

SAAESD Fall 2021 Meeting Notes

Tuesday, September 28, 2021

Participants: In person: JF Meullenet- AR, Rob Gilbert- FL, Scott Sensman- OK, David Monks- NC, Nathan McKinney- AR, Keith Cobel- MS, Susan Duncan- VA, Lesley Oliver- KY.

Via Zoom: Mike Salassi- LA, David White- TN, Tom Zimmerman- VI, Loren Fisher- NC, Said Mostaghimi- VA, Randy Raper- OK, James Matthews- KY, Wes Burger- MS, Henry Fadamiro- TX, John Davis- FL, Michael Toews- GA, Damian Adams- FL,

Executive Director's Office: Gary Thompson & Cindy Morley

Other guests: Kevin Kephart, NIFA; Gary Jackson, ASRED; John Greed, SRDC; Frankie Gould, LSU; Dr. Carrie Castille, NIFA Director; William Hoffman, Chief of Staff; Faith Peppers, Director of Communications

Agenda #	Action Items
1	Agenda- Approved Spring Meeting Minutes- Approved Interim Actions- Approved
2	MRC- New MRC and AA Procedures developed by SAAESD Office Two members of the SERA Review Committee will serve on the MRC
3	By-Laws Revision- Approved (11-0)
8	Nominating Committee Report: Lesley Oliver Elected as Executive Committee Member-at-large Paula Agudelo Elected as SAAESD Chair-elect

Item	Agenda Item - Presenter
1	<p>Welcome and Introductions – Jean-Francois Meullenet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval of Agenda • Spring Meeting Minutes • Interim Actions • Introduction of new COOs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scott Senseman- Oklahoma State University • Jamie Matthew- University of Kentucky • Keith Coble- Mississippi State University (Interim) • Arthur Appel- Auburn University (Interim) • Tom Zimmerman- University of the Virgin Islands (Interim)
2	<p>SERA Review Committee Report – David Monks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations, Discussion

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SERA-47 – (Approved) Strengthening the Southern Region Extension and Research System to Support Local & Regional Foods Needs and Priorities <p>Multistate Research Committee Report –Nathan McKinney</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects Approved <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S-1069 – Research and Extension for Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Applications in U.S. Agriculture and Natural Resources • S-1090 – AI in Agroecosystems: Big Data and Smart Technology-Driven Sustainable Production • MRC Procedural Changes- See procedure document for full changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership increase to 5 members (consistent with policies already in place) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 members of the SERA Review Committee will make up the two new members. • The MRC will now meet 4 times per year going forward and minutes from the meetings will be taken and posted on the website. • The MRC will now conduct mid-term reviews of those projects that are ready for them. • There is now a concise timeline that is standardized across all projects.
3	<p>SAAESD By-laws Revisions – Gary Thompson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation, Discussion & Motion for approval • SAAESD Rules of Operation Proposal- See Power Point presentation for full highlights of changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised entirety of document to remove redundancy and remove references to documents that no longer exist. • Clarified membership and defined regular meetings • Clarified Officer positions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defined the Executive Committee “Member at large” to be elected from the Non-COO members of the association and will serve as their representative. • Defined the Standing committees and charged the MRC to be the “quality assurance mechanism for the Multistate Research Portfolio” • Changed the name of the document from “By-laws” to “Rules of Operation”
4	<p>Updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NIFA update – Kevin Kephart • ASRED update – Gary Jackson • SRDC update – John Green • AI Initiative update – Robert Gilbert • 2022 Southern Mini-land Grant Meeting update – Gary Thompson
5	<p>Strategic Roadmap Implementation – Implementation Team</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Action Plan Proposal presented by the Strategic Implementation Steering Committee members. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative Discovery- David White & Henry Fadamiro • Enhancing Reputation- Michael Toews & John Davis • Strategic Alliances- Susan Duncan & Gary Thompson • Effective Communications- Frankie Gould & Cindy Morley
6	<p>NIFA Leadership Visit – Dr. Carrie Castille, NIFA Director, William Hoffman, Chief of Staff, Faith Peppers, Director of Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joined our meeting to share successes and gather feedback • Stressed NIFA’s commitment to partnership building & nurturing and their willingness to listen to needs. • Recognized the uniqueness of each region and the need to consider geographic innovations. • Successes shared: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50 new staff goal-surpassed. • Workforce looks like the people they serve. • Providing needed leadership. • NIFA is “Your Organization” and would like to hear from you. • They understand the need to get \$\$ out the door fast and they have increased the speed that they are doing that. • Asked how do we help brand capacity that emphasizes the input you have? Data. • Asked what are things that we need to work on collectively? • Emphasized that they are happy to support what we are working on.
7	<p>Resolutions Committee Report – Lesley Oliver</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resolutions for 5 retiring COOs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bob Godfrey • Kieth Owens • David Ragsdale • Robert Houtz • Keith Owens • Resolution for outgoing Chair- JF Meullenet
8	<p>Nominating Committee Report – Robert Gilbert</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Committee Member-at-large <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leslie Oliver nominated and elected • SAAESD Chair-elect <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paula Agudelo nominated and elected
9	<p>Passing of the Gavel – Jean-Francois Meullenet</p>

Adjourn

Interim Actions

Fall 2021 Meeting

- Steve Lommel, (North Carolina State University) has been appointed to represent ESS on the Advocacy RFP Advisory Committee.
- Steve Lommel (North Carolina State University) has been appointed to represent SAAESD on the NRSP Review Committee.
- Hongwei Xin has been appointed to the NCFAR Board of Directors.
- The former Strategic Planning Committee, consisting of David White (TN), Susan Duncan (VA), John Davis (FL), Michael Toews (GA) and Bob Godfrey (VI) will continue as the Implementation Steering Committee. New members of the Steering Committee are Henry Fadamiro (TX) and Frankie Gould (Communicator from GA).
- SAAESD signed onto the letters to the President and Confessional leadership regarding agricultural climate research, agricultural innovation, and agricultural research infrastructure created by SoAR.
- Henry Fadamiro (TX) has been appointed AA for SAC12.
- Jeff Edwards (OK) Department Head of Plant and Soil Sciences Appointed as the SAAESD Representative to the US Wheat & Barley Scab Steering Committee.
- SAAESD Signed onto NCRAR support letter for Chavonda Jacobs-Young to serve as the Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics (REE).
- Scott Senseman (OK) appointed as AA for S294 and SERA47
- Paula Agudelo (SC) Appointed AA for NRSP1
- Neal Schrick (TN) Department Head of Animal Sciences appointed as AA for SCC84
- Jamie Matthews (KY) appointed AA for S1086 and S1081

Multistate Research Committee Report
Fall 2021

Presenter: Nathan McKinney

Background:

The Southern MRC is composed of Nathan McKinney (Chair), Henry Fadamiro, Susan Duncan, and Tim Rials

The following is a current status report, prepared by Cindy Morley, of MRF activities sorted by termination date. This information is also available on the southern directors' web site.

Multistate Activities' Status

Projects/Activities Terminating 9/30/2021

S-1068- "Integrated Management of Pecan Arthropod Pests in the Southern U.S."- Henry Fadamiro, AL

S-1069- "Research and Extension for Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Applications in US Agriculture and Natural Resources"- Randy Raper, OK

SCC-85- "Consumer, Horticulture Extension, Research and Education Coordinating Committee" Bob Houtz, KY

SERA-47- "Strengthening the Southern Region Extension and Research System to Support Local and Regional Food needs and Priorities"- Bob Houtz, KY

Replacement Projects/Activities Approved

S-1069- "Research and Extension for Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Applications in US Agriculture and Natural Resources"- Randy Raper, OK

S-1090 (NEW) "AI in Agroecosystems: Big Data and Smart Technology-Driven Sustainable Production" Damian Adams

SERA-47- "Local and Regional Food Systems Extension and Research: network development, emerging issues and policy development"- Ed Jones (Ext), TBD (Research)

Terminating without Replacement 9/30/2021

SCC-85- "Consumer, Horticulture Extension, Research and Education Coordinating Committee" Bob Houtz, KY

S-1068- "Integrated Management of Pecan Arthropod Pests in the Southern U.S."- Henry Fadamiro, AL

Projects/Activities Terminating 9/30/2022

S-1070- "The Working Group on Improving Microbial Control of Arthropod Pests"- Paula Agudelo, SC

S-1071- "A framework for secondary schools agriscience education programs that emphasizes the STEM content in agriculture"- Lesley Oliver, KY

S-1072- "U.S. Agricultural Trade and Policy in a Dynamic Global Market Environment" -Michael Salassi, LA

SCC-81- "Sustainable Small Ruminant Production in the Southeastern U.S."- Bob Godfrey, VI

SERA-03-“Southern Region Information Exchange Group for IPM” - David Monks, NC

SERA-06- “Methodology, Interpretation, and Implementation of Soil, Plant, Byproduct, and Water Analyses” - Nathan McKinney, AR

SERA-27- “Nursery Crop and Landscape Systems” - Bob Houtz, KY

SDC-102- “Integrated Research in New-Media Marketing for Rural Agricultural and Natural Resources Enterprises” - Damian Adams, FL

MRC Recommendation to Southern Directors

New MRC Procedures, Timeline and meeting schedule

Multistate Research Committee (MRC) Procedures

The Southern Regional Multistate Research Committee (MRC) is the quality assurance mechanism for the multistate research portfolio administered through the SAAESD. The multistate research portfolio consists of Multistate Research Fund (MRF) supported projects (S), Southern Development Committee projects (SDC), Southern Coordinating Committee projects (SCC), and Southern Extension and Research Activity projects (SERA). The MRC may be called upon to provide input for Interregional Projects (NRSP) and shall seek input from Southern Advisory Committees (SAC).

The MRC is charged to thoroughly review proposals for new multistate projects and extensions of current projects. A major objective of the MRC is to conduct effective and meaningful reviews that include evaluating the quality of science, appropriateness, regional significance of proposals, and the adequacy of the procedures and participation. The MRC is also charged to assure that the format and procedural aspects of the project proposals are done in accordance with procedures defined in the National Guidelines for Multistate Research Activities.

Composition of the MRC and length of term - The MRC shall be composed of five members who serve four-year overlapping terms to be initiated and terminated at the SAAESD Fall Meeting. Committee members are selected from the SAAESD membership (COOs or non-COOs) and approved by the Executive Committee. Members may serve successive terms. Two members of the MRC shall serve on the SERA Review Committee and will update the MRC on SERA projects. The Executive Director serves as an ex officio nonvoting member of the MRC.

Committee Leadership – Leadership for the MRC is provided by its Chair. The MRC Chair shall be appointed from the MRC membership by the SAAESD Chair at the SAAESD Fall Meeting and can serve two-year successive terms.

Meetings - The MRC shall conduct its business at four formal meetings each year to be scheduled in the winter, spring, and fall. Additional meetings can be called as needed. Meetings can be conducted virtually in a format that allows a robust discussion of the business at hand. One in-person meeting each year should be held in conjunction with the SAAESD spring meeting.

Examples of specific tasks that are linked to the meeting dates are below.

Winter meeting (January/February)

- Evaluate “Requests to Write Proposals” for Multistate Projects not evaluated at Fall Meeting
- Review SAC reports from NIMSS
- Conduct mid-term reviews for projects that are ready

Spring meeting (March/April)- In-person meeting at SAAESD Spring Meeting

- Review Excellence in Multistate Research nominations
- Review expiring project notifications for the upcoming year
- Review edits/revisions to proposals and make final decisions for proposals that are ready
- Report to directors
- Conduct mid-term reviews for projects that are ready

Summer Meeting (July)

- Review proposals (*primary meeting for proposal reviews*)
- Provide a SERA Review Committee update
- Conduct mid-term reviews for projects that are ready

Fall meeting (October)

- Evaluate “Request to Write Proposals” and project renewal intents for any proposals (*primary meeting for requests to write*)
- Conduct mid-term reviews for projects that are ready
- Review expiring project notifications for the upcoming year
- Review SAC reports from NIMSS

Minutes and Reports – Written minutes from the MRC meeting shall be posted on the SAAESD website. Reports to the SAAESD will be made at the SAAESD Spring and Fall meetings. Additional reports may be made by the MRC chair to the Executive Committee as necessary.

