

Agenda Brief

Agenda item: Battelle Study Status and Discussion

Presenters: Craig Nessler, Bob Shulstad, Clarence Watson, Joe Zublena, and Eric Young

Background:

In early January the experiment station and extension directors had a conference call with directors from the North Central region who were involved in leading the regional impact study done there last year by Battelle to explore the possibility of conducting a similar study in the Southern region. This call was followed up in mid-January with two conference calls with Simon Tripp and Debra Cummings from Battelle and Pete Nelson from BioDimensions, a Battelle associate. After these calls both groups of directors decided to move ahead with contracting for an impact study in the Southern region to be conducted by Battelle. A Steering Committee was appointed to interact directly with Battelle personnel on behalf of ASRED and SAAESD. Committee members are Craig Nessler, Bob Shulstad, Tim Cross, Paul Coreil, Clarence Watson, Joe Zublena, Ron Brown, and Eric Young.

The Steering Committee requested that Battelle develop a draft Scope of Work document and then held a conference call with Simon Tripp and Deborah Cummings on March 9 to discuss details of the draft. During that call the Committee accepted that the study will document the following related to the Southern region:

1. The range of opportunities in modern agbiosciences and associated fields, and the large-scale economic development promise contained within these opportunities into the future.
2. The critically important role that agricultural experiment stations and extension services serve, and will serve, in realizing these opportunities.
3. The major advantages and significant assets that the Southern region has for research and development and the commercialization of agbioscience and associated innovations.
4. The central role of extension in providing research based programs and education that support human capital development, the diffusion of knowledge, and the development of the resilient societal, community and family resources required to sustain a robust and sustainable development environment.

The Committee agreed that the scope of the study should include all efforts related to agbiosciences, defined to include forestry and fisheries, and those related to building resilient youth, families, and communities. It was also agreed that a Quantitative Economic Impact Analysis of the 15 experiment stations and extension services, which was presented in the draft as an optional task, would be beneficial and should be part of the study.

Simon and Deborah indicated that if the response for information from the directors is timely, the study document should be completed by November, 2012, with associated documents done a few weeks later. An estimate of the total study cost is \$130,000, which is approximately \$4300 for each experiment station and extension service of the 15 member institutions. Also, Simon indicated that it would be most efficient if a single institution contracted with Battelle on behalf of both associations. Battelle has contracted previously with Univ of Arkansas and they have agreed to act as contractor for this study. Simon and Deborah are currently putting this study's scope of work through the Battelle costing process and a final proposal will be transmitted by the end of March.

The Steering Committee will have a face-to-face meeting in Atlanta on May 15 to discuss any feedback from the ASRED and SAAESD spring meetings and to make decisions on the following aspects of the study.

1. Review and finalize the data/information request
2. Discuss the potential structure and message of the report
3. Determine how to adequately address extension activities