knipling to discuss concerns regarding acknowledgement of collaborative work with LGUs. M. Harrington and W. Wintersteen will provide specific examples.
 6. Fred Hutchison noted a need to have access to a photo library for use with future publications of BRT. Fretz to work with F. Hutchison in developing a catalog of themes in support of budget development and send request to AHS to submit photos to build a library that BRT can use.
 7. Issues for continued discussion:
 - Impacts
 - “Raising visibility of science in LGUs” – regional meetings, symposia
 - Partnership with other federal agencies
 - 150th LGU birthdays

1. Review of Committee Charge and Expectations – Jerry Arkin

J. Arkin reviewed the charge of the committee:

“The ESCOP Communication and Marketing Committee, in consultation with the BAC, advocacy organization(s), and others, is charged with providing guidance in the assessment of impacts resulting from SAES/ARD system; developing marketing strategies/initiatives, when appropriate; and leading ESCOP's marketing and communication efforts.”

The committee was revitalized and its first undertaking was to look at the SAES Marketing Plan and the Science Roadmap. It will not embark on communication and marketing activities but will provide guidance to ESCOP. Chair Arkin noted that at the end of the meeting, the committee should be able to:

- define its long term goals;
- clarify the role of the Blue Ribbon Team vis-à-vis this committee;
- engage the CSREES communication team; and,
- decide whether it is important to hire a professional to implement plans and strategies in a SUNEI-like format.

W. Wintersteen noted that several LGUs will be planning centennial celebrations. This would be a good opportunity to market the system. How well equipped are we in our institutions and should we deal with this collectively?

1. Review and Discussion of the Counterfactual Study – T. Fretz

T. Fretz gave a brief background on the history of the Counterfactual Study. The study was initiated by the late Dr. David MacKenzie. It was commissioned and paid for by ESCOP through the Northeastern association (NERA) to study the impacts of the formula fund. J. Ritchie (SAAERD), W. Huffman (Iowa State Univ.), M. Evenson (Yale Univ.) and M. Rosegrant (IPFRI) conducted the study. The original report was deemed too technical for wide publication. With the help of the Iowa State University, Department of Agricultural Communication and Dr. W. Huffman, the “Formula for Success” publication was prepared. Mock up copies were distributed. One with two-tone color and the other with full color. There was unanimous agreement to go with the full color.

It was decided to share the materials with the CARET Executive Committee that was meeting simultaneously at the NASULGC building. T. Fretz provided CARET with a brief presentation and update on the Counterfactual Study.

F. Hutchison commented that the material contained the nuggets that they are looking for when it comes to justifying base funding. The material was also deemed timeless and will have a long shelf life. The length is ideal and can be easily read. A wide distribution should be targeted and should include internal and external advocacy groups. BRT agreed to go over the material to give it a “political read”. F. Hutchison suggested targeting the NASULGC meeting in November as the deadline to have the publication ready for distribution.

A reference should be made on the back cover of the material mentioning the work done by Wally Huffman of ISU. Also to be added, will be the contact information of the regional Executive Directors.

The discussion moved to impact statements. Having a database that the BRT could refer to and access anytime would be very helpful in defending budget lines. It should be:

- authored by the system
- how it came into being, what authorization
- who gets the \$ and why is it still relevant
- fields can be updated and reformatted depending on type of report required
- can be written in one paragraph or a one-pager explaining what it is and “why it is still important to me”.

This database will be important because the institutional memory may disappear. It will also give the perspective of the system, the state or a combination thereof and not just the agency’s. The info may already exist in different sources, and need to be consolidated or transformed into a database that can be manipulated to produce reports that will meet BRT’s needs.

T. Meisenbach noted that his office already collects the impacts and that the system can be designed so that sorting is not only limited by “year”. Partners can also be requested to include funding lines in their report. It may be a useful to have BRT provide a format

or outline of the information they need, and this can be used as the basis to develop the database.

Chair Arkin raised the question if there is a role for his committee in the development of such system. What the committee can do is to inform the Budget and Advocacy Committee of the need to have such database. They can then decide on who among the COPs would be best suited to tackle its development.

A motion was made from the committee that the BAC consider developing communication pieces supporting and justifying budget lines and to develop a database to enable documentation of base funding impacts. A friendly amendment was given that there may be a number of approaches to do this.

The committee then settled to make a recommendation to BAC to initiate the development of a database that will be used for supporting and justifying budget lines according to: 1-BAC's priority for 2005; 2-Base fund like Hatch etc.; and lastly, the special grants or earmarks.

2. Overview of the BRT Expectations – Fred Hutchison

The BAC had decided on a timeline on what to do for next year's budget planning. It will start the process of priority identification way in advance and will meet several times during the year. The principal meetings and planned activities are:

1st meeting - Initial decision on overall priority are set at the July COPs meeting.

