

Minutes of NE-162 Regional Project Meeting

*Rural Economic Development,
Alternatives in the New Competitive Environment
Wyndham Resort,
Miami Beach, FL
April 13, 2000*

Agenda:

- | Item |
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| 1 Call to order and member introductions |
| 2 Committee administrative issues |
| 3 Report from NE Directors, Dan Rossi, Ad. Advisor |
| 4 Federal Budgets and Research Prospects |
| 5 Speaker: Mark Bailey, Program Director, NRI, USDA |
| 6 Discussion of 2001 meeting dates and location |
| 7 Election of 2001 Secretary/Chair-elect |
| 8 State report summaries |

Call to order and membership introductions

Chair, Dawn Thilmany called the meeting to order at 12:00 PM. The participants were asked to introduce themselves.

Last name	First name	State	University
Adamson	B.	South Dakota	South Dakota State U.
Alwang	Jeff	Virginia	Virginia Tech.
Barkley	David	South Carolina	Clemson U.
Cooke	Steve	Idaho	U. of Idaho
Deller	Steve	Wisconsin	U. of Wisconsin
Francis	Joseph	New York	Cornell U.
Goldman	George	California	U. of California-Berkeley
Hastings	Steve	Delaware	U. of Delaware
Jansen	Edmund, Jr.	New Hampshire	U. of New Hampshire
Kilkenny	Maureen	Iowa	Iowa State U.
Kraybill	David	Ohio	The Ohio State U.
Leistriz	Larry	North Dakota	North Dakota State U.
Renkow	Mitch	North Carolina	North Carolina State U.
Rossi	Daniel*	New Jersey	Rutgers U.
Smith	Steve	Pennsylvania	Penn. State U.
Stallman	Judith	Texas	Texas A&M U.
Thilmany	Dawn	Colorado State	Colorado State U.
Weber	Bruce	Oregon	Oregon State U.

* Advisor

Administrative issues

Report from NE Directors, Dean Dan Rossi, Administrative Advisor

The status of NE-162

The current research program ends on 30 Sept 2002. The annual reports are due. The reports need to be integrated and not a collection of projects. The focus is on national collaboration and grants.

The Farm bill's impact is the focus on programs, inputs and outcomes in CES. Reports are due in December 2000/March 2001. The aggregate impact from our stations is 33,000 CRIS projects that make the story hard to tell.

Also: Multifunction activities, multi-state requirements. ES/CES need to document, as a legal requirement is auditable.

Also: Stakeholder input is needed. The implications for multi-state projects: 1) guidelines from CSREES, 2) more focus on expected outcomes rather than research methods.

Federal funding: formula funding is level in amount, while NRI, competitive funding is increasing.

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Federal funds: IFAFS (Inputs for ag. Food system) 401 with \$20 million. FRA (Funds for Rural America) is \$60 million.

Q: (S.H) What is the difference between state plans of work and Hatch projects:

A: The Farm bill requires state plans of work. These are approved for 5 yrs. You still need Hatch project approval. Regional projects are multi-state projects.

Q: (D.K.) 25% of Hatch funds only on integrated ES/CES projects and the same for Smith funds.

A: This is a result of an increased call for accountability.

Q: (S.H.) Two years is not too soon to think about reauthorization of the NE-162 project.

A: If CES were started now, then what would it look like? You have to tell your story.

Q: (B.W.) What kinds of outcomes do you use?

A: We have not told our story.

Q: (D.B.) Sometimes our outcome is the prevention of a mistake(s).

Administration discussion

(B.W.) Lets structure the next meeting around a flip chart on outcomes, collaborations, joint efforts identified.

(D.T.) Cut and paste state reports by objectives and send in state reports by objectives. Are we weak on diversity in labor supply research? There is a Western Coordinating Committee on

immigration labor. Perhaps we should integrate with the WCC on immigration to meet this objective.

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(D.T.) cont. We need to focus on research. If a conference is included then put them in the minutes. Put an organized session as part of a joint conference included in the minutes. (see conference handout)

(G.G.) Social science with expertise in measuring impacts, e.g., IR-6, ag. productivity. It is difficult to measure impacts of social science research and extension.

(S.H.) "A public official used this information."

(J.S.) "How many jobs did you create."

(S.D.) Who is the audience for this information? What is the measure of success? Money? Journal articles? Jobs? Case studies? Success stories?

(D.T.) We need publications, objectives, success stories, and cross state cooperation.

(M.R.) Include impact statements including press releases and self-promotion in the report.

(D.K.) This can be a minor effort w/ a big impact.

