



IR-4 PMC & CLC MEETINGS MINUTES *Summer Meeting, 2020* *Zoom Virtual Meeting*

MOTIONS AND ACTION ITEMS

Motions:

1. Motion for approval of the Spring Meeting minutes. **Approved.**
2. Motion that the IR-4 Project Management Committee requests that the APLU Experiment Station Section support the NERA appointment of Dean Moses Kairo of the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) to serve as the Northeast Administrative Advisor to IR-4. While UMES is not part of the NERA, UMES hosts the IR-4 Northeast Region and Dean Kairo's contributions to IR-4 would be very valuable. **Approved.**
3. Motion that the PMC supports continued evaluation of remote Quality Assurance inspections in the field, however, will only authorize use of remote Quality Assurance inspection after all opportunities, including regional and contract Quality Assurance is exhausted. **Approved.**
4. Motion to accept proposed Food program plan as presented:
Traditional Food Program: \$2,425,250 (residue \$1,996,000; \$429,250 product performance),
Integrated Solutions: \$420,000. With 40 (300 trials) Food Use Workshop "A"s, and 5 regional upgrades. **Approved**
5. Motion to replace Marylee Ross with Megan James, and make Cristina Marconi chair of the training committee if she is willing. **Approved.**

Action Items:

1. Send a reminder email to collaborators and remind them that a renewed project needs to also include a renewed Appendix E (Recommended by member Buhler).
2. Douglas Buhler will make the ask to support the NERA appointment of Dean Moses Kairo as the Northeast Administrative Advisor to IR-4 at the ESCOP meeting, and Dan Rossi will ask Rick Rhodes for feedback ahead of time.
3. Jerry Baron to develop a graph in the reduction in IR-4 research over time due to flat funding. Will be used by CLC to inform Congress of the need for more IR-4 funding.

PARTICIPANTS

Jerry Baron; IR-4 Executive Director
Michael Bledsoe; CLC/Chair
Doug Buhler; Administrative Advisor-NCR
John Davis; Administrative Advisor-SOR
Amer Fayad; USDA/NIFA
Liwei Gu; Regional Director-SOR
Matt Hengel; Regional Director-Western Region

GUESTS

Tammy Barkalow
Michael Braverman
Debbie Carpenter
Krystal Chojnacki
Cristi Palmer
Van Starner

Marcel Holyoak; Administrative Adviser - WR
Moses Kairo; Administrative Adviser - NER
Dan Kunkel; Senior Associate Director
Steve Lommel; Administrative Adviser- HQ
Dan Rossi; Outgoing Regional Director-NER
Alvin Simmons; USDA-ARS
John Wise; Regional Director-NCR/Chair PMC
Simon Zebelo; Incoming Regional Director - NER

Tuesday Jul. 14th, 11:00 am to 3:30 pm

1) Welcome and Introductions

- John Wise called the meeting to order at 11:00am, welcomed the group, initiated self-introductions around the room, and reviewed the meeting schedule.

2) Approval of minutes, new agenda items (Wise)

- **A motion for approval of the minutes was made by Alvin Simmons and seconded by Jerry Baron; unanimously approved.**
- Under the Executive section to add the lobbyist topic (Bledsoe).
- On the Wednesday agenda the last bullet item number #2 should be a separate agenda item labeled #13.

3) Updates from AAs, NIFA, ARS, CLC, NE, SO, WR, NC, HQ

·AAs

- Douglas Buhler: The National Research Support Program Review Committee unanimously supported funding for IR-4 for another five years, and there will be a forthcoming vote by the Regional Directors. Regarding experiment station audiences, member Buhler also recommended that there be a reminder to send an email to collaborators and remind them that a renewed project needs to also include a renewed Appendix E.
- Marcel Holyoak: From an administrative perspective things are carrying on as needed.
- Steve Lommel: The NC State and CALS administration considered IR-4 an asset and sees this as a synergistic opportunity for collaboration with the IPM center.
- Moses Kairo: UMES views the relationship of IR-4 as a great fit with their own work plans and the administration is supportive of this continued relationship.
- John Davis: Stated he was looking forward to being a part of this group and looking forward to helping in any way they can.

