

SAAESD Spring Business Meeting 2024

March 26 – 1:30-5:00 *Regency 1*

March 28 – 8:30-11:00 *Regency 1*

Hyatt Regency, Lexington, KY

Agenda

Tuesday, March 26 1:30 – 5:00

1:30 - 1:40	1	Welcome and Introductions – Hongwei Xin <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review/Approve Agenda Review/Approve minutes from September 25/26, 2023 Approve Interim Actions Meeting Schedules
1:40 – 2:00	2	Multistate Research Committee Report – David Monks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MRC updates 2024 ESS Award Nomination for Excellence in Multistate Research S9 update & budget presentation – Bob Stougaard NRSP3 renewal discussion – Kang Xia
2:00 – 2:30	3	IR-4/NRSP-4 Update – Jerry Baron
2:30 – 3:00	4	Liaison Reports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> S-SARE Report – Jeff Jordan NIFA Report – Kevin Kephart
3:00 – 3:30	Networking Break	
3:30 – 4:00	4	Liaison Reports continued <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ARD Report – Gregory Goins SRDC Report – John Green ESCOPE Committee Reports: (written reports) <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 Cotton Winter Nursery Report – Don Jones
4:00 - 5:00	5	Director Topics and Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborative projects to build 1862-1890 bridges in the region – Kang Xia Research – teaching balance in animal sciences – Hongwei Xin

Thursday, March 28 8:30 – 11:00

8:30 – 9:00	6	SRCC Successes and Updates – Frankie Gould, Lyndall Stout
9:00 – 9:30	7	Executive Directors Report – Gary Thompson
9:30 - 9:45	8	SAAESD Budget Presentation – JF Meullenet
9:45 – 10:00	9	<p>Nominating Committee – Scott Senseman</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAAESD Excellence in Leadership Award • SAAESD Agricultural Research Innovation Award of Excellence • Susan E. Duncan Meritorious Service Award <p>Resolutions – Lesley Oliver</p>
10:00 – 10:15		Break
10:15 – 10:45	10	<p>Executive Session- ALL COOs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FY 22 SAAESD Budget Discussion and Vote • Executive Director Performance Review
10:45 – 11:00		Executive Session Debrief – Hongwei Xin
11:00		Adjourn Business Meeting – Hongwei Xin
11:00 – 1:00		MRC Meeting – MRC members only

SAAESD Fall Meeting 2023

September 25-26, 2023

DeVos Place Hotel- Grand Rapids, MI

Room Locations: DeVos Place Grand Gallery Overlook Room H

Agenda

Time	Item	Monday, September 25- Agenda Item - Presenter
3:30-4:00	1	<p>Welcome and Introductions – Paula Agudelo</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introductions• Approval of Agenda<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approved with slight change to include Dionne Toombs Addition.• Spring 2023 Meeting Minutes- Approved by Acclimation• Interim Actions and Announcements (See agenda brief)• Upcoming Meeting Announcements (see slides 1)<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Future Mini land-grant meetings may disrupt our meeting schedules beginning in 2025.• SAAESD/ASRED Spring Meeting March 25-28 (or 29th) in Lexington KY. Hyatt Regency in Downtown Lexington. <i>Very tentative agenda-</i><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monday 25th- travel day with evening reception. Optional tours may be offered on Monday.• Tuesday and Wed. morning tours and campus visits• Wed afternoon and Thursday morning for meetings.• Thursday afternoon for optional meetings.• 2024 AgInnovation meeting will be in Raleigh, North Carolina<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Topic is “Reimagining the LGU/Industry relationship”• Looking at tours in the middle of the conference, possibly at industry locations.• Reception at the Plant Science Initiative building• Final day would be the ESS business meeting.• Location is the Sheraton downtown.• Planning committee will begin before the holidays.
4:00-4:30	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Multistate Research Committee Report – David Monks- (See agenda briefs and Slides 2)• Project Approvals, Renewals, and 3rd Year Reviews• SERA Review Committee Report• Open Assignments<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lesley will check with new colleague (new Assistant Dean who is a meat scientist) about AA for SAC 4• Kang is interested in NRSP3
4:30-5:00	3	<p>2023-2024 Strategic Roadmap Action Plan – Gary Thompson and Scott Senseman (See slides 3) What are the top initiatives in each of these areas?</p> <p>Collaborative Discovery-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Circular bio economy- Virginia Tech and Tennessee are working on this.

- At Clemson circular packaging with zero waste is a big issue right now (Sustainability of packaging).
- Circular bio economy is a wide topic area. Some topics within this are: Food Waste (lot of momentum on this topic), biomass conversion etc.
- AR has elements of all of these and has people working in these areas. Waste from food processing (not just food waste) is also an issue. Poultry litter.
- Seafood processing waste is a bottleneck for seafood producers. Processing as a byproduct would be valuable.
- Precision Livestock- Only one (specific) multistate project right now. Europe has been doing this for a while. Looking for field applications. The southern region could play a leadership role.
- Work needs to be done in the “application” of precision livestock. Engage SAC 2 to ask what the research questions in Precision Livestock are (they are on board).
- A regional conference on one of these topics would be useful, not just a topic for our spring meeting.
- In reference to an AI database- “Elements” and “Faculty insights” are places to go for searching for experts in a field.

Strategic Alliances

- The Spring 24 Meeting is an opportunity for joint programming with ASRED.
- Aligning with Extension typically happens at the state level. Are there low hanging fruits at the regional level?
- Extension is being talked about a lot by upper administration, but concern that upper administration doesn’t always understand what Extension is and that Research isn’t being included.
- Many stakeholders think Extension is at the county level... they forget they are at the University level (many have joint appointments). Extension faculty and Research faculty are often the same person.
- Virginia is going to do a research needs-assessment and send the survey to stakeholders.
- Much of our research isn’t “innovative” but we could present it in an innovative way.
- The younger generation of researchers are more willing to share data, and the older generation still uses paper.
- Regional standardized protocols (for variety testing etc.) need to be in place for this data. Need to identify base parameters and standardized protocols. Soil Science folks already did this. People often don’t agree on what these should be.
- All that the farmers hear from the Universities is that they got this big grant focusing on X and X is unlikely to help them. There is a disconnect on what gets the attention and what the producers are hearing. Utilize Extension personnel to help tell the stories.
 - A strategic alliance may be less with Extension and more with the stakeholders, but utilize Extension in the science communication.

		<p>Enhancing Reputation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the secret sauce for honorifics? See the two modules that have been released so far. A third module to be released soon. These are best practice guides. • FL funds their AAAS memberships. Three years of membership is required before you can be recognized (recognition in your 4th year). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tennessee has begun to offer to pay for memberships. • VT just hired someone part time to focus on this. <p>Effective Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Faculty training. - Tennessee does some of this. Science communication workshops where they hired some consultants to come in and help train faculty. • Communicators should explore “Alt-metrics” to track metrics. • Metrics to check Website hits would be useful. • Marketing and communications campaign. OK uses a campaign for field days so that they can coordinate everything in advance. • VT uses the NSF convergence accelerator program- must be user driven. Curriculum for faculty on how to pitch your idea to the users. Helpful for faculty on that project. Small scale. Every researcher would benefit from it. • CMC found it very beneficial to meet at Joint COPS. Benefited from interacting with administrators at this level. Elevating the dialog. Involving communication staff leaders in these elevated conversations is important.
5:00-5:30	4	<p>Recap of Recent SAAESD Joint Meetings – All</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAAESD-SRCC Spring Meeting Outcomes (see slides 4) • ARD-SAAESD Joint Meeting (See slides 5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Everyone likes the idea of doing this every other year. ○ Everyone likes meeting in a convenient location such as an airport hotel.
Time	Item	Tuesday, September 26- Agenda Item - Presenter
8:00-8:30	5	<p>General Discussion - ESS Business Meeting Topics Preview Discussion – See Slides</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRSPs updates and approvals • AG-NGINE • CY24 Proposed ESS Annual Budget
8:30-9:30	6	<p>Director-led Discussions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NIFA indirect costs on proposals with multiple sub-awardees – Lesley Oliver <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 30% of total funds for NIFA. Works until you get subawards. Who has policies that allow you to not be penalized if you have one of these collaborative grants that cause the indirects to be lower? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Virginia tech OSP office must renegotiate with the subs to agree on the lower rate. They are wanting them to adopt a policy. ▪ If you have a bunch of sub awards the total ends up being greater than 30% federal funds.

