



IR-4 PMC MEETINGS MINUTES

Summer Meeting, 2021

Zoom Virtual Meeting

MOTIONS AND ACTION ITEMS

Motions/Consent Items/Action Items:

1. A motion for approval of the Spring 2021 PMC & CLC Meeting minutes was made by Mike Bledsoe, seconded by Alvin Simmons; **unanimously approved.**
2. A motion was made for approval of the "Flat Budget" scenario for 2022 with 40 Priority "A" studies, and 338 Trials (35 FUW, 5 regional upgrade) made by Marcel Holyoak; seconded by Liwei Gu; **approved with 1 abstention by member Alvin Simmons.**
3. A motion was made to adjourn the Wednesday, July 14th meeting at 5:16 pm by John Wise, seconded by Matt Hengel; **unanimously approved.**
4. A motion for approval of the following amendment to the backlog policy was made by Liwei Gu, second by Matt Hengel; **unanimously approved.**
 - *"Once a project becomes backlogged, per definition, a formal letter will be sent to the IR-4 executive director by the lab director, co-signed by the regional director, containing explanations of current status, and a proposal for how corrections will be made to meet the EPA submission deadline. HQ will decide if a meeting between the lab director, regional director, IR-4 executive director (and others as requested) is needed to discuss how best to make corrections to meet study timelines."*
5. A motion for approval of action item one was made by Marcel Holyoak, seconded by Matt Hengel; **unanimously approved.**
 - **Action Item 1:** As a follow-up to the 2019 lab efficiency exercise, lab directors shall meet to make a proposal to the PMC (due by September 1, 2021) on what the prime factors are contributing to backlogs, and what processes, personnel or equipment can resolve the backlog problem.
6. A motion for approval of action item two was made by Marcel Holyoak, seconded by Alvin Simmons; **unanimously approved.**
 - **Action Item 2:** A PMC subgroup will review the lab directors' backlog solution proposal, and seek further information as needed to prepare recommendations for the 2021 Fall PMC meeting.
7. A motion for approval of action item three was made by Jerry Baron, seconded by Marcel Holyoak; **unanimously approved.**

- **Action Item 3:** Re-initiation of Path Forward exercise to address potential structural and programmatic changes and future strategic investments. With a potential team to include Dan Rossi, Rob Hedberg, Janis McFarland, and to expect recommendations to the PMC by the Spring 2022 PMC meeting.
8. A motion for approval of action item four was made by Michael Bledsoe, seconded Liwei Gu; **unanimously approved.**
- **Action Item 4:** To study the geography of QA needs and to make a recommendations about staffing regionally and nationally.
9. A motion was made to adjourn the Thursday, July 15th meeting at 4:21pm by Alvin Simmons, seconded by Michael Bledsoe; **unanimously approved.**

Other Action & Consensus Items:

1. **Action Item:** Following the Technical working group with the EPA meeting PMC consider requiring labs to conduct zero day storage stability analysis dependent on EPA’s decision.
2. Consideration of partnering with Hemp Consortium funded by the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research (FFAR). **Consensus was provided.**

Members

Jerry Baron; IR-4 Executive Director	Marcel Holyoak; Administrative Adviser – WSR
Tom Bewick; USDA/NIFA	Joseph Munyaneza; Administrative Adviser – USDA-ARS
Michael Bledsoe; CLC/Chair	Alvin Simmons; USDA-ARS
Doug Buhler; Administrative Advisor-NCR	John Wise; Regional Director-NCR/Chair PMC
John Davis; Administrative Adviser – SOR	Simon Zebelo; Regional Director – NER
Liwei Gu; Regional Director-SOR	
Matt Hengel; Regional Director-WSR	

Guests

Debbie Carpenter	Johanna Mazlo
Krystal Chojnacki	Cristi Palmer
Susan Erhardt	Venkat Pedibhotla
Jenn Heiss	Tamara Snipes
Gail Mahnken	Dan Rossi
Cristina Marchesan Marconi	Todd Wixon

Wednesday Jul. 14th 10:30 am to 4:30 pm

John Wise called the meeting to order at 10:35 am.