(S.H.) We could have a list server and maintain an informal collaboration that is invisible.

(D.R.) We could develop common databases, common methods under different settings.

(S.D.) CPAN not mentioned.

(B.W.) Bruce will attempt this approach.

(D.J.) Send in success stories.

(J.F.) Impact potentials?

(D.R.) We need two or three different successes per year. We need a new way of thinking.

(B.W.) Suggestion for next year: 1) list of publications and 2) one outcome, across states preferably.

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(M.K.) Teaching, research, extension, and service are inputs and not just extension.

(D.R.) The focus needs to be on making a difference. We are here to solve problems. So what problems are we solving? A research report needs a "so what" statement. New federal and ES approach makes it a local responsibility to avoid duplication and spread the fixed costs.

(D.T.) We need a statement of some sort, a paragraph, e.g., CRIS statement.

National Research Initiative, USDA

NRI discussion

D.T. Money is available from NRI for cross state collaboration as well as conference funds to pay speakers and for travel.

D.B. Are cross state proposals favored, e.g., P.I.'s from five different states? This can create a free rider problem.

S.D. What are the NRI criteria for evaluating proposals? What is the weight for technical soundness?

D.T. NRI criteria is 1) a good model, 2) tell a good story, and 3) a good survey approach. Use a 'no hole' approach, not necessarily a sophisticated model approach. We need sociology and demography as our allies.

J.S. How are the panel and the chair of the panel selected?

D.T. The NRI social sciences panels include agricultural economists, rural sociologists, demographers, and business school researchers. At the margin, economists tend not to do cross-disciplinary research and other social science disciplines do. In the proposals the narrative is key, the methods are less important.

M.K. Both as a submitter and as a reviewer I have found that the more explicit you are in your proposal, the less successful you are. Preliminary empirical results are better than a more specifications for the model.

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D.K. Multidisciplinary proposals alone are not enough. They must also be free of jargon and well motivated.

D.B. One approach is to ask a rural sociologist to read your NRI proposal and make suggestions.

M.K. If the to 10% of the proposals are economic, then there is a tendency to spread the money around to the other disciplines.

Speaker: Mark Bailey, Program Director, NRI, USDA

What happens from gate to plate in the NRI grant process?

First the proposals are coded and subject to a triage for appropriateness and meeting minimum requirements. The proposals are assigned reviewers through a panel manager. The panel includes six people with two people repeating from the previous year's panel to assure continuity. Reviewers fill out a preference sheet stating their desire to be a primary or secondary champion for a proposal. The primary champion leads the discussion. Each proposal has six to eight ad hoc reviewers. It is important to put a lot of effort on the summary. Try to make it exciting and well motivated. The summary sets the tone for the reviewers.

The review panel assembles in a room and assigns numbers to the proposals. The primary reviewer summarizes the strengths and weakness of the proposal. The secondary reviewer makes any additional comments. The ad hoc reviews are considered as well as the reader's comments. Then the proposal is scored on a one to six scale. The scale is: one, outstanding or top 1 or 2% of the total; two, high priority; three, medium priority (minor data or methodology concerns; four low priority, significant concerns; five some merit; six, do not fund.

A score of one, two, or three is needed to receive funding. Scores four to five suggest the need to work further on the proposal and would consider it again. A six means the panel never wants to see the proposal again. There is a "purgatory" category that occurs when reviews disagree on a proposal's score.

Some observations: biological proposals seem to have a set of accepted research protocols. The proposal evaluation process is one of whether the research question is a good one. This is not true in the social science. NRI received 63 rural development proposals and two strengthening ones. We also receive 73 marketing and trade proposals.

Discussion of 2001 meeting dates and location

The next NE-162 meeting will be in Austin, TX on or before the 5, 6, 7 April 2001. The meeting will be held in conjunction with the Southern Regional Science Association meetings. Theme of the conference: "How to measure the outcomes of rural development teaching, research, and extension."

Election of 2001 Secretary/Chair-elect

Secretary for 2001 meeting: Bruce Weber

Chair for 2001 meeting: Steve Cooke

State report summaries

State reports were distributed before the meeting. Participants were encouraged to read them.

For next year's 2001 reports, please provide a sentence describing your research in light of the NE-162 program categories, e.g., policy analysis.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 PM. Several members of the NE-162 participants, including the chair had responsibilities in the first session of the SRSA, which began at 4:00 PM.

Submitted by Steve Cooke, Secretary

7 July 2000

Approved: _____
Technical Committee Chair

Date: _____

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Approved: _____ Date: _____
Administrative Advisor