

agInnovation- West (WAAESD) Meeting

Wednesday March 27

Minutes

8:15 AM-12:00 PM, Classroom 2035

Attendance: Sreekala Bajwa, Mark McGuire, Shawn Donkin, Jodie Anderson, Leslie Edgar, Gene Kelly, Darin Boss, Greg Cuomo, Adrian Ares, Dr. Nair, Chris Davies, Brad Gaolach, Jay Lillywhite, Holly Neighberg, Glenda Humiston, Scot Hulbert, Aufai Areta, Staci Simmonich, Bret Hess, Jerry Baron (via zoom as presenter), Rick Rhodes (via zoom for NRSP4), David Levibovitz (via zoom for NRSP4), Jennifer Horton (recording secretary).

- I. **Call to Order, Welcome, Introductions-** Sreekala welcomed members and introductions were made.
- II. **Spring Business Meeting Agenda-** no changes to the agenda.
- III. **2023 Fall Business Meeting Minutes-** Scot made a motion to approve, Glenda seconded. Motion approved unanimously.
- IV. **Chair's Interim Actions & Executive-**
 - a. We are almost agInnovation-West. When the tax return is filed with the state our accountant will also file to make the name change legal. Shawn recommends directors promote themselves as OSU, part of agInnovation-West to help promote and create consistency. Leslie agrees that we should have a "one page" that supports our statistics. Shawn recommends we ask our communicators to help generate a tag line to help promote. Leslie agrees that the tag line "Science That Feeds the World" should be used. Sreekala agreed that we need alignment on a national level. The members agreed to allow Bret to ask Erica to work on a logo for agInnovation-West. Shawn was going to work on a tagline to start the ball rolling. Communicators will be asked to review the logo and tagline to build upon.
 - b. Sreekala reviewed the work completed with LBA. It was recommended that on our new regional website to include a map populated with research center locations/dots.
 - c. Mark was selected as the recipient for the 2024 Leadership award.
 - d. Leslie was selected as the incoming chair for APLU CMC. (Communications and marketing committee).
 - e. The Chair's interim Actions & Executive report was approved unanimously.
- V. **NRSP_TEMP_12 Proposal-** Brad shared a presentation. ([Link to PPT](#)). Brad asked the committee what the best way to connect would be? Gene recommends, since this is important, to host a workshop so we can have thought leaders together. Scot recommends having the research aspect figured out. The framework is complete. The workshop could help refine the research. Sreekala questioned urban ag has been a topic for a while, but is there a multi-state already established? Brad has started one, and Western Water is focusing an aspect on urban ag. What Brad envisions is that the NRSP can be a component as a tool to get the thought leaders together to host a workshop. Gene recommends tightening the proposal, so it is ready to launch. Leslie shared that this proposal might be early because science isn't caught up yet. Science needs to be articulated more clearly. Scot recommends hosting a summit to define the

topics. Is there early work before the summit to identify who can contribute to the thought leadership of what the next steps are?

Mark noted that there are several projects in NIMSS that are food based and the reviews all link back to questioning the research.

Brad asked for help to make connections to get the right people involved and included. Bret recommends distribution of an email from Brad to help create the connections.

- VI. **NRSP4 Update-** Jerry Baron presented with representatives from the NE joining. ([Link to PPT](#)) Jerry asked the committee not to cut funds by \$75,000, but to allow \$170,000 to dedicate consultant services for regulatory advice with crop protection technologies. Scot asked if any states have started their own IP centers? Jerry shared that WA, HI, OR, CA all has programs and NRSP4 works closely with those groups. Jerry noted that he is not following NRSP-RC's recommendations.

Rick Rhodes questioned if Jerry had any examples of emerging technologies? Jerry shared that a double strand of RNA was registered to control a pest. This was a project pushed through by a private industry. Cornell was engaged in the process and worked with the industry partner. NRSP4 has worked on generating more tools in the tool kit that can be used for fruit pests and mosquito management. A second example is spider venom that helps to monitor and mitigate mosquitos.

Rick questions the \$1.5 million going to IDC, what is the rate being charged to NRSP4. Jerry shared that that IR4 had a large presence in NE. Two institutions could not afford to subsidize anymore, and the headquarters have been relocated. USDA was able to get a 10% discount on the grant. NRSP4 is paying for a portion of their way. NC State is happy to collect 10% because NRSP4 is paying for rent.

- VII. **NRSP_TEMP_3 Proposal-** David Gay Presented ([link to PPT](#)). Committee agreed that \$50,000 is leveraged very well.

- VIII. **Treasurer's Report and Budget-** The treasurer's report will be similar to last year. As a reminder, staff salaries are not included because those are paid with Multistate Off-The-Top funds. The left-hand column includes the Profit and Loss statement for the 2023 calendar year. Revenues include annual assessments for operations, event income from Eventbrite for hosting meetings, reimbursements from agInnovation, registration fees collected outside of Eventbrite, and sponsorships and grants. Miscellaneous income is reimbursement for such things as extra jackets.

Total revenue amounted to \$249,123.14 for 2023.

Expenses are broken down into the various costs associated with conducting business throughout the year.

Business expenses include membership, sponsorships, and fees paid to retain the business certificate.

Contract services cover the accountant, facilitators, and the web manager. Communications, events coordination, and secretary services were paid in January while Jenn was transitioning to a full-time employee.

Operation expenses include typical items associated with normal business functions, such as supplies, postage, software subscriptions, and reimbursement of telephone and internet for Jenn's remote office.

The "Other expenses" in the P&L report for 2023 include the agInnovation jackets that all members of agInnovation- West received.

Most of the program expenses are offset by charging registration fees for events and conferences or they are reimbursed by agInnovation.

