

SAAESD Spring 2023 Business Meeting notes

Mississippi State University April 17-20

SAAESD Attendees: Usman Adamu, Paula Agudelo, John Andrae, Angus Catchot, Jeffrey Dean, Loren Fisher, Cory Gallo, Robert Gilbert, Amy Grunden, Aaron Kiess, Cliff Lamb, Jamie Larson, Steve Lommel, Jamie Matthews, Nathan McKinney, J.F. Meullenet, David Monks, Saied Mostaghimi, Lesley Oliver, Leland Pierson, Randy Raper, Tim Rials, Michael Salassi, Mary Savin, Scott Senseman, Nathan Slaton, Bob Stougaard, Harsha Thippareddi, Gary Thompson, Scott Willard, Kang Xia, Hongwei Xin

Liaisons and Guests: Michael Evans, Gregory Goins, John Green, Kevin Kephart, Adrian Percy, Mike Phillips, Kaylee South

SRCC Attendees: Tobie Blanchard, Ruth Borger, Alisa Boswell-Gore, Karen Brasher, Marthious Clavier, Max Esterhuizen, Latasha Ford, Frankie Gould, Nick Kordsmeier, Maria Lameiras, Patty McDaniels, Hope Miller, Cindy Morley, Tricia Petty, Lisa Stearns, Lyndall Stout

Action Items:

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agenda - Approved by acclamation.• Meeting Minutes from Mini Land Grant - Approved by acclamation.• Interim Actions - Approved by acclamation.• Save the Date for a Joint ARD/SAAESD Meeting August 9-10, Atlanta Airport Marriott
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2023 Southern Region Award Nomination for Excellence in Multistate Research – S1084: Industrial Hemp Production, Processing, and Marketing in the U.S.• Discussion whether to allow department heads to serve as AA's for S Projects. This is currently not our practice, but there was no opposition to doing this going forward. Recommendation to pair a department head with their respective Experiment Station Director as joint AA's so the Director can mentor and provide oversight.• S9 budget increase approved (8 approve, 1 against, 4 did not vote).
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approved unanimously: Steve Lommel's nomination from the Southern regional association as ESS chair elect.• Henry Fadamiro, ESS/SAAESD 2023 Excellence in Leadership Award.• Lesley Oliver, inaugural Susan E. Duncan Meritorious Service Award.
	<p>Executive Session Debrief:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approved, 2% Cost of Living increase for SAAESD staff will be added to the annual assessment.• Approved, one-time 3% merit raise for SAAESD staff to be paid from the reserve (not added to the annual assessment).• Cotton Assessment:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Approved unanimously: discontinue \$25K payment to CottonGen effective immediately.○ Approved unanimously: phased reduction for the Cotton Winter Nursery with \$35k in 2024, \$25K in 2025, \$15K in 2026, and no funding in 2027 forward.• Approved unanimously: FY23-24 budget with above conditions.

Agenda and Discussion:

Monday, April 17

MRC Meeting – MRC Members Only

Tuesday, April 18

1	<p>Welcome and Introductions – Paula Agudelo</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review/Approve Agenda- Approved by Acclamation• Review/Approve minutes from September 27, 2022- Approved by Acclamation• Approve Interim Actions- Approved by Acclamation• Southern Mini Land Grant Meeting discussion. S-AHS has requested input from the associations for a desired rotation (2 to 5 years). Feedback was either 3 or 4 years, with a 4-year cycle compatible with SAAESD/ASRED joint meeting schedules.• Joint ARD/SAAESD Meeting planned. Will convene August 9-10 (noon to noon) at the Atlanta Airport Marriott.
2	<p>Multistate Research Committee Report –Nathan McKinney</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion whether to allow department heads to serve as Administrative Advisors (AA) for S projects. This is currently not our practice, but there was no opposition to doing this going forward. Recommendation to pair a department head with their respective Experiment Station Director as joint AA’s so the director can mentor and provide oversight.• 2023 Southern Region Award Nomination for Excellence in Multistate Research. S1084: Industrial Hemp Production, Processing, and Marketing in the U.S.• Reviewed current AA opportunities: NRSP3, SACs 4, 12, 16. Gary will reach out to specific directors.• NRSP8 & NRSP11 discussion – goal is to become more systematic on how to approve renewals and new projects. NRSP financial support is Hatch off-the-top funding with an expectation that most will ultimately find their own funding. The NRSP Review Committee (RC) will meet in Reno, NV, May 31-June 1 to review NRSP8 (renewed at \$500,000) and NRSP11 (new project at \$212,000 over 5 years).• S9 budget presentation and vote (see agenda brief). Voted to approve budget increase (quorum present: 8 approve, 1 not approve, 4 did not vote).
3	<p>Liaison Updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• NIFA Report – Kevin Kephart<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Currently 350 employees with a target workforce of 390 employees.○ 2500 grants processed in FY22 funding 70 programs. Total funding \$2.2 billion.○ NIFA priorities- Implementing Biden administration’s priorities; supporting partners in addressing critical needs; and driving efforts to advance ag-related services.• ARD Report – Gregory Goins<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ ARD has a goal of strengthen relationships.○ FY 21 saw a 21.9% increase in funding.○ Nextgen proposals being reviewed with \$250M funding.○ 1890 Scholarship Program○ 5-year goals: continue strengths, global food security and leadership programs• ASRED Report – Mike Phillips<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ We learned a lot due to Covid and identified audiences unknown to Extension.○ Challenge now is to maintain those relationships built during Covid.○ October 9-12, 2023, NEDA meeting will convene in Tucson, AZ

