



**MINUTES**  
**Project Management Committee**  
**Fall 2022 Meeting**  
**October 26-28, 2022**  
*Hybrid Meeting*

**MOTIONS AND ACTION ITEMS**

**Motions/Consensus Items:**

1. A motion for approval of the Summer 2022 PMC Meeting Minutes was made by Matt Hengel; seconded by Liwei Gu. **Unanimously approved.**
2. A motion was made to approve Chris Bardenhagen of the Cherry Marketing Institute as a member of the Commodity Liaison Committee by Todd Scholz, seconded by John Wise. **Unanimously approved.**
3. A motion for approval of the Backlog Response Policy was made by Liwei Gu; seconded by Todd Scholz. **Unanimous approved.**
4. A motion for approval of the adoption of the IR-4 Laboratory Guidance Document was made by Liwei Gu; seconded by Todd Scholz. **Unanimously approved.**
5. A motion for approval to support a review of the Environmental Horticulture Program and to appoint Amy Upton as the review panel chair, with the report target date for submission at the 2023 Spring PMC Meeting, was made by Matt Hengel, seconded by Todd Scholz. **Unanimously approved**
6. A motion to have the HQ management team review and vote on the nominations for the National Recognition of Excellence Award was made by John Wise; seconded by Matt Hengel. **Unanimously approved.**
7. **Consensus:** To move savings from residue into product performance and also \$50,000 savings from integrated solutions into product performance.
8. **Consensus:** To maintain the 2023 Food Use Workshop as an in-person event with a virtual component.
9. A motion to nominate and approve Matt Hengel as the new Project Management Committee Chair was by Jerry Baron, seconded by Todd Scholz. **Unanimously approved.**
10. A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 11:26 by John Wise, seconded by Matt Hengel. **Unanimously approved**

**Action Items:**

- **Action Item:** Matt Hengel will circulate the cover page of the IR-4 Laboratory Guidance Document for signature.
- **Action Item:** Jerry Baron will lead an effort to look into different models to fund research centers in March-July, 2023.
- **Action Item:** Cristina Marconi will send a document with the proposal from the Education and Training Committee on SOP standardization to the PMC.
- **Action Item:** Dr. Baron will add to each of the Performance Expectations a bullet point about enhancing diversity, equity, and inclusion as an expectation of each position.

**Members:**

Jerry Baron; IR-4 Executive Director  
Doug Buhler; Administrative Advisor-NC  
Liwei Gu; Regional Director-SOR  
Matt Hengel; Regional Director-WR  
Marcel Holyoak; Administrative Advisor- WR  
Joe Munyaneza; USDA - ARS  
Michelle Samuel-Foo; USDA-NIFA  
Todd Scholz; CLC Chair  
Alvin Simmons; USDA-ARS  
John Wise; Regional Director-NCR/Chair PMC  
Simon Zebelo; Regional Director – NER

**Presenters:**

Michael Braverman; IR-4 HQ  
Jimmy Byrtus; IR-4 HQ  
Debbie Carpenter; IR-4 HQ  
Krystal Chojnacki; IR-4 HQ  
Dirk Drost; MUF  
Cristina Marchesan Marconi; IR-4 HQ  
Johanna Mazlo; IR-4 HQ  
Philip Moore; IR-4 HQ  
Cristi Palmer; IR-4 HQ  
Venkat Pedibhotla; IR-4 HQ  
Hannah Ross; IR-4 HQ  
Dan Rossi; IR-4 HQ  
Janine Spies; IR-4 SOR