Summary Procedures for Multistate Projects	
Action	Responsibility
Informal request to write a new or renew existing project proposal to ED Office	Faculty group, current members, or SAAESD leadership (Top-Down Projects)
Assign an Administrative Advisor (AA)	ED Office
Request to Write a Proposal: brief statement on the issues and justification entered into NIMSS	Writing Committee Chair or AA
Approve “Request to Write a Proposal”	MRC
Prepare proposal and complete appropriate Appendix form in NIMSS	Writing Committee Chair or AA
Notify ED Office of potential peer reviewers	AA
Assign peer reviewers and conduct reviews	ED Office
Response to peer reviews sent to ED Office	Writing Committee Chair or AA
Upload final proposal into NIMSS	Writing Committee Chair or AA
Invite participation in the activity through NIMSS	ED Office
Enter participant information into Appendix E	Station Directors
Notify MRC of proposal to review via NIMSS	ED Office
MRC review and submit decision to NIMSS	MRC Chair and MRC
Notify AA of MRC recommendation	ED Office
Respond to MRC review	Writing Committee and AA
Approve final proposal	MRC
Notify AA of SAAESD approval	ED Office

Synopsis of Multistate Activities¹

Multistate Research Project (S-xxx)

Projects that involve integrated, potentially interdisciplinary, and multistate activities; have expected outcomes, including original research results; convey knowledge; and are peer reviewed. APPENDIX A - Format for Multistate Research Project Proposals.

Southern Development Committee (SDC-xxx)

Committees of duration less than two years for the purpose of developing a Multistate Activity; have the expected outcome of a full proposal for a particular Multistate Activity; and are peer reviewed. APPENDIX A - Format for Multistate Research Project Proposals

Southern Coordinating Committees (SCC-xxx)

Activities that provide a mechanism for addressing critical regional issues where multistate coordination or information exchange is appropriate within a function (i.e. research, education or extension); have expected outcomes; convey knowledge; and are peer reviewed. APPENDIX B - Format for Coordinating Committees and Education/ Extension and Research Activity Proposals.

Southern Education/Extension and Research Activity (SERA-xxx)

Activities that serve to integrate education (academic and/or extension) and research on a particular topic where multistate coordination or information exchange is appropriate; have expected outcomes; convey knowledge; and are peer reviewed. APPENDIX B - Format for Coordinating Committees and Education/ Extension and Research Activity Proposals.

Southern Advisory Committee (SAC-xx)

Committees of department chairs/heads from a particular discipline that exchange information and serve a multistate administrative function through review of multistate activities, but are not peer reviewed.

Southern 500 Series (S-5xx)

Committees formed, for a maximum of two years, to provide a mechanism for response to acute crises, emergencies, and opportunities using the multistate research approach. Activities may range from formally organized research on targeted objectives to very informal research coordination or information exchange activity, depending on the circumstances; have expected outcomes; convey knowledge; and are peer reviewed.

National Research Support Project (NRSP-xx)

Activities that focus on the development of enabling technologies, support activities (such as to collect, assemble, store, and distribute materials, resources and information), or the sharing of facilities needed to accomplish high priority research, but which is not of itself primarily research; funded through off-the-top MRF Hatch appropriations; and are peer reviewed.

¹Described in National Guidelines for Multistate Research Activities

Optimal Timeline for New and Renewed Multistate Project Proposals
(All projects initiate on October 1 and terminate on September 30)

Calendar year prior to project initiation

- **September 30:** Writing Committee submits a “request to write a proposal” in NIMSS by uploading the Issues and Justifications section. An Administrative Advisor (AA) will be assigned after submitting a proposal request. Effective 2021, all S-projects will retain the same number designation upon renewal, unless otherwise requested.
- **October:** MRC meets to review “Request to Write.”
- **October 30:** Begin to upload the remaining proposal sections in NIMSS.

Calendar Year of project initiation

- **March 15:** Final Project Proposal due in NIMSS along with a list of five suggested peer reviewers. SAAESD invites participants to the project via NIMSS.
- **March 30:** SAAESD office sends the proposal for peer review.
- **May 15:** Proposals are back from peer review. The SAAESD office sends the peer reviews to the AA to be relayed to the writing committee.
- **June 15:** Writing committee responds to the peer review and edits the proposal as appropriate. A document is e-mailed to the SAAESD office that gives a point-by-point response to each of the comments made by the peer reviewers and the changes made to the project in response to these comments. This document will be shared with the MRC to aid in the review process. The revised proposal is uploaded into NIMSS.
- **July:** MRC meets to review projects up for review. Projects that are unable to be reviewed by the MRC at this meeting may not be able to be renewed for the October 1 start date.
- **August:** The Writing Committee responds to MRC review and edits the proposal as appropriate
- **September:** SAAESD reviews all revisions and makes any remaining project decisions
- **September 30:** Old projects expire.
- **October 1:** New projects begin.

Multistate Research Fund (MRF) Supported Project (S-project)

“Multistate Research Project”

The mission of the Multistate Research Program is to enable research on high-priority topics among the State Agricultural Experiment Stations (SAES). Multistate research projects involve a team of investigators associated with several SAES working together to solve complex scientific problems of regional or national interest for which no one state could address singularly.

The Multistate Research Program allows non-SAES partners to join in these project-based collaborations. Thus, many multistate projects include members from the Cooperative Extension System (CES), Agricultural Research Service (ARS) or Forest Service research scientists. In addition, projects can have private sector and foreign participants. Moreover, the majority of multistate projects have participants from more than a single region, with many having representation from all regions, such that they are national in scope.

The MRC has responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the Multistate Research Projects portfolio, including suggesting new projects of relevance to the Southern Region. Individual Multistate Research Project proposals are evaluated using Appendix H of the National Guidelines for Multistate Research Activities.

Southern Development Committee (SDC)

Southern Development Committees (SDC) are approved for the sole purpose of developing a full proposal to establish a new or replacement Multistate Research Project (S). A new or replacement multistate project is not required to begin as an SDC. Starting as an SDC gives the project organizers two years to fully conceptualize the project, recruit participants, access to travel funds to meet, and develop the full proposal. Travel expenses for authorized SDC meetings can be paid from an individual station's multistate research funds.

The SDC proposal is uploaded to NIMSS, peer reviewed, and revised accordingly. The revised proposal, along with the reviewers comments and the written response from the SDC, is submitted to the MRC for review and evaluation. Concerns raised by the MRC are relayed to the SDC via the Administrative Advisor. Once the SDC has satisfactorily addressed concerns, the MRC Chair will send the completed proposal to Executive Director with recommendation of approval. Approved SDCs are required to meet annually. Additional meetings can be authorized by the administrative advisor. Meetings must be authorized in NIMSS and minutes uploaded in NIMSS within 60 days after the meeting.

Southern Coordinating Committees (SCC)

Southern Coordinating Committee (SCCs) provide a mechanism for groups of scientists to meet periodically to discuss and coordinate research involving related but not interdependent activities in individual states or cooperating agencies. There is also a mandate from the SAAESD for each Administrative Advisor and SCC to critically review the need for continuation of the activity.

SCCs provide a means of exchanging information and ideas on areas of common research interest in the region, identifying and avoiding areas of unnecessary duplication. They facilitate communication outside the region and with non-research agencies to identify opportunities for joint proposals for extramural funding or to identify areas for new collaborative research. Approved SCCs are required to meet annually. Additional meetings can be authorized by the administrative advisor. Meetings must be authorized in NIMSS and minutes uploaded in NIMSS within 60 days after the meeting.

Southern Extension and Research Activity (SERA)

Southern Extension and Research Activity¹ (SERA) projects bring together researchers and Extension specialists sharing a common problem, issue, or disciplinary interest. The general objective is to provide a functionally integrated forum to coordinate joint activities to address stakeholder needs. SERA committees focus on a particular topic where multistate coordination or information exchange is appropriate.

SERA membership is made up of two AAs (research and Extension), NIFA representative, scientists, and Extension personnel. Industry representatives are often engaged as SERA members. SERAs provide an opportunity for scientists, specialists, and others to work cooperatively to solve problems that concern more than one state, share research data, and coordinate research and other types of activities.

SERA project proposals are reviewed and approved by the SERA Review Committee. The SERA Review Committee is composed of two research directors, who also serve on the MRC, two Extension directors, and the respective Executive Directors for SAAESD and ASRED.

- Proposals for a new or renewed SERA can be made by a group of research and Extension faculty or by an Experiment Station and/or Extension Director. A new SERA proposed by a faculty group must be co-sponsored by an Experiment Station and/or Extension Director. Proposals for renewing an existing SERA can be co-sponsored by their Administrative Advisors (AA).
- SERA proposals are submitted via the National Information Management Support System (NIMSS, go to <http://www.lgu.umd.edu/login.cfm>) using Appendix B to the SAAESD Executive Director, who notifies the Executive Director of the Association of Southern Region Extension Directors (ASRED).
- Proposals are reviewed by two or more peer reviewers who are identified in consultation with the AA or relevant Advisory Committee and by the SERA Review Committee, who makes a recommendation to the SAAESD and ASRED Executive Directors.
- The SERA proposal and Review Committee recommendation is considered by the SAAESD and ASRED directors separately at their Fall meetings. If approval by one of the associations (ASRED or SAAESD) is not granted, the activity may be considered for another type of activity.
- The duration of a SERA can be up to five years. An administrative advisor (AA) and NIFA representative are assigned to the SERA.
- Meetings are held annually, with provisions for interim meetings upon authorization by the administrative advisor. Meetings must be authorized in NIMSS and minutes uploaded in NIMSS within 60 days after the meeting.

¹SERA committees typically involve Extension and research activities; however, academic education and research activities can also be the focus of a SERA committee.

Optimal Timeline for all new and revised SERA Projects
(All projects begin October 1 and terminate on September 30)

Calendar year prior to the termination year

- **September 30:** Writing Committee submits a “request to write a proposal” in NIMSS by uploading the Issues and Justifications section. An Administrative Advisor (AA) will be assigned after submitting a proposal request. Effective 2021, all S-projects will retain the same number designation upon renewal, unless otherwise requested.
- **October:** Sera Review Committee meets to review “Request to Write” as needed.
- **October 30:** Begin to upload the remainder of the proposal sections in NIMSS.

Termination Year

- **January:** SERA Review Committee Meets to Review “Requests to Write” as needed.
- **March 15:** Final Project Proposal due in NIMSS along with a list of five suggested peer reviewers. SAAESD invites participants to the project via NIMSS.
- **March 30:** SAAESD will send the proposal for peer review.
- **May 15:** Proposals are back from Peer Review. The SAAESD office sends the peer reviews to the AA to be relayed to the writing committee.
- **June 15:** Writing committee responds to the peer review and edits the proposal as appropriate. A document is e-mailed to the SAAESD office that gives a point-by-point response to each of the comments made by the peer reviewers and the changes made to the project in response to these comments. This document will be shared with the SERA Review Committee to aid in the review process. The revised proposal is uploaded into NIMSS.
- **July:** SERA Review Committee meets to review projects up for review. Projects that are unable to be reviewed at this meeting may not be able to be renewed for the October 1 start date.
- **August:** The Writing Committee responds to SERA Review Committee report and edits the proposal as appropriate.
- **September:** SAAESD reviews all revisions and makes any remaining project decisions.
- **September 30:** Old projects expire.
- **October 1:** New projects begin.

Southern Advisory Committees (SAC)

Southern Advisory Committees (SACs) are dedicated to single discipline or subject matter areas. Membership consists of Department Heads/Chairs or similar administrators who are appointed by their respective Directors, usually one member per southern SAES. SACs may be established as standing committees by the SAAESD or by petition through an administrator interested in a specific topic. SACs may be abolished by action of the SAAESD. SACs have several important functions related to planning, implementation and review of research activities in the Southern Region. These include:

- **Identify new research needs and opportunities** – SACs provide the SAAESD a perspective of emerging issues and opportunities that have implications for future research in the region. They are asked to develop specific proposals for new activities, which may be submitted by the Administrative Advisor (AA) for consideration and recommendation to the SAAESD.
- **Evaluate the total Southern Multistate Research Portfolio** – SACs are asked to maintain an ongoing evaluation of the portfolio of the SAAESD activities and to review and evaluate summaries of the total research project portfolio as drawn from the NIMSS database.
- **Review requests for new and continuing activities** – SACs are asked to review and make recommendations for disposition of proposals for new and continuing activities of the SAAESD. This review should include an analysis of the disciplinary mix needed in the activity. SAC recommendations are considered by the Executive Committee and are presented for consideration and action by the SAAESD.
- **Peer Review Multistate Project Proposals** – SAC members may be contacted to assist in the peer review process for multistate project proposals. Members may conduct reviews or recommend faculty subject matter experts to serve as reviewers.
- **Perform Mid-Term Reviews of Multistate Research Projects** – Each Multistate Research Project in the Southern Region portfolio is assigned one or more SACs to monitor the progress of the activity. The designated MRF project should be reviewed at least in its third year, but could be reviewed more often if desired.
- **Interact individually with local director** – Committee members, acting as individual administrators, interact with their Director regarding the discussions and recommendations of the Committee to which they are appointed.
- **Chairs meet annually with SAAESD** – The SAC Chairs and their Administrative Advisors are invited to participate in the annual spring meeting of the SAAESD.

