



MINUTES
Project Management Committee
Summer 2024 Meeting
July 9-11, 2024
Virtual Meeting

MOTIONS AND ACTION ITEMS

Motions/Consensus Items:

1. A motion to approve the Spring 2024 PMC & CLC Joint meeting minutes was made by Alvin Simmons, seconded by Todd Scholz; **unanimously approved.**
2. A motion to recess the meeting for the evening at 3:45pm was made by Jerry Baron, seconded by Liwei Gu; **unanimously approved.**
3. A motion was made to approve the parameters of the 2025 Field Research Food Program as outlined below:
 - 37 New “A” Priorities and 6 PUP/RUs “A” or “H+”
 - 9 Product Performance “H+” Priorities
 - 6 Integrated Solutions “A” Priorities and if funding remains move on to fund additional “B” Prioritiesby Todd Scholz; seconded by Simon Zebelo; **motion passed (1 absent: Alvin Simmons).**
4. A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 3:10 pm by Alvin Simons seconded by Liwei Gu; **unanimously approved.**

Votes Made Via Email In-Between Regular Meetings:

1. The PMC voted via email for approval to provide biopesticide regulatory support to Soilcea in regards to CRISPR edited technologies to manage huanglongbing (HLB) in citrus. **Approved by majority via written consent (1 decline: Liwei Gu; 2 abstentions: Jerry Baron and Mary Hausbeck).**
2. The PMC voted via email for approval to provide biopesticide regulatory support to USDA - ARS in regards to using SlaGemV1 mycovirus on sunflowers to reduce the virulence of disease causing Sclerotinia sclerotiorum. **Approved by majority via written consent (1 decline: Matt Hengel; 3 abstentions: Jerry Baron, Mary Hausbeck, and Alvin Simmons).**
3. The PMC voted via email to decline the provision of biopesticide regulatory support to Amalgamated Sugar Cooperative for the registration of Funibiol eucalyptus extract for disease management in sugar beets. **Declined by majority via written consent (2 abstentions: Jerry Baron and Alvin Simmons).**
4. The PMC voted via email for approval of Michelle Starke of CoverCress’s membership to the Commodity Liaison Committee. **Unanimously approved by written consent.**

Action Items:

1. **Action Item:** J. Baron will reach out to biopesticide partners/stakeholders to request their review and input of the proposed biopesticide regulatory support review process and report back to the PMC.

2. **Action Item:** K. Chojnacki will reach out to financial contact at each regional subaward institution to request information on what will be needed for NCE moving forward.
3. **Action Item:** J. Baron will add an Integrated Solutions listening session to the 2024 Food Use Workshop Agenda and add a follow up agenda item for the fall PMC meeting.

Members:

Jerry Baron; IR-4 Executive Director
 Doug Buhler; Administrative Advisor-NCR
 Rubella Goswami, USDA-NIFA
 Liwei Gu; Regional Director-SOR
 Mary Hausbeck; Regional Director - NCR
 Matt Hengel; PMC Chair; Regional Director-WR
 Marcel Holyoak; Administrative Adviser – WR

Steve Lommel; Administrative Adviser- HQ
 Todd Scholz; CLC Chair
 Alvin Simmons; USDA-ARS
 Simon Zebelo; Regional Director - NER

Presenters:

Alice Axtell, IR-4 HQ
 David Beaudreau; DCLRS
 Michael Braverman; IR-4 HQ
 Debbie Carpenter; IR-4 HQ
 Krystal Chojnacki; IR-4 HQ
 Christina Dineen; IR-4 HQ
 Anna Gore; MUF
 Cristina Marconi; IR-4 HQ
 Johanna Mazlo; IR-4 HQ

Philip Moore; IR-4 HQ
 Cristi Palmer; IR-4 HQ
 Jaimin Patel; IR-4 HQ
 Thomas Pike; IR-4 HQ
 Josh Peterson; IR-4 HQ
 Hannah Ross; IR-4 HQ
 Robert Welker; IR-4 HQ
 John Wise; Consultant