2nd meeting – Final decision on line items and tentative numbers are set at the November NASULGC meeting.

3rd meeting – BAC meets after the President's budget is released

At the July COPs meeting, BAC had identified key issues/areas that resonate well in the public and the agency: Health, Security and Sustainability. The overarching umbrella theme is "Capacity Building" BRT urges that the system speak with one voice. A universal message, repeated widely has significant cumulative effect. It would be useful to have institutional leaders speak about one of the issues, ex. health care or security issue. There were two documents developed by BRT to communicate the FY2006 priorities. Both are in draft form.

Capacity building for all LGUs should be addressed in the next Farm Bill. This is an important issue for the 1862s. Hearings for the next Farm Bill will be held nationwide. Start the drumbeat and deliver the same message, if LGUs agree that "capacity building" should be included in the next Farm Bill, and should include human as well as physical infrastructure. Do we need to build new ones or just need funding to maintain existing personnel/structures?

Increasing formula fund is a hard sell, but BAC had not backed away from preventing its further erosion. The system needs to develop documentation or communication pieces that research funded through the Formula are as good as those funded competitively. The system needs to address the perception that “competitively funded peer reviewed research equals higher quality of science, and that Formula Fund are considered entitlement funds”. Hatch projects are also peer reviewed but this is invisible. Perception on the Hill is that quality science is competitive. It is necessary to speak from all fronts in defense of the “entitlement” fund. We need to keep the base system in place to respond and to react rapidly for security reasons.

It is apparent that publishing the Counterfactual material is important in defending the formula fund. Another consideration, is that we currently have a balanced portfolio of NRI, special grants, base funding etc. (although this portfolio is minimal compared to NIH or homeland security), but the formula fund is the glue that keeps the portfolio together resulting in tremendous leveraging for funding research even from other federal sources.

T. Fretz reported that at the ESCOP-CAC meeting in the morning, the proposal to use \$5,000 of the ESCOP Chair’s discretionary fund will be supported. A proposal will be brought to the ESCOP Executive Committee. T. Fretz will ask Brian Meyer at ISU to provide a quote for full color printing and to increase the font size. He will also request W. Huffman update the figures on page 19 and use FY2003/04 data if possible. A web friendly format will also be the NERA and ESCOP websites. T. Fretz will meet with CARET briefly after this meeting to get their feedback on the publication. An e-mail will be sent out asking for suggestions on who should be included in the distribution list. The SAESs, CARET, BRT and N-CFAR have so far been identified. M. Harrington and R. Pardini will get the Western impact writing group’s feedback as well.

3. CSREES Communication and Marketing – Terry Meisenbach

The CSREES communication group has been working with LGU partners for about ten years now and through the years small improvements have been made to synthesize information into useful nuggets. T. Meisenbach and F. Hutchison plan to meet in the fall to discuss how the system can be further improved. Submissions also need to be improved. Only about 10% of what’s submitted can be considered impacts. We need to continue educating our scientists on how to report impacts. Impacts are always hard and take time to measure. Research impacts are not immediately apparent. “What’s the condition you’re trying to solve?” helps set the stage on what eventually will benefit the public. Most scientists report on activities and not impacts. Measuring and identifying impacts require additional study, hence, time and resources. T. Meisenbach encourages the institutions not to look for “quantity” but “quality”. Select the best project the institution has to offer and identify only high impact projects.

Information can be used in a variety of ways. The new CSREES website links to the source of the impact statements. BRT had used some. Mini-CDs were used by CARET

to distribute on the Hill (although, this may not be the most effective medium). CSREES relies on getting the information out through its distribution channel.

There seems to be a flaw in the research design. Get extension involved upfront and then support their findings with research. Let extension identify the high impact issues and trace back to research inputs. Economists should also be involved in the research to later measure the impacts in economic terms. What should AES focus on? Should we strategically select high impact projects and perform input/output analysis? Is there an EFNEP-like project we could identify in the system? A conversation around this issue will take place in Oklahoma. Steve Slack is scheduled to make a presentation.

Another issue is that AESs do not get the credit for collaborative projects with ARS. T. Fretz will approach Ed Knipling on this issue. W. Wintersteen and M. Harrington will provide him with concrete examples. Nationally, why can't the system have a similar magazine like ARS? ARS has seven fulltime staff working on this. CSREES might not be willing to invest. Is there a way to do it using a different model? We have hundreds of successful stories out there that can be published monthly. We have our own communication staff in our institutions. The problem is how to get them to work together. "We are a loosely held federation held together by Formula Fund."

A question was raised if it is the right time to hold another national workshop on impacts.

The problem with the LGUs not getting the credit that they deserve is an important issue that should be brought to the highest level. Comments were given that the system may have a better chance with the incoming USDA administration. The system should move quickly to work with the new administration to address these issues.