Appointment of Administrative Advisor – An Administrative Advisor is appointed for each SAC by the Chair of the SAAESD. He/she is one of the Southern Agricultural Experiment Station Directors and provides the linkage between the SAC and the SAAESD.

Committee Leadership – Leadership for the SAC is provided by its Chair. SACs elect a Chair and Secretary from their membership to serve for two years. For continuity, it is suggested that the Secretary become the Chair. Officers may be re-elected.

Meetings – SACs usually meet once per year, often in conjunction with other meetings attended by most of the group. The Administrative Advisor approves dates and location of meetings of the SACs and notifies all Southern Directors via the National Information Management Support System (NIMSS) at least 6-8 weeks prior to a meeting.

Reports/Minutes – Annual reports and/or minutes from the SAC to the SAAESD are made through the Administrative Advisor, who posts them in the NIMSS database, which then distributes a notice to Southern Directors and to the Executive Director's office. Additional reports may be made at any time the SAC finds a need to communicate with the SAAESD.

Administrative Advisor Procedures

The Administrative Advisor (AA) is the linkage between the SAAESD and faculty who are involved in regional multistate activities. The AA provides administrative leadership, whereas, the participants provide the scientific leadership. ***The principal role of the Administrative Advisor is to facilitate the multistate activity to make it possible for the technical committee¹ to function easily and to assure that their administrative needs and responsibilities are met.***

Members of the SAAESD and department heads or chairs are appointed by the SAAESD chair² as AAs to the following multistate activities:

- Multistate Research Projects (S-xxx)
- Southern Development Committees (SDC-xxx)
- Southern Coordinating Committees (SCC-xxx)
- Southern Advisory Committees (SAC-xxx)
- Southern Education/Extension Research Activities (SERA-xxx)
- Task Forces or Conferences

Administrative Advisors are assigned by the SAAESD chair during the annual review of appointments, at the initiation of new projects, or as needed to replace the AA. These appointments are harmonized across all members of the SAAESD, with concern both for individual and state workload and interest.

The ***AA is a facilitator*** working with the technical committee chair, who provides leadership for the multistate activity, the Multistate Research Committee (MRC), which reviews and approves project activities, and the ED's office that manages the multistate portfolio. The AA is expected to be familiar with the administrative procedures of the SAAESD and related activities at the state, regional and national level for the multistate activity (see: [Guidelines for Multistate Research Activities](#)).

AAs:

- serve as the communication link between the multistate activity and the SAAESD
- assure that the activity is effectively carrying out its functions
- provide guidance to the technical committee on administrative matters
- evaluate the level of effort and quality of the multistate activity

AAs are responsible for assuring reports are made by the multistate activity in a timely and meaningful way. During the lifetime of the multistate activity, the AA is responsible for ensuring that all information is uploaded into NIMSS (see page 6). The AA authorizes meetings of the technical committee in NIMSS prior to the meeting date and ensures meeting reports (SAES-422 Annual Accomplishment Reports) are uploaded in NIMSS within 60 days following the meeting.

¹ *The technical committee is the research scientists and other participating members of a multistate activity, including the administrative advisor and the NIFA representative.*

²*AA appointments rest with the authority of the SAAESD. Department heads or chairs may serve as administrative multistate advisors for all activities except federally-funded multistate research (S-xxx) projects. For SERA's, it is recommended that an Extension AA also be appointed by the Extension association (ASRED). In the case of NRSPs, one AA from each region shall be appointed, with one of those to be designated as the lead AA.*

Summary Of Administrative Advisor Duties:

Management

- Ensure election of project leadership, including the chair, chair-elect, and secretary who will take notes in meetings¹
- Update the technical committee on changes in the multistate research program
- Encourage broad participation in scientific expertise, including extension, from a multitude of states including those in different regions
- Consult with the leaders of the technical committee to achieve goals and meet deadlines
- Request NIMMS editor access from the SAAESD office for appropriate technical committee members to upload proposals and reports

¹*Recommendation: officers serve for one-year terms in rotation, electing a new secretary each year*

Meetings:

- Authorize the annual meeting or activity in NIMSS prior to the planned meeting
- Assist the project leadership with the preparation of the meeting agenda, focusing on an agenda built around the project's objectives
- Ensure that individual SAES participant activity reports are submitted prior to the meeting¹
- Encourage the recording of meeting minutes as a record of all decisions made and consensus developed by the project's participants.
- Ensure a strong commitment to the multistate activity as evidenced by annual meeting attendance (Appendix E guided participation)
- Encourage the NIFA representative to attend and report on NIFA opportunities and relevant programs at the annual meeting²
- Determine the date and location of the next annual meeting³
- Ensure that the SAES-422 annual report is uploaded to NIMSS 60 days after the meeting

¹ *Recommendation: individual SAES activity reports are best structured when aligned with relevant project objectives.*

²*Recommendation: if the NIFA representative cannot participate, meet with the NIFA representative in advance of the meeting and discuss opportunities or issues that need to be brought to the attention of the members.*

³*Recommendation: chair hosts the meeting each year or decide as a group the location of the next meeting at the current meeting.*

SAES-422 Annual Accomplishment Reports¹:

- Encourage the project leadership to set deadlines for necessary committee or project activities
- Discuss and reinforce the need to demonstrate interdependence in the SAES-422 annual report
- Ensure that the members understand how to write an appropriate impact section of the report
- Encourage the project leadership to complete the SAES-422 annual report in a timely fashion and confirm that it was uploaded in NIMSS by the AA or project editor
- Review the SAES-422 annual report to determine if the results are clear, concise and usable and the project is achieving its objectives

¹*Recommendation: SAES-422 annual reports are often transcripts of the meeting minutes combined with individual station reports. SAES-422 annual reports are most informative when developed using those materials to synthesize and summarize the accomplishments against the individual objectives.*

Engagement:

- Acquaint new members who join the regional project with the history and current activities of the project
- Review contributions of scientists assigned to the research project and contact SAES directors for those who are not participating to encourage removal from Appendix E
- Review the extramural funding portfolio of scientists engaged in the multistate activity that enhance selective objectives of the project
- Encourage dissemination of research results to stakeholders and work with the group on strategies to identify appropriate stakeholders

Leadership

- Understand the nature and the purpose of the regional project
- Advocate on behalf of the project, working with the technical committee to identify and develop meaningful impact statements
- Consider reaching out to the Multistate Research Fund Impacts Program to help prepare and share Impact Statements (<https://www.multistateresearchimpacts.org/>)
- Consider, when appropriate, linking or meeting with similar multistate projects to expand collaboration
- Encourage participation of investigators from other disciplines to increase the multidisciplinary nature of the activity, including Extension personnel
- Encourage participation of investigators from 1890 and 1994 Land-grant Universities
- Ensure the individual activities support the project objectives and demonstrate a level of interdependence in its approach¹
- Review the outcomes of the proposed activity with the technical committee to determine if they are achievable

¹ Recommendation: Look for evidence that the investigators are working together on each objective, rather than a collection of individual investigators conducting research without some demonstrated level of interdependence.

Project Continuation or Termination:

- Conduct a midterm review of project at year three and share the review with the MRC
 - *The midterm review is an appropriate time to discuss with the technical committee whether the project will be continued (renewed) or terminated at the September 30 termination date.*
- Project Continuation: encourage the technical committee to start the process of writing the new project (renewal) approximately a year before the project termination date and upload the “Issues and Justification” in NIMSS no later than September of the year before the project will terminate
 - *The “Issues and Justification” serves as the “request to write” trigger for the initial evaluation and feedback from the MRC.*
 - *Failure to have an approved new project results in the current project ending on the termination date.*
- Project Termination: ensure the technical committee submits the final SAES-422 termination report within 6 months of the termination date
 - *The final SAES-422 termination report summarizes the accomplishments of an activity and communicates research achievements measured as results, outcomes, impacts, and benefits to a project’s sponsors and stakeholders.*

AA Guidelines¹ to Establish New Multistate Research Projects:

Develop the group and establish leadership

- Identify a leader who will be responsible for moving the proposal forward
- Seek multidisciplinary collaborators from a minimum of two SAES
- Encourage diverse representation of participants across the LGU system at the writing stage

Define the objectives

- Look for areas of similarity and synergy
- Define 2-4 lines of effort where more than ½ the group are working
- Define potential goals/objectives for a 5-year project² and narrow to a manageable number of objectives (2-5 or 3-4 is the sweet spot)
- Avoid lumping too much into broad topics; choose what they would actually want to do together

Identify objectives where each participant can contribute

- Everyone does not have to work on every objective
- Participants can contribute to multiple objectives

Create small subset groups to develop skeleton ideas of how to approach each objective

- Select leaders for each objective
- Discuss possible activities

Establish the writing team

- 2 or more people per objective group
- 1-2 who will lead the writing group and draft the proposal
- 1-2 who will write a brief literature review
- Detail the objectives and procedures (activities)

Submission and reviews³

- Review the MRC deadlines with the SAAESD ED Office or the MRC Chair and convey deadlines to the writing committee
- Upload the “Issues and Justification” in NIMSS to initiate the “Request to Write” MRC evaluation
- Upload the final proposal in NIMSS
- Provide the SAAESD ED Office with the names and contact information for 5-6 peer reviewers
- Transmit the peer reviewers comments to the writing committee to consider project revisions⁴
- Upload the revised proposal into NIMSS

¹*These are informal guidelines to assist AAs in helping faculty to establish a new Multistate Research Project and can be shared with the writing team. New Multistate Research Projects can, but are not required, to be formed by initially establishing a Southern Development Committee.*

²*A Multistate Research Project normally has a life of five years with the scheduled termination on September 30 (i.e., the end of the Federal Fiscal Year).*

³*Proposals for new multistate projects can be initiated at any time; however, all approved projects begin on October 1. The peer review process can be lengthy and must be completed prior to the MRC evaluation. The MRC only meets to evaluate proposals three times a year (Winter: January-February; Spring: March-April; Fall: October).*

⁴*All peer reviewer comments should be addressed in a detailed email response sent to the SAAESD ED Office, which will be incorporated into the materials presented for the MRC evaluation of the project.*

AA Guidelines for Midterm Reviews

Midterm evaluations for five-year projects are important to evaluate the health of the project and to determine whether the objectives are being accomplished. Midterm evaluations are also valuable to determine the contributions of individual members and the level of interrelationships among individual members. Finally, this is a time when corrections can be made if needed, especially if the technical committee is planning to prepare a proposal to continue the project for another five-year period.

About six months prior to the start of the project's third year, AAs and committee members should ensure that all annual reports are complete and have been submitted to the NIMSS system.

Materials needed for a midterm review:

Evidence of Committee Activities and Meetings: All committees should be meeting annually. This is indicated by the AA's authorization of the meeting in NIMSS. Meeting authorizations and submission of subsequent annual reports is a primary indicator that the technical committee is still active. Inactive projects can be terminated prior to their expiration date.

Annual reports (SAES-422): Must be uploaded into NIMSS within 60 days of each annual meeting and no later than December 15, at the end of year two. Committee's reports can be checked in NIMSS by selecting Meetings/Reports >> Reports >> Search for Reports and use your current project number as the search parameter. All projects should have a minimum of two annual reports in NIMSS by the time of midterm review.

AA Midterm Review: The AA's NIMSS-based review form should be completed no later than December 15. The SAAESD office will assign this NIMSS form (Appendix I) to the AA earlier in the summer/fall. After the review has been assigned, AAs can find it in NIMSS under Reviews >> Submit a Review.

Midterm review materials are evaluated by the SACs (Southern Advisory Committees) and the MRC (Multistate Research Committee) and the process is an important facet of our overall project renewal system. Projects that do not submit the required midterm review materials may subject to early termination by the Multistate Review Committee

Administrative Advisor (AA) NIMSS Summary:

Adapted from User Guide for the National Information Management Support System (NIMSS). To access the full User Guide go to <https://www.nimss.org/> click on the Directory tab.

Meetings and Reports

All multistate project meetings must be authorized in the NIMSS by the project AA or their designate. All multistate projects are required to meet annually and submit an annual report via NIMSS within 60 days of the meeting. If reports for any past meetings are missing or not AA approved, the system will not allow a new meeting to be authorized.