Tuesday July 9, 2024 11:00 am to 4:00 pm ET

Matt Hengel called the meeting to order at 11:01 am.–

1. Welcome and Introductions.
 - M. Hengel welcomed the group, reviewed virtual meeting etiquette, and initiated introductions around the room and on Zoom.
2. Approval of minutes & new agenda items. (Handout)
 - M. Hengel asked the PMC if there were any additional changes to be made to the minutes, several typos were corrected; none additional offered.
 - **A motion to approve the Spring 2024 PMC & CLC Joint meeting minutes was made by Alvin Simmons, seconded by Todd Scholz; unanimously approved.**
3. Administrative Advisors Updates
 - NCR: D. Buhler stated that he will be presenting on the NRSP renewal during a later agenda item.
 - NC State: S. Lommel reported that things have reached equilibrium at NC State in terms of personnel, operations and facilities and that he will defer the rest of his time for the NRSP renewal.
 - Jerry Baron added that Dr. Rich Bonanno is leaving NC State as the Extension Director and moving into the position of Executive Director of Southern Region Extension Directors Association.

- WR: M. Holyoak reported that they are recruiting a new Dean of their college and there are other changes in campus leadership as well; seismic renovations are still planned; and that operations are overall going well.
- ARS: A. Simmons shared comments on behalf of J. Munyaneza; and that ARS leadership expressed their appreciation of the work and partnership of the IR-4 Project.
- NRSP- 4 Renewal (Handout)
 - D. Buhler reported: that the notice to renew has been submitted; that there has been work on the approach to ensure that funding levels are maintained; and work to provide a response to the outcomes of the mid-term review.
 - J. Baron reported: that he visited with the four Regional Associations of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors and provided an overview of the current environment of pest management domestically and abroad including the implications of judicial rulings; and requested the group to reconsider the proposed cut to funding.
 - S. Lommel reported: that the sentiment to cut was grounded in eliminating perpetual NRSP funding to groups as well as the prospect of increased funding to IR-4 from NIFA; that the shift to organics and biologics positions IR-4 in an important way especially in the Chevron Doctrine ruling; and that climate change is bringing forth new pest issues that IR-4 is geared toward addressing.
 - A discussion was held regarding providing regional critical challenges and examples that link to IR-4 up front in the renewal request; regulatory authority is increasing, as is climate uncertainty and disease uncertainty; and that IR-4 has to be robust so it can pivot and be responsive to those uncertainties.
- ARS Umbrella Account Funds
 - A. Simmons reported: that there was a Congressional appropriation budget cut to ARS that resulted in a loss of umbrella account funding as well as others; the Commodity Liaison Committee (CLC)/ Friends of IR-4 wrote to ARS leadership to maintain these umbrella funds and ARS responded that they will make whole the funds for 2025 for the IR-4 Cooperative Agreement.
 - A discussion was held regarding a new "Dear Colleague" letter that was being drafted to maintain the funds that support IR-4-related work at ARS offices; that IR-4 was able to support the EHC work for a year, but that was not sustainable; and that there have been contingency plans developed in the amount of projects funded in the future if these funds are permanently removed.

4. NIFA Update

- R. Goswami provided an update: thanking IR-4 for submitting the Congressional report; the NIFA budget has been reduced by 37 million and travel has been reduced as a result; the upcoming Farm Bill and calls for data and how NIFA can amplify our news stories; the FY 2024 grant has been submitted and NIFA hopes to return the continuation promptly; the next year grant would move to a non-competitive grant and that when it does, IR-4 should attach an NRSP mid-term review to the non-competitive application.
- A discussion was held regarding NIFA representation on the NRSP committee.

5. CLC & Friends Update

- T. Scholz provided an update on: membership – currently 31- and working on adding several more members; appreciation for inclusion of CLC representation on the PMC; the status of subcommittees (government); activities to secure increased funding and working with DCLRS to make visits impactful.

- D. Beaudreau reported: the House Agriculture Appropriations Bill is being marked up tomorrow and thus far IR-4 has seen an increase; the current status of the Farm Bill and potential passage timeline; and reported that Friends of IR-4 currently has 26 members.
- A discussion was held regarding the mechanism by which IR-4 funds are allocated (Farm Bill vs Appropriations funding).