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SRDC Report – John Green <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ They will be piloting a seed grant program proposed by MSU and UF. ○ Rural Population Research Network will meet in September at Nashville <p>ESCOPE Committee Reports: (written reports)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Budget & Legislative Committee Report – Steve Lommel ● Communication & Marketing Committee Report – JF Meullenet ● Science & Technology Committee Report – Nathan McKinney ● Diversity Catalyst Committee Report – Jamie Larson <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Seeking nominations for the DCC annual awards (deadline extended)
4	<p>Strategic Roadmap Implementation Update – Implementation Working Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collaborative Discovery is an area that we need improve. What can we do as an association to have a positive impact? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ AI: 2021 workshop led to two outcomes S1090 multistate project and two NIFA-sponsored conferences (2023 this week in Orlando, FL). ○ Climate Change: engaged in Nation Climate Change Roadmap. ESS survey of climate change expertise in our institutions, and Southern region contributed more than any other region. NCCR Core Group is tasked with administratively assisting the program. Working group nominations were accepted, including a social scientist. ○ Controlled Environment Ag: we will have a workshop tomorrow. ● Enhancing Reputation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Modules and workbooks around honorifics have been distributed. ○ SAAESD curates a list of AAAS fellows from our member universities who can serve as mentors and letter writers for nominations. ● Strategic Alliances <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Mini Land Grant was productive with two demonstratable outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Academic Programs: AgEngine has been online for about 2 weeks with 9 institutions signed on. ~200 students have submitted their information. ▪ ARD: Reciprocal liaisons assigned, and a joint meeting is being organized ○ SRDC: goal to highlight social science research in our experiment stations. ● Communications: SRCC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SRCC meeting concurrently with the SAAESD at this meeting. ○ Steering Committee is very active and SRCC meets monthly. ○ Multistate proposal on communications is currently being developed. ○ Co-sponsoring a session on regional communications at the Association for Communication Excellence (ACE) meeting on June 13 in Ashville, NC. ○ One goal is to develop collaborative press releases and regional stories. ○ Funding agencies (NIFA) are amplifying our stories. ● Discussion: What are our Priorities? This is YOUR roadmap. What can we do to guide the activities within the parameters of our organization, and are there emerging opportunities? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is there a way to connect faculty researchers from different institutions? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is there a way to automate a database with modern AI tools? ▪ How to get faculty from other disciplines to engage with Ag? ▪ Is there an opportunity for our grant writers to work together to identify faculty experts? ○ How to connect to the 1994 institutions? We only have 1 in our region. ○ Can we develop regional priorities without duplicating efforts?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Developing regional research priorities is a tough discussion. How to identify the priorities? Is it worth doing? ▪ Research priorities spreadsheet was developed based on conversations with the directors. Yet, no consensus emerged. Should this spreadsheet be updated?
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5	<p>Cotton Winter Nursery and CottenGen Report and Discussion – Don Jones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cotton Winter Nursery is now in Costa Rica <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 60-year-old asset. 10-15 users per year. Large majority use from the public sector. Historical use for university use is 32%. Characterization of the cotton germplasm. \$500K contributions from the USDA to start it up in Costa Rica. A couple of full and mostly seasonal staff. ○ Cotton incorporated has increased funding in 2023 to \$288K, which is roughly 2X increase. ○ There is a set fee (hill cost) for using the winter nursery. ○ There is a need for a reserve funds to replace aging equipment, etc. ○ Requesting continued support of \$35K for Cotton Winter Nursery • CottonGen Database: a plan is in place to make this self-sustaining based on USDA funding sources but will not know until this time next year. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Requesting continued support of \$25K for CottonGen, but this will be the last year they will request this funding. • 92% of the cotton harvested acres in the last 3 years are in the Southern region. • Our model is based on acreage categories (model created by Eric) vs a straight percentage to make it more equitable among members. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Texas & Georgia (2/3 of acreage) view it as a positive investment. ○ How many states have a breeding program? Breeders and geneticists both use the winter nursery. Eight states use the winter nursery. • Is ARS paying an equitable amount? They pay the same hill cost and pay a supplemental amount each year that contributes to the fixed costs. • Fixed costs vary year to year but are usually ~\$150,000 per year. • SAAESD funds are greatly appreciated. Anyone who wants to go down to visit the winter nursery is welcome to travel down with Don Jones.
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Keynote Address – *The Gallery*
Harnessing Interdisciplinary Science to Tackle Grand Challenges in Agriculture
Dr. Adrian Percy, North Carolina Plant Sciences Initiative