**Wednesday, October 26, 3:00 pm to 4:30 pm - CIPM Conference Room in Venture IV**

-- John Wise called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm--

- 1) Joint meeting of PMC, Regional Field Coordinators, Laboratory Coordinators, QA Unit, and HQ staff
  - a) Welcome (Wise)
    - Dr. Wise welcomed the group.
  - b) Update (Baron)
    - Dr. Baron thanked the participants of the NRPM for their work to develop a research plan for 2023 this week.
    - Dr. Baron gave an update on the HQ relocation and current staffing levels; the NC Regional lab closure has been finalized; the QA unit reorganization; an increased funding allocation from USDA NIFA; activities and accomplishments in 2022; new regulatory challenges; the value the IR-4 Project contributes to the US Economy; and an overview of the Path Forward 2.0 recommendations.
  - c) Milestones: Retirements and New Hires
    - Dr. Hengel mentioned the upcoming retirement of Michael Horak and the recent retirement of Stephen Flanagan in the Western Region.
    - New hires from each of the regions (field and laboratory), headquarters, Canada PMC, and the Minor Use Foundation were introduced.
    - New hires were introduced including:
      - WR: Dr. Kari Arnold, the new Regional Field Coordinator of the Western Region.
      - NCR: Nicole Soldan, the new Regional Field Coordinator of the North Central Region; and Celeste Wheeler as the FRD and will assist Nicole with QC work.
      - SOR: New Chemists in the Lab, a new incoming Analytical Chemist that has been given a job offer, and Kristen Searer-Jones, the new Assistant Regional Field Coordinator.
      - NER: New FRD Wesley Bouchelle.
      - ARS: Charleston: Thomas Hardy (transitioning to Pollution prevention) – will rehire for the position, John Stone (temp employee in Tifton), and an upcoming retirement.
      - HQ: National Information and Communications Officer: Hannah Ross; Senior Operations Associate: Allison Ballantyne; Business Operations Associate: David Schnatter; and Principal Plant Pathologist: Jaimin Patel.
      - Canada: Christine Gagnon and Sheryl Lonsbary.
      - MUF: Veronica Picado.
  - d) Issues with Data Entry-Corrective Actions and Path Forward (Baron)

- Dr. Baron discussed errors found in the database, and corrective actions being made as well as implementing new measures and additional FTE allocated to help prevent these errors moving forward.
  - A discussion was held regarding the source of the issues, the need for enhanced training and clearer definitions and the need for additional information to be captured/noted/recorded during the technical meetings to ensure correct capture of actions.
- e) Path Forward 2.0 Implementation overview (Baron and Chojnacki)
- Dr. Baron introduced the item, some of the high level outcomes of the Path Forward 2.0 report, and the Implementation Plan developed and approved by the PMC. Baron reported that implementation activities have commenced including: performance expectations and associated dates for final submissions; field trial reimbursement increases (complete); communications enhancements (both internal and external); training (leadership and new employee); technology task force; and addressing the laboratory backlog and identifying a National Laboratory Director (complete).
  - A discussion was held regarding how this information will be used as an advisory for supervisors of these positions in their formal evaluations; whether we are currently receiving inquiries from supervisors on IR-4 staff performance; and the change in the funding mechanism to a single grant and the ability to ensure performance.
- f) Plans for National Educational Conference
- i) Program overview (Marconi)
- C. Marconi reviewed the details for the 2023 National Education Conference including: the registration deadline (December 1); and the sessions included in the Draft agenda.
  - A discussion was held as to whether or not there will be hands on training with the new efield data notebook software.
- ii) Proposed change in awards (Spies)
- Dr. Spies reported on a new award committee that emerged from the education and training committee and brought forth a proposal to: present regional awards at the NEC this year, and a proposal for issuance the National Recognition of Excellence Award including nomination form, selection committee and due dates. Each region/ARS will present their own 1-2 technical and meritorious awards to a field, lab or QA professional.
  - National Award of Excellence nominations will be due the first week of December to the PMC search committee; regional award deadlines will be the first week of January.
- g) IR-4 Communications Update (Ross and Chojnacki)
- Dr. Chojnacki introduced the topic, H. Ross presented on: new stories; website updates; social media posts with positive engagement; reviewed the analytics from the newsletter and social media; hi-lighted enhanced communications; updated on the development on our 60 Years communications strategy; and reviewed the events held.
- h) Plans for The IR-4 Project: 60 Years (Chojnacki, Ross and Baron)
- H. Ross presented our 60 Year strategy with the: goals to address gaps in understanding about the work of IR-4 Project; to create outreach materials around a shared identity and unified messaging; outlined all of the audiences we need to strengthen our reach to; reviewed the timing and plan for the roll-out of the 60 Year strategy; reviewed content and materials that would be developed; and shared items that the PMC could do to support the 60 Year campaign.
  - A discussion was held regarding opportunities to extend the campaign through the EHC priority setting session and regional commodity meetings.