6. Unit Updates

- NCR: M. Hausbeck provided a report on: decommissioning the South Dakota site this year and the need to have the QA audits in prior to that; an electronic field data notebook training in the spring; a State Liaison Representative (SLR) meeting held in spring; and the status of a problematic field trials.
 - A discussion was held regarding the reasoning for the decommissioning of the South Dakota site; and headquarters reaching out to the missing SLR states in the region.
- NER (Handout): S. Zebelo provided a report on: the year 2 and 3 NIFA sub on subaward status and budget for no-cost extension; year 4 UMES subaward grant documents have been submitted; trials underway including QA and QC being conducted; eFDB GLP training that was held in the region; the US EPA crop tour was held in the NCR in June and NCR staff was able to attend; SLR meetings were held to discuss research needs; and research work in the Zebelo lab that is underway.
- SOR (Handout): L. Gu provided a report: that Kristen has been doing a great job as the Interim Regional Field Coordinator; interviews will start next week for the RFC position; QC is going well; there was a loss of a FRD in the Homestead site and tropical trials are being relocated or delayed; there was a vacant chemist position and the position has been filled with the candidate starting later this year; the status of delayed ASRs; and QA is on schedule to finish their workload as planned.
- WR: M. Hengel reported: that field trials are progressing as scheduled and books are being returned at a good pace; Dr. Arnold has been reaching out to stakeholders in the region to bring awareness around IR-4; held an SLR meeting in April in Hawaii; Sherita Normington retired from the QA unit and a new QA coordinator has been hired: Laurel Hsieh; the lab is in good shape and working on method development for several projects; several publications have been released out of the lab; the UC Davis the seismic retrofit will require the lab to move in the spring of 2025; and that UC Davis continues to struggle with their sponsored program getting their funding out their researchers.
 - A discussion was held regarding the journal that the publication was submitted and the increasing costs at some research sites.
- ARS: A. Simmons reported: on the success of a controlled environment conference put on by ARS; on staffing levels and promotions at the various ARS laboratory facilities and research sites and that the leadership at the sites are committed to the IR-4 work; they are working to address backlog issues within the labs and updating SOPs; and funding challenges at some of the ARS sites due to budget cuts.
- HQ (Handout): J. Baron reported: on the current headquarters organizational chart; that staff are quickly learning their new roles; and reviewed new hires.

Break at 1:03. The meeting reconvened at 1:20 pm.—

7. Program/Platform/Committee Updates

- Food Program
 - Field Residue Studies (Handout)

- C. Marconi reported on the status of field data notebooks with the FRD, RFC, QA or Headquarters and on internal challenges such as analytical backlog and delayed field data books.
- Submissions (Handout)
 - T. Pike reported on regulatory challenges that impact submissions such as the Endangered Species Act (ESA), registration statuses of active ingredients in Europe, and holds on submissions by companies.
- Laboratory activities (Handout)
 - D. Carpenter reported on the status of each analytical laboratory, the plans for addressing challenges in labs moving forward, and addressing data quality in labs.
 - A discussion was held regarding the time needed to perform a stabilization study.
 - M. Hengel reported on the status of implementing a periodic training program for lab personnel, topics that will be covered, and the goal of giving all lab personnel a standard base of knowledge.
- Quality Assurance Unit (Handout)
 - J. Mazlo reported: EPA has a new inspector; QA completed an EPA inspection on an olive study; QA is working to decommission two sites; QA has been working closely with the eFDB rollout; and provided an update on new personnel and activities of the QA unit.
- Product Performance & Integrated Solutions (Handout)
 - A. Axtell reported: on the increase in product performance studies prioritized at the food use project; the number of trials and funding needed to complete 2023 and 2024 research including projects still on hold; the number of integrated solutions projects prioritized and trials underway for 2024; the number of trials and funding needed to complete trails from the 2023/2024 research plan; and reviewed the plans for the Industry Technology Session and the 2024 Food Use Workshop.
- Biopesticide Regulatory Support Update (Handout & Presentation)
 - M. Braverman provided an update and overview of the new biopesticide regulatory database; shared hurdles with building out the new database
 - M. Braverman reported: on the status of EPA submissions; new projects under development; future projects in the timeline; and announced his retirement.
 - Sentiments of appreciation for the work and contributions of Michael Braverman were shared.
- International/Minor Use Foundation (MUF)
 - A. Gore reported on the Global Minor Use Summit that took place earlier this year and reviewed the outcomes and key takeaways of the summit that the MUF is working on implementing; on the CODEX Committee on Pesticide Residue (CCPR) meeting; USDA has put out a call for proposal for the Assisting Specialty Crop Exports (ASCE) and the MUF is submitting a proposal; and Bill Barney will be participating in the 2024 Food Use Workshop to see where partnerships could take place.
 - J. Baron congratulated Anna Gore on her appointment as Executive Director of MUF.
- Environmental Horticulture (Handout)
 - C. Palmer reported on outcomes and impacts; 65,090 crop uses as of the end of June for the program's history; outstanding data reports; joint pilot project on thrips; and provided a wrap-up of the program over the past years.