6	<p>Executive Directors Report – Gary Thompson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See agenda brief for activities summary. Slides outlining the ED activities for the year were presented.
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7	<p>SAAESD Budget Presentation – JF Meullenet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See agenda brief for FY23-24 budget models. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The cotton assessments were discussed at length. ○ The value of the cotton winter nursery was not questioned but why SAAESD is continually supporting after many years was of concern. ○ The lack of reporting about CottonGen from Washington State University was of concern as was the usage within our institutions. The database has value but should be self-supporting.
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8	<p>Director Topics and Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Research External Funding and Intellectual Property – Michael Salassi <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gave background on intellectual property related to state soybean research. They couldn't sign contracts that stipulated jointly own intellectual property and royalty sharing. University policy is that they own the intellectual property. ○ United Soybean Board is saying universities need to decide if they want to do business with USB under those parameters. ○ LSU has one board that handles four commodity boards. Contract this year says if they choose to own it, then they own it in full. ○ Over the last 5-6 years these groups funding research are trying to get bigger and bigger returns on their investments. ○ Concern about setting a precedent. ○ Similar concerns promulgated by the USDA Ag Marketing Service directions to commodity boards usually cannot be tied to a legislative act. ○ Scott Senseman: Rice promotion board is no longer wanting to support the rice breeding program. They would rather support rice research. ○ Scott Willard: Mississippi State University will not be part of the Puerto Rico winter nursery contract moving forward. Just wanted to let everyone know as this will increase other station's winter nursery costs. ● Grant Support Specialists – Nathan McKinney <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ AR sponsored programs office is internally funded, and resource constrained limiting the operations to pre- and post-award activities. Interested in increasing grant writing technical support. What should this cost? ○ Virginia Tech: hired a staff member to work with faculty to increase numbers of large proposals and grants, focusing on proposal development through submission. Serves as recruiting tool for faculty to have this staff member. \$80K salary likely. ○ Penn State model: specialized university-level grant writing team supporting cradle to grave proposal development for a limited number of big grants. Contracted with individual grant writers for other grants. These writers quickly get to know the faculty and build connections. Consultants would submit a per project bid. ○ LSU Ag Center has a sponsored programs office for pre-award activities and campus does post-award. Working with a firm to provide faculty grant writing training. Created a research support position to help faculty find grants and help them put together the proposal. ○ TAMU has a corporate engagement office of 6 people that is outside of the general pre/post structure. Have been very successful. They will generally only focus on grants >\$1.5M. Expect \$75-\$136K salaries. Keeping anyone under \$85K is difficult. ○ UF is adding staff in the Dean's office for these activities and hired a faculty level position.
9	<p>Nominating Committee – Hongwei Xin</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SAAESD Chair-elect nominee is Scott Senseman (OSU). The association vote will take place at the Fall SAAESD meeting. ● agInnovation (Experiment Station Section) Chair-elect nomination from the Southern region – call for nominations and approval. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Steve Lommel was approved as the nominee from the Southern region to stand election for as Chair Elect of ESS at the Fall agInnovation (ESS) meeting.