- Kentucky has to pay back to the university the difference between.
 - NIFA USADA policy is what is driving this (farm bill thing). NSF and NIH don't have these issues.
 - Researchers are saying they don't want to submit NIFA Collaborative grants.
 - AR had a call from Bozeman's office last week. They are contemplating removing that 30% cap. They were supportive of it. This issue might resolve itself.
 - There are 6 universities who have this policy. Mary Burrows will get the names of those.
- Cost-share/funding match (Extension credit) – Scott Senseman
 - Extension faculty member who did not have an research appointment. Had issues doing a cost-share/match.
 - Was rare to have someone not have a research appointment but they were part of this grant.
 - Smaller institutions have more of an issue with this. Not enough space for the 1:1 match.
 - NC State recommended: Talk to NIFA, let them know what the plan is. Explain the Extension person will do some applied research and do the outreach side of it.
 - Extension faculty have an expectation for applied research in Clemson, Kentucky.
 - Concerns about being audited by USDA.
 - Can change the appointment for the faculty member if needed.
- Development/management of umbrella Hatch projects – Harsha Thippareddi
 - Arkansas does not really do umbrella projects.
 - Clemson gives them a choice
 - While in Montana, Mary Burrows found that those umbrella projects the junior faculty did all the work.
 - Kentucky does it for some who are already working on a team. Really needs a leader who will develop the proposal and gather.
 - Harsha- similar to multistate in function?
 - NIFA makes it difficult to co-PI's.
 - Gary while at Penn State experienced that they had entire departments under one project. Reporting got so bad and no longer encouraged interactions. It turned into an administrative expediency.
 - Smaller concentrated cohorts work well... but not necessarily department-wide projects.
 - NC State doesn't really any large umbrella projects but they are looking to encourage some groups who are already collaborating to do this.
 - Oklahoma encourages them to do individual Hatch or to do a multistate.
 - Match can be an issue and sometimes those umbrella projects can help with that.
- Grad student/faculty professional development/mental health – Mary Burrows
 - Some of the newer faculty need mentoring, since they lost 2 years of that during the pandemic. Have you developed programs for young professionals?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Arkansas- Fiona Goggin has been putting a program together for mentoring and onboarding. ○ Would like to develop a sense of community for the Grad Students around the state. ○ Consider doing a new faculty tour around the state. ○ Clemson does not call them “off campus”... they are not ‘main” campus. ○ Florida has a lot of students at the RECs. The further you got from Gainsville, the further alienated the students felt. RECS that had strong leadership had good association with their students. They felt very engaged DURING the pandemic since departments were reaching out electronically and being included more. Alienation was creeping back once things returned to in person. Every time students go a notice about something happening on the main campus that they couldn’t attend because they were at a REC, it impacted them. Be cognizant of that. ○ Housing issues. ○ Even though they are not on the main campus they are charged fees that they don’t get to use. Gives a wrong message to the students. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clemson gets away with this by having different campus designations (main campus vs. another campus at a REC). ○ Healthcare and insurance and being out of network is an issue for students not on the main campus. ○ Reduced access to online now that we are coming out of a pandemic is alienating some off campus students. ● Recruiting and retaining a new generation of employees – Mary Burrows <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How to make these jobs palpable? Stresses of the grant game and managing a huge load has escalated. ○ Some people are fantastic but unsure if they can sustain that level (quality of life issues). ○ A lot of faculty are concerned about taking on more staff centered duties (managing travel, accounting etc.) ○ Hongwei-regarding staff-allowing remote work, make sure pay is competitive, professional development are all issues that they are addressing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supervisors need to pay attention to the changing jobs and added responsibilities and look at changing job descriptions and documenting all that. ▪ Career ladders are important or your staff will be picked off by those who do have that option (main campus?) ▪
9:30-9:45	7	<p>Nominating Committee Report – Hongwei Xin</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2024 ESS Chair from the Southern Region- Steve Lommel ● SAAESD Chair-elect - Call for nominations and election Scott Senseman elected by acclamation
9:45-9:55	8	<p>Resolutions – Lesley Oliver</p>
9:55-10:00	9	<p>Passing of the Gavel – Paula Agudelo and Hongwei Xin</p>

10:00-10:30	Networking Break
10:30-12:30	agInnovation Business Meeting - Devos Place Ballroom D
12:30-1:45	agInnovation Awards Luncheon – Devos Place Ballroom D
1:45-2:45	agInnovation Business Meeting – Devos Place Ballroom D
2:45-4:30	agInnovation Committee Meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget and Legislative Committee – Grand Gallery Overlook Room H • Science and Technology Committee – Grand Gallery Overlook Room F
4:30	Conference Adjourns

Attendees: Nathan Slaton, Scott Senseman, David Monks, Mary Burrows, Bob Stouggard, Usman Adamu, JF Meullenet, Paula Agudelo, Hongwei Xin, Scott Willard, Harsha Thippareddi, John Andre, Bill Hoffman (ECOP), Lesley Oliver, Henry Aweka (New Interim Assistant Director-Virgin Islands), Katie Frasier (CARET rep for Virginia Tech), Gary Thompson, Cindy Morley

Dr. Dionne Toombs from USDA NIFA- associate Director of programs and was former Interim Director.

Updates:

- Now fully staffed. Now they are just filling positions when people leave.
- Most are working remotely. Some are teleworkers in DC and KC. Other USDA agencies will be using space in the KC offices.
- Remote workers are allowed to come in the offices.
- NIFA is under a union.
- Learning and Development team train our program leaders and division directors.
- Deb Hamernick retired August 31
- Administrative priorities:
 - USDA Science Strategy- released in May at the Aim for Client meeting (this is on the website). Realignment from the REE Action plan. There will be a listening session about this. NIFA will share that information.
 - Partnerships will continue to be a focus. Our engagement with out LGUs and federal partnerships with NSF (where they are working with AI).
 - Also has a pilot program with ARS and 1890 to build capacity. They are working with UA Pine Bluff. First workshop held in June. Next will be held at Fort Valley State University.
- Moving to a new grants system. Grants modernization. Grants.gov will be used at least through 2025. Working with NIH to help develop this. Pilot program (ERA).
- Accountability and reporting- webinar coming. October 17th. Accepted manuscripts. Find it: nifa.usda.gov/events
- Bookmark the NIFA RFA Calendar because there is so much that comes through quickly.
- Stay updated with the newsletter.
- Discussion-
 - PI's concerned with turnaround for submission lately. Is there a standard?

- Some RFA's have been sent out late and so the quick turnaround has been because of USDA. This is being addressed. New tracking system will help.
- Universities used to bring faculty to DC to do the rounds. Now that you are in KC, how do we approach that?
 - Send an email. We are back in the office 15% of the time as of September 15th. Some national program leaders are not in DC, some may be in KC or other US cities. It may have to be virtual.
- SAAESD and ARD hosted a meeting and was appreciative of Dr. Misra for his attendance.
- To invite NIFA to attend an event send a letter. The sooner the better because of scheduling conflicts.

Interim Actions

Spring 2024

- Kang Xia appointed as the Southern Regional Administrative Advisor to NRSP3 National Atmospheric Deposition Program
- Randy Raper appointed as AA for Sac16- Ag Engineering
- Harsha Thippareddi appointed AA for SAC4- Food Science and Technology
- Appointed Darrin Dodds to the Joint Cotton Breeding Committee, replacing Angus Catchot for a 3 year term (2023-2026)
- Appointed Amir Ibrahim to the Implementation Steering Committee replacing Sandy Pierson
- David Monks Appointed to ESCOP Science and Technology Committee for a 4 year term (2023-2027)
- With the concurrence of the treasurer, approved awarding \$500 to the winners of the Susan Duncan Award and making it retroactive to the first recipient.
- Appointed the 2024 SAAESD Nominations Committee to consist of: Scott Senseman, Paula Agudelo and JF Meullenet.
- Approved final FY 23 budget reconciliation with consent of treasurer.

Multistate Research Committee Report Spring 2024

Presenter: David Monks

The MRC is composed of five members, including two representatives of the SERA Review Committee: David Monks (Chair, 2024), Tim Rials (2026), Cliff Lamb (2026), Michael Salassi (2026), Jeffrey Dean (2028).

The following is a current status report, prepared by Cindy Morley, on Multistate Research Funded activities. This information is also available on the SAAESD web site.

Multistate Activities' Status

Projects Terminating 9/30/2024:

S1085- Cover Crops for Sustainable Southern Agroecosystems- Rob Gilbert, FL

S1086- Enhancing sustainability of beef cattle production in Southern and Central US through genetic improvement- Jamie Matthews, KY

SCC76- Economics and Management of Risk in Agriculture and Natural Resources- Michael Salassi, LA

SERA 41- Improving Production Efficiency of the Beef Cow Herd in Southeastern- Cliff Lamb, TX

SERA 43- Southern Region Integrated Water Resources Coordinating Committee- Scott Senseman, OK

SERA 45- Crop diversification opportunities to enhance the viability of small farms- Lesley Oliver, KY

SERA 46- Framework for Nutrient Reduction Strategy Collaboration: The Role for Land Grant Universities- Nathan Slaton, AR

SERA 48- Turf- John Davis, FL

Projects Not Renewing in 2024:

SERA 43- Southern Region Integrated Water Resources Coordinating Committee- Scott Senseman, OK

New Project Proposals in 2024:

S_TEMP1096 Selection and mating strategies to sustainably improve dairy cattle performance, efficiency, and resiliency- Neal Schrick

SERA_Temp50: Consumer Horticulture Southern Extension and Research Activity

Projects up for Mid-term Review 2024 (those that end in 2026):

S1069- Research and Extension for Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Applications in U.S. Agriculture and Natural Resources- Randy Raper, OK

S1090- AI in Agroecosystems: Big Data and Smart Technology-Driven Sustainable Production- Damien Adams, FL

SERA 47- Strengthening the Southern Region Extension and Research System to Support Local & Regional Foods Needs and Priorities- Scott Senseman, OK

Administrative Advisors for these projects and Administrative Advisors for the SAC(s) assigned to review them have been contacted and Appendix I/K forms initiated. MRC is meeting after Spring SAAESD meeting to review.