Authorizing an Annual Meeting

1. Log into NIMSS at www.nimss.org.
2. Select Reports/Meetings >> Meetings >> Authorize an Annual Meeting.
3. Enter all of the meeting information into the Meeting Authorization form.
4. Click the Create Meeting button, down on the lower right side of your page.
5. If you need to make any changes, contact your regional NIMSS system admin (http://www.nimss.org/directory/regional_offices)

Submitting an Annual Report

1. Sign into NIMSS at www.nimss.org. If you can't remember your password, select "Forgot Password" and follow the instructions. If the system doesn't recognize your email or if you've changed stations, please contact your regional NIMSS system admin for assistance.
2. Once you've signed in, go to **Reports/Meetings >> Draft/Edit Report**. If you are authorized to submit the report on your committee's behalf as the AA or project editor, the project should come up for you automatically. If it does not, contact your project AA or your regional NIMSS system admin to be given the appropriate editing access. Click the "new report" or "edit report" button to submit the annual report (SAES-422).
3. Use the links on the left side of the screen to edit the report by sections. Start with the Basic Info section and update the report date and designate if the report is a termination one or not. If the minutes are part of the annual report, you may use the "minutes" link to post the brief summary of the minutes as well as the file (using the "browse" button to search for the file on your computer, but be sure the file is .pdf to avoid any viewing errors. NIMSS displays .pdfs the best over all other formats). Be sure to click the Save button before moving to a new section.
4. When you're done, click the "submit report" link. Check over the report to make sure everything looks correct. If not, go back and correct the sections, save, then submit again. This will send notification to the AA that is ready for approval. If you are the AA, then the report is immediately marked as approved.
5. If you need to edit an approved report, contact your NIMSS Regional System Administrator (RSA, Cindy Morley) for help. They are able to return reports to Draft status.

Approving an Annual Report

When one of your project editors submits a report, NIMSS will send you an email notification. As AA, it's your responsibility to look over the report, make sure it meets the requirements, then approve it.

1. Log into NIMSS (www.nimss.org)
2. Go to Meetings/Reports, then Reports
3. Select Approve Report
4. To view this report, click View Report under the report date. Make sure the report is complete, follows the Appendix D format, and is multistate in nature, featuring collaborative accomplishments and impacts. Lists of only individual station reports are not acceptable.
5. To approve this report, click Approve

Assigning Editors to Projects and/or Proposals

Proposal/project editors have access to upload proposal materials and annual reports.

1. Log into NIMSS and select Projects Proposals >> View All.
2. Search for the desired proposal number; be sure to include the "temp" designation.
3. Click View, click into the Outline, then click on Assign Editors (near the bottom, on the left)
4. Click Add Editor and begin entering the name of the desired editor into the box. Their full name should appear if they are in NIMSS.
5. To add more, click Add Editor button
6. Click Save when done.

Inviting Participants to Proposals/Projects

1. Proposals need to be set to Draft Proposal status before participants can be invited. This function will not work if the proposal is set to Under Review. Approved projects must be active and not expired/terminated.
2. Log into the NIMSS, www.nimss.org
3. Under Participants on the left-side menu bar, select Invite Participants
4. Enter the project or proposal number in the search box in the upper left corner and click Filter
5. Click Invite Users next to the proposal of interest
6. Enter the number/ID of the previous project (so those participants also get this email invite)
7. Set the due date for submission of Appendix E forms
8. Click Send Invite

Approving Submitted Proposals

As an AA, your committee will upload material for their renewal proposal, then submit it for you to approve.

1. You can find these proposals after logging in under Action Items, and then click My Project Proposals.
2. Please review the proposal material in the outline, then click AA Approve.
3. You can approve proposals either before or after you complete the AA review, assigned to you by your RSA. Approving proposals and completing the review are two separate tasks.

Synopsis of Multistate Activities¹

Multistate Research Project (S-xxx)

Projects that involve integrated, potentially interdisciplinary, and multistate activities; have expected outcomes, including original research results; convey knowledge; and are peer reviewed. APPENDIX A - Format for Multistate Research Project Proposals.

Southern Development Committee (SDC-xxx)

Committees of duration less than two years for the purpose of developing a Multistate Activity; have the expected outcome of a full proposal for a particular Multistate Activity; and are peer reviewed. APPENDIX A - Format for Multistate Research Project Proposals

Southern Coordinating Committees (SCC-xxx)

Activities that provide a mechanism for addressing critical regional issues where multistate coordination or information exchange is appropriate within a function (ie. research, education or extension); have expected outcomes; convey knowledge; and are peer reviewed. APPENDIX B - Format for Coordinating Committees and Education/ Extension and Research Activity Proposals.

Southern Education/Extension and Research Activity (SERA-xxx)

Activities that serve to integrate education (academic and/or extension) and research on a particular topic where multistate coordination or information exchange is appropriate; have expected outcomes; convey knowledge; and are peer reviewed. APPENDIX B - Format for Coordinating Committees and Education/ Extension and Research Activity Proposals.

Southern Advisory Committee (SAC-xx)

Committees of department chairs/heads from a particular discipline that exchange information and serve a multistate administrative function through review of multistate activities, but are not peer reviewed.

Southern 500 Series (S-5xx)

Committees formed, for a maximum of two years, to provide a mechanism for response to acute crises, emergencies, and opportunities using the multistate research approach. Activities may range from formally organized research on targeted objectives to very informal research coordination or information exchange activity, depending on the circumstances; have expected outcomes; convey knowledge; and are peer reviewed.

National Research Support Project (NRSP-xx)

Activities that focus on the development of enabling technologies, support activities (such as to collect, assemble, store, and distribute materials, resources and information), or the sharing of facilities needed to accomplish high priority research, but which is not of itself primarily research; funded through off-the-top MRF Hatch appropriations; and are peer reviewed.

¹*Described in National Guidelines for Multistate Research Activities.*

APPENDIX I

Midterm Review of Multistate Research Projects (To Be Completed During the Third Year of Project)

Activity Number:

Title:

Administrative Advisor:

Proposed Termination Date:

1. Progress Report: Describe results since the project was last approved; compare actual accomplishments with the objectives in the project; reasons should be given if project objectives were not met. Rate this project on accomplishment of stated objectives.

Excellent

Comments:

Good

Fair

Unacceptable

2. Linkages: Provide evidence that collaboration occurs among project participants and with other projects/agencies. How well is the technical committee working together? Document any linkages. Rate this project on linkages.

Excellent

Comments:

Good

Fair

Unacceptable

3. Funding: Has outside funding been obtained from other federal and state agencies or the private sector by the technical committee to support project activities? Rate this project on its accomplishments in leveraging outside funding to help solve the problem being investigated.

Excellent

Comments:

Good

Fair

Unacceptable

4. Information and Technology Transfer: Document information and technology transfer, which is required for every project supported by Multistate Research Funds. Rate this project on plans or accomplishments for delivering the results to users which include other researchers (journal articles, technical reports, etc.), Cooperative Extension Service, industry, producers, students, etc.

Excellent

Comments:

Good

Fair

Unacceptable

Recommendation:

_____ Approve/continue with normal revision.

_____ Approve/continue with revision (provide specific recommendations).

_____ Disapprove/terminate at termination time (provide specific reasons).

Signature:

Date

**Rules of Operation
of the
Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors
Experiment Station Section, Board on Agriculture Assembly
Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities**

Approved April 13, 1993; Amended July 13, 1996, August 15, 2000, August 13, 2001, September 28, 2021

ARTICLE I – Name

The name of this organization shall be the Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors, hereinafter called the Association or abbreviated SAAESD, established in conformity with the constitution of the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU).

ARTICLE II – Purposes

The Association, one of five such autonomous regional institutions, shall represent the administrators of the State¹ Agricultural Experiment Stations (SAESs) in the Southern Region in their collective dealings. On matters to be ratified by, reported to, or recommended to APLU, the consensus of the Association shall be conveyed to the chair of the Experiment Station Section (ESS) by the SAAESD chair. The Association shall conduct its affairs in conformance with the Rules of Operation of the ESS and APLU.

The purposes of the Association include but are not limited to the following.

- Arranges for and conducts its own affairs, elects members to ESCOP², makes recommendations to ESCOP and to the ESS, reacts to proposals of ESCOP and the ESS, and participates in the handling of [interim] business of the ESS.
- Exchanges information between the regional and national levels via input to ESS or ESCOP, which is the normal channel for SAES Directors in the Southern Region to engage the Board on Agriculture Assembly (BAA). ESS meetings provide a forum for formal adoption of policies and procedures proposed by ESCOP or the Regional Associations and for information exchange.
- Participates with the ESCOP Committees, National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), and other regional associations in the programming and conduct of cooperative regional multistate research and integrated research and extension activities as authorized by the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1988 (AREERA).
- Facilitates cooperation among its member SAESs, with federal and other state agencies, with industry and others in the planning, programming, financing, implementing and performing of all agricultural and related research.
- Employs and pays the salaries and benefits of the Executive Director and other staff as well as other expenses related to the functions of the Executive Director.
- Collects and disburses dues, enters into contracts with cooperators and/or granting agencies, and covers the costs of programs as agreed upon by the Association.

¹ The use of the term “State” includes the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the Territory of the U.S. Virgin Islands, each of which have agricultural experiment stations that receive funds via the Hatch Act of 1887 and are members of the Association.

² When combined, the four Regional Associations of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors and the Association of Research Directors (1890) comprise the Experiment Station Section of the Board on Agriculture Assembly of APLU. The Experiment Station Committee on Organization and Policy (ESCOP) acts on behalf of the Experiment Station Section, functioning in most ways as an Executive Committee of the Experiment Station Section.

ARTICLE III – Membership

The formal voting members of the Association who will vote to commit SAES resources or deal with policy matters of the Association shall be fifteen in number. They consist of the Directors (Chief Operating Officers [COO], or their duly authorized representatives from the individual SAES) of the State Agricultural Experiment Stations eligible for funding under the Hatch Act, as amended in 1955 (69 STAT. 671) in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Virginia.

Associate and Assistant Directors (non-COOs and others holding similar or equivalent titles) of the member SAESs of the Southern Region shall also be members. Non-COOs may vote on matters other than funding and policy. The Chair may stipulate when a formal vote on policy matters is to be taken.

USDA administrative designees and the Executive Director shall be ex-officio, non-voting members of the Association.

ARTICLE IV – Meetings

Two (2) regular meetings shall be scheduled each year. They shall consist of:

- Spring meeting – usually in April
- Fall meeting – usually in conjunction with the annual meeting of the ESS in September

Other meetings may be scheduled with the approval of the Executive Committee. Meeting locations shall be agreed upon by the membership who may delegate the decision.

ARTICLE V – Officers

A. Officers: The officers of the Association shall be the Chair, Chair-Elect, Past-Chair, Treasurer, and Executive Committee Member-at-Large. The ED serves as executive vice-chair, and the ED's office provides administrative services for the Association.

The normal progression will be to serve one-year terms in each position of Chair-Elect, Chair, and Past-Chair. Once elected as Chair-Elect, the progression through the offices is automatic. Members of the Executive Committee normally would not succeed themselves.

The Chair-Elect¹ will be nominated from the ranks of the Chief Operating Officers of the member Experiment Stations.

The Treasurer shall be the COO of the SAESs host institution for the Office of the Executive Director.

The Executive Committee Member-at-Large will be elected for a two-year term from nominations from the non-COO members of the Association.

¹Under unusual circumstances, the Association would be best served to elect a senior non-COO as Chair-Elect. In this case, the Nominating Committee operating under the authority of the Executive Committee, may nominate such persons for that position.

B. Elections:

The Officers of the Association, except for the Treasurer, shall be elected by the membership (one vote per state). Nominations shall be submitted by a Nominating Committee chaired by the Chair-elect. A simple majority vote is required for election. If the Treasurer's position is vacated, the Executive Committee will name the person who assumes the decision-making role at the host institution's SAES to the Treasurer's position.

Terms of officers begin with the conclusion of the Fall SAAESD and ends at the same time the following year.

C. Executive Director:

There may be an Executive Director chosen and employed by the Association under the terms of the Cooperative Agreement among the member Experiment Stations (1966), with duties as specified therein and as updated from time to time as recorded in the minutes of the Association.

D. Duties:

The Chair shall preside at business meetings of the Association, at meetings of its Executive Committee and on all other occasions where the head of the organization is to be recognized. He/she is the chief executive officer of the Association. The Chair acts on behalf of the Association in taking interim actions between meetings, with the advice and consent of the Executive Committee on matters of policy and precedent.

The Chair-Elect shall undertake such duties as the Chair prescribes. He/she shall become Chair for the unexpired term should the Chair resign or otherwise become unable to serve. He/she shall preside in the absence of the Chair and will normally be expected to become the Chair in the subsequent year.

The Past-Chair will preside over the affairs of the Association in the absence of the Chair or Chair-Elect.