<p>Resolutions – Lesley Oliver</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resolution for Henry Fadamiro’s service to the Southern regional association. <p>SAAESD Excellence in Leadership Award Presentation – Paula Agudelo</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Henry Fadamiro received the 2023 SAAESD leadership award and will receive the national leadership award at the Fall ESS meeting in Grand Rapids, MI. <p>Susan E. Duncan Meritorious Service Award – Saied Mostaghimi</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lesley Oliver received the inaugural Susan E. Duncan Meritorious Service Award.
<p>Executive Session- ALL COOs (closed session)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FY 22 SAAESD Budget Discussion and Vote Executive Director Performance Review
<p>Executive Session Debrief – Paula Agudelo</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved, 2% Cost of Living increase for SAAESD staff will be added to the annual assessment. Approved, one-time 3% merit raise for SAAESD staff to be paid from the reserve (not added to the annual assessment). Cotton Assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved unanimously: discontinue \$25K payment to CottonGen effective immediately. Approved unanimously: phased reduction for the Cotton Winter Nursery with \$35k in 2024, \$25K in 2025, \$15K in 2026, and no funding in 2027 forward. Approved unanimously: FY23-24 budget with above conditions.
<p>Adjourn Business Meeting – Paula Agudelo</p>

Wednesday, April 19

<p>Communications Workshop – <i>The Gallery</i></p> <p>Session 1: Seeking Success with Stakeholders</p> <p>Lyndall Stout (Moderator), Oklahoma State University Dennis Reginelli, Mississippi Soybean Promotion Board Marty Fuller, Cornerstone Government Affairs Jon Kalahar, Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation</p> <p><i>Research conducted at our Agricultural Experiment Stations addresses the complex, multifaceted challenges in agriculture, the environment, and the life sciences. Our challenge is to develop effective communications and marketing strategies that reach audiences who need to hear our messages, especially policymakers and advocates who influence research funding. The panel will explore the question: what do these stakeholders need to know and how do they need to hear it?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key takeaways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be nice to everyone. A lower-level staffer today will be in a higher position of authority later. Understand who your champions are. Deal with those who aren’t your champions with respect and remember that you don’t have to win the debate. Present like you are presenting on a 9th grade field trip. Be willing to talk about projected impact. If this works, then we can do... Find personal stories that resonate with your legislators! Staffers learn a lot by going on tours! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spending \$15-\$20K investment to bring staffers to visit is one of the best investments you can make to create relationships. Create SIMPLE 1-page communications.

- 1 PowerPoint slide
- Lots of infographics with pictures
- Write the social media posts for them.
- Be authentic.
- Branded. Where can they find additional information?
- Make sure your website is updated.
- Quick and easy documents that can serve as a reference for congressional members.
- Researchers need to work closely with communicators!
- Don't give mixed signals...stick to the message.
- For a regional message- make sure everyone is on the same page!
 - Bounce ideas off each other and create a common message.
 - Tweak each website to show similar messaging.
 - What are unifying topics from a congressional standpoint.
- Having constituent support is very powerful.
- Invite local media to your experiment stations and get them to know you and your people (build relationships).
- Develop a 30 second soundbite and a "leave behind" document.
- Define the problem – propose solutions – project the impact.
- Remember that all politics is local – relate regional issues to local impacts.
- Create teams: researcher, director, communicator.
- Remember that fundraising is what drives elected officials.

Communications Workshop

Session 2: Communications and Media Training: Am I prepared to meet the press?

Sidney "Sid" Salter, Director of Public Affairs at Mississippi State University

Directors are part of a mission-critical executive team in our colleges who must convey the importance of science and its applications to the public, often in times of crisis. Communicators play an essential role in collaborating with the directors to enable them to create meaningful and appropriate messaging.

- Key takeaways:
 - ESSENTIAL - Compose the narrative before you respond (1-3 lines what has happened)
 - Tell the truth within the narrative.
 - Stick to verifiable facts. Not every question a reporter asks must be addressed.
 - Take responsibility and acknowledge what matters.
 - Show compassion and situational awareness...keep your eye on the ball.
 - Be accountable and credible...own it.
 - Make clear this is an evolving situation and updates will be forthcoming.
 - Deflect unverified facts and avoid speculation...defend with verifiable facts.
 - Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know but I will get back to you when I get more information."
 - Control the narrative and update when facts become clear...refresh the factual narrative.
 - Consider university policy, HR rights, etc. in the narrative.
 - Establish rapport with reporters assigned to your institution BEFORE there is a crisis.

Growing Controlled Environment Agriculture Enterprises in Your State – The Gallery

Kaylee South, Virginia Tech

Michael Evans, Virginia Tech

Amit Dhingra, Texas A&M University

See PowerPoint presentations

Luncheon Speaker

Update from the USDA-NIFA Southern Regional Aquaculture Center

Jimmy Avery, Southern Regional Aquaculture Center

See PowerPoint presentations

SRDC Workshop – *The Gallery*

Advancing Knowledge about Climate Resilience and Population Change: Roles for Social Scientists in Experiment Station Research

John Green, SRDC

Gary Thompson, SAAESD

See PowerPoint presentations