The meeting recessed for the evening at 4:57 pm.

**Thursday, October 27, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm – Markle Conference Room in Venture IV**

-- John Wise called the meeting to order at 8:03 am --

- 2) Approval of minutes, new agenda items (Wise) (Handout)
  - **A motion for approval of the Summer 2022 PMC Meeting Minutes was made by Matt Hengel; seconded by Liwei Gu; unanimously approved.**
  - New Agenda were requested including:
    - Dr. Carpenter noted that there should be an action to establish a PMC committee for Awards.
    - Dr. Baron requested there be a discussion on the distribution of funds for the Food Program.
    - Todd Scholz noted there needed to be official approval to add Chris Bardenhagen of the Cherry Marketing Institute onto the CLC (will handle during update).
- 3) Funding update
  - a) Delays in distribution of 2022 funds; lessons learned (Baron and Chojnacki)
    - Dr. Baron acknowledges delays in the distribution of 2022 funds and that there were additional delays caused by the change from no IDC in year one to IDC in year two.
  - b) Status/expectations with 2023 Appropriations (Scholz & Beaudreau)
    - T. Scholz introduced David Beaudreau of DC Legislative and Regulatory Services (DCLRS) and Beaudreau updated on funding requests made to the house and senate in the previous years and plans for increases in the ask for this year on the appropriation and authorization sides of the funding process and on engagement efforts with Friends of IR-4.
  - c) CLC plans for FY 2024 (Scholz) (Slides)
    - T. Scholz provided a report on: the mission and story of IR-4 and its history of successes; the future of IR-4 including IPM, tactical sciences, ESA, and climate smart agriculture; reviewed the CLC membership, outgoing members, and new potential members; reviewed the budget appropriation process; outlined the strategy for requests to congress for appropriations; announced that the new chair of the Government Relations Sub Committee is Jonathan Sarager of Western Growers; and shared plans for 2023 House and Senate outreach.
    - **A motion was made to approve Chris Bardenhagen of the Cherry Marketing Institute as a member of the Commodity Liaison Committee by Todd Scholz, seconded by John Wise; unanimously approved.**
  - d) Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance proposal (Scholz and Baron) (Handout)
    - Dr. Baron reported that: Western Growers made a proposal to increase IR-4 Project funding in the Farm Bill; while there was no dollar amount specified in the ask, that this, along with the efforts of Friends of IR-4, could result in a \$15 million increase.
- 4) Unit update
  - a) USDA
    - i) NIFA (Samuel-Foo) (Slides)
      - Dr. Samuel-Foo provided an update on NIFA that: NIFA is fully staffed and introduced the program team; increasing customer service; launching a new website; reengineering RFAs; and shared funding opportunities at NIFA including AFRI, conference, and equipment grants. Dr. Samuel-Foo further updated on: engagement efforts with IR-4; increasing participation of underrepresented groups in IR-4 Programs; and that federal funds cannot be used to support tobacco programs.
      - A discussion was held regarding: AFRI grants and that residue projects have no shot but that integrated solutions may be well aligned; the NEC may be a good training to submit for a conference grant; equipment grants and purchases of lab

equipment and oversight measures to comply with GLP; CLC participation in a meeting with the advisory board; the possibilities of RFCs and other IR-4 members to expand invitations to the FUW and other meetings to underrepresented groups and potentially submitting a conference grant to support registration for these attendees.