NIFA - Amer Fayad

- The move to Kansas City has been a busy time for NIFA; focusing on being responsive to inquiries, reviewing proposals and processing awards.
- Encouraged IR-4 to work with NIFA legislative liaisons and stakeholders to advocate for the funder to change to a different legislative authority.
- Jerry Baron stated that Tom Bewick requested IR-4 to develop a vetted, long term equipment plan to avoid the need for future re-budgets and extensions; this item was moved to the executive session.

USDA-ARS - Alvin Simmons

- ARS is operating under a telework mandate, field and laboratory locations have been operating under an essential designation and have been able to continue their work, and in-person audits are being handled by third party contractors.
- Budget for ARS activities under IR-4 has been flat for a number of years and the President's plan calls for a reduction in ARS HQ funds which typically supports QA work.
- ARS is in the process of developing a 5 year agreement with NC State to support QA work as well as research at Cream Ridge.
- ARS is hiring a support scientist to aid in coordinating the food use pesticide work.
- Tamara Snipes has been appointed as Laboratory Research Director at Tifton, GA
- Dwayne Larson has assumed the Field Research Director for Wapato.
- Discussed funding for Cream Ridge and outstanding QA support available from IR-4 HQ and regional partners.

Commodity Liaison Committee (CLC) Chair - Michael Bledsoe

- Provided a background of the role of the CLC with IR-4 and reported he is meeting with Jerry weekly to keep moving forward with items.

North East Region

- Dan Rossi: Primarily working on the transition from Rutgers to University of Maryland Eastern Shore.
- Simon Zebelo: Using transition funding to prepare the new office and operational support and working on completing a peer review for their NIFA regional proposal.

Southern Region - Liwei Gu

- Back to work in full capacity after a shutdown due to COVID-19.
- Some projects have been subject to a delayed start date or pushed back into the autumn.

Western Region - Matt Hengel

- Operations have been relatively stable during COVID-19 including QA operations and SOP's and guidelines to follow surrounding operations during COVID-19 have been completed.
- Work is underway to transition instruments from two labs into a single lab.

North Central Region - John Wise

- Stay-at-home orders reduced work productivity in the lab, but due to diligent administrative processes put into place and they have been able to regain productivity.

Headquarters

- Jerry Baron:
 - Rutgers:
 - A work from home order remains in place thru August; staff are adjusting.
 - Rutgers has implemented a furlough.
 - Funding burn rate has slowed due to travel limitations and restrictions.
 - Retirements planned or underway for several HQ staff members.

- The Plant Biology Department to house three Rutgers employees who will remain at Rutgers and funded through a sub-award from NC State.
 - NC State:
 - Worked to get new NC State HQ employees as exempt from COVID-19 although everyone is encouraged to continue to work primarily from home;
 - Out-of-state travel is restricted at this time so staffing counterpart meetings between employees at the two sites have been stifled;
 - Hiring has been moving forward with several transfers from the Southern Region with priority being placed on completing trials;
 - Hiring underway for a new QA Manager, vetting candidates for the Research Planning position, and posting a Research Assistant soon.
 - Staff is working to find permanent office and archival space including options on campus and adjacent to campus; hoping to make some decisions soon.
 - Dan Kunkel:
 - Rutgers:
 - Holding weekly staff meetings to maintain continuity of operations.
 - Administrative burdens remain at Rutgers due to staffing changes including the Dean and Experiment Station Director.

2020 Funding - Jerry Baron

- House Appropriations Committee approved a baseline budget increase to IR-4 thanks to the hard work of the CLC and the APLU; however with the upcoming elections approvals are uncertain.
- The CLC continues to monitor this and to work with members of the Senate.