4. Lessons Learned - Lee Sommers and Mike Harrington

The charge of the ESCOP Partnership Committee is to improve the relationship with CSREES, other agencies such as ARS, ERS etc., and explore partnership opportunities with other federal agencies. In the late 1990s the focus was on CSREES which culminated in the Baltimore workshop. The workshop recommendation was to form a Partnership Working Group with broader representation. There were three co-chairs: M. Harrington (AES), Pat Jensen (AHS) and Gary Cunningham (CSREES).

The Partnership Committee served in the Oversight Committee for SUNEI. SUNEI was successful in forging relationships with EPA and NASA because there was a permanent staff (Mary Ellen Devitt) and an IPA at CSREES, Charles Krueger. It is not possible to build or nurture relationships without a permanent staff who can follow up and do the leg work for the committee. Another partnership model to look at is the DOE with Jim Fischer. The Policy Board uses the DOE model as an example by which other relationships might be developed in the future. Do we really need someone inside the organization? This issue is outside the purview of this committee. The Policy Board needs to decide what set up or approach they want to use to build partnerships.

The Partnership Committee has struggled and would like to recommend that this committee be abolished. Can its activities be taken over by the Communication and Marketing Committee? How do we formalize the Partnership Working Group? Should it be a standing committee for all COPs or the Policy Board?

6. Governmental Relations – Rich Harpel, NASULGC

R. Harpel gave a brief description of his unit's activities at NASULGC and advised the members on how to make use of their federal relations officers in their campus. It would be worthwhile to invite them to your laboratories and for them to see the work that you do. Increasingly, this group of people is coming out directly from the Hill and may not have LGU experience. There is a cohort of governmental affairs personnel that are sensitive to LGU concerns, about 10-12 people. They have connections with key members and maybe effective partners, but they can't be viewed as solely carrying ag. research or extension in their agenda. It should be noted that they represent their Presidents. It is up to the colleges to help sensitize this group of people and provide them with background papers and talking points. Their value is in opening doors and having someone who will articulate and be passionate about your issues, and to have parallel persons supporting your agenda.

Federal relations officers on campus should get copies of the Counterfactual publication. It would be great just to have these people working for us and not against us.

7. Open Discussion

The committee supports ESCOP's participation in the Ag Exhibit on the Hill on March 1, 2005. M. Harrington and his group will develop the exhibit. There is no theme yet, but W. Wintersteen was encouraged to approach her dean, Dr. Catherine Woteki who will chair the selection process.

F. Hutchison shared his idea of having an **Agriculture Science Week on Hill in 2006**, in lieu of the Ag. Exhibit on the Hill which is just a one-day affair. This concept is similar to the **"Capitol Hill Ocean's Week"**. Permanent exhibits could be set up and seminars conducted during the week. We can also tie this together with industry folks. Other suggestions include:

- holding regional symposia in carefully selected venues and let the senator take credit for the meeting
- two or three EFNEP like meetings can be held each year
- brown bag meeting of 2-3 researchers with legislative assistants arranged by BRT to talk about specific issues. The purpose is to connect Hill staff with the best minds to get them excited.

Counterfactual publication should also be distributed to all congressional staff.

The committee is interested in the **2006 Ag Science Week** as a long term plan and is willing to provide support to move ahead.

The database for impacts can be handled by T. Meisenbach's office. The committee would like to pursue the issue of impact reporting with T. Meisenbach. A Task Force was formed, chaired by R. Pardini (NERA will provide staff support). The members are W. Wintersteen and R. Lacewell. This group will give guidance on what the Communication and Marketing Committee can undertake realistically. What can we bring back to ESCOP? How do we successfully achieve timely communication of hot issues? Do we want to invest in some areas and measure impacts? Can we choose a set of extraordinary national issues that may likely come up that we can now back up with research and invest to have impacts measured in social and economic terms? This task force will return with recommendations.

BRT requested photos that they can use to dress up their materials. There are photo libraries on the web but are not easily searchable. T. Fretz and F. Hutchison will work together to develop a catalog of themes and will make a request for photos. Requests will be sent through the AHS to their ag communicators.

Land-grant universities 150th birthdays are coming up. Is there something we can do as a system to celebrate this milestone? Can we come up with a strategy?

The compelling issue for this committee is "Raising the visibility of science from the LGUs". What can we reasonable do as a committee? How do we do it?

1. Start a dialog and address the problem with our partners (ARS-Ed Knipling).
2. Develop relationship particularly with incoming secretary and undersecretary
3. Conduct symposia and meetings (be ready for the next round of listening sessions for the next Farm Bill).
4. Science roadmap display at the Ag Exhibit on the Hill on March 2005.

Chair Arkin thanked the presenters and the committee members for the excellent discussion. He also thanked the NERA and NASULGC staff for organizing the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 3:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:
Rubie G. Mize
Sept. 27, 2004