

**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 SERA Review Committee shall also serve on the MRC.

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.