- ii) ARS (Munyaneza and Simmons)
  - Dr. Munyaneza introduced Dr. Simmons who provided an update on staffing transitions in Charleston, Wapato, and Tifton; thanked MSU for the transfer of some lab equipment; and expressed a commitment to continued partnership with IR-4 including ARS' participation in the eFDB trial and the NEC in Puerto Rico.
  - On behalf of Dr. Munyaneza, Dr. Simmons reported that: they recommended for ARS to include in the green paper the ARS IR-4 work that captures the registration efforts for field, flora, and ornamental, thanked Jerry and Cristi for providing information for the annual report, and that they cited the Economic Impact Report (ARS portion) for economic impact.
- b) CLC (Scholz)
  - Update provided in a previous agenda item.
- c) North Central Region (Buhler and Wise)
  - Dr. Wise provided an update on: the NCR lab shutdown and that outstanding lab samples have been redistributed for analysis; lab equipment transferred to ARS labs; closing out QA documents in the NCR and scanning to HQ; two staff members are supporting RFC Nicole Soldan some support and learning how to do QC and outreach; and thinking about succession planning for critical positions such as FRDs.
  - Dr. Buhler reported: that the communications ahead of the NCR lab closure helped to make the transition smooth and transparent; and noted that the NCR has excellent new team members transitioning in.
  - Dr. Baron acknowledged the excellent performance of Nicole Soldan in her new role and that HQ looks forward to working with her and supporting her.
- d) Northeast Region (Kairo and Zebelo) (Handout)
  - Dr. Zebelo reported: despite the delay in the new grant distributions they were able to move forward with pre-award on contracts; that the RFCs have done a push in outreach and now have all the states in the NER represented in research; established reoccurring meetings to keep the regional partners informed; and NER RFCs visited all of the research stations in the region.
  - A discussion was held regarding funding State Liaison Representative travel.
- e) Southern Region (Davis and Gu) (Handout)
  - Dr. Gu started by recognizing Dr. Hengel who recently visited the SOR and met about improving efficiency and SOPs. Dr. Gu reported that: the Florida lab has received some equipment from MSU and are installing them for use; the field work is going well with a few exceptions of the: banana trial in Puerto Rico destroyed in Hurricane Ian, hemp trials not performing in Florida Climate, and GLP compliance with new researchers in the region.
  - Dr. Gu reported that: the analytical lab is struggling to retain chemists due to competing industry in the region; they using a new hi-resolution instrument in the lab; identified a few difficult projects that will be moved to contract labs to keep the projects on track timeline wise; and reported on goals and plans established to increase productivity within the lab. Dr. Gu reported that for QA, they have completed 84% of the workload.
- f) Western Region (Holyoak and Hengel)
  - Dr. Holyoak reported on funding a new agricultural initiative at UC Davis and that the building the IR-4 lab is based in will undergo seismic renovations and the lab will have to temporarily move which may be very costly.

- Dr. Hengel reported that: Kari Arnold has joined as the new RFC; not looking to refill Stephen Flanagan's position in the region at this time; CDFA has decided to provide funding for CA field trial research an additional year (\$750k); the region will have several additional retirements in the next few years that the region is working on succession planning for; and QA is in full capacity.
  - Dr. Hengel further reported that: they are working on day zero storage stability; they have successfully produced CBD extract; the lab is temporarily down a chemist; and discussed the seismic building updates in 2024.
  - A discussion was held regarding Michael Horak's end date.
- g) Headquarters (Lommel and Baron)
- Dr. Baron reported that: there is a new search initiated for the CALS Dean at NC State and Dr. Lommel is the chair of the search committee; HQ is looking to advertise another position for QA and event support; HQ is working under a hybrid work environment but asking for people to all come in on Wednesdays so everyone can be in the office at the same time.

--The meeting recessed for a break at 10:20 am and reconvened at 10:36 am --

5) NRSP-4 Mid-term review (Buhler)

- Dr. Buhler reported that it is due in January, that the Administrative Advisers will comprise a review panel, and that a financial plan may be needed to be provided as part of the process.