NE AA - Jerry Baron

- While UMES is a land grant university, AA's are required to come from an 1862 institution. A discussion was held regarding where the appointment comes from and amending the representation guidelines or asking for an exception for Dean Kairo and UMES.
- Douglas Buhler will make the ask to support the NERA appointment of Dean Moses Kairo as the Northeast Administrative Advisor to IR-4 at the ESCOP meeting, and Dan Rossi will seek feedback on this idea from Rick Rhodes.

Motion that the IR-4 Project Management Committee requests that the APLU Experiment Station Section support the NERA appointment of Dean Moses Kairo of the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) to serve as the Northeast Administrative Advisor to IR-4. While UMES is not part of the NERA, UMES hosts the IR-4 Northeast Region and Dean Kairo's contributions to IR-4 would be very valuable. Approved.

12:55 -- Break --

4) COVID-19 Response

COVID-19 Task Force (Remote Audits, Data Flow, Workshops, etc) - Jerry Baron

- Holding weekly All-Hands meeting to keep track of research project disruptions, and to share information between institutions to work through research exemption processes.
- Ideas emerged including remote audits, new data flow processes, and workshop ideas.
- A small task force was formed to take some of these ideas and further develop them.

- The QA field remote audits had a mixed success rate dependent on location. Pilot of remote lab audits worked well.
- In terms of data flow, the large question was that of why we still use paper versus electronic systems.
- Remote workshops have been discussed in terms of their transition to a remote event for the Priority Setting Workshop and industry new technology presentations.

5) Transitions

HQ (New Hires, updated relocation timeline, alternative office space ideas, Rutgers shutdown, other Challenges)

- Jerry Baron:
 - The hiring plan continue to progress as planned with six positions filled, one recommended for hire and two open postings.
 - Moving on to the second group of new hires in the short term.
 - Several Rutgers staff that will be transitioning into positions at NC State and there will be a few positions that remain at Rutgers for the foreseeable future.
 - Reviewed in detail the updated transition timeline for general items, personnel transitions, funding transitions, data and files, and IT system through October 2021.
- Dan Kunkel:
 - By March of 2021 all NIFA funds will be spent down and the rest of the funding will be paid out of industry funds.

Northeast Region - Simon Zebelo

- Shared a PowerPoint presentation reviewing: a brief background of UMES; the transition plan of the NE regional offices from Rutgers to UMES; the 2020-2021 plan of work including new hires and budget proposal; and new organizational chart and state liaison representatives.

2:45 -- Break --

The meeting reconvened at 2:57pm into Executive Session. The meeting adjourned at 3:30pm.

Wednesday Jul. 15th, 11:00 am to 3:30 pm

6) Program update.

- John Wise called the meeting to order at 11:01am and noted that a good portion of the meeting would be dedicated to program updates.
- Dan Rossi: Reported that he reached out to several contacts regarding the NE AA and noted two considerations 1) financial, and 2) by making this motion we are asking the NE region to not have a representative IR-4, this should go up to the multi-State activities committee and get feedback from them.

Food Program (PowerPoint)

- Dan Kunkel:
 - Reviewed a PowerPoint presentation of the 2020 new uses that have come out already or are expected to come out later this year.
 - There are currently 12 submissions in 2020 and IR-4 remains on target with projections.

- The EPA has indicated that they are moving forward with crop grouping.
- The residue program is on track as well to hit 65 studies, there are 49 performance studies and 15 Integrated Solutions studies.
- Success stories that are published in the IR-4 news blasts.

Integrated Solutions (PowerPoint)

- Dan Kunkel: reviewed a PowerPoint presentation of the integrated solutions program at IR-4 that emphasizes integrations of bio pesticides into conventional systems.
 - Reviewed the 2019 and 2020 integrated solutions projects.
- Jerry Baron: noted that the industry is also beginning to mirror this integrated approach.