- 1) Welcome and Self Introductions (Wise)
 - John Wise welcomed attendees and self-introductions of attendees were made.
- 2) Approval of minutes, new agenda items (Wise)
 - **A motion for approval of the Spring 2021 PMC & CLC Meeting minutes was made by Mike Bledsoe, seconded by Alvin Simmons; unanimously approved.**

- Jerry Baron noted that there would be a Path Forward discussion in the Executive Session.

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

AAs

- Douglas Buhler: NRSP funding is going smooth and in Michigan there has been a reduction of COVID- infections and the university is opening back up and moving toward full operations.
- Marcel Holyoak: Things are opening back up on campus and are expecting students back and University of CA Agriculture and Natural Resources just received an increase of funding to boost extension activities.

NIFA – Tom Bewick

- Provided an update on staffing levels at NIFA and that they are exploring remote work options; reported on an excess in administrative set aside due to savings in rent, hiring delays, and travel due to COVID-19 (from FY 20) that NIFA will be returning for programming. The amount for IR-4 Project is \$476,520 which will be added to the 2021 funding.
- Discussed the model used for managing funding distributions to IR-4 and that they are working to modify the process for providing funding for IR-4 from multiple applications (NRSP and Grant) into a single funding mechanism and converting to non-competitive funding. Tom Bewick addressed questions regarding the excess funding and potential future funding model changes.

USDA-ARS - Alvin Simmons

- Reported that ARS will continue to follow a policy of 25% maximum onsite attendance thru October 1 and only essential travel is allowed during that time; the IR-4 work is being prioritized to ensure these projects move forward; and reported on some delays due to weather/rain, some issues with lab equipment, and refilling vacant positions.
- ARS administration continues to support the IR-4 work functions, and that despite the lack of increase in funding over all of crop protection, the IR-4 Work is supported.
- The Cooperative agreement for the Quality Assurance work and Environmental Horticulture work in Cream Ridge (Rutgers) is still being processed through his office.
- Noted a discussion item for Executive Session.

Commodity Liaison Committee (CLC) Chair - Michael Bledsoe

- Reported on the outcomes of the June CLC Government Affairs Sub-Committee meeting: that they will be reaching out to the Senate Appropriations Committee, and that the Tactical Sciences Network conducted a SWOT analysis was conducted and IR-4 was named as a model group.
- Provided an update on lobbying efforts by the DCLRS firm, reviewed a timeline of activities organized by the firm, and discussed the increased outreach to legislators since contracting with the firm.
- Reported that his term as Chair will end in March and he will work with the CLC to select a new Chair and noted the great work of Jerry Baron as Executive Director.

Northeast Region – Simon Zebelo (Handout)

- Reported that operations are running smoothly, the 2021 grant has been set up at UMES and they are working on service agreements with contactors, and that a no cost extension has been requested to extend last year's NIFA grant.
- Reported that the team has recently conducted stakeholder visits in the region and reported on their successful receipt of three grants to support work on hemp, small farm pests, and solar panels to implement pollinator habitats, and another that will go toward lab improvements.
- Field trials: 25 trials have been placed, 1 trial has been canceled. Field Datebooks form 2020 have been sent to RFC offices, and reported on Quality Assurance Audits. For performance, there have been 20 trials placed this year. Integrated solutions there have been 9 trials placed for this year. For Environmental Horticulture 4 trials have been placed.