Projects Terminating 9/30/2025:

S1087- Sustainable Practices, Economic Contributions, Consumer Behavior, and Labor Management in the U.S. Environmental Horticulture Industry-Tim Rials, TN

S1088- Specialty Crops and Food Systems: Exploring Markets, Supply Chains and Policy Dimensions- J.F. Meullenet, AR

S1089- Advanced Understanding and Prediction of Pollutants in Critical Landscapes in Watersheds- Mary Savin, AR

SCC33- Cooperative Variety Testing Programs- Rob Gilbert, FL

SCC80- Imagining the Future of Plant Breeding- Rob Gilbert, FL

SERA 05- Sweet Potato Collaborators Conference- David Monks, NC

SERA 35- Delta Region Farm Management and Agricultural Policy Working Group-J.F. Meullenet, AR

[For Discussion:](#)

[Additional Information:](#)

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.

**MULTI-STATE RESEARCH PROJECT S-009
PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES CONSERVATION AND UTILIZATION
BUDGET REQUEST BRIEF FOR FY2025**

Updates on Accomplishments and Activities:

- The Plant Genetic Resources Conservation Unit (PGRCU) collection conserves 104,842 accessions of 1598 species and 280 genera with 88% available for distribution.
- In CY2023, 39,731 accessions (10,588 in the S-009 region) were distributed in 895 orders to requestors. Sorghum (16,467), millets (4,042), pepper (3,797), and sesame (3,012) were the most requested crops. A total of 1,736 accessions were selected for regeneration, and 4,233 seed inventories were pulled for germination testing.
- The S-009 Regional Technical Advisory Committee was held virtually on July 26, 2023, hosted by Soraya Bertioli, 2022-2023 S-009 Chair and Representative from Georgia. There were 25 participants.
- ARS germination technician, Phiffie Vankus, retired on December 30, 2023 after 21 years of service. Germination testing is being conducted on a temporary, reduced capacity by S9 technician Jill Cunningham.
- Repairs are currently underway for damage caused by the tornado that hit Griffin, GA on January 12, 2023. Deer fence has been installed at the Westbrook Farm. Roof damage to our seed storage buildings has been repaired. The USDA greenhouses are being renovated to include replacement of all poly carbonate panels, fans, rack and pinion systems, and overhead lights. The USDA screenhouse is being renovated to include replacement of all screen sides, and the glass roof is being replaced with polycarbonate panels. The Westbrook pumphouse is being replaced with a concrete block building and one tank and bladder system is being replaced. Total renovations were \$1.718 million funded by ARS Headquarters, Southeast Area Office, and ARS location funds.

S-009 Support: The S-009 Budget currently supports seven full-time technicians, partial salary for one permanent administrative associate position, and several seasonal positions to support the conservation and distribution of plant germplasm maintained at the Griffin, GA location. An additional \$78,374 is set aside for purchase of supplies and \$1,000 for travel.

ARS Support: USDA, ARS annual appropriations provided to the Griffin, GA location supports 16 full-time permanent positions which includes five scientist positions. The annual budget includes funding for supplies, utilities, equipment, and facilities maintenance and repair. It also includes \$95,000 paid via a Research Support Agreement to UGA-Griffin to cover grounds maintenance and HVAC maintenance.

S-009 Personnel: Based on the Governor of Georgia's budget proposal for FY2025, University of Georgia employees will receive a 4% salary raise which totals \$13,425 for the S-009 employees. The farm technician, Luke Doss, will receive a 5% performance raise of \$1,976. Overall, there will be a deficit of \$15,401 in the labor budget.

S-009 Budget Request: A proposed budget of \$606,619 is requested. This is an increase of \$15,401 to cover the labor budget deficit.

Action Requested: Approval of S-009 FY2024 Budget Request.

**PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES CONSERVATION AND UTILIZATION
FUNDING REQUEST FOR FY2025
TO THE SOUTHERN ASSOC. OF STATE AGRIC. EXPT STATION DIRECTORS**

A. S-009 Budget	REQUESTED		
	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025
Personnel	493,525	511,844	527,245
Travel	1,000	1,000	1,000
Operations	78,374	78,374	78,374
TOTAL	<u>\$572,899</u>	<u>\$591,218</u>	<u>606,619</u>

B. USDA/ARS Budget

	FY2023	FY2024*	FY2025**
Personnel	\$1,777,162	\$1,875,300	\$1,912,806
Travel	12,778	0	0
Repairs and Maintenance	486,135	506,767	520,307
Supplies	165,225	75,253	***21,939
Equipment	23,752	7,732	10,000
Facilities Support to UGA	95,000	95,000	95,000
Total Base Funds	\$ 2,560,052	\$ 2,560,052	\$2,560,052
Area Office/HQ Funds	<u>1,718,950****</u>	<u>TBD</u>	<u>TBD</u>
TOTAL FUNDING	\$ 4,279,002	\$ 2,560,052	\$2,560,052

*Budget is based on NOT receiving increase to budget for the salary raises received 1/1/24 of 5.4%.

**Personnel expense and Indirect Costs are based on proposed 2.0% salary increase for CY2025.

***From supplies, \$56,635 returns to USDA/ARS for mandatory assessments each year. Therefore, FY2025 will be in a deficit.

****Area Office/HQ Funds in FY2023 were provided for repairs due to tornado damage sustained in January 2023.




Advancing Sustainable Ag Innovations

Southern SARE Funding Opportunities for
Researchers, Graduate Students, and
Ag Educators

www.southernsare.org



1

What is SARE?

2

Who is SARE?

- Stands for Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program
- Authorized in the 1985 Farm Bill and is part of USDA's NIFA program
- Our goal is to support farmers, researchers and educators as they explore sustainable ag practices
- Primary tool is grants





www.southernsare.org

3


How SARE Works

- Regionally administered; we support 13 states and two territories in the Southern region
- Host institutions: UGA, FVSU, Kerr Center
- Participatory
- Inclusive
- Administrative Council sets research priorities, releases grant calls for proposals, and reviews/selects grants




www.southernsare.org


4



Defining Sustainable Agriculture


- SARE's three broad goals, known as the Pillars of Sustainability
 - Profit over the long term
 - Stewardship of our nation's land, air and water
 - Quality of life for farmers, ranchers and their communities

These goals must be considered when applying for a grant.




SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PILLARS

QUALITY OF LIFE
FARMER & RANCHER CENTRIC
ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP
PROFITABILITY



5



Our Grant Opportunities

Nationally, SARE has provided funding support for over 8,500 sustainable ag research projects. In the Southern region, we've awarded over \$92 million in grants for over 1,500 proposals. Georgia is among the top 5 states by grant dollars and number of grants awarded.

State	R&E	Education	DFRS	POP	Graduate	Producer	SCIS	Total
AL	23	3	10	13	12	22	12	95
AR	39	6	11	18	23	31	31	169
CA	50	10	17	8	23	31	10	173
DC	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	13
GA	11	0	2	5	11	9	2	40
IA	36	3	11	14	4	13	4	85
IL	6	16	11	13	13	17	17	103
IN	15	6	8	8	2	18	2	69
KS	6	6	2	5	2	31	2	54
NC	19	3	10	18	16	11	6	83
ND	14	1	7	7	20	21	7	81
OH	41	3	21	12	32	27	4	160
OK	23	3	11	9	25	16	9	113
OR	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	11
SD	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	11
Texas region	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	11
Total	384	54	170	178	293	317	93	1319

State	R&E	Education	POP	Graduate	DFRS	Producer	SCIS	Total
AL	\$3,002,878.00	\$198,402.00	\$462,872.00	\$127,778.00	\$216,576.00	\$164,956.00	\$5,356,311.00	\$5,956,311.00
AR	\$8,438,905.00	\$387,512.00	\$1,763,898.00	\$292,564.00	\$889,496.00	\$126,761.00	\$46,621.00	\$10,810,093.00
CA	\$6,492,511.00	\$182,268.00	\$551,193.00	\$589,542.00	\$963,453.00	\$282,085.00	\$87,256.00	\$10,168,348.00
GA	\$10,683,611.00	\$172,858.00	\$398,986.00	\$273,528.00	\$197,558.00	\$263,453.00	\$86,584.00	\$12,576,148.00
IA	\$2,783,818.00	\$69,893.00	\$1,513,756.00	\$79,288.00	\$156,885.00	\$26,348.00	\$38,112.00	\$5,587,216.00
IL	\$1,194,813.00	\$1.00	\$272,968.00	\$129,313.00	\$44,373.00	\$97,207.00	\$19,391.00	\$1,757,444.00
IN	\$1,116,423.00	\$122,675.00	\$1,116,533.00	\$47,722.00	\$14,786.00	\$122,781.00	\$21,148.00	\$2,621,369.00
NC	\$13,162,131.00	\$401,634.00	\$2,513,757.00	\$499,618.00	\$253,322.00	\$466,988.00	\$220,137.00	\$19,456,148.00
ND	\$2,444,683.00	\$1.00	\$130,962.00	\$139,565.00	\$111,854.00	\$122,425.00	\$16,264.00	\$3,444,812.00
OH	\$814,823.00	\$236,048.00	\$218,683.00	\$26,493.00	\$42,474.00	\$86,545.00	\$10,000.00	\$1,487,074.00
OK	\$5,672,585.00	\$126,500.00	\$298,675.00	\$132,510.00	\$142,373.00	\$197,485.00	\$43,020.00	\$6,324,723.00
OR	\$9,466,375.00	\$42,893.00	\$198,816.00	\$296,175.00	\$114,722.00	\$253,347.00	\$26,198.00	\$10,002,836.00
TX	\$5,961,851.00	\$128,467.00	\$882,380.00	\$418,076.00	\$508,498.00	\$221,258.00	\$40,000.00	\$11,762,599.00
VA	\$4,564,415.00	\$149,885.00	\$180,900.00	\$167,245.00	\$209,973.00	\$488,377.00	\$112,727.00	\$6,634,136.00
WV	\$885,413.00	\$46,103.00	\$87,813.00	\$48.00	\$34,313.00	\$61,811.00	\$10,000.00	\$1,111,814.00
Total	\$96,332,331.00	\$2,446,910.00	\$12,812,184.00	\$3,577,690.00	\$2,662,668.00	\$3,208,061.00	\$1,100,793.00	\$92,162,636.00

6

Why Apply for a SARE Grant?