- Sentiments of appreciation for the work and contributions of Cristi Palmer were shared.
- Communications (Handout)
 - H. Ross reported: on the 2024 visual strategy update; latest print materials including regional one pagers; new videos released and planned; digital updates including stories, social media, the newsletter and website; an update on the intranet project; and that the SOAR award nomination period is now open.
- Training Committee and other training activities (Handout)
 - C. Dineen reported: on the 2026 NEC planning underway; completed national SOPs and those in progress; magnitude of residue protocol template revision; updated IR-4 advisories; and national virtual training underway and planned.
 - A discussion was held regarding including the training committee chair in the lab training.
 - R. Welker provided a preliminary outline on the Field Research Director training and reported on work to create a slide deck and modules for the training.
- Technology Committee (Handout)
 - J. Peterson reported on results of a preliminary survey on technology needs including the IR-4 database and QA data management system updates.
- Network Expansion Project (Handout)
 - J. Patel reported: there are currently 9 members that meet monthly; publications submitted and underway; outreach and talks at conferences; and informational videos produced to bring about awareness about the priority setting process.

8. Proposed Parameters of 2025 field research program (Handout)

- A. Axtell reported: on the proposed 2025 budget as compared to 2024; the number of residue and performance trials the funding will support along with other funding sources; reviewed scenarios of funding models for Integrated Solutions (IS) projects; and the total number of projects (by type) available for selection at the 2024 Food Use Workshop.
 - A discussion was held regarding: an alternate number of projects to be funded through the Integrated Solutions Platform; if the IS program has been refined in terms of measures of success; the flat budget for the EHC platform and if an increase could boost our recruitment efforts for a new EHC Program Manager; IR-4's commitment to the EHC platform; and revisiting the IR-4 cost of trial reimbursement for ornamental research.

A motion to recess the meeting for the evening at 3:45pm was made by Jerry Baron, seconded by Liwei Gu; unanimously approved.

Wednesday July 10, 2024 11:00 am to 4:00 pm ET

Matt Hengel reconvened the meeting at 11:01 am. --

9. Pesticide Program Dialogue Committee (PPDC) Update (Presentation)

- J. Wise presented on the EPA's PPDC spring meeting, including refining maps that determine where endangered species are and impacted farms; a commitment from EPA to make mitigations more flexible; the herbicide strategy in place and forthcoming insecticide and fungicide strategies; label identifiers proposed related to the Endangered Species Act (ESA); and plans related to the ESA full roll-out.

- Proposed mitigation measures and the lack of data on whether the pesticide would actually harm the endangered species were discussed.

10. i-Advantage electronic Field Data Notebook update (Handout)

- P. Moore reported on the statistics associated with the eFDB usage; training and support activities; new processes that resulted from the eFDB roll-out; challenges and changes that have resulted from the implementation; and the overall acceptance of the program from FRDs and other users.

11. Crop Protection technology – trends/takeaways and challenges (Handout)

- J. Baron shared takeaways from annual company meetings and industry trends, including new requests being down, EPA's stoplight analysis is "freezing" more requests, a low number of new pesticide chemistries from registrants, a low number of companies presenting at the Industry Technology Session, and research allocation observations.
- J. Baron reported results and trends from investigating the future of biopesticides and emerging technologies, opportunities for growth in research in this area, and IR-4's biopesticide regulatory work to support registrations.
- A discussion was held regarding: synergies of this work with the MUF; the possibility of IR-4 to conduct biopesticide studies; efficacy work and lab analysis needed for the registration of biologicals; whether or not this work is required by the EPA to be conducted under GLPs; drawing on the areas where biologicals have been a success to extend the uses of existing chemistries; and clarifying the purpose of Integrated Solutions.
- A further discussion was held regarding reaching out to folks who had Integrated Solutions Projects in the past to learn what worked and what did not and the reduction in the number of researchers conducting residue work over the years.