Residue Research (PowerPoint)

- Dan Kunkel: reviewed the residual research projects underway this year as well as field data notebooks for 2018 and 2019 and noted an increase in notebooks received at headquarters this year.
- Debbie Carpenter: Debbie reviewed a PowerPoint slideshow reporting that the number of studies awaiting submission is slightly higher, there are an additional 77 studies waiting, and that there may be delays in lab work due to COVID-19.

Product Performance (Handout)

- Van Starner: provided a background of the Food Use Performance Program including crop efficacy and crop safety trials and that performance work is often required prior to conducting a residue project.
 - Shared a table of older/committed projects and high priority projects, their associated costs and funding mechanisms.
- Dan Kunkel: noted that these projects are also listed in our databases.
- John Wise: noted that even though IR-4 is a stakeholder driven program that the participation of registrants is a critical component of the program.
- A brief discussion was held regarding the tracking of and issues with, crop sensitivity to herbicides/fungicides/insecticides.

International (PowerPoint & Handout)

- Michael Braverman: provided a background on the international activities, including training and capacity building, of IR-4 including work in Asia, Africa and South America.
 - Reviewed a PowerPoint presentation reviewing a timeline of the Global Minor Use Priority Setting Workshop and associated outcomes and priorities.
- Dan Kunkel: provided a background of the Minor Use Foundation, shared information on the foundations website, leadership and oversight board and provided an overview of the role the foundation plays in international activities including the Global Minor Use Priority setting workshop and the funding projects both domestic and abroad.
 - Shared a handout of JMPR submissions for 2020.

Environmental Horticulture/Current Communications (PowerPoint)

- Cristi Palmer: provided an overview of the Environmental Horticulture Program at IR-4, introduced members of the team, reviewed their priority setting process that is focused on the problem to be addressed and an annual research cycle.

- Reviewed a handout/report outlining program updates including: a research summary, program registrations, and crop impact for 2020 to date, website/webpage reach statistics, COVID-19 delays (approx. 30%) but no cancellations thus far, and planned and completed trials by region.
- Reviewed plans for future improvements for the website (including conversion from cold fusion to .net), updates to the report/research submission portal, building a research tracking database for the website, and automated test sampling ordering system.
- Reported on pollinator protection and invasive species research activities at IR-4.
- Responded to a question regarding when the residue studies will be ready for publication.

Biopesticides regulatory support (PowerPoint)

- Michael Braverman: reviewed a PowerPoint presentation and provided an overview of IR-4's Biopesticide and Organic support program which is primarily focused on regulatory support, reviewed several registrations supported by the program, and reviewed successful regulatory assistance projected completed thus far by obtaining, or being en route to obtaining, bio-chemical classification by the EPA.
 - Presented on international biopesticides work and training planned and underway in Southeast Asia, Pakistan, South Africa and Latin America.
 - Responded to an inquiry on how the EPA views the new area of peptide products, noting that the regulatory pathway would likely be as a biochemical biopesticide.

7) Laboratory Backlog (PowerPoint)

- Matt Hengel: shared a PowerPoint presentation and provided a report of data tracking of the lab backlog in an effort to improve lab performance and efficiency, and noted that a project is considered "late" if it is close to completion but waiting to be transmitted to HQ, and "backlogged" if it is still in the research and development phase.
 - Reviewed the backlog statistics from the individual IR-4 regional labs and recommended a discussion in Executive Session, about how these larger backlogs - particularly in Michigan - are to be handled (MI).
 - Reviewed the status of backlogged projects being handled by contract labs reporting that overall the backlog continues to trend downward overall, however in the last two quarters there has been a small increase, which may be due to lab constraints due to COVID-19.
- Debbie Carpenter: noted that a late project is on hold until HQ receives analytical data and that she has seen an increase in the number of backlogs and late projects 3 labs (2 ARS) that warrant a discussion.
- Matt Hengel: noted his lab may have the capacity to pick up a few projects if needed and he is open to a further discussion.