- The Chair, Chair-Elect and Past-Chair automatically become members of ESCOP upon assuming their official positions. The past-Chair shall serve as the senior member of the region's delegation to ESCOP, representing the Association on the ESCOP Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee Member-at-Large shall serve on the Executive Committee as the representative and liaison for the non-COO members of the Association.

The Treasurer proposes an annual budget for the Association, which is reviewed, modified as necessary and approved by the Association. He/she provides an annual financial report to the Association and assesses each member institution for its share of the budget for the office of the Executive Director. He/she performs such other duties involving finances and the transfer of funds as may be required.

The Executive Director, under the guidance of the Chair and the Executive Committee, provides leadership and support for activities of the Association, maintains permanent Association files, maintains liaison with other associations and government agencies and maintains the Association website. The Executive Director can be a voting member and officer of regional or national committees and serves as the Executive Vice Chair of ESCOP, when the Chair of ESCOP is from the Southern Region.

ARTICLE VI – Committees and Designees

Committees may be established and Administrative Advisors and other designees named by the Chair, in pursuit of the Association’s mission and business. Administrative Advisors to various multistate research committees may be drawn from the administrative teams of member Experiment Stations. Heads or Chairs of Departments from member Experiment Stations may serve as Administrative Advisors to Information Exchange Groups and Southern Extension Research Activity-Information Exchange Groups.

The Standing Committees of SAAESD are:

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall be comprised of the Chair, Chair-Elect, Past-Chair, Executive Committee Member-at-Large, Treasurer, and Chair of the Multistate Research Committee. The Executive Director shall be non-voting ex-officio member of the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee, through the Chair, executes the programs of the Association and guides the activities of the Executive Director and other staff. The Executive Committee also is empowered to handle the immediate affairs of the SAAESD between business meetings.

The Multistate Research Committee (MRC) is the quality assurance mechanism for the multistate research portfolio administered through the Association. The MRC is charged to thoroughly review proposals for new multistate projects and extensions of current projects. A major objective of the MRC is to conduct effective and meaningful reviews that include evaluating the quality of science, appropriateness, regional significance of proposals, and the adequacy of the procedures and participation. The MRC is also charged to assure that the format and procedural aspects of the project proposals are done in accordance with procedures defined in the National Guidelines for Multistate Research Activities.

The MRC shall be composed of five members who serve four-year overlapping terms to be initiated and terminated at the SAAESD Fall Meeting. Two members of the MRC shall also serve on the SERA Review Committee.

The Nomination Committee is chaired by the incoming Chair-Elect and is comprised of two additional COOs who have previously served as Chair.

ARTICLE VII – Quorum

For purposes of doing business of the Association, a quorum shall consist of a minimum of ten (10) formal members or their officially designated representatives present and voting at any duly called meeting where written notice and agenda is provided in advance of a meeting. A simple majority resolves all issues except amendment of the Rules of Operation which shall require a two-thirds majority (see below).

ARTICLE VIII – Parliamentary Authority

The emphasis in all meetings shall be an orderly process to achieve an objective decision by those present and voting. Should there be a parliamentary challenge, however, it shall be answered by reference to Roberts Rules of Order.

ARTICLE IX – Amendment of Rules of Operation

The Rules of Operation may be amended at any business meeting of the Association or voted on by electronic ballot provided the proposed amendment has been made available to all members one

month in advance of the meeting. To change the Rules of Operation, a quorum of the formal membership must be present and a two-thirds majority of the formal membership present must vote in favor of the amendment.

ASRED Report– August 2021

1. Administrative News
 - a. Dr. Ashley Stokes is Dean and Director, University of Tennessee, as of February 2021.
 - b. Dr. J. Mike Phillips is Director of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System as of March 2021.
 - c. The University of Florida is in the search process to replace Dr. Nick Place, who moved to the role of Dean at the University of Georgia.
 - d. About half the Extension Directors in the region have been in their current roles less than two years.
 - e. Dr. Kevin Kephart is NIFA Liaison to the Southern Region.
 - f. Andrea Putman has been hired as the APLU Assistant Vice President, Communications and External Partnerships; Food, Agriculture & Natural Resources (FANR).
 - g. Dr. John Green has been hired as Director of the Southern Rural Development Center.

2. Awards
 - a. Dr. Gary Lemme, retired Director, Alabama Cooperative Extension Service, was recognized in April 2021 as winner of the ASRED Distinguished Leadership Award.
 - b. Dr. Ed Jones, Associate Dean and Director, Virginia Tech, has been selected to receive the 2021 National Ruby Award from Epsilon Sigma Phi, the national honor society for extension professionals. The National Ruby Award is the most prestigious recognition presented by ESP and recognizes truly outstanding thinking, performance and leadership in Extension.
 - c. The highest award recognizing programmatic excellence nationally is the National Excellence in Extension Award, given by ECOP and NIFA. The Southern Region has won this award the last two years (James D. Ellis, University of Florida, 2020, and Matthew Devereaux, 2019, University of Tennessee) and six of the last ten years. Our region is once again a strong contender for the National award.
 - d. The Southern Region has won the National Extension Diversity Award three times in the last decade, most recently by Ronald Cox, Oklahoma State University, in 2018. Our region being chosen as the national winner again this year is a likely possibility.

3. The recently renamed Extension Foundation has announced a new tool for inventorying Extension programs, the National Registry of Cooperative Extension Programs and Assets (NRCEPA). It is being piloted by the National Extension Climate Initiative (NECI). This is planned to be a living inventory tool useful for program planning as well as supportive of partnership development and legislative advocacy.

4. National 4-H Congress was not held in 2020, which was the 100th anniversary year. The 100th anniversary theme will be carried forward into the in-person event planned for

November 2021. Some states will be sending both 2020 and 2021 4-H delegations. Although being planned as a face to face meeting, some virtual components will be added.

5. ASRED Directors recently met with Wendy Powers, incoming Chair of ECOP, to provide input regarding ECOP priorities for 2022. Strategic Directions 1 and 3 were judged most important and are:
 - a. Increase visibility and recognition of the Cooperative Extension System as a provider of evidence-based education and services and as a valuable partner to federal and national non-federal entities through improved communications of program impacts and successes.
 - b. Expand federal and non-federal resources available to Extension. The more frequently mentioned advocacy areas were health, broadband and 4-H youth. However considerable discussion occurred, with broad consensus, that our advocacy areas should also include Food and Fiber Production, Processing, Marketing and Safety.
6. The ECOP Program Committee and the Budget and Legislative Committee are working together on six concept papers that can be used in advocacy and program development. In addition, the Program Committee, with involvement of southern region leaders and a NIFA liaison, is working on Program Action Teams in each area. They are:
 - a. Workforce Development and Recovery
 - b. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
 - c. Urban Agriculture and Extension
 - d. Broadband Infrastructure, Access and Literacy
 - e. Climate Extension
 - f. Health Extension
 - g. 4-H Positive Youth Development Pathways Project

Each of these teams includes Extension program leaders from across the nation and a NIFA NPL, as well as non-LGU representatives. Each team will design a national leadership model for a particular program and work together to secure funding. All of the teams have some startup funds either from ECOP, appropriate Foundations, and/or from NIFA via the Extension Foundation National Technology in Agriculture Extension program. In addition to the more traditional ANR, FCS, CRD and 4-H programs important to our region, each of the above provide opportunities for funding and program development.

Southern Rural Development Center at Mississippi State University

Extension and Research Priorities, 2021

Dr. John Green, Director
www.srdc.msstate.edu

- **Regional and National Listening Session on Economic Viability:** The four Regional Rural Development Centers received funding from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) to support listening sessions to inform both regional and national priorities. These will include a broad national survey, four regional listening sessions, and four focused conversations on high priority topics as informed by the survey.
- **Broadband Access and Adoption:** National Digital Education Extension Team (NDEET) is building capacity within the Land-Grant system to support:
 - Community organization to connect to broadband
 - Adoption of broadband through digital literacy skill development
 - Research on high priority issues such as digital ag, broadband adoption benefits, reaching underserved communities
- **Heirs' Property:** Five working groups are meeting monthly to address concerns related to heirs' property.
 - Partnership development – Seeking to identify stakeholders in this arena to better align efforts
 - Research – Examining vital gaps in data and learning to enhance and inform practices for prevention and resolution
 - Education and outreach – Building capacity among Extension and other professionals working with families and farmers to prevent/resolve heirs' property issues
 - Legal-Policy-Funding – Examining/informing best practices in policy development and implementation
- **Community Conversations on Race – Coming Together for Racial Understanding:** The purpose of this effort is to build capacity within the LGU Extension System to facilitate community dialogues on issues of race/ethnicity. To date, 29 states have sent teams, and new funding for this year will allow for additional training and capacity building for these and new states. The Southern leaders (ASRED and AEA) have also used this process to develop action ideas for expanding DEI across the region through joint partnerships.
- **Rural Population Health and Aging:** The Interdisciplinary Network on Rural Population Health and Aging facilitates innovative research on the multilevel and multidimensional exposures shaping and being shaped by health and aging trends among different rural populations and regions in the United States.
- **Local & Regional Food Systems – SERA 47:** Southern Region Extension & Research Activity is addressing food insecurity and access issues through local and regional food systems.
- **Rural Retail Economies – CREATE BRIDGES:** Teams in six states are piloting efforts to enhance retail, tourism, and entertainment economic sectors can thrive in rural places given that typically 25%+ of rural economies are based within these sectors, which is much higher than most urban settings. Thus, this is a key rural economic opportunity.
- **COVID-19 Impact on CRD Efforts:** SRDC is exploring how COVID emphasized the need for Community Resource Development (CRD) support to address rural resilience and equitable access to resources for underserved communities.



Southern Mini Land-grant Meeting Update

September 28, 2021

- May 16-19, 2022, Texas A&M Hotel and Conference Center, College Station, TX.
- Begins on Monday morning with optional tour starting around 9:00. Conference officially starts with reception/dinner Monday evening and goes through Thursday morning.
- Individual association meetings all day Tuesday and Thursday morning. Joint session with everyone all day Wednesday.
- Hotel conference rate will be \$115 + tax, including free parking and Wi-Fi. Registration will be around \$650, which includes Monday reception/dinner, breakfasts, lunches, Tuesday & Wednesday offsite dinners, and breaks.
- Optional tour will have a separate fee (<\$100) that covers lunch and transportation, and require pre-registration. Tour stops will include PVAMU and TAMU AgriLife sites, returning to hotel around 3:30.
- Joint SAAESD meetings are scheduled on Tuesday or Thursday along with individual association meetings (see schedule below)
- Meeting website with hotel and local information is planned to go live by the end of October
 - Registration will be available on the website starting in January
- Wednesday's joint sessions
 - Who is our audience?
 - Climate influences on agriculture
 - Recruitment and retention of diverse faculty & staff
 - Ag colleges' roles in promoting human health

Southern Mini Land-grant Meeting SAAESD Joint Sessions

Tuesday, May 17, 2022

Time	Group 1	Group 2
<i>Breakfast 6:30</i>		
8:00 - 10:00	SAAESD	ASRED
<i>Break 10:00 - 10:30</i>		
10:30 - 12:00	SAAESD	
12:00 - 1:30 Lunch	SAAESD	CARET
1:30 - 3:00	SAAESD	
<i>Break 3:00 - 3:30</i>		
3:30 - 5:00	SAAESD	

Thursday, May 19, 2022

Time	Group 1	Group 2
<i>Breakfast 6:30</i>		
8:00 - 9:00	SAAESD	
9:00 - 10:00	SAAESD	ARD
<i>Break 10:00 - 10:30</i>		
10:30 - 11:30	SAAESD	S-APS
11:30 - 12:00		
<i>Adjourn 12:00</i>		



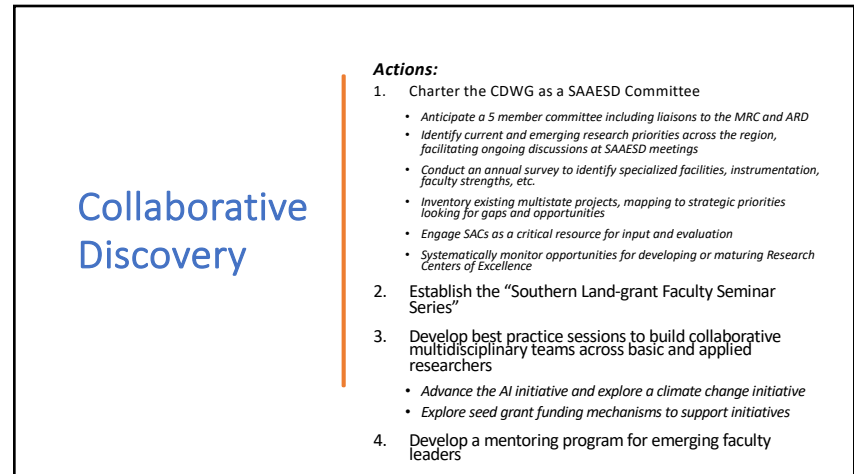
1



2



3



4

Enhancing Reputation

Actions:

1. Promote a culture of professional societies award nominations through strategic discussions with SACs
2. Share e-Learning modules on “Building Success in Extramural Funding” to build long-term leadership in the region
3. Initiate a long-term strategy to increase the number of AAAS fellows at member institutions
 - Curate and share a list of current AAAS Fellows and NASEM members in SAAESD, updated annually
 - Develop a core of members to serve as “honorary champions”
 - Develop an e-Learning module about the initiative
 - Engage current AAAS Fellows and NASEM members to build a shared sense of purpose

5

Strategic Alliances

Actions:

1. Use the **Southern Mini Land-grant Meeting** joint sessions to discuss and develop ideas and priorities for increasing interactions with ASRED, CARET, ARD, S-APS
2. Take proactive steps to build a genuine strategic partnership with **1890 Agricultural Research Directors (ARD)**
 - Reciprocal liaisons between our organizations
 - Co-develop multistate and regional research projects
 - Presence at the ARD Research Symposium
 - Co-develop joint ARD-SAAESD winter meeting
 - Participation in Southern Research Communicators Consortium
3. Partner with the **Southern Rural Development Center (SRDC)** in broadening the Southern research portfolio and building collaborative opportunities
4. Engage with **Southern Association of State Departments of Agriculture (SASDA)** as a resource to address emerging issues and provide experts for input into policy decisions

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Effective Communications

Actions:

1. Capture success stories and amplify award announcements at SAAESD member institutions
 - Create a space on the SAAESD website to house success stories and multi-state impacts.
2. Create opportunities for communicators to meet, collaborate, and coordinate messaging
 - Form the **Southern Region Communications Consortium (SRCC)** to exchange and connect experiences.
3. Develop a communication toolbox
 - Create and share resources and attach our research priorities to a public need
4. Develop a social media campaign to grow southern Ag science awareness
 - **#SouthernAgResearch**

7

Conversation: Where do we focus our efforts?

8



SAVE THE DATE

SOUTHERN REGION
MINI LAND-GRANT MEETING

MAY 16-19, 2022

COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS



Southern Mini Land-grant Meeting

SAAESD Joint Sessions – Strategic Alliances

Tuesday, May 17, 2022

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8:00 - 10:00	SAAESD ASRED
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11:30 - 12:00	
Adjourn 12:00	

Update on Artificial Intelligence

Dr. Robert A. Gilbert
UF/IFAS Dean for Research

SAAESD Fall Meeting

UF Artificial Intelligence Initiative: Opportunity for Collaboration

- **\$70 M NVIDIAUF partnership**
 - Nation's fastest supercomputer in higher education (# globally)
 - UF hiring 100+ faculty in AI; among largest faculty concentrations
 - Research, teaching, workforce readiness, equity and inclusion
- **UF Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) Hires**
 - 10 Core Areas of Strength identified: (1) Accelerated Precision Breeding, (2) Robotics and Precision Agriculture, (3) Omics, (4) Food System Resilience, (5) Environmental Systems, (6) Invasion Science, (7) Human Health, (8) AI Methods and Tools, (9) Hidden Connections and Principles, and (10) Education and Communication
 - IFAS hiring in key areas (13 AI core faculty, 7-~~re~~levant)
 - UF welcomes opportunities for collaboration



SAAESD Planning and Outcomes

- **Spring 2021 SAAESD survey on AI**
 - Led by Gary Thompson's team
 - 13 of 15 southern stations responding
 - Key findings:
 - 92% view AI as major focus area
 - The most common research areas: precision agriculture, remote sensing, big data, and machine learning
 - High interest for collaborating crossuniversity (10 stations)

SAAESD Planning and Outcomes

- **Survey Results: Major gaps and opportunities**
 - **Awareness** of what others are doing is likely low and happening in an uncoordinated way
 - A coordinated approach, sharing lessons learned, could help reduce **barriers and costs to engaging** in the AI space
 - Articulating the **core competency domains** can lead to improved collaboration and avoid redundancy across the system
 - Public-private and multi-university **partnerships are lacking**
 - Awareness of what others are doing and **best practices** in the educational context might be helpful
 - Can work with funding agencies to make adjustments and increase awareness of **funding opportunities**

UF/IFAS Core Areas and Hires

Accelerated Precision Breeding

Challenge: Develop genetically advanced, highly resilient, and productive crops.

New Hires: 4 new positions

Robotics and Precision Agriculture

Challenge: Develop the next generation of mechanical and sensing technologies.

New Hires: 2 new positions

Omics

Challenge: Discover molecular toolkit and mechanisms and develop synthetic biology design principles.

New Hires: 5 new positions

Food System Resilience

Challenge: Improve resilience, reduce environmental impacts, and stabilize disturbances of food system.

New Hires: 2 new positions

Environmental Systems

Challenge: Reduce environmental demands while creating economically sustainable production systems.

New Hires: 3 new positions

Human Health

Challenge: Provide real-world demonstrations of how to target prevention programs.

New Hires: 1 new position

Invasion Science

Challenge: Make basic discoveries, generate applied research, and create cutting-edge trainings.

New Hires: 1 new position

AI Methods and Tools

Challenge: Bridge and balance the basic to applied agricultural research domains.

New Hires: 1 new position

Hidden Connections and Principles

Challenge: Make basic discoveries about plant and animal systems with wide applications.

New Hires: 1 new position

Education and Communication

Challenge: Make AI understandable/accessible and increase fundamental readiness to conduct research, teaching, and extension.

New Hires: No new position requests

SAAESD Planning and Outcomes

- April 2021 SAAESD workshop on AI
 - *Why AI matters to experiment stations* (Katie Migliaccio– U. Florida)
 - *The funding landscape for AI research* (Steve Thomson– USDANIFA)
 - *Industry perspective on AI research opportunities* (Ed Barnes– Cotton Inc.)
 - **Action items**: conference grant and multistate project

Conference Grant on AI

- “Envisioning 2050 in the Southeast: AI-driven Innovations in Agriculture”
- USDANIFA funded
- **When/where ?** March 2022 at Auburn University
- **PI: Dr. Brenda Ortiz** (Auburn University); **CoPIs: Dr. Kati Migliaccio** (University of Florida) and **Dr. Alex Thomasson** (Mississippi State University)
- Program development based on **input from faculty across southeastern universities** (collaborators) **with support from SAAESD** (including U. of Kentucky, Cotton Inc., Penn State, U. of Tennessee, Prairie View A&M U., Virginia Tech, North Carolina State U., Louisiana State U., Oklahoma State U., U. of Arkansas, Texas A&M U., U. of Georgia, U. of Maryland, Tuskegee U., and Clemson)

AI Conference Details

- **Goal:** To strengthen knowledge sharing and collaboration among SE university faculty and students, industry, and stakeholders to identify opportunities in AI that will advance agriculture and closing the loop in sustainability in the Southeast.
- **Conference format:** Breakout sessions, panels, facilitated working sessions, poster session
- **Who?** Engaging participation from academia, industry, government, and stakeholders
- **Communication:** Website to be developed ASAP to advertise

Hatch Multistate Research Project

- “AI in Agroecosystems: Big Data and Smart Technology-Driven Sustainable Production”
- *S-1090 (approved)*
- **Lead:** Dr. Daniel Lee, U. of Florida
- **Involvement:** 12 universities, 24 participants
- **Administrative Advisor:** Dr. Damian Adams, U. of Florida
- **Disciplines:** Engineering, entomology, social sciences (including economics)

University	Participants #
Auburn University	2
Clemson University	2
Louisiana State U.	2
Mississippi State U.	4
N. Carolina State U.	3
Oklahoma State U.	1
Texas A&M U.	2
Virginia Tech	1
U. of Arkansas	1
U. of Florida	3
U. of Kentucky	2
U. of Tennessee	1

S-1090 Objectives

1. **Develop AI-based approaches for agro-ecosystems production, processing, & monitoring**
 - a) Development of AI tools for crop and animal production
 - b) Application of AI tools for improved robotic, machine vision, and autonomous system's perception, localization, manipulation, and planning for agro-ecosystems
 - c) Natural resources scouting and monitoring
 - d) Assess environmental, climate, economic, and social sustainability
 - e) Research in breeding and pre-breeding areas (phenotyping & genotyping)
2. **Data curation, management, accessibility, and security, ethics**
 - a) Develop open-source, public agricultural datasets for benchmarking AI algorithms
 - b) Standardization and testbed development
 - c) AI explainability, security, and ethics
3. **Extension: Showcase the value of current approaches AI adoption (technology transfer) and workforce development and training**

Thank you

Dr. Robert A. Gilbert
UF/IFAS Dean for Research
ragilber@ufl.edu



National Institute of Food and Agriculture
www.nifa.usda.gov

NIFA Update

Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors

Kevin Kephart

Deputy Director, Institute of Bioenergy, Climate, and Environment

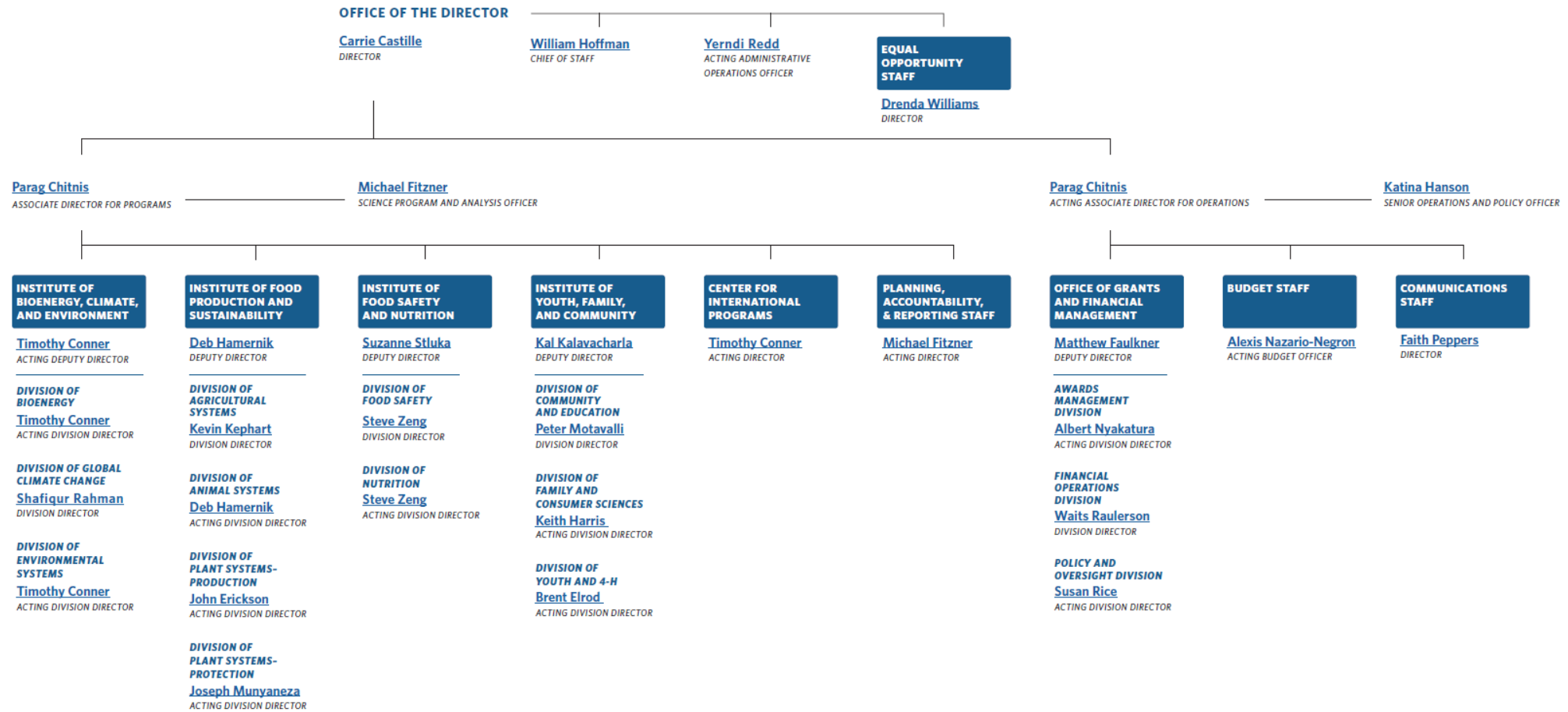
Kevin.Kephart@USDA.gov

September 28, 2021





The Organization of **USDA'S NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE** — Revised 08.24.2021