Break at 1:00 pm. The meeting reconvened at 1:20 pm. –

12. Ways of Working in Food Program – Addressing partners issues (Handout)

- D. Carpenter reported on: operational challenges including funding, timing of partner input, test and reference substances, and modernization of systems; and potential solutions to those challenges including changes to IS priority setting at the Food Use Workshop.
- A discussion was held regarding: the high cost of test substance; adopting the Canadian timeline; renaming IS to something more clear; holding a biennial IS workshop; if the eFDB is reducing the timelines; how adjusting the timelines impact industry/growers; and having a separate biological technology session.

13. Process improvements in the IS Platform (Handout)

- A. Axtell reported: on the newly expanded research areas and products/devices/practices; updates to the website to provide clarity on the program; updates to the IS database and the search tools including a forthcoming updated request form; and requested help to get the word out about this program.

14. Biopesticide Regulatory Support Platform – detailed discussion (Handout)

- J. Baron reviewed an outline of a new process for new requests for biopesticide regulatory assistance including: a preliminary assessment; company/supporting group commitment to register; and secondary vetting by a qualified review team to determine if regulatory support will be provided.

- A discussion was held regarding vetting the process with CLC biopesticide representatives and EPA, current projects in the pipeline for approval, if information would be on our website to direct people to, and that the point system is a good idea and will help to give feedback to applicants.
- **Action Item:** J. Baron will contact biopesticide partners/stakeholders to request their review and input on the proposed biopesticide regulatory support review process and report back to the PMC.

15. Closing out the current grant (Handout)

- K. Chojnacki reported on the parameters of the current grant, the difference in the period of performance between year 1 and the new continuation, a no-cost extension issue, the period of performance moving forward, and managing end dates.
- A discussion was held regarding: distribution of researcher funds and completion of spending within two years; and issues with giving funding in arrears with the move award from regular residue work; and the possibility to write a proposal and make a request for two years' worth of funding in year 1&2.
- **Action Item:** K. Chojnacki will contact the financial contact at each regional sub-award institution to request information on what will be needed for NCE moving forward.

16. Future Meetings

- 2024 Food Use Workshop - Milwaukee; September 10-12, 2024
- Fall PMC/NRPM-Raleigh; October 21-25, 2024
- Joint Spring PMC/CLC meeting - Washington; March 4-6, 2025
- 2025 Food Use Workshop – Denver/TBD September 9-11, 2025
- 2025 Environmental Horticulture Workshop – Raleigh/TBD October 2025
- National Education Conference – TBD; February 1-5, 2026

A discussion was held regarding hosting a summer virtual meeting every other year and an in-person every other year with a tour (with a virtual option) and the first meeting should be a joint meeting in Canada.

A motion to adjourn the regular session at 3:19 pm and to move to Executive Session was made by Alvin Simmons; seconded by Todd Scholz; unanimously approved.

The meeting recessed for the evening at 3:21 pm. --

Thursday July 11, 2024 – 11:00 am to 4:00 pm ET

Matt Hengel convened the Executive Session at 11:00 am. --

17. Executive Session

Break at 1:40 pm. The meeting reconvened at 2:00 pm. –

The members reconvened into regular session at 3:09 pm with the following motions or actions:

- **A motion was made to approve the parameters of the 2025 Field Research Food Program as outlined below:**
 - **37 New “A” Priorities and 6 PUP/RUs “A” or “H+”**

- **9 Product Performance “H+” Priorities**
- **6 Integrated Solutions “A” Priorities and if funding remains move on to fund additional “B” Priorities**
by Todd Scholz; seconded by Simon Zebelo; motion passed (1 absent: Alvin Simmons).
- **Action Item:** J. Baron will add an Integrated Solutions listening session to the 2024 Food Use Workshop Agenda and add a follow up agenda item for the fall PMC meeting.

18. Adjourn

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 3:10 pm by Alvin Simons seconded by Liwei Gu; unanimously approved.