Southern Region - Liwei Gu (Handout)

- University is back to 100% normal with no remote work, there are no budget cuts expected to the University.
- Reported that they were successful in receiving three grants totaling \$400,000 to put toward research; including funding from Florida Department of Agriculture.
- Field program is going well. Field data books (FDBs) from 2019 have been received and more than half of the 2020 FDBs. Dr. Gu expressed gratitude to Roger Batts for providing coverage during a staffing shortage and reported on staffing shortages in the region, and that they are advertising for an Assistant Regional Field Coordinator position.
- Analytical Lab: there have been four analytical summary reports submitted and expect 13 in total by the end of the year to have been completed.
- Quality Assurance unit: on track with finishing their assigned work load.
- A discussion was held regarding the state funding (specialty crop block grant) received, potential supplements to IR-4 Projects, and what a great job Janine Spies is doing.

Western Region - Matt Hengel

- Field program: Trials are underway and conditions have been normal, there is an anticipated shortage of water to irrigate crops later in the year.
- Lab: All is going well, there are five ASRs turned in, six ready to go, and several other projects awaiting samples to come in.
- QA: Travel is opened back up and the auditors have expressed that they like the digital final report audits.
- CDFA funding was awarded for another year but there will be leadership change soon.
- There is a lot of interest on campus for the hemp work that they are doing and their hemp extract equipment has arrived to support this work.

North Central Region - John Wise

- Field: FRDs have successfully initiated 2021 field trials for food use and environmental horticulture despite battling varying weather conditions.
- QA: Field QA has been flexible with changing scheduled due to weather. Shifted to contract QA and working on training a new auditor due to an employee's departure.
- Lab: Keeping productive but have struggled with specific difficult chemistries, and thanked Matt Hengel and the Western Region lab for assistance.
- Reported on a new Missouri State Liaison Representative.

4) Headquarters & Transitions Update

- Rutgers & NC State: Jerry Baron (Handout)
 - Reported that both institutions re-opened 100% on July 6th. The Rutgers team is working to close out files, projects, and offices, for the full shut down on September 30th. Jerry commended Debbie Carpenter and Dan Rossi for their leadership during this time.
 - The 2021 grant application submission and implementation has gone as smooth as possible even with shifting budgets, and noted that the indirect costs is an item that the institutions will need to address next year.
 - Reviewed the updated combined organizational chart; reported on the new permanent office space and larger proposed conference room; IT systems have been successfully migrated to NC State; and 2/3 of GLP files have been moved with the rest planned for August 3rd.
 - Reported on funding remaining at Rutgers and the plan for use of remaining funds.
 - Hosted a soft opening for the NC State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Dean and Directors and plan to hold the hard opening in October.
 - Applying for a new grant opportunity through FAS – Borlaug Fellow program and partnering with CIPM for their Cochran Fellow program.

-- 12:19 pm -- Break – The meeting reconvened at 12:44pm.

5) Program update/discussions

Food Program

Residue Research (PowerPoint)

- Debbie Carpenter: Reported on New tolerances for 2021 (7), Submissions for 2021 (9), provided a crop group update (Group 25 and 26), and updated on 2021 research activities.

(1) Field (PowerPoint)

- Debbie Carpenter: Provided a 10 year history of the total number of field trials noting that they continue to drop over the years, updated on the status of field data notebooks into HQ that there are 2020 trials that have not yet started, and reviewed the project completion timeline.
- A discussion was held regarding studies that have not started in 2020 and if the PMC can help to contact FRDs to get work started.

(2) Analytical Laboratories including laboratory backlog (Handout)

- Matt Hengel: Provided an update on the status of backlogged projects in the various IR-4 analytical and contract labs, reviewing issues that have delayed specific projects, shared an eleven year historic graph of the backlog, and expressed difficulty with getting analytical standards from registrants to complete lab work.
- A discussion was held regarding minimal changes in the backlog in labs, field trials have been reduced over the years but the backlog remains, and the increasing complexity of each analysis.