8) Quality Assurance Unit Challenges (resources vs workload, remote inspections, transitions) (PowerPoint)

- Tammy Barkalow: reviewed a PowerPoint presentation of the Quality Assurance Unit at IR-4, provided an overview of the activities and structure of the QA unit and handles over 960 reports per year.
 - Updated on an EPA Inspection that occurred this year and reported on the decommissioning of an IR-4 site in North Dakota and the transfer of data from that site to HQ has been completed.

- Reported that Debbie Carpenter is training to be an administrator on the eQA/eDOCs system and will support new users with training along with the vendor of the system, recommended the training for other users at IR-4 as well, reported that the eDOC system is functioning well and housed over 3000 documents.
- Reported on auditing changes implemented in the face of COVID-19 including audits of field data books at the regional level, field in-life inspections have been delayed as well but coverage of inspections is underway, finalizing reports have been prioritized at HQ during this time.
- Dan Kunkel: thanked Debbie for stepping up to handle the eDOCS program and the group thanked Tammy for all of her service to IR-4.
- Jerry Baron: Baron noted the constraints to QA work in light of COVID-19 and commended the regions who stepped up to work together.
 - Reported on how virtual/remote QA auditing has been working well in the lab, however in the field there are more issues and may be more compromises, the possibility of hiring external QA auditors to support the group, and exploring the possibility of our QA HQ staff travelling more when regional QA employees cannot.
- John Wise: noted it was worthy to use resources to understand better under what conditions a remote audit might work best in the field.
- Matt Hengel: noted that exploring a hybrid approach may be a good idea as well, of performing live audits after a series of remote audits, for example.
- Debbie Carpenter: noted that if we ask field staff to do this then it may take away from their other work and that a contract in-person audit would be more ideal than a remote audit.
- Tammy Barkalow: concurred with Carpenter that it takes one staff member to direct/manage the camera and another to respond to questions and others to continue working on the field program, technology/carrier issues with a variety of mobile phone devices, and encourages the directors to speak to their QA professionals, feels that in the laboratory she understands how it can be beneficial (but doesn't like it).
- Matt Hengel: asked Barkalow if there is adequate QA contractors to perform this work; Barkalow stated yes but some may need to travel to more remote locations.
- Jerry Baron: noted that he is not certain we have exhausted the search for QA consultants prior to moving to remote audits.
- Tammy Barkalow: noted that if we move to remote we just need to be able to support our decision to do so as a tool judiciously.
- John Wise: concurred and noted that he thinks we should finish what we have started as an effort to vet the acceptability of remote audits; noted that no one is pushing it as a primary solution to in-person inspections.
- Liwei Gu: in his perspective with COVID-19 getting worse in the South he has concerns and discomfort with her being there in-person and would like to consider a consultant right now.

Motion (Baron) that the PMC supports continued evaluation of remote Quality Assurance inspections in the field, however, will only authorize use of remote Quality Assurance inspection after all opportunities, including regional and contract Quality Assurance is exhausted. Dan Rossi Seconded. Unanimously approved.

9) Parameters of 2021 field research program (Handout)

- Van Starner: Starner shared a proposal for the 2021 Food Use Field research proposal reporting: anticipated flat funding in 2021, noted the proposal is similar to the 2020 proposal, and reviewed the elements that would be included in the budget.

- Noted that contributions from Canada (10 trials) and ARS (70 trials) will be reduced in 2021 and that there is uncertainty of additional funding from California.
- Reported that carryover Red “A” trials that will need to be included in 2021 due to COVID-19 delays.
- In 2021 we will have about 10-11 fewer studies than in 2020.
- Priority projects are not set by discipline but rather what are the most critical needs.
- Micheal Bledsoe: would like to see a graph of losses of trials over the years to be able to take to Congress (the number of studies stakeholders see).
- Jerry Baron suggested we pull that from the annual report, and noted that how we count field trials can be confusing (not just how things start).

Motion (Bledsoe) to accept proposed Food program plan as presented: Traditional Food Program: \$2,425,250 (residue \$1,996,000; \$429,250 product performance), Integrated Solutions: \$420,000. With 40 (300 trials) Food Use Workshop “A”s, and 5 regional upgrades. Seconded by Matt Hengel. Unanimously approved.

10) Priority setting plans for 2020

- Jerry Baron: Reported on an outstanding contractual issue with the hotel/conference center in Minneapolis and the Minor Use Foundation in canceling this year’s events.
 - This year’s event will be remote, the first pass will be by discipline, and the second pass will be combined group.
 - There will be an opportunity for networking.
 - The industry presentations will be in advance of the priority setting session and with 6 companies registered to date.

11) Training Committee (Handout)

- Van Starner: presented a document outlined the purpose and activities of the IR-4 Education and Training Committee including the membership, responsibilities, training and networking, and a description of IR-4 advisors.
 - Reported that when members request to roll off, it comes before the PMC along with a recommended replacement.
 - Noted there three rotations: Marylee Ross with the recommended replacement of Megan James UMD; Cristina Marconi in the near future as she is moving into a Study Director position at HQ; and Van Starner.
 - Noted the chair has typically resided at HQ.
- Jerry Baron: recommended that Cristina Marconi move from the representative committee to the chair of the committee.

Motion (Bledsoe) Motion to make Cristina Marconi chair of the training committee and replace Marylee with Megan James; second Baron. Unanimously approved.

12) Rebuilding IR-4 outreach and communication (PowerPoint)

- Krystal Chojnacki: provided a report on the future structure of the communications position including hiring a strong writer and contracting out creative services.
- Jerry Barron: will be more quickly on communications positions than originally scheduled. Seeking a stronger presence on these platforms. Meeting with the Western Region (Michael Horak) to get information on their communications activities.

- Dan Rossi: Likes a person with good writing skills and tapping into more creative skill sets.
- Crisiti Palmer: Crisiti provided communications updates including the lens she uses for outreach, the communications pathways utilized by IR-4 both direct and indirect, and reviewed website structural content that has been updated.
 - Shared dynamic content such as success stories that have been posted.
 - Reported that the website traffic was to the QA page.
- John Wise and the PMC members thanked Crisiti for her work.

13) Additional funding opportunities (TASC grants, Multistate Specialty Crop Block Grants, Agriculture infrastructure funds, CDPR, etc.)

- Jerry Baron: noted that there are funding opportunities that periodically arise such as: TASC grants, Multistate Specialty Crop Block Grants, Agriculture infrastructure funds, and CDPR funds.
 - Reported that IR-4 HQ was partnering with the IPM center to submit a proposal to FAS.
- Matt Hengel: noted that they are looking at a Multi-State block grant in the Western Region as it relates to Hemp and could partner with all the IR-4 regions.
- Michael Bledsoe offered to provide data for the application if needed.
- Dan Kunkel: stated that he and Venkat Pedibhotla were looking into a USDA APHIS grant.
- Liwei Gu: noted that the Specialty Crop Multi-State grant has a deadline in September.

14) Future meetings

- Jerry Baron: Previously discussed having an in-person meeting in NC but with the travel bans and without a HQ permanent location we might want to have another zoom meeting in late October.
- Matt Hengel: We should also plan on having the national research planning meeting should remain remote.
- Discussion regarding the last full week of October, National Research Planning Meeting 27th and 28th and then the PMC Meeting the 29th & 30th. Hold the week of October 26.

John Wise adjourned the meeting at 3:46PM.

Thursday Jul. 16th, 11:00 am to 3:30 pm

13) Executive Session

John Wise Called the meeting to order at 11:00 am. The meeting adjourned at 3:30 pm.