

The IR-4 Project Path Forward

IR-4 Organizational Assessment & Quest for Improved Process Efficiencies

John C Wise, PhD



Michigan State University

AgBioResearch

Organizational Assessment

- **Path Forward project included IR-4 performing an organizational assessment to:**
 - Evaluate the organizational structure of the regional centers (including ARS), their field research centers/field research cooperators and dedicated IR-4 analytical laboratories, and the coordinating operations of IR-4 Project Headquarters.
 - Identify efficient and inefficient operational processes throughout the IR-4 Organization.

Organizational Assessment Outcome

- Organization Assessment Committee:
 - representatives from Agchem industry, Land Grant universities, ARS and an assessment expert.
- recommended the following:
 - That IR-4 maintain its current organizational structure.
 - That IR-4 undergo a thorough review of its current processes to determine if any modifications would lead to operational efficiencies and/or financial savings.

IR-4 Efficiency Exercises

- IR-4 implemented two efficiency exercises in 2016 to find operational efficiencies and/or financial savings:
 - Lab exercise
 - Field exercise



Laboratory Efficiency Exercise

- **The laboratory efficiency exercise targets are to:**
 - Improve analytical labs' throughput by 20% over a baseline of 2013-16 average
 - Eliminate sample backlog by the end of 2018



Laboratory Efficiency Exercise

- **The laboratory efficiency exercise activities:**

Step 1– Conduct self-evaluation via survey tool (targeted and open-ended questions)

Step 2– Lab director ACAC group do a critical review of survey results at NEC

Step 3– External inspection and recommendations

- Final report and recommendations to PMC by July 15, 2017

Field Efficiency Exercise

- **The field efficiency exercise addressed “field data flow” process improvements within the IR-4 Food Program by reviewing the following:**
 - (1) Movement of field data books through the review process.
 - (2) Number of steps
 - (3) Quality of FDB

Target of improving the “future” process



Field Efficiency Exercise

Preliminary conclusion of group was ...

“Single most important way of improving productivity and or efficiency is to reduce the number of field failures, also delivering high quality product upfront, to reduce loss of trials and wasted time with turn-arounds.”

- **The field efficiency task force also launched effort to review and revise the IR-4 OPERATIONAL HANDBOOK:**

- process improvements will be reflected through updates to the IR-4 handbook and/or suggesting new IR-4 advisories.

Final report and recommendations to PMC by March 14, 2017

IR-4 Efficiency Exercises Deliverables

- IR-4 efficiency exercises are expected to provide operational efficiencies and financial savings.
- Future efficiency exercises may target:
 - QA
 - HQ