- Builds sustainable ag portfolio
- Opportunities to interact with farmers, community groups, researchers, etc.
- Builds research portfolios, especially for graduate students and new researchers
- Used as stepping stones for other grants
- High level of engagement
- Grants contribute research dollars
- No matching funds required
- Don't apply through Grants.gov
- Simple reporting process



Photo by Candice Palock


7

SSARE Grant Programs

- Research & Education:**
 - For researchers, gov't, ag professionals, NGOs
 - Flagship grant, research & education
 - \$400,000 for research
- Education:**
 - Mainly targeted to NGOs
 - Education activities only
 - \$50,000
- Professional Development Program:**
 - Train-the-trainer
 - \$80,000
- On-Farm Research:**
 - Extension, gov't.
 - Generally on-farm production
 - \$30,000
- Graduate Student:**
 - Masters and PhD
 - \$22,000



8



Research & Education Grants

- For researchers (1862, 1890 or otherwise), govt. agencies, NGOs, other ag professionals.
- Pre-proposal, full proposal process.
- Encourages a systems approach to sustainable ag.
- Awards up to 3 years of research. Funding maximum \$400,000.
- Research-based projects with an educational/outreach component.
- Producers required to be part of the research process.
- Should include all three pillars of sustainable ag; social science an important component of the project.


9



Professional Development Program Grants

- For researchers (1862, 1890 or otherwise), govt. agencies, NGOs, other ag professionals.
- Pre-proposal, full proposal process.
- Train-the-trainer grant program.
- Awards up to 2 years of research. No funding cap, but priority given to projects less than \$80,000.
- Involves farmers in the planning, evaluation and delivery of the training.
- Projects further education and outreach strategies for professionals and educators who work directly with farmers and ranchers.

10



Education Grants

- Mainly targeted to NGOs, but researchers (1862, 1890 or otherwise), govt. agencies, community organizations, other ag professionals can apply.
- Encourages education/outreach-based activities to promote sustainable agriculture in communities.
- No research is involved.
- Awards up \$50,000. The project is limited to two years.
- Education-based projects whose outcomes are intended to benefit farmers and farming communities.


11



On-Farm Research Grants

- For Extension specialists, university researchers, NRCS, NGOs or other ag professionals who currently and regularly work with farmers/ranchers.
- These grants are not open to farmers.
- Supports on-farm research or marketing projects related to sustainable ag to help farmers find solutions to various ag production issues.
- Funding is \$30,000 for up to 2 years of research.

12



Graduate Student Grants

- For full-time Master's and Ph.D. students at accredited universities in the Southern region interested in sustainable ag research.
- An applicant may only receive 1 SARE Graduate Student Grant during his or her degree program.
- Funding is \$22,000 for up to 2 years of research.

www.southernsare.org

13

Grant Release Schedules

<p>Research and Education Grants</p> <p>March – Call for Pre-proposals released June – Pre-proposals due August – Selected applicants invited to submit full proposals November – Full proposals due February – Proposals selected for funding</p> <p>Professional Development Program Grants</p> <p>July – Call for Pre-proposals released August – Pre-proposals due October – Selected applicants invited to submit full proposals November – Full proposals due February – Proposals selected for funding</p>	<p>Education Grants</p> <p>May – Call for Proposals released August – Proposals due February – Proposals selected for funding</p> <p>Graduate Student Grants</p> <p>February – Call for Proposals released May – Proposals due August – Proposals selected for funding</p> <p>On-Farm Research Grants</p> <p>September – Call for Proposals released December – Proposals due February – Proposals selected for funding</p>
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14

Interested in Grants?

Some Things to Know

- ✓ SARE grants are mainly research grants; education grants are also offered
- ✓ SARE grants do not pay a farmer to farm
- ✓ SARE grants always involve the farmer/rancher
- ✓ SARE grant projects provide an education/outreach component
- ✓ The application process always begins with the release of Calls for Proposals
- ✓ Applications are submitted through SARE's own online proposal system
- ✓ Proposals are reviewed by regional committees made of a cross section of your peers in the ag community



Photo by Brian Deane

15

Tips for Applying

- ✓ Farmer/researcher/organization collaboration
- ✓ Do your homework
- ✓ Read the Call for Proposals
- ✓ Start on your proposal early
- ✓ State your project clearly in the abstract; "So what?" or "What's new?"
- ✓ Make sure your objectives align with your project idea
- ✓ Discuss your idea with others; seek expert feedback
- ✓ Follow the directions in the Call for Proposals
- ✓ Ask questions


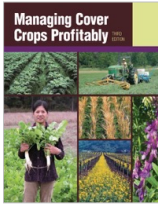


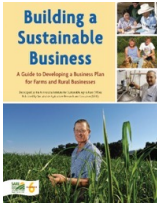
Photo by Laura Lengnick

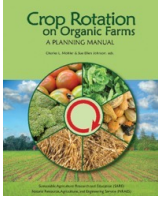
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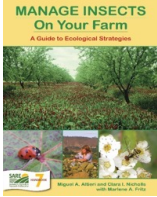
SARE Outreach

- **a library** of practical, how-to books and bulletins (in print or download for free)
- **media outreach**
- **a portfolio** of in-depth reports on current topics
- **conference sponsorships**
- **countless** online resources, including project reports and grantee-produced publications









www.SARE.org/Learning-Center

17

Learn More

Southern SARE
<http://www.southern.sare.org>
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Jeff Jordan, Program Director
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Photo by Stackie Curry

18



Report – SAAESD Spring Business Meeting

Association of 1890 Research Directors (ARD)

March 26, 2024

ARD Officers

Dr. Louis D. Whitesides, Chair, Vice President & Executive Director 1890 Research and Extension, South Carolina State University

Dr. Wesley Whittaker, Chair-Elect, Dean and Director, Sherman Lewis School of Agriculture and Applied Sciences, Langston University

Dr. Jose Ulises Toledo, Associate Vice Chancellor for Research, Southern Agricultural Research and Extension Center, Treasurer, Southern University.

Dr. Chandra Reddy, Immediate Past Chair, Dean and Director of Research/Administrator of Extension, Tennessee State University

1890 Land-grant Universities FY 2025 Ag Appropriations Request

Our FY 2025 agriculture appropriations request, compared to the final 2043 omnibus appropriations, are:

1890 Research, Education and Extension Activities

	FY 2024	FY 2025
	Final	Requested
<i>(All \$ Millions)</i>		
1890 Research	89.000	113.000
1890 Extension	72.000	92.000
1890 Education Grants	30.000	30.000
1890 Facilities Improvement	21.500	100.000
1890 Centers of Excellence	10.000	10.000
1890 Scholarships	10.000	10.000

2023 Farm Bill Initial Priorities

The 2023 Farm Bill priorities for the 1890 universities have been submitted to the Committee of Legislative and Policy (CLP) of the Board of Agriculture Assembly (BAA). The priorities submitted to date includes:

- Reauthorization of the Evans-Allen (Research and Education Programs) with the percentage share of Hatch funds be increased from 30% to 40%
- Tuition and fees will be an allowable expense for Evans-Allen
- Reauthorization of 1890 Extension Program with the percentage share of Smith Lever funds be increased from 20% to 40%
- Reauthorization of the 1890 Capacity Building Grants Program
- Reauthorization of the 1890 Facilities Improvement Program
- Reauthorization of the six existing Centers of Excellence and request support for four additional centers: (1) Climate Change/Climate Smart Agriculture; (2) Forestry Resiliency & Forestry Conservation; (3) Food Safety/Bioprocessing/Product Development and (4) Transdisciplinary Social Science Research (specific to the food and agriculture sector).
- Reauthorization of the Scholarships for Students at 1890 Institutions
- Request support for the 1890 Universities Foundation

ARD Research Symposium

The 2024 research symposium, ARD's signature event, will be held on April 6 – 9 at the Gaylord Opryland in Nashville, TN. The 1890 research community will present nearly 1000 oral papers and poster presentations, and more than one-half of those will be presentations by graduate and undergraduate students. The goal of all symposia is to provide a forum for sharing knowledge and expanding partnerships through networking, as well as showcasing the talents and achievements of the 1890 community. In addition, the ARD symposium focuses on students' experiential learning, challenges and opportunities that face land-grant universities, and on the "next new idea" and initiatives to strengthen the 1890 research and education enterprise.

The 2024 research symposium will focus on five focus areas: (1) Renewable Energy, Natural Resources, Environment and Climate Change; (2) Plant Health and Production and Plant Products; (3) Animal Health and Production and Animal Products; (4) Family, Youth, Community and Economic Development; and (5) Food Safety, Nutrition, Health and Health Disparities. Special sessions will climate change, artificial intelligence, the centers of excellence, global food security, new and emerging technologies, IPM, alternative agricultural enterprises and funding opportunities.