Quality Assurance (PowerPoint)

- Johanna Mazlo (PowerPoint): Provided an update on EPA GLP compliance monitoring including the North Dakota State University Fargo field site that has been decommissioned; provided a Quality Assurance (QA) activities update reviewing QA outputs by region, auditors, days spent on audits, and sites contractor QA use; and updated on eQA/eDOCS status and transition.

Product Performance & Integrated Solutions (PowerPoint)

- Venkat Pedibhotla: Provided an update on the Industry Technology Session (July 20th) with an increase in both registrants and participants this year over last, shared goals for growth, and shared the agenda for the upcoming 2021 Food Use Workshop.
- A discussion was held regarding how well the new format of having the Industry technology Session in advance of the Food Use Workshop worked.

International

- Jerry Baron: Reported that the Foreign Agricultural Service is stepping up their efforts on moving toward Maximum Residue Limits (MRL) harmonization and we are seeing a lot more funding opportunities in this area, many of which the Minor Use Foundation is leading the effort in pursuing.

Environmental Horticulture/Current Communications (PowerPoint)

- Cristi Palmer:
 - Provided an update on the 2021 registration support research network; reported stats on program data summaries, program registrations, percentages of planned trials completed by region; updated on planned infrastructure improvements at the Rutgers Cream Ridge Facilities; reported on activities surrounding transitioning the Environmental Horticulture (EH) Program away from the Princeton office; provided a 2021 EHC Program Workshop update; and reviewed research plans for 2022.
 - Provided a Green Industry update including the box tree moth and downy mildew grant funded work; announced a new diamide analysis publication in *Chemosphere*; and reviewed new large grant proposal to NIFA SCRI.

Communications (PowerPoint)

- Jenn Heiss: Provided an update on website improvements including the homepage and new Industry Resources page; reviewed materials currently being updated including a 1 pager, program materials and GLP book; provided social media updates; and reviewed the recent EPA Virtual "Tour" on Cranberry and future Hemp Tour in late August.
- The PMC expressed appreciation of Jenn's work on IR-4 Communications.

Biopesticides Regulatory Support

- Jerry Baron: Reported that the biopesticides focuses on biopesticide regulatory support and that there has been an increase in focus on this area by registrants over the last several years.
- A discussion was held to move up the budget discussions agenda item to today.

6) Proposed parameters of 2021 field research program (PowerPoint)

- Venkat Pedibhotla: Presented potential scenarios for the 2022 food program with a flat budget, at the \$14 million level, and at the \$20 million level; reviewed the number of potential new studies numbers within each scenario.
- A discussion was held regarding the NIFA holdback return to programs and how this may be handled in the future; when that funding will come in and how it can be used (we will have 5 years to spend it); whether the core will have enough staffing to accommodate the increase data processing in the \$20 million scenario; that a conservative approach should be taken to priority setting; discussions of adding the 2021 holdback (\$476,520) to the 2022 residue trials (use it across all programs, equipment to address backlog, etc); and use of these funds for lab equipment or to pay for the IDC shortfall if we have a flat budget.
- Discussion was held regarding which scenario to move forward with as it will impact the study count goal at the FUW.
- **A motion was made for approval of the “Flat Budget” scenario for 2020 with 40 Priority “A” studies, and 338 Trials (35 FUW, 5 regional upgrade) made by Marcel Holyoak; seconded by Liwei Gu; approved by majority with 1 abstention by member Alvin Simmons.**

-- 3:27pm – Break. The meeting reconvened at 3:42pm into Executive Session.

7) Executive Session I (Wise)

- Contingency plans for funding increase/decrease
- Balancing Workload

The meeting reconvened at 5:16 pm with no reportable action items out of the Executive Session.

A motion was made to adjourn the Wednesday, July 14th meeting at 5:16 pm by John Wise, seconded by Matt Hengel; unanimously approved.

Thursday Jul. 15th: 10:30 am to 4:30 pm

John Wise called the meeting to order at 10:31 am, welcomed attendees, and self-introductions of attendees were made.

8) Training Committee

- Cristina Marconi: Provided an update on training included:
 - Western Region held a GLP training and webinar in May, and have one planned on August 3rd.
 - Training committee met in May to discuss herbicide application on orchards.
 - A discussion was held regarding advisories that are distributed out of the training committee and if that practice was still being used (it is).

9) Laboratory Backlog policy

- John Wise: Provided a background around the backlog policy and that there is an intent to update it and complete it; and he reviewed/read aloud elements of the policy that were under consideration for updating.
- Matt Hengel: Noted that the next step is to allow the laboratory coordinators to comment on the proposed policy.
- An in depth discussion was held regarding: the protocol and chain of events to be followed once a backlog situation is identified by a Lab Director (LD) and/or HQ; how the policy should be

updated to reflect who should initiate the notification (letter/meeting) and what should be included in the letter (identification of issue/remediation plan); if identification and discussion of the issue should first occur at the ACAC meetings; the urgency of addressing these backlog matters; whether to not method development should be concentrated in labs that have more capacity; and if we should treat the labs like contract labs.

- This item will be discussed further in closed session.

10) Zero-day storage stability analysis

- Debbie Carpenter: Reported that EPA's chemists asked her to remind IR-4 that we need to submit zero-day storage stability analysis in their reports; reviewed the regulations/guidelines requiring the analysis; and reported that there is a meeting planned with EPA to discuss this where a request will be made to phase in this process or will this requirement be applied to on-going research.
- A discussion was held regarding potential use of the registrant's guideline storage stability studies/data in lieu of a day zero analysis.
- **Action item:** Following the Technical working group with the EPA meeting PMC consider requiring labs to conduct zero day storage stability analysis dependent on EPA's decision.

-- 12:32pm -- Break. The meeting reconvened at 12:54pm.

11) Partnering with Hemp Consortium

- Jerry Baron: Reported on a meeting he had with the leadership of Foundation for Food and Agriculture grant with hemp. Discussed the possibility of IR-4 funds being matched with FFAR for studies with hemp. This would require IR-4 to fund hemp work with industry dollars (FFAR does not match Federal dollars)
- A discussion was held regarding our budgeting process prior to the Food Use Workshop, how the funding is distributed, that this may potentially fund an additional hemp project in 2022, will these costs support only field or also analytical and QA functions as these studies are costly.
- **Consensus was provided.**

12) European Situation-Potential Impact on IR-4

- Jerry Baron: Provided an update that Europe is moving to Farm to Fork Strategy that is part of the European Green Deal which will phase out a lot of products they use for pest management and it is based on hazard assessment. Jerry noted that there is an opportunity in the Integrated Solutions area to develop alternatives for growers who export to the European markets.

13) Future meetings

- Jerry Baron: Led a discussion about upcoming meetings including the NRPM and Fall PMC meeting and proposed to host it here in the new HQ in North Carolina. We would start the meeting at the All Hands Meeting on Wednesday and the PMC meeting on Thursday and Friday.
- Spring PMC Meeting – to do this in person in Washington, DC the week of March 7th and would include the CLC.
- Next year's Food Use Workshop will be held September 12-15, 2022 in Bloomington MN.

-- 1:26pm -- The meeting moved into Executive Session.

14) Executive Session II

- Follow-up of Executive Session I discussions
- Maintaining IR-4 Branding

The meeting reconvened from Executive Session at XX:XX with the following reportable items:

- **A motion for approval of the following amendment to the backlog policy was made by Liwei Gu, second by Matt Hengel; unanimously approved.**

- *“Once a project becomes backlogged, per definition, a formal letter will be sent to the IR-4 executive director by the lab director, co-signed by the regional director, containing explanations of current status, and a proposal for how corrections will be made to meet the EPA submission deadline. HQ will decide if a meeting between the lab director, regional director, IR-4 executive director (and others as requested) is needed to discuss how best to make corrections to meet study timelines.”*
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