The largest unrecovered annual expense goes to support travel and registration fees for association staff to attend conferences and meetings.

Annual operating expenses in 2023 amounted to \$238,201.08, which was less than revenues resulting in a \$10,922.06 profit. However, \$10,000 of that so-called profit was unused funds from a sponsorship by Western SARE.

Bank statement balances are listed in the last column to show that the association's annual carry-over remains comparable to year's past. In fact, the \$35,368.74 balance to begin March was roughly \$1,000 more than the checking account balance at that time last year. The conference grant that the Western Water Network received covered Bret's travel expenses to attend the workshop, which contributed to the net positive in 2023.

The P&L report will be submitted to the accountant for preparing this year's tax documents.

The budget and treasurer's report were approved unanimously.

- IX. **agInnovation- West Goals-** Goals for 2024 will be presented as a seconded motion. Similar to past year's the goals are organized into three strategic directions:

Strategic Direction 1- Strengthen functional relationships with regional and national partners.

Strategic Direction 2- Foster multistate collaborations.

Strategic Direction 3- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

Under strategic direction 1 is collaborating with WGA, CSG- West, APLU (especially on the Farm Bill), NIFA, and representing the region on the development of the agInnovation Research Strategy Framework. The regional communications strategy will become increasingly important to all of these initiatives.

Glenda offered to connect CSG-West to join a future meeting and add connections to the team in Portland when they meet in October. Jackie Tinnetti would be happy to attend any of our meetings if we would like to include her. Please let Bret know other suggestions.

Under strategic direction 2 is supporting activities of the Western Water Network and visiting members institutions. A visit to Hawaii, Guam and Micronesia is planned for the last week of April through the first week of May.

Under strategic direction 3 is assisting with organizing the FALCON conference and assisting WGA with recruiting and selecting tribal members to their leadership institute. The group asked if there is a way to have more of a supported and valued effort. Sreekala noted that each tribal community is like their own country. They all operate in a different fashion, and we need to be aware.

The goals were approved unanimously.

- X. **MRC Report and AA Vacancies-** The MRC reviewed peer reviews and conducted two reviews on each proposed project. These are their recommendations. Any project that needs major revisions is reviewed by the committee again at a follow up meeting at the end of June. All projects proposed will take affect 10/1/2024.

There is a new award- Agricultural research innovation award of excellence.

The board reviewed the AA vacancies- the objective is to distribute the load. It is time to review and redistribute. Members made a few suggestions. Bret is going to distribute a call out and continue to work on updating.

- XI. W106 Reporting-** Something that was brought to Shawn's attention was the possible need to report on W106 in NRS (and perhaps NIMSS). A sample of what might be reported through NRS is included as an agenda brief. Bret offered to update reports in NIMSS, and that report can be used in NRS.
- XII. Western Regional Aquaculture Center-** Shawn shared that there are 5 centers in the West and they each get about a million a year from USDA. There is a board of 15 members and Shawn is the agInnovation-West representative. The Executive Director is going to retire. It was determined to keep the hub at the University of Washington. There is currently a national search for a new director. The new position will be structured as a 50% director and 50% school of environment.
- XIII. Leasing Experiment Station Land-** Adrian shared there has been an offer from the Philippians to lease land on a 25-year base and grow plants to produce essential oils. Glenda shared that as far as she is aware the USDA is concerned; they don't care as long as the AES funds are spent appropriately, and you report on the funds. Washington and Colorado follow this structure. Aufai shared that from the Pacific this is a very sensitive issue because they are a US Territory and are dealing with a foreign government. Land ownership is a very difficult. Previously, they did not allow more than 5-year leases and that deterred investors. In this case Adrian is encouraged if he can negotiate a shorter-term lease. The revenue generated could be used for infrastructure or scholarships. In Montana all lands are managed by the Board of Regents. Sreekala shared the lease term's length determines who can manage. Adrian was recognized for his contributions over the years as this might be his last meeting.
- XIV. Sun Grant/Matching Issues-** Shawn shared that USDA supports the Sun Grant center. There are 5 centers funded with \$3 million divided between the facilities. There are no operating funds received. Those that apply for the funds are required to have a 20% match of the federally supported budget. The IDC can't be used as a match. Rick Rhodes and other directors have noted that institutions are limited to apply because of the limitation of the match. The issue is can we go as part of the farm bill to ask for a waiver of the match uniformly on behalf of the smaller grants. Shawn asked for feedback. Bret noted that there was a question regarding the use of unrecovered IDC's? There is language in the farm bill that restricts use: you can use your federally negotiated IDC's or USDA NIFA's IDC, whichever is less. This means that most institutions can't use un-used IDC. Salary use is complicated, and many times already being used as a match. Leslie noted that APLU's recommendation is a reduction in funds from NIFA to the Sun Grants. Shawn noted that they always go back and ask for funds to be included again. Leslie recommends a marker bill as a beginning point to start creating awareness. Shawn noted that the Sun Grant Directors didn't want to bring forward as a marker bill because it has the potential to disrupt the capacity funding. Possibly on a future farm bill we could come forward with a strategy asking for a broad waiver for the smaller grant recipients. This could also address the issues of the unrecovered IDC funds. The members agreed to explore this strategy moving forward. Glenda noted that we should be

aware of not going after each individual line item. We have gotten more traction asking for one big ask instead of the smaller asks. How can we make this a condensed ask?

XV. Other-

- a. NRSP_Temp_12_Proposal-** the group agreed NRSP needs another year of work to develop the research aspect.
- b. NRSP4-** it is a good project that turned into a national project and the committee agreed with the funding cut recommendation from NRSP-RC.
- c. NRSP3-** Committee agreed to follow MRC's recommendation to continue funding at \$50,000.

XVI. Meeting adjourned.