Due to the high volume of pre-registrations and space constraints, on-site registrations will not be available.

For additional information about the 2024 ARD Research Symposium, including registration, click on this link: <https://wwwcp.umes.edu/ard/1890symposium/>

1890 National Scholars Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is accepting applications for the USDA 1890 National Scholars Program, which aims to encourage students at 1890 land-grant universities to pursue food and agriculture career paths. The application deadline was March 1st.

The USDA 1890 National Scholars Program is a partnership between USDA and the 19 historically Black land-grant universities. USDA partners with these 1890 universities to provide scholarship recipients with full tuition, fees, books, and room and board. Scholarship recipients attend one of the 1890 universities and pursue degrees in agriculture, food, natural resource sciences, or related academic disciplines. The scholarship also includes work experience at USDA through summer internships. Scholars accepted into the program are eligible for noncompetitive conversion to a permanent appointment with USDA upon successful completion of their degree requirements by the end of the agreement period. The USDA 1890 National Scholars Program awarded 100 scholarships in the 2023 cohort of 1890 Scholars.

ARD Updates Newsletter

The Association of 1890 Research Directors (ARD) persists in releasing its monthly *ARD Updates* newsletter. The publication offers highlights, impacts and developments regarding research and academic programs as well as events, activities, grant opportunities, and job prospects relevant to the 19 universities within the 1890 land-grant system. Wildly distributed, the newsletter has garnered considerable national recognition. Past editions can be accessed on the ARD website at <https://www.wcp.umes.edu/ard/ard-updates/>

2024 AEA and ARD Joint Meeting

In January, I participated in the joint business meeting of the Association of Extension Administrators, the Association of 1890 Research Directors and the 1890 Council of 1890 Administrators Heads (Deans). Hosted by Tennessee State University, this in-person gathering of 1890 administrators was interactive, productive, and by design and structure, a forum that allow attendees to engage in critical discussions about pressing issues and other important programs confronting 1890 universities. Our deliberate dialogues focused on communicating the impact and public value of the institutions; sustaining the Centers of Excellence, and expanding our work in the realms of climate change and artificial intelligence. We also discussed the Farm Bill, FY 2024 and FY 2025 appropriations and the advocacy for the funding, infrastructure, compliance, and partnerships. It should be noted that the administrators of NIFA, the Southern Rural Development Center (SRDC), the Economic Research Service, and Cornell University were also fully engaged in our meeting. The meeting left all participants upbeat and with a willingness to work a little harder and more collaboratively to develop and advance a set of goals and priorities to define a path forward that will further improve the quality of life and prosperity of the stakeholders we serve.

Dr. Chandra Reddy received ESS/agInnovation Excellence in Leadership Award

Dr. Chandra Reddy received the ESS/agInnovation National Excellence in Leadership Award from the ARD Region at the 2023 ESS agInnovation Annual Meeting in Grand Rapids, MI. Dr. Reddy is Dean of the College of Agriculture and Director of Research /Administrator of Extension at Tennessee State University, Nashville,

TN. Dr. Reddy earned his B.S. and M.S degrees from India and his Ph.D. degree in Agronomy from the University of Florida.

Dr. Reddy is a Fellow of the American Society of Agronomy and a Fellow of the Soil Science Society of America, and currently serves on the Boards of Agriculture Future of America (AFA), 1890 Universities Foundation Board, Emerging Technologies Life Sciences Advisory Board, Ag Launch Technical Advisory Board and Tennessee State Fair and Exposition Commission. In recent past, he served on the Boards of National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board and LEAD 21/APLU. He is the immediate past Chair of the ARD.

Dr. Reddy is an internationally recognized research scholar and an institution-building expert. He received several prestigious honors and awards including the USDA/NIFA Partnership Award in 2013; a Joint Resolution from the Tennessee State Legislature in 2012 for his outstanding contributions to Tennessee Agriculture and the George Washington Carver Agricultural Excellence Award sponsored by the USAID in 2008 for his impactful international research and institution building efforts.

Dr. Mortimer H. Neufville - Retires after 53 Years of Meritorious Service

Dr. Mortimer H. Neufville is the immediate past President & CEO of the 1890 Universities Foundation, which represents the 19 Historically Black Land Grant Universities. Dr. Neufville has served in numerous positions in higher education, including the first Executive Vice President and Director of Federal Relations for the National Association of State Universities of Land Grant Colleges (NASULGC) {now the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities- APLU}; Dean of Agriculture; Vice President and President of the University of Maryland Eastern Shore; and President of Coppin State University.

He received his BS degree from Tuskegee University and his MS and PhD from the University of Florida. Dr. Neufville built a distinguished 45-year career of service, mentorship, policy development and leadership, which has impacted the field of food and agricultural science on a national and global level.

As an educator and administrator in the 1890 land grant system, and as the Executive Vice President of APLU, Dr. Neufville made extraordinary impact on food systems for over 50 years. His remarkable career has been marked by innovation, engagement, and service. While at APLU, and more recently at the 1890 Universities Foundation, Dr. Neufville was an effective spokesperson and proponent to ensure that the U.S. Congress and the Administration were aware of and provided commensurate resources to the land-grant system whose research, education outputs and outcomes were critical to American agricultural productivity and competitiveness.

Last month, Dr. Neufville received the Meritorious Service to CARET Award.

Submitted by Gregory D. Goins, Associate Dean for Research, College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, North Carolina A&T State University (On behalf of Dr. Alton Thompson, Executive Director Association of 1890 Research Directors -ARD)

Broad Reaching Structural Efforts:

- Continue 1890 Fellow
- Explore opportunities for 1890/1862 collaborations
- Integrate research and Extension efforts
- **Updates**
 - Michelle Eley is serving as the first 1890 Fellow, and has contributed to presentations/workshops.
 - In collaboration with AEA and ASRED, SRDC conducted a research project on the Extension collaborations that work. A report was released (<https://srdc.msstate.edu/publications/special-topics/collaborations-that-work>) and is being widely disseminated. Also in talks with ARD and SAAESD for conducting similar study on research collaborations.
 - SRDC is partnering with the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development to conduct a southern region version of the STAT household survey on rural socioeconomic issues.
 - SRDC is pursuing a joint publication series with the Socially Disadvantaged Farmers & Ranchers Policy Research Center, giving an opportunity for integrated research and Extension efforts.

Developing Pathways to Resilient Communities

- **Local & Regional Food Systems, SERA-47**
 - Facilitate work on the new 5-year plan
 - Support annual meeting
 - Monitor future opportunities for related issues
 - Explore opportunities for new tracks including nutrition security
 - Updates: SERA 47 conducted its annual meeting virtually in December 2023 and hosted a face-to-face meeting at the Southern Rural Sociological Association (SRSA)/Southern Association of Ag. Scientists (SAAS) meeting in Atlanta in February.
- **Heirs' Property**
 - Support launching of the SERA 49 Heirs' Property Working Group
 - Coordinate AFRI project - *The Racial Wealth Gap, Persistent Poverty, and Heirs' Property: Analysis, Connections, Solutions*
 - Complete train-the-trainer workshop agreement in cooperation with the Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Policy Center (SDFR) (six workshops over a 2-year period)
 - Updates:
 - SRDC is helping to coach the organization of the newly formalized SERA 49.
 - The AFRI project wraps up at the end of June.
 - An heirs' property training was held in Puerto Rico in November, and one was held in Birmingham, AL in February 2024. An evaluation report template has been developed and piloted.
 - SRDC is partnering with the SDFR on a new grant received from the JP Morgan Chase Foundation to address concerns around the ethics of heirs' property and responsible use of data. This will result in toolkits for different stakeholders. In partnership with SDFR and Atlanta Fed., a kick-off meeting was held in February, and a focus group with landowners was held at a national minority farmers conference (North Carolina) in February.
- **Digital Access and Literacy (Broadband)**
 - Facilitate work of the National Digital Education Extension Team and the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP) Program Action Team
 - Collaborate with 1890 system to build capacity to aid underserved communities in digital literacy funded AFRI grant
 - Establish metrics for impacts of digital access on quality of life

- Updates
 - SRDC hosted a train the trainer workshop in Salt Lake City in October. The new Digital Volunteer Initiative was launched there. Another workshop is planned for April in Atlanta. Materials are here: <https://srdc.msstate.edu/digital-literacy>
 - 1890 pilots are in process now with metrics that can be used for this project and also nationally.
 - SRDC is starting coordination on a common evaluation and metrics initiative.
- **Coming Together for Racial Understanding**
 - Support the 32 states that have trained Coming Together state teams
 - Build capacity for dialogues through additional training
 - Evaluate impacts and lessons learned
 - Engage with NIFA on co-learning
 - Updates: The national training team held a retreat in January to explore sustainability and growth for the future. Future efforts coming from that event include seeking new funding to support a new cohort of state teams to join, conducting advanced training for existing state teams, and working on a certification process.
- **Supporting Healthy Communities Across the Life Course (Interdisciplinary Network on Rural Population Health and Aging)**
 - Build capacity around community development aspect of health
 - Provide mentorship for early career scholars
 - Pursue collaborative publication options
 - Build capacity for research and Extension collaboration
 - Updates
 - A renewal proposal was submitted to the National Institute on Aging in October, with the Univ. of MN as the lead and SRD/MSU, Syracuse Univ., and Penn State as partners.
 - A proposal writing workshop was held in February (Atlanta) in conjunction with SRSA/SAAS.
 - An additional workshop is planned in Colorado centering on climate change and healthy aging (fall 2025).
 - A listening session was held in Nashville exploring the demographic change data and analysis Extension is interested in. Four follow-up virtual session were held in February.
 - Have delivered presentations on population change to meetings with the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, Delta Regional Authority, Mississippi Senate, and MS State University.
 - The Rural Population Research Network is planning a meeting in September in Kansas City that will include collaboration with ERS.

Building Strategic Partners

- **Delta Scholars/Delta Directions**
 - Support leadership initiative for undergraduates
 - Assist with Summer Institute held in June in the Delta, follow-up Boston Conference in Nov.
 - Updates
 - Applicants have been received for the new 2024 cohort.
 - The Delta Scholars Summer Institute/Delta Regional Forum are planned for June 2024.
 - One year of funding is remaining, and we are working to write a new proposal for future funding. The program is being renamed “Delta Innovation Scholars”.
- **Southern Region Program Leadership Network (PLN)** - Support the work of PLN along with helping support the Program Leadership Committee’s efforts to plan for the annual joint meeting
 - Updates: Plans are coming along well for the 2024 PLN Meeting. Additionally, SRDC is supporting a task force to determine technology needs of the committees.

- **Southern Region Community Resource Development (CRD) Indicators** - Facilitate gathering and reporting of southern region CRD indicators released in August
 - Updates
 - The 2023 indicators were shared at PLN in August (<https://srdc.msstate.edu/impacts/southern-region-impacts>), and calls are being planned for the 2024 indicators publication.
 - SRDC will participate in national CRD indicators event being organized through the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development in May.

Mobilizing Resources around Emerging Issues and Opportunities

- **Grant Writing Skills:**
 - Pursue opportunities to integrate resources into identified programs
 - Document lessons learned from 2023 pilot efforts
 - Updates
 - SRDC wrapped up the training sessions and are now working to put in place collaborative seed funding between SRDC and their host institutions.
 - Some of the training tools will help shape the proposal writing session noted above under Healthy Communities across the Lifecourse.
- **Recreation Economy:**
 - Engage in partnership discussions including the National Extension Tourism (NET) network
 - Explore opportunities to use CREATE BRIDGES resources to advance work
 - Updates
 - Participated in the NET conference in Sept 2023, now in communication with Outdoor Recreation Working (as are all RRDCs).
 - Held southern region meeting to discuss regional needs and interests.
 - SRDC is partnering with the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development in collaborating on a proposal to the Appalachian Regional Commission led by members of the Outdoor Recreation Working Group to organize a Rural Tourism Institute.
 - SRDC will be looking at what CREATE BRIDGES could bring to this conversation, noting that the CREATE curriculum is now available (<https://srdc.msstate.edu/programs/create-bridges/curriculum>).
- **Economic Climate Resilience**
 - Participate in the National Extension Climate Initiative (NECI)
 - Explore collaborative opportunities with 1890s
 - Identify southern indicators of vulnerability – explore opportunities to update/revisit
 - Ensure the community development perspective is considered
 - Updates
 - Serving as liaison with NECI for RRDCs and participating in Strategic Doing process for the future of this group in Extension.
 - SRDC contributed to a research and Extension proposal to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOA) proposal regarding climate adaption.

SRDC Website: <http://srdc.msstate.edu/>

John J. Green, Director, john.green@msstate.edu / Rachel Welborn, Associate Director, rachel.welborn@msstate.edu

Agenda Brief: Budget and Legislative Committee (BLC)

BLC Chair: Anton Bekkerman

Action: For Information

Budget and Legislative Committee (BLC, <http://escop.info/committee/blc/>)

BLC meetings occur on the fourth Tuesday of every month from 4:00-5:00 ET. The committee alternates its meetings: one month the meeting is for voting members only to foster open discussion, and the alternating month includes more structured discussion and liaison reports. One of the outcomes of this revised structure is more time for in-depth discussions by the voting members that is valuable in reflecting on broader questions that the BLC needs to address, while still receiving timely input from the liaisons. Lewis-Burke Associates (LBA) regularly participates in our meetings with Dr. Elizabeth Stulberg serving as the liaison.

The BLC chair is a multifaceted leadership position given the multiple committee assignments (BAA-Budget and Advocacy Committee [BAC] voting member, BAA-Committee on Legislation and Policy [CLP] voting member, ECOP BLC liaison). Due to the BLC chair's involvement in many other parts of the BAA where liaisons provide updates, the chair can bring back information to the BLC in a timely manner even with liaisons joining the BLC meetings less frequently.

The predominant focus of the BLC is to create, adapt, monitor, and change agInnovation's input into the BAC, CLP, and infrastructure budget and legislative activities. Modification to existing processes, advancing new deadlines, and creation of new steps and requests make this an iterative process. The BAA Unified FY 2025 Appropriations Request was approved by the BAC and the BAA Policy Board of Directors and is summarized here ([FY25 Approps](#)). The BAA Farm Bill Request is summarized here ([BAA Farm Bill](#)). The BLC also presented information to CARET representatives for Hatch, AFRI, and RFA during the "All About the Request" webinar (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2SahCRJIVGA>) on January 31, 2024.

The BAC and CLP are jointly developing a "Decadal Visioning and Advocacy Strategy" to guide both advocacy and authorization activities over the next five-year period. Two fly-in meetings were convened with BLC and agInnovation leadership participating in Washington, DC for initial discussions. On September 11, a meeting was held to discuss a shared future vision and path forward for Agricultural, Natural Resources, and Forestry research. This was followed by a joint BAC/CLP session and FANR/LBA Advocacy Leadership Forum on November 1-3 to collaboratively frame the decadal plan. Discussions at both fly-in meetings informed proposed high-level topics to serve as pillars for the decadal plan. Below is the content provided by the BLC on January 12, 2024. This content was shared during the January 10 agInnovation Chairs Advisory Committee virtual meeting and revised.

1. National Security and Resiliency

Overcoming climate change and land access challenges, the United States produces 95% of its food domestically while reducing water, land, and energy inputs by 50%, capturing 75% more carbon and reducing agricultural greenhouse gas emissions by 60% through advanced food and biobased technologies—all helping ensure food price inflation is under 2%.

[Recent data indicate that the U.S. already consumes about 87% of food that was domestically produced, so I don't think 95% is a stretch. The bigger moonshots would be the input reductions and carbon sequestration. Median food price inflation since 1973 has been 3.4%, so reducing that by about 1.5 percentage points could be a reasonable goal as well...and 2% sounds nice too!]

2. Global Competitiveness and Leadership

America will be the global leader by tripling its annual agricultural and food science innovations and high impact patents, underpinned by an increase of at least \$2.0 billion annual federal investment in capacity and competitive programs that support agricultural research and extension.

[The \$2.0 billion represents \$1 b annual increase in competitive funds, raising the AFRI funding to \$1.5 billion annually (approximately a doubling of the current \$700m authorization) plus a \$500 m increase in capacity funding and \$500 m in ag infrastructure.]

3. **Food and Diet-Related Diseases**

Food insecurity in America will be less than 5% and development of more nutritious food and safer food production and consumption will cut in half the number of Americans with diet and other food-related diseases, reducing national healthcare costs by 25%.

[Currently, U.S. spends about \$4.5 trillion in healthcare costs annually, so any double-digit percentage reduction will be significant. For example, 25% reduction is \$1.13 trillion = ~5% of U.S. GDP. Food insecurity in 2022 was 12.8% ([ERS](#)), reducing down below 5% seems like a lofty/bold goal.]

4. **Rural Prosperity**

America's rural communities are revitalized through new biobased industries, diverse farming opportunities, and a high quality of life that reduces rural poverty by 50% and incomes grow by 30%.

[According to US Bureau of Economic Analysis income data, over the past 10 and 20 years, urban (metropolitan) income grew by about 30% more than the growth in rural (nonmetropolitan) incomes. So, 30% growth could be a nice figure to shoot for—equitable distribution of income opportunities across U.S. communities.]

On February 15, the BAC/CLP decadal visioning committee met to discuss the initial draft of a high-level overview, based on information received from different committee members. The document included three themes:

- The United States maintains a safe, abundant, and secure domestic food supply for the benefit of food safety and national security.
- Rural communities are economically and environmentally healthy places to live.
- Americans have better, more satisfying diets and longer, healthier lives.

The BAC/CLP chairs facilitated a discussion and set a goal to have a high-level overview document finalized, printed and distributed in the materials provided at the 2024 CARET-BAA meetings.



Communications and Marketing Committee (CMC)

Agenda Brief (September 19, 2023 – March 7, 2024)

To: agInnovation Executive Committee

From: Andrea Putman, Office of Food, Agriculture & Natural Resources (FANR), APLU

Date: March 7, 2024

Last agenda brief: September 18, 2023

CMC Membership is [here](#).

Meetings: The CMC held the following zoom meetings from September 2023 – February 2024:

- September 21, 2023
- November 16, 2023
- January 18, 2024
- February 15, 2024
- Next meeting: March 21, 2024

Note: The October 19, 2023 meeting was cancelled so that CMC members could be available to participate in *Communicators Focus: agInnovation Rebrand Webinar*.

HIGHLIGHTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The National Impact Database (NIDB)

APLU's Board on Agriculture Assembly (BAA) began administering the NIDB in 2023. The NIDB is the nation's most comprehensive repository of the land-grant system's collective impacts in agricultural research, education, and Extension. It serves as an important resource for members of the land-grant system to tell their stories. APLU, USDA NIFA, BAA member institutions, and other stakeholders use the NIDB throughout the year to highlight land-grant universities' accomplishments.

The FANR team worked closely with The Extension Foundation, which is the new provider of hosting for the NIDB database as of September. In close collaboration with FANR, the technical transition from Texas A&M to the Extension Foundation was completed in October. Based on the CMC's requests for improvements, the Extension Foundation has updated and strengthened the NIDB's software framework.

FANR has improved the website both visually and structurally with features such as (1) a new layout so the statements are no longer organized in a list of text but have graphics, tags, and a short introduction

(2) new tagging system (3) addition of individual webpage for each story and summary that also links PDFs (4) more prominent reference to funding source(s).

The team is encouraging increasing participation through outreach including (1) direct communications to member institutions (2) notices in the FANR Focus (3) reminders in the BAA monthly communications toolkits (4) inclusion CARET materials on Land-grant.org.

Frankie Gould and Sara Delheimer are co-chairs of the NIDB Communications team (and serve on the CMC). In 2023, land-grant universities across the nation submitted **over 620 impact statements** (for comparison: **582 were submitted in 2022**; YTD 2024 is 111). On February 2-3, 2024, [a team of 22 professional land-grant university communicators](#) representing all five regions, gathered in Atlanta, GA to create educational materials highlighting outstanding examples. The team wrote, edited, designed, and illustrated **99 web stories, 38 fact sheets, and one video**.

[Impact stories](#) highlight an individual institution's work, while [impact summaries](#) combine multiple statements from different institutions around a common theme. The summaries also include a designed pdf for easy download and use.

[View all the materials](#) or view by [category](#), [university](#), [funding source](#), etc.:

- [Agricultural Systems](#)
- [Energy and Bioproducts](#)
- [Environmental Stewardship](#)
- [Food Security](#)
- [Nutrition and Health](#)
- [Youth, Family, and Communities](#)

Climate-smart Solutions Publication

APLU's Board On Agriculture Assembly released [America's Public & Land-grant Universities: Leveraging Discovery, Education, and Engagement for Climate-Smart Solutions](#) (February 2024) that highlights how public and land-grant universities are on the leading edge of addressing climate change, creating and implementing practical solutions, and building a sustainable future.

The FANR team distributed approximately 460 hard copies at the 2024 Council for Agricultural Research, Extension and Teaching (CARET) / BAA Washington Conference and will do a targeted mailing of hard copies.

Monthly Communications Toolkits (October 2023 – March 2024)

The team develops and distributes a monthly communications toolkit for university communicators. Many communications professionals have requested to be added to the distribution list, which grown from approximately 140 to 285 people (2021 – present). The toolkits are now available on the AgIsAmerica site.

- October: [PROTECTING ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH](#)

- November: [GIVING THANKS: STORIES FROM OUR COMMUNITIES](#)
- December: [CONNECTING AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND HEALTH](#)
- January: [INNOVATING FOR THE FUTURE: CLIMATE-SMART SOLUTIONS](#)
- February: [CELEBRATING 1890 LAND-GRANT UNIVERSITIES](#)
- March: [LAND-GRANT UNIVERSITIES COLLABORATING TO INCREASE PRODUCERS' PRODUCTIVITY AND PROFITS](#)

FANR Focus

The team produced FANR Focus, a monthly newsletter that is distributed to ~850 BAA stakeholders. [March 7, 2024](#), [February 13, 2024](#), [January 8, 2024](#), [December 6, 2023](#), [November 8, 2023](#), and [October 12, 2023](#), and other past editions are [here](#).

APLU Blogs from FANR

- [APLU Board on Agriculture Assembly's Experiment Station Section Rebrands to agInnovation](#), December 12, 2023
- [APLU and USDA Announces National Teaching Awards for Food and Agricultural Sciences](#), November 12, 2023
- [USDA, Cooperative Extension & APLU Award Top Honors in Extension Excellence and Diversity](#), October 11, 2023

Major Website Updates

[Land-grant.org](#) serves as the primary web resource for the Council for Agricultural Research, Extension and Teaching (CARET) delegates. The FANR team developed a members-only portal to host internal materials (e.g., directories, training videos, meeting minutes). The team also updated advocacy materials in advance of the 2024 CARET/BAA Washington Conference.

CMC Chair Rotation

As per the CMC operating guidelines, the Chair positions rotated at the conclusion of the CARET)/BAA Washington Conference at the end of February. **Shelly Nickols-Richardson** became Chair; **Nancy Cox** became Past Chair; and **JF Meullenet** rotated off.

The CMC is very grateful to Dr. Meullenet for his service to the CMC during a period of transitions and growth over the past 3 years. agInnovation Executive Committee will recommend an Incoming Chair to the CMC.

CMC Meeting Minutes are [here](#).

Action Requested: For information only.

ESCOP Science & Technology: <http://escop.info/committee/scitech/>

Committee Members:

<p>Chair: Nathan Slaton (SAAESD) Past Chair: Bernie Engel (NCRA)</p> <p>Delegates: Alton Thompson (ARD) John Yang (ARD) Frank Casey (NCRA) Shibu Jose (NCRA) George Criner (NERA) Jason Hubbart (NERA) Nathan McKinney (SAAESD) David Monk (SAAESD) Gene Kelly (WAAESD) Greg Cuomo (WAAESD)</p> <p>Executive Vice Chair: Bret Hess (WAAESD ED) Jennifer Horton (WAAESD Recording Secretary)</p>	<p>Liaisons: Tara McHugh (ARS) Kevin Kephart (NIFA) Roger Magarey (NIPMCC) Tim Killian (SSCC)</p>
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Meetings: Virtual meetings are scheduled 1-2 pm PT/2-3 pm MT/3-4 pm CT/4-5 pm ET the first Monday of the month. Zoom connection information is:

<https://unr.zoom.us/j/81036274718?pwd=OHIHYXhkWIEyekI3NjcwREZ1dDJpZz09>

Meeting ID: 810 3627 4718 Passcode: STC

Activities Since the [Report to the agInnovation on December 12, 2023](#)

Feedback received during the agInnovation membership meeting on December 12 and additional input from STC members was incorporated into the final draft of the call for nominations for the Agricultural Research Innovation Award of Excellence. The call for nominations was announced by agInnovation Chair Smith following the Finance Committee’s approval so spend up to \$5,000 to support the new award. The deadline for nominations was extended to February 29. Guidelines for submitting nominations for respective agInnovation awards are available at http://escop.info/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/STC_INNOVATION_EXCELLENCE_AWARD_2024_CALL.pdf; http://escop.info/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/STC_RESEARCH_AWARD_CALL_2024.pdf; and http://escop.info/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/STC_LEADERSHIP_AWARD_CALL_2024.pdf

The success stories templates for each of the agInnovation Roadmap Grand Challenge have been reformatted in Canva (available at <https://escop.info/grand-challenge-templates/>), which is a more user-friendly format than InDesign. The goal is to update annually with regional and local success stories and begin sharing updated success stories on the new agInnovation website.

The committee was pleased to receive an overview of the [National Climate Change Roadmap](#) as the final step in providing guidance throughout its development.

Plans to begin working on development of guidelines to recognize use of capacity funds in publications and making data publicly available via Data Commons have been put on hold in lieu of crafting a response to NSF's [Catalyzing Across Sectors to Advance the Bioeconomy](#) (CASA-Bio) initiative. CASA-Bio is a collaborative, facilitated activity involving stakeholders from federal funding agencies, industries, non-profits, and the public sector research community. The overall goal is to give life to the vision of the White House's Bioeconomy Executive Order by seeking synergy through collaboration in areas of mutual interest. A draft of community input was developed from survey responses received from the research strategy framework working group and text from the [agInnovation Science Roadmap](#). The main thrust in March will be to finalize the draft and submit responses through the [Community Input Portal](#).

Item 8.0: Diversity Catalyst Committee (DCC) Update

Agenda Brief: ag Innovation Diversity Catalyst Committee (DCC)
Date: March 14, 2024
Chair: Brian Raison (Ohio State)

- 1.) **Committee Membership** (as of March 14, 2024): see ESCOP Diversity Catalyst Committee (DCC) webpage – <http://escop.info/committee/dcc/>
- 2.) **Meetings** (since December 2023): The DCC held the following meetings via Zoom. Minutes/notes from those meetings are available on the [DCC's page on the ESCOP website](#) (see Past Events).
 - December 14, 2023
 - January 24, 2024
 - February 22, 2024 (webinar)
 - Upcoming Meetings:
 - March 28, 2024
- 3.) **Accomplishments / Upcoming Plans:**
 - In January 2024, the Diversity Catalyst Committee held a discussion at its monthly meeting with agInnovation Chair George Smith, to discuss the DCC's working relationship with agInnovation leadership and the role the DCC plays in implementation of the Chair's priorities in 2024.
 - In February 2024, the call for nominations was released for the 2024 National agInnovation Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Awards. agInnovation intends to recognize an individual and a team for their creation and implementation of inclusive efforts at the local, state, regional, or national levels. The call for nominations is [posted on the ESCOP website](#) and the [electronic portal to submit nominations](#) (SurveyMonkey) is open.
 - On February 22, 2024, the Diversity Catalyst Committee hosted an agInnovation Lived Experience Webinar entitled "Fulfilling the Land-grant Mission through Cultural Competency." The webinar was presented by Dr. Jacquelyn Wiersma-Mosley, Assistant Dean of Bumpers College, University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture. A recording of the webinar is [available for viewing on YouTube](#).
 - Further webinars arranged by the Diversity Catalyst Committee are anticipated to be held in 2024.
- 4.) **Attachments:**
 - Flyer advertising the webinar on February 22.



agInnovation "Lived Experience" Webinar
February 22, 2024, 4:00 PM ET

**Fulfilling the Land-grant Mission through
Cultural Competency - Dr. Jacquelyn Wiersma-
Mosley, Assistant Dean of Bumpers College,
University of Arkansas System Division of
Agriculture**

Hosted by the Diversity Catalyst Committee



COTTON INCORPORATED

TO: SAAESD
FROM: Don C. Jones
RE: Cotton Winter Nursery (CWN) Update
DATE: 2/28/24

The CWN serves the greater cotton community by advancing generations of selfed seed and increasing such high quality seed for genotyping and phenotyping purposes. Some limited crossing is also provided to make new genetic populations. These services are provided to all public sector scientists and several private sector breeders. The CWN is also the primary location to increase and characterize the USDA National Cotton Germplasm Collection in a short-day growing environment. This is required as approximately 30% of the 10,000 accessions are day length sensitive. The site also serves as a 'carry over' nursery where accessions are grown over multiple years. This is required when certain materials do not flower after one season but require multiple cycles (years) to flower.

The number of users each year varies, but usually the total number is between 10-12. On-site visits are encouraged so scientists can observe their materials in the field. Several USDA employees visit each year in February to characterize the materials growing that season. I also visit multiple times each year to assess the current state of the operation, walk the nursery to observe and advise on agronomic improvements, and learn from the Operations Manager Mr. Alfonso Palafox.

In 2023 the local site owner requested Mr. Palafox *purchase* the rented land and office building where the CWN resides. This request came after they had negotiated for several years and failed to agree on a rent increase for the same. The requested purchase price was excessive, some 4X what Mr. Palafox thought was fair and reasonable, so he made the decision to seek another site to house the CWN operation. This required him to rent new land, drill a new irrigation well and install a drip irrigation system. He also began the process of building a suitable facility to gin and delint as he must vacate the current site where he gins, delints and has storage by year end 2023. Several cargo shipping containers were delivered and are being joined to serve that purpose. The most recent SAASED funds were largely used to install the new irrigation well, pump, and drip irrigation system. Your financial assistance is greatly appreciated and has allowed the CWN to seamlessly continue to serve the U.S. based cotton breeder community.

SAAESD Annual Activity Report

April 18, 2023 – March 28, 2024

Summary (Highlights)

This report summarizes the activities of the executive director's office during the period from April 18, 2023, through March 28, 2024. Activities in the past year required travel to attend meetings as the liaison to allied organizations or providing support for directors who are in regional and national leadership positions at regional and national events. Campus visits to North Carolina State University, University of Tennessee, Texas A&M University, and University of Kentucky gave us a better understanding of the specific strengths and challenges of our member Experiment Stations. Fly-in meetings in Washington and Chicago were oriented to developing new long-range advocacy strategies for capacity, competitive, and infrastructure funding. We were extensively involved in organizing and executing in-person national and regional meetings. An important milestone was the first joint meeting between SAAESD and ARD directors held in Atlanta. Similarly, we engaged our Extension colleagues during a joint meeting between ASRED and SAAESD directors in Lexington. We continue to encourage the development of our social sciences portfolios through actively participating in the Southern Rural Development Center (SRDC).

Effective January 1, 2023, we assumed administrative oversight of the ESCOP Budget and Legislative Committee (BLC) as the executive vice chair (Gary) and assistant executive vice-chair (Cindy). The BLC is aligned through membership in the BAA Budget and Advocacy Committee (BAC) and the BAA Committee on Legislation and Policy (CLP). The BLC is one of the most active of the ESCOP standing committees through its engagement in advocacy for the annual NIFA budget request, the farm bill, and other legislation. In addition, we began providing administrative support for the National Research Support Program Review Committee (NRSP RC), which manages the NRSP portfolio of off-the-top funded national projects. Gary continued providing support for the ESS voting member of the BAA Policy Board of Directors and was a member of the Core Horizon Scan Planning Group National Climate Change Roadmap, which completed its work this year. We are providing support for the agInnovation chair-elect and working with Steve Lommel and his staff to prepare for the 2024 agInnovation annual meeting in Raleigh, NC. This meeting will focus on LGU-industry relationships, highlighting agricultural science and technology leaders and companies in the Research Triangle Park.

Through the work of the SAAESD Strategic Roadmap Implementation Team we continue to implement strategies that will strengthen our partnerships, increase the visibility of our region, and provide collaborative research opportunities for our members. The Southern Research Communications Consortium (SRCC) developed the Regional Strategic Research Communications Roadmap with three major goals: collaborate to amplify the southern research message; engage with our key audiences; and to train researchers to communicate with the media. Progress was made toward accomplishing all three goals. The 2023 pilot of AgNGINE (administered by CALS, University of Florida), an APS-agInnovation supported collaborative national online database of prospective graduate students in the agricultural and related sciences, was successful, engaging 22 universities (8 SAAESD members), 1337 undergraduate students, and 368 master's students. We continue to focus on regional collaborations through the creation of new multistate programs in addition to catalyzing activities in the areas of precision livestock farming and the circular bioeconomy. Our portfolio of multistate projects continues to grow with two new projects and 15 renewals in 2023 and four projects under development with eight renewals in 2024 (see appendix).

Travel

- NRSP Review Committee Meeting, Reno, NV. May 31-June 2, 2023.
- ACE meeting, Asheville, NC. June 12-13, 2023. (*Research Communicators Workshop, June 13*)
- North Carolina State University campus visit, Raleigh, NC. June 14-15, 2023. (*agInnovation 2024 annual meeting planning*)
- Joint COPS Meeting, Kansas City, MO. July 18-20, 2023. (*ESCOP, CLP, BAC, PBD meetings*)
- University of Tennessee campus visit, Knoxville, TN Jul 26-28, 2024.
- S-AHS/CARET Summer Meeting, Knoxville, TN. July 28-30, 2024.
- SAAESD/ARD meeting, Atlanta, GA. August 9-10, 2023.
- APLU BAC/CLP Fly-in, Washington, DC. September 10-11, 2023.
- SRDC Board Meeting, Starkville, MS. September 19-22, 2023. (*Board of Directors Meeting*)
- agInnovation Annual Meeting, Grand Rapids, MI September 24-27, 2023. (*ESCOP BLC meeting*)
- BAC/CLP Fall Meetings and Advocacy Summit, Washington, DC. October 31-Nov 3, 2023.
- Texas A&M University campus visit, College Station, TX. November 7-9, 2023.
- Joint Cotton Breeding Committee Meeting, Fort Worth, TX. January 4, 2024. (*Chair*)
- SAAS, Atlanta, GA. February 4-5, 2024. (*S-AHS, RCAS, SRSA, SAC7, SERA 47 meetings*)
- agInnovation Research Strategy Meeting, Chicago, IL. March 6-8, 2024.
- SAAESD-ASRED Joint Spring Meeting, Lexington, KY. March 25-29, 2024.

Conference/Workshop Planning and Organizing Committees

- ARD-SAAESD Joint Meeting, Atlanta, GA. August 9-10, 2023
- ESS Annual Meeting Planning Committee, Grand Rapids, MI. September 2023
- Joint Cotton Breeding Committee Meeting, Fort Worth, TX. January 4, 2024
- 2024 ASRED-SAAESD Joint Meeting Planning Committee. Lexington, KY. March 25-28, 2024
- agInnovation2024 Annual Meeting Planning Committee, Raleigh, NC. September 22-25, 2024
- Southern Mini Land-Grant Meeting Planning Committee, Fayetteville, AR. Summer 2025

SAAESD Committee Meetings

- SAAESD Executive Committee - quarterly
- Multistate Research Committee – quarterly
- SERA Review Committee - annually
- SAAESD Strategic Implementation Committee – monthly
- SRCC Steering Committee and SRCC virtual meeting – monthly
- SAAESD Nominations Committee - annually

Appointments and Liaisons

- Association of Southern Regional Extension Directors (ASRED), liaison
- SERA Review Committee, member
- Joint Cotton Breeding Committee, chair
- Southern Rural Development Center (SRDC), Board of Directors (12/2021-11/2025)
- Council for Agricultural Science and Technology (CAST) Board of Trustees, chair

- Southern Research Communicators Consortium, *ex officio* member
- ESCOP Budget and Legislative Committee, executive vice-chair
- ESS Finance Committee, *ex officio* member
- BAA Policy Board of Directors support for agInnovation representative, Mark McGuire
- BAC & CLP support for agInnovation representative, Anton Bekkerman
- ESCOP Executive Committee, *ex officio*, member
- ESCOP Chairs Advisory Committee, *ex officio*, member
- National Impact Database (NIDB) Committee, *ex