NIFA Hiring:

- National Program Leaders (Biological Sciences)
 - Animal Health (DVM)
 - Animal Nutrition/Growth/Heat Stress
 - Plant Pathology
 - Horticulture
 - Food Science/Microbiology
- National Program Leaders (Social Sciences)
 - Rural Sociology
- Program Specialists





USDA FY2021 Priorities:

- Containing the COVID-19 pandemic
- Ensuring racial justice and equity
- Ensuring food and nutrition security
- Rebuilding the rural economy
- Addressing the impacts of climate change





NIFA Core Teams

- Climate Change – Megan O'Rourke
- Nutrition Security – Sheila Fleischhacker
- Economic Recovery – Kevin Kephart
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion – 'Suresh' Sureshwaran





Economic Recovery Core Team

- Goal: Identify how we could use NIFA resources and networks to promote rapid, sustained, and equitable economic recovery



- Ganesh Bora, Ag Systems
- Amber Campbell, Environmental Systems
- Daniel Cassidy, Environmental Systems
- Melinda Coffman, IBCE
- Brent Elrod, Family and Consumer Sciences
- Vicki Finkenstadt, Ag Systems
- Kevin Kephart, Ag Systems
- Peter Motavalli, Community and Education
- Carlos Ortiz, Community and Education
- Robbin Shoemaker, Ag Systems
- David Songstad, SBIR NPL, Ag Systems
- Sponsors: Parag Chitnis, Tim Conner, Sivapathasun Sureshwaran



Core Team Charge

- Advance rural economic and workforce development
- USDA-wide economic recovery coordination meetings
- Develop ideas and strategies related to:
 - Post-pandemic economic recovery
 - Circular economies in agriculture, food systems, renewable energy systems, rural communities
 - workforce development
- Implement new programs related to economic recovery/development
- Ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion in these programs



Underway for FY2021

- Develop plan for regional listening sessions on economic recovery/workforce development needs with Regional Rural Development Centers
- Provide RFA revision suggestions
- Develop ideas for new programs
- Coordinate with other relevant federal funding agencies



Rural America COUNTS

70%
of the nation's land area is rural.

However, only **11%** of all US workers work in rural areas.

Rural areas and the people who work there fuel the US economy, with:

 Food & Water	 Energy	 Recreation
<p>74% of land in farms and 72% of the water area</p>	<p>57% of mining and quarrying jobs and about half of all hydro and geothermal electric power generation employment</p>	<p>67% of all forest land, over one third of B&B Inns, and most national parks</p>

A strong *Rural America...*

... is good for *All Americans!*

RRDC Regional Rural Development Centers

The numbers presented here are based on 2013 rural county definitions. Images courtesy of Twitter (camping scene), and USDA (bottom photos.)

The nation's four Regional Rural Development Centers link the research and educational outreach capacity of the nation's public universities with communities, local decision makers, entrepreneurs, families, and farmers and ranchers to help address a wide range of development issues. Information presented here does not necessarily reflect the view of the USDA or of other funders.

- Stakeholder Survey
 - Summer 2021

- 4 Regional Listening Sessions
 - Autumn 2021

- Report to NIFA
 - November 2021



Farm of the Future:

- The Committee directs the Under Secretary to collaborate with NIFA, ARS, and the Office of the Chief Economist to issue a competitive grant to an institution in the land-grant university system to establish a Farm of the Future testbed and demonstration site.
- <https://nifa.usda.gov/funding-opportunity/farm-future>
- Applications due October 15, 2021
- Integrated projects required
- Available funding \$3,936,000



New NIFA REPORTING SYSTEM

- NIFA Reporting System will replace the REEport portal
- Response to LGU's request to integrate Extension with research, streamline & reduce burden on partner institutions.
- Because the technology behind REEport limits its functionality, NIFA decided to build an entirely new system that takes advantage of new technology.
- NIFA goal to have all capacity and competitive programs in NRS by the end of CY 2022
 - The order and release dates can change in response to user needs. This is common in an Agile process.



General Timeline

2020-2021: AREERA

- Extension Program Initiation module was launched in September 2020
- The first iteration of the Research Project Initiation module released in May 2021
- Reporting modules currently being
- New procedures to hasten Hatch initiations

2021: Institutional Profile, McIntire-Stennis, RREA, Animal Health, and Smith-Lever Special Needs

2022: Competitive Programs



Other Items

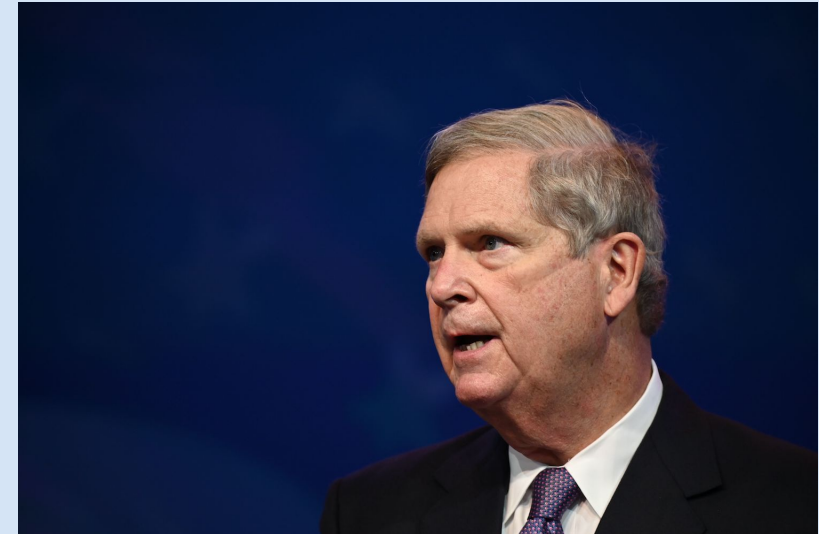
Secretary Vilsack

Speech on Climate Change

Colorado State University

Wednesday, September 29

YouTube





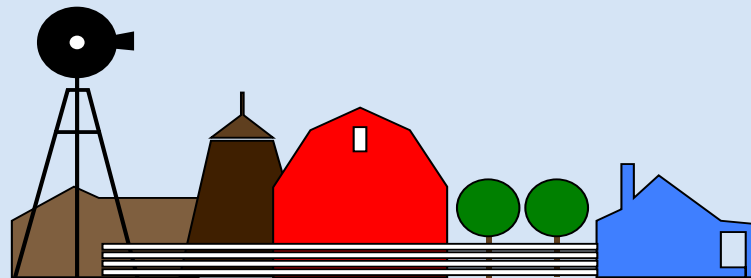
National Institute of Food and Agriculture
www.nifa.usda.gov




INVESTING IN SCIENCE | SECURING OUR FUTURE

Thank You

Kevin Kephart
Kevin.Kephart@USDA.gov





Multistate Research Committee Procedural Changes

- August 6th NIFA memo eliminated NIFA approvals for MRPs, NRSPs, and Rapid Response Projects
- Opportunity to strengthen our MRC procedures



Membership

- ▶ SAAESD policy: MRC composed of 5 members
 - Only 4 members in recent years
 - One member rotating off in 2021 – leaves 3 members
- ▶ SERA Review Committee (SRC)
 - 2 SAAESD members - 2 ASRED members - 2 EDs
 - Propose the 2 SAAESD members on the SRC also serve on the MRC
 - Goal: improve linkage between MRC and SRC



Meetings

- ▶ **Propose MRC meet 4-times per year**
 - Goal: increase transparency and standardize practices
 - meeting minutes shared on the SAAESD website
 - provide proposal writing committees with firm target dates
 - Goal: improve discussion about new or existing projects
 - evaluate “requests to write”
 - evaluate project proposals
 - conduct mid-term reviews
 - 1 meeting face-to-face and 3 meetings virtual



Winter meeting (January/February)

- Evaluate “Requests to Write” Proposals
- Review SAC reports from NIMSS
- Conduct mid-term reviews

Spring meeting (March/April)

In-person at SAAESD Spring Meeting

- Review Excellence in Multistate Research nominations
- Review expiring project notifications for upcoming year
- Review edits/revisions to proposals and make final decisions for proposals
- Report to directors
- Conduct mid-term reviews

Summer Meeting (July)

- Review proposals (*primary meeting*)
- SERA Review Committee update
- Conduct mid-term reviews

Fall meeting (October)

- Evaluate “Request to Write Proposals” and project renewal intents (*primary meeting*)
- Conduct mid-term reviews
- Review SAC reports from NIMSS
- Review expiring project notifications for the upcoming year



Timeline

- ▶ **Propose a concise timeline for proposal development**
 - elimination of NIFA approvals shortens the timeline
 - gives the writing committees more time for proposal development
 - clarifies expectations for directors and administrative advisors
 - ▶ Goal: standardized the timeline across all projects
- 

Calendar year prior to project initiation

- **September 30:** Writing Committee submits a “request to write a proposal” in NIMSS
 - Administrative Advisor (AA) assigned
 - Effective 2021, renewed S-projects can retain the same number designation
- **October:** MRC meets to review “Request to Write”
- **October 30:** Begin to upload the remainder of the proposal sections in NIMSS


Project Initiation Year

- **March 15:** Final Project Proposal due in NIMSS
 - List of five or more suggested peer reviewers
 - SAAESD invites participants to the project via NIMSS
- **March 30:** SAAESD sends the proposal for peer review
- **May 15:** Peer reviews sent to AA and writing committee
- **June 15:** Writing committee responds to peer reviews, edits proposal, and uploads into NIMSS
- **July:** MRC meets to review project proposals (*last chance for an October 1 start date*)
- **August:** Writing committee responds to MRC review and uploads edited proposal
- **September:** SAAESD reviews all revisions and makes any remaining project decisions
- **September 30:** Old projects expire
- **October 1:** New projects begin



SAAESD By-laws become Rules of Operations

- Updated last in 2001
- Conform with ESS Rules of Operation
- Aligned with our current practices



ARTICLE II - Purposes

- ▶ This section was extensively revised to eliminate redundancy and removed references to documents that no longer exist.
- ▶ Added language about us being “*one of five autonomous regional institutions*”.



ARTICLE III - Membership

ARTICLE IV- Meetings

- ▶ **Article III:** Clarified the definition of membership by adding “(State Agricultural Experiment Stations) *eligible for funding under the Hatch Act, as amended in 1955 (69 STAT. 671)*”
- ▶ **Article III:** Updated *ex officio* membership from “Administrator of CSREES” to “USDA Administrative Designees”
- ▶ **Article IV:** Clearly defined the two regular meetings of the association, while still having language to meet at other times



ARTICLE V- Officers

- **Added:** *“The ED serves as executive vice-chair, and the ED's office provides administrative services for the Association.”*
- **Defined:** Executive Committee (EC) “member-at-large” to be nominated *“from the non-COO members of the Association”*
- **Clarified:** Officer terms begin with the conclusion of the Fall SAAESD meeting
- **Added:** Officers automatically become members of ESCOP upon assuming their official positions (*as per ESCOP*)
- **Added:** Duties for the EC member-at-large as the *“representative and liaison for non-COO members of the Association”*



ARTICLE VI- Committees and Designees

- ▶ **Combined:** Original articles VI. Executive Committee and VII. Committees and Designees
- ▶ **Defined:** Standing committees of the SAAESD to be: Executive Committee, MRC, and Nomination Committee
- ▶ **Defined:** MRC description along with the charge to be the “*quality assurance mechanism for the multistate research portfolio*”
- ▶ **Updated:** MRC membership to include two members from the SERA Review Committee



ARTICLE VII - Quorum

ARTICLE IX - Amendment of Rules of Operation

- ▶ **Article VII:** Document name from “*By-laws*” to “*Rules of Operation*”
- ▶ **Article IX:** Added language to allow voting by electronic ballot



SAAESD Strategic Roadmap Annual Action Plan

John Davis, U. of Florida **Susan Duncan**, Virginia Tech **Michael Toews**, U. of Georgia
Henry Fadamiro, Texas A&M U. **David White**, U. of Tennessee **Frankie Gould**, Louisiana State U



Annual Action Plans

A **Strategic Roadmap Implementation Team** will develop annual action plans to:

- Identify and prioritize specific needs
- Identify, update, and prioritize emerging opportunities within the five focus areas
- Evaluate accomplishments and develop annual action plans to support the goals
- Monitor progress, evaluate results, and share recommendations with SAAESD members

Implementation Work Groups

Collaborative Discovery

Enhancing Reputation

Strategic Alliances

Effective Communications

Collaborative Discovery

Actions:

1. Charter the CDWG as a SAAESD Committee
 - *Anticipate a 5 member committee including liaisons to the MRC and ARD*
 - *Identify current and emerging research priorities across the region, facilitating ongoing discussions at SAAESD meetings*
 - *Conduct an annual survey to identify specialized facilities, instrumentation, faculty strengths, etc.*
 - *Inventory existing multistate projects, mapping to strategic priorities looking for gaps and opportunities*
 - *Engage SACs as a critical resource for input and evaluation*
 - *Systematically monitor opportunities for developing or maturing Research Centers of Excellence*
2. Establish the “Southern Land-grant Faculty Seminar Series”
3. Develop best practice sessions to build collaborative multidisciplinary teams across basic and applied researchers
 - *Advance the AI initiative and explore a climate change initiative*
 - *Explore seed grant funding mechanisms to support initiatives*
4. Develop a mentoring program for emerging faculty leaders

Enhancing Reputation

Actions:

1. Promote a culture of professional societies award nominations through strategic discussions with SACs
2. Share e-Learning modules on “Building Success in Extramural Funding” to build long-term leadership in the region
3. Initiate a long-term strategy to increase the number of AAAS fellows at member institutions
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Strategic Alliances

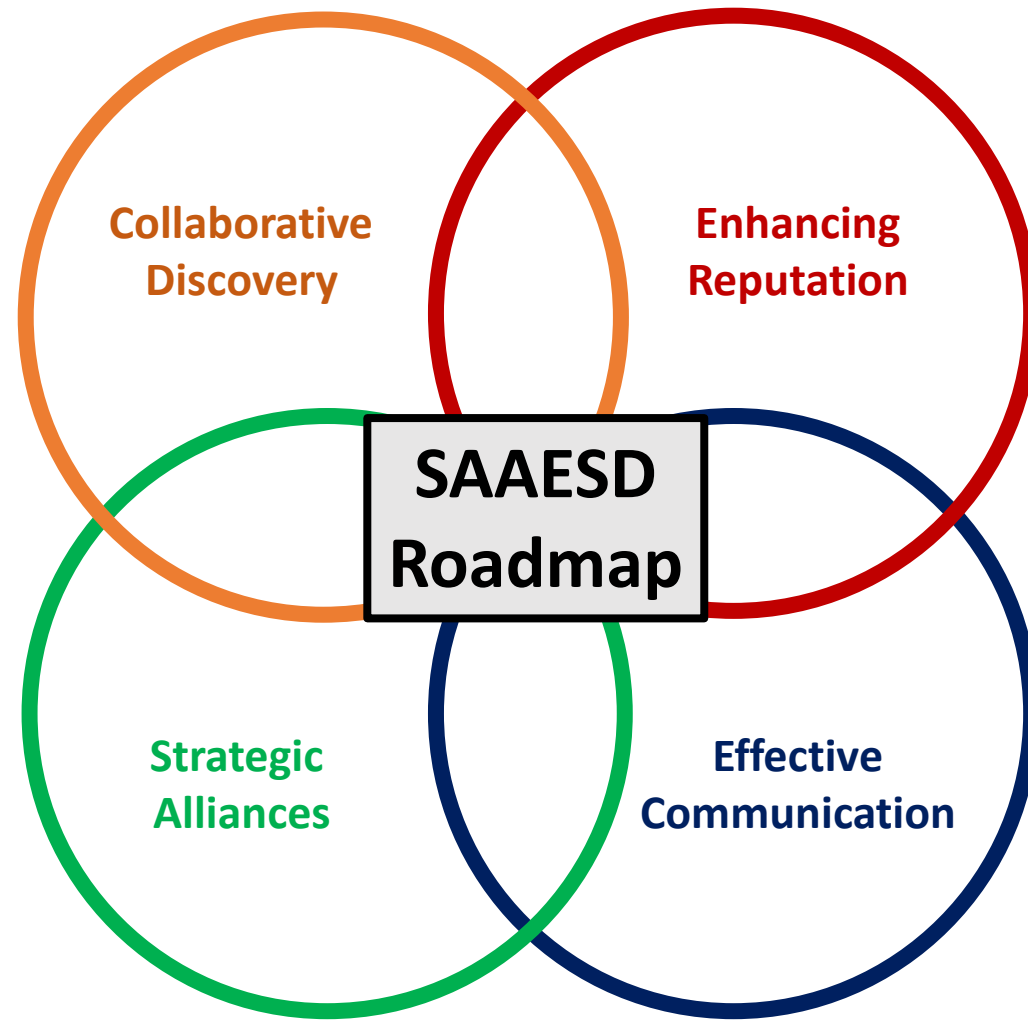
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4. Develop a social media campaign to grow southern Ag science awareness
 - ***#SouthernAgResearch***



Conversation: Where do we focus our efforts?

**RESOLUTION HONORING
ROBERT GODFREY**

Whereas, Dr. Robert Godfrey, Associate Director of the Agricultural Experiment Station, at the University of the Virgin Islands, will no longer participate directly in the activities of the Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors; and

Whereas, Dr. Godfrey has, during his years of service, contributed significantly to the activities of the association by serving as its Chair-elect, Chair and past-Chair from 2015-2018, as the ESCOP Liaison to ECOP since 2018, providing leadership as an administrative advisor on Multistate Research Projects and Coordinating Committees, serving for five years as the Insular Land Grant Institutions representative on the APLU BAA Policy Board of Directors and as our representative on ESCOP committees and boards;

Whereas, Dr. Godfrey's leadership and service was recognized with the 2020 Excellence in Leadership Award, which recognizes those who have served the Southern Experiment Stations, SAAESD, and the national Land-Grant System with exemplary distinction;

Whereas, Dr. Godfrey has served the Land-Grant mission of the United States Virgin Islands, the Southern Region, and the U.S. with dedication and vision toward maintaining competitive, safe, profitable, efficient and sustainable agriculture;

Now, Therefore Be It Resolved That the Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors, assembled in Olympic Valley, California on September 28, 2021 expresses sincere appreciation to Dr. Robert Godfrey for his dedication and outstanding service to the Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors and wishes him every success in his professional endeavors.

Be It Further Resolved that the Chairperson of the Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors be authorized and directed to transmit to Dr. Godfrey an appropriate copy of this resolution in honor of his leadership and contributions.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JF Meullenet'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

JF Meullenet, Chair

Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors

**RESOLUTION HONORING
DAVID RAGSDALE**

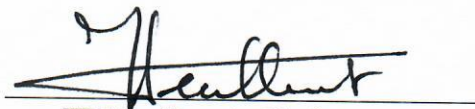
Whereas, Dr. David Ragsdale, Associate Director of Texas A&M AgriLife Research will no longer participate directly in the activities of the Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors; and

Whereas, Dr. Ragsdale has, during his years of service, contributed significantly to the activities of the association by providing leadership as an Administrative Advisor for SAC12 and served as our representative to the US Wheat and Barley Scab Steering Committee; and

Whereas, Dr. Ragsdale has served the Land-Grant mission of the State of Texas, the Southern Region, and the U.S. with dedication and vision toward maintaining competitive, safe, profitable, efficient and sustainable agriculture;

Now, Therefore Be It Resolved That the Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors, assembled in Olympic Valley, California on September 28, 2021 expresses sincere appreciation to Dr. David Ragsdale for his dedication and outstanding service to the Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors and wishes him every success in his professional endeavors.

Be It Further Resolved that the Chairperson of the Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors be authorized and directed to transmit to Dr. Ragsdale an appropriate copy of this resolution in honor of his leadership and contributions.


JF Meullenet, Chair



Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors

**RESOLUTION HONORING
KEITH OWENS**

Whereas, Dr. Keith Owens, Associate Vice President of the Oklahoma Agricultural Experiment Station, at Oklahoma State University, will no longer participate directly in the activities of the Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors; and

Whereas, Dr. Owens has, during his years of service, contributed significantly to the activities of the association by serving as its Chair-elect, Chair, and past-Chair from 2018 through 2021, providing leadership as an administrative advisor on several multistate research projects and serving as our representative on the ESCOP NRSP Review Committee and the NRSP1-Management Committee as well as providing input into other committees and boards;


Whereas, Dr. Owens' leadership and service was recognized with the 2021 Excellence in Leadership Award, which recognizes those who have served the Southern Experiment Stations, SAAESD, and the national Land-Grant System with exemplary distinction;

Whereas, Dr. Owens has served the Land-Grant mission of the State of Oklahoma, the Southern Region, and the U.S. with dedication and vision toward maintaining competitive, safe, profitable, efficient and sustainable agriculture;

Now, Therefore Be It Resolved That the Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors, assembled in Olympic Valley, California on September 28, 2021 expresses sincere appreciation to Dr. Keith Owens for his dedication and outstanding service to the Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors and wishes him every success in his professional endeavors.

Be It Further Resolved that the Chairperson of the Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors be authorized and directed to transmit to Dr. Owens an appropriate copy of this resolution in honor of his leadership and contributions.





JF Meullenet, Chair

Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors

**RESOLUTION HONORING
REUBEN MOORE**

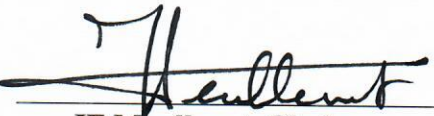
Whereas, Dr. Reuben Moore, Interim Director of Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station, will no longer participate directly in the activities of the Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors; and

Whereas, Dr. Moore has, during his years of service, contributed significantly to the activities of the association by serving as our representative on the Board of Directors for both the Southern Rural Development Center and the Southern Regional Aquaculture Center; and

Whereas, Dr. Moore has served the Land-Grant mission of the State of Mississippi, the Southern Region, and the U.S. with dedication and vision toward maintaining competitive, safe, profitable, efficient and sustainable agriculture;

Now, Therefore Be It Resolved That the Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors, assembled in Olympic Valley, California on September 28, 2021 expresses sincere appreciation to Dr. Reuben Moore for his dedication and outstanding service to the Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors and wishes him every success in his professional endeavors.

Be It Further Resolved that the Chairperson of the Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors be authorized and directed to transmit to Dr. Moore an appropriate copy of this resolution in honor of his leadership and contributions.


JF Meullenet, Chair



Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors

**RESOLUTION HONORING
ROBERT HOUTZ**

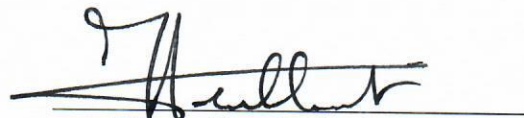
Whereas, Dr. Robert Houtz, Associate Dean for Research and Director of the Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station will no longer participate directly in the activities of the Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors; and

Whereas, Dr. Houtz has, during his years of service, contributed significantly to the activities of the association by providing leadership as an administrative advisor to multiple Multistate Research Projects, Southern Coordinating Committees and SERAs; and

Whereas, Dr. Houtz has served the Land-Grant mission of the State of Kentucky, the Southern Region, and the U.S. with dedication and vision toward maintaining competitive, safe, profitable, efficient and sustainable agriculture;

Now, Therefore Be It Resolved That the Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors, assembled in Olympic Valley, California on September 28, 2021 expresses sincere appreciation to Dr. Robert Houtz for his dedication and outstanding service to the Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors and wishes him every success in his professional endeavors.

Be It Further Resolved that the Chairperson of the Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors be authorized and directed to transmit to Dr. Houtz an appropriate copy of this resolution in honor of his leadership and contributions.



JF Meullenet, Chair



Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors

**RESOLUTION HONORING
JEAN-FRANCOIS MEULLENET**

Whereas, Dr. Jean-Francois Meullenet, Chairman of the Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors, has provided selfless and committed leadership and keen oversight to enhance the system this past year; and


Whereas, under Dr. Meullenet' leadership and support, the activities of the Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors have been greatly enhanced and the association has achieved significant accomplishments; and

Whereas, Dr. Meullenet has been efficient and timely in the conduct of Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors business; and

Whereas, Dr. Meullenet has served the Land-Grant mission of the Southern Region and the U.S. with dedication and vision toward maintaining competitive, safe, profitable, efficient, and sustainable agriculture;

Now, Therefore Be It Resolved That the Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors, in Olympic Valley, California on September 28, 2021 expresses sincere appreciation to Dr. Jean-Francois Meullenet for his commitment, service, and leadership in making the Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors more effective in addressing current and future needs, challenges and opportunities in agricultural research, and

Be It Further Resolved that the Chairperson of the Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors be authorized and directed to transmit to Dr. Meullenet an appropriate copy of this resolution in honor of his leadership and contributions.



Dr. Robert Gilbert, Chair



Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors