



**MINUTES**  
**Project Management Committee**  
**Special Meeting**  
**April 10, 2025**  
***Virtual***

**MOTIONS AND ACTION ITEMS**

1. **Action Item:** J. Baron will ask the Regional Field Coordinators to validate the field trial numbers and bring back a final version for a vote.
2. **Action Item:** J. Baron will take the PMC feedback that there is interest to open dialogue to the Commodity Liaison Committee Government Affairs Committee.

**CONSENSUS ITEMS**

1. **Consensus:** To continue the practice of QC going forth and re-visit after one year at the March 2026 PMC meeting.
2. **Consensus:** To hold off on implementing esignature software at this time and defer back to the technology team to review how implementation would look/cost for a future year.

**Members:**

Jerry Baron; IR-4 Executive Director  
Doug Buhler; Administrative Advisor – NCR  
Liwei Gu; Regional Director - SOR  
Matt Hengel; Regional Director-WR/PMC Chair  
Moses Kairo; Administrative Advisor - NER  
Joseph Munyaneza; Administrative Advisor – ARS  
Todd Scholz; CLC Chair  
Alvin Simmons; USDA-ARS  
Simon Zebelo; Regional Director – NER

**Staff:**

Deborah Carpenter; IR-4 HQ  
Krystal Chojnacki; IR-4 HQ

**Thursday, April 10, 2025 10:00 am EST to 11:00 am EST**

-- Dr. Matt Hengel called the meeting to order at 10:03 am --

1. Quality Control (QC) of electronic field data notebooks
  - J. Baron stated that this was a follow-up item from a prior meeting and asked for feedback from the regions; and reminded that the QC cost will offset the increased cost of the eFDB software and the regions would need to absorb the costs
  - The regions reported out with consensus to keep QC on eFDB's for a 6 month to 1 year amount of time and then to reassess to consider continued need; and an anonymous survey being developed for FRD's on eFDB feedback.
  - **Consensus:** To continue the practice of QC going forth and re-visit after one year at the March 2026 PMC meeting.
2. Electronic signatures

- J. Baron stated that this was a follow-up item from a prior meeting and asked for feedback from the regions.
  - The regions reported out with consensus that this is not a pressing need at this time and we can stay with manual signatures.
  - **Consensus:** To hold off on implementing esignature software at this time and defer back to the technology team to review how implementation would look/cost for a future year.
3. Funding and funding distribution (Handout)
- J. Baron reported that we still have not received our budget numbers for 2025; we should plan on the proposal to be similar to the last 4-year submission; and reviewed a budget model using the \$15 million dollar budget similar to the prior year.
  - A discussion as held regarding the Integrated Solutions line items; if we have initial costs for contract labs (working on now); the need to prepare a full 4-year budget for this new grant cycle; the grant will be non-competitive; and the new manner in which USDA contracts are currently being reviewed.
  - **Action Item:** J. Baron will ask the Regional Field Coordinators to validate the field trial numbers and bring back a final version for a vote.
4. Keith Pitt's proposal regarding BPIA
- J. Baron reported that Keith Pitt let him know that Biological Product Industry Alliance (BPIA) was having a meeting in Washington, D.C. at the same time as our annual March meeting and if we should consider a joint meeting/reception/legislator visits.
  - A discussion was held regarding the potential for a joint congressional reception; interest from stakeholders to move away from pesticides and into biopesticides; and asking a subset of the BPIA to attend the reception.
  - **Action Item:** J. Baron will take the PMC feedback that there is interest to open dialogue to the Commodity Liaison Committee Government Affairs Committee.
5. Intranet site
- J. Baron reported that the intranet site is now live and a tutorial was put together and distributed to IR-4 project stakeholders.
6. Executive Session
- The Members convened to executive session at 11:03 am.

The meeting reconvened at 11:15 am into general session with no reportable actions.

**The meeting adjourned at 11:15 am.**