6) Program update/discussions

a) Food Program

i) Residue research

(1) Field & Analytical (Carpenter) (Slides)

- Dr. Carpenter provided a report on: in 2022 there were 618 new uses and 546 tolerances established thus far; there have been 7 submissions to US EPA in 2022; Phase VI of the crop grouping update has been completed; reviewed that status of Field Data Notebooks; provided an Analytical Labs update; and reported that two labs were visited since the prior PMC meeting.
- A discussion was held regarding improving efficiencies in returning ASRs to HQ and outstanding field data notebooks.

(2) Quality Assurance (Mazlo) (Slides)

- Dr. Malzlo provided a report on: compliance underway with new FRDs and NCR lab closure; consolidating databases; updating the QA website and GLP Booklet; participating in the planning of the NEC; ongoing inspections and audits; and training and updates on eQA/eDOCS.
- A discussion was held regarding the 2022 audits as comparison to 2021 and it is well aligned.

ii) Product Performance (Pedibhotla) (Slides)

- Dr. Pedibhotla reported on: the 2032 Food Use Field Trial budget on the residue and performance programs; "Red A" trials and upgrade studies; and registrant support for the studies.
- A discussion was held regarding the shift from residue work to performance work and how that impacts our staff at the regions and HQ; the item was tabled for further discussion during a later agenda item.

iii) Integrated Solutions (Pedibhotla)

- Dr. Pedibhotla reported on the Integrated Solutions program funding.

b) Environmental Horticulture Program (Palmer)

- Dr. Palmer reported on: the locations of the EHC research and activities across disciplines; completed 13 data summaries so far this year; shared the 2023 proposed

reimbursement rates and distribution of funding among the regions; shared task leads for EHC research activities; and 2023 workshop plans.

- A discussion was held regarding how substitutions for projects are handled.
- c) Biopesticides Regulatory Support (Braverman)
- Dr. Braverman reported on: recognizing Bill Barney and Philip Moore for their work on the program; new crops (walnuts) are emerging for biopesticide work that require efficacy studies; a shift from just looking at organisms to what metabolites that organism produces and now into bioinformatics; IR-4 Project work leading to successes in Europe; and provided a status update of various ongoing project that address pests and invasive species.
  - A discussion was held as to if the SCRI grants would be a good opportunity to fund some projects such as citrus greening (IR-4 as a potential contractor).

--The meeting recessed for lunch at 11:52 am and reconvened at 12:44 pm --

d) International (MUF Drost/Gore) (Slides)

- A. Gore provide an overview of the Minor Use Foundation including: the board; the vision and mission; they have 13 active projects with 5 more planned; IR-4 archives project; data generation for CODEX; and reviewed priority setting activities underway.
- A discussion was held regarding how IR-4 researchers receive funding for conducting MUF trials and how the MUF is funded.

7) Analytical Laboratory Analysis and Reporting Backlog (Carpenter & Hengel)

- Dr. Carpenter provided a report on: the backlog in the analytical labs including the background, causal challenges, and ways to address it.
- In response to an action item in a previous PMC Meeting Dr. Hengel presented a Backlog Response Policy and reported on several solutions outlined including: better planning and lab assignments; a shorter methods development timeframe (6 months); consequences for backlogs. If approved; this document will become part of the lab guidance document.
- In response to an action item in a previous PMC Meeting Dr. Hengel presented the IR-4 Laboratory Guidance Document updated with: the addition of the National Laboratory Director; method working section with reference to backlog response policy; updated storage stability section; R&D section to help with difficult method development; descriptions for matrix max samples; updated ASR example; and minor updates surrounding standards.
- A discussion was held as to if  $R^2$  is a requirement and why use .985, the use of weighted curves, and US EPA standards.
- **A motion for approval of the Backlog Response Policy was made by Liwei Gu; seconded by Todd Scholz; unanimously approved.**
- **A motion for approval of the adoption of the IR-4 Laboratory Guidance Document was made by Liwei Gu, seconded by Todd Scholz; unanimously approved.**
- **Action Item: Matt Hengel will circulate the cover page of the IR-4 Laboratory Guidance Document for signature.**

8) Future workload in the residue research (Baron & Carpenter)

- Dr. Carpenter reported on difficulties filling the residue slate for 2022, 2023, the reasons why, and implications for the future.
- Dr. Baron commented that the timeframe for newer chemistries is long and costly and the shift from residue to performance and efficacy.
- A discussion was held regarding the background of the study directors in biological disciplines, the importance of site separation for field trails, the burden on study directors if a contract lab is used; percentage of trials that might fail; types of research our centers

could conduct to keep their programs whole; and a question for the CLC about IR-4 conducting efficacy work.

--The meeting recessed for a break at 2:26 pm and reconvened at 2:42 pm --

9) Environmental Horticulture Review (Baron)

- Dr. Baron reported that: while periodic reviews of the food program take place there are only secondary reviews conducted of the Environmental Horticulture (EHC) as part of those, but it has never been a primary focus of a review; there have been significant contributions to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by the program as outlined in the Economic Impact Report; last review has been approximately 15 years ago; if approved by the PMC, Amy Upton has agreed to lead a review committee; reviewed the items this committee would be charged with reviewing; and the potential to get the review completed and presented at the March joint CLC/PMC meeting.
- **A motion for approval to support a review of the Environmental Horticulture Program and to appoint Amy Upton as the review panel chair, with the report target date for submission at the 2023 Spring PMC Meeting was made by Matt Hengel, seconded by Todd Scholz; unanimously approved.**

10) PMC to set Awards Committee (Chojnacki) (Handout)

- Dr. Baron said while it is good to put awards out, raise a flag of giving two meritorious service awards and technical awards each year.
- A discussion was held regarding increasing the regional awards for this one year aligned with the NEC and moving forward we would return to only one per category in future years; up to one nominee per region and ARS for the National Recognition of Excellence Award (6 nominees total); and if the group at HQ who selects the SOAR award (HQ Management Team) could go ahead and make the selection.
- **A motion to have the HQ management team review and vote on the nominations for the National Recognition of Excellence Award was made by John Wise; seconded by Matt Hengel; unanimously approved.**

11) Food Program funding distribution discussion (Baron) (Slide)

- Dr. Baron shared a spreadsheet with proposed budget distributions and noted the product performance budget was exponentially larger due to multiple years of trials required. Dr. Baron reported that: there was a discussion at the FUW and agreement to move money left on the table from the residue program into the product performance; and that this amounts to \$160,000 in 2023.
- A discussion was held about the timing of efficacy, crop safety, and residue projects that require laboratory analysis, and what data is needed to ensure a successful project (efficacy); how to secure additional funding if/when needed; holistic thinking about how we fund our field research centers; and the additional work the RFCs did to secure estimates form product performance.
- **Action Item: Jerry Baron will lead an effort to look into different models to fund research centers in March-July, 2023.**
- **Consensus: To move savings from residue into product performance and also \$50,000 savings from integrated solutions into product performance.**

12) Executive Session I

The members of the Project Management Committee continued Executive Session at 3:37 am.

The meeting recessed for the evening at 4:22 pm.



## Friday October 28, 8:00 am - 12:00 noon– Markle Conference Room in Venture IV

-- John Wise called the meeting to order at 8:02 am –

- 13) Workshop Debrief/Preliminary discussions on 2023 meeting (Pedibhotla and Baron)
- Dr. Pedibhotla introduced the item and reported that: there was good participation (110 in-person and 65 virtual) and in-person attendance; the priority setting goals were met and the meeting ended early thanks to all of the preparation of researchers and RFCs.
  - Dr. Baron reported: that during the two years of the pandemic IR-4 was able to carry on successfully as a virtual meeting and this year it was in-person meeting with a virtual option; options moving forward; the 2023 workshop will be planned to be held in the Raleigh area; and that we need feedback on 2024 and beyond (virtual vs in person vs hybrid).
  - A discussion was held regarding the pros and cons of the different formats; interaction in-person is priceless; some companies and agencies are still restricting or cutting back on travel; stress to virtual participants to stay engaged; establishing some presentation times as firm times (initial reports) and others can be more fluid; to maintain 2023 as in-person with a virtual component; new commodities that joined during the virtual component were not familiar with nor seem to trust the process; and the increased costs of a virtual component.
  - **Consensus: To maintain the 2023 Food Use Workshop as an in-person event with a virtual component.**
- 14) Standardized SOPs for Field Sites (Carpenter)
- Dr. Carpenter noted that she was reporting back on a prior action item from a PMC meeting on standardizing a single SOP, and the Education and Training Committee are eager to move forward with more than a single SOP.
  - C. Marconi reported that the committee held discussions about what types would be most effective (administrative and non-site specific); a subcommittee was established and 5 SOPs were identified as ones that could be standardized; that further discussion and review of the SOPs will be held at the NEC; and the benefits of standardization.
  - A discussion was held regarding: some SOPs being clearly not suitable to standardize, and some on the fence that will take some good writing; the hold-up may be having people embrace a new way/SOP; the plan for the session at the NEC; and specifications that may vary across regions and ways to address that including referencing a manual developing a training session on writing an SOP.
  - **Action Item: Cristina Marconi will send a document with the proposal from the Education and Training Committee on SOP standardization to the PMC.**
- 15) Detailed discussion of Path Forward 2.0 Implementation (Baron) (Handouts)
- a) Update of Performance Expectations (Regional Directors)
- Dr. Baron introduced the item and background of the intent of the performance expectations. Dr. Baron presented drafts for Regional Directors and HQ Management.
  - A discussion was held regarding: the need to add enhancing diversity, equity and inclusion as an expectation; the timeline for the remaining performance expectations; using “if applicable” as needed as all items may not apply universally; the difficulty with implementing these with annual reviews/cycles; discussion of positional supervisors at each region; sharing both positive and constructive feedback; and a variety of ways to include this feedback in an annual review at various institutions and taking an alternating year approach by position.
  - **Action Item: Dr. Baron will add to each of the Performance Expectations a bullet point about enhancing diversity, equity, and inclusion as an expectation of each position.**
- b) Communications
- H. Ross reported on work toward establishing the Communications Committee.

- A discussion was held about getting Hannah connected with communications folks at partner institutions; the expectations among the regions for communications support from HQ; including the Regional Directors on some communications decisions being made; and making sure the regional websites represent the region as a whole and not a single state.

--The meeting recessed for a break at 10:10 am and reconvened at 10:23 am --

c) Training

- Dr. Baron reported that this item was discussed during the joint meeting portion of the meeting.

d) Technology

i) Electronic Field Data notebook (eFDB) (Moore and Byrtus) (Slides)

- J. Byrtus and P. Moore reported on: the actions currently underway with the eFDB pilot program with 16 trial notebooks; and the remaining actions to wrap up the pilot, solicit feedback and develop SOPs.
- A discussion was held regarding: the requirements at UMES to get the eFDB vendor established and ready to go; which institution will control the application (HQ); and potential issues such as changing security requirements and issues overcome with installing software on university owned computers.

ii) Other technology

- Dr. Baron reported that a technology committee will be established to look at these opportunities and provide recommendations.

e) Analytical Laboratory Backlog

i) National Laboratory Director

- Dr. Baron reported that this item was discussed during the joint meeting portion of the meeting.

16) Proposal to engage a larger research/extension community (Baron)

- Dr. Baron reported that: we are facing a reduction in the number of available researchers; that universities are not refilling these positions; there are opportunities to engage the larger research and extension communities including those at HBCU's; and that a task force would be initiated to help close the gap in these opportunities.
- A discussion was held regarding bolstering the regional efforts to reach out to researchers as well; and the need to compile a list of the institutions and researchers we want to reach out to.

17) Executive Session II

a) Election of PMC Chair

The members of the Project Management Committee moved to Executive Session at 11:07 am.

The members reconvened from Executive Session at 11:25 pm with the following motions or actions out of Executive Session:

- **A motion to nominate and approve Matt Hengel as the new Project Management Committee Chair was by Jerry Baron, seconded by Todd Scholz; unanimously approved.**

**A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 11:26 by John Wise seconded by Matt Hengel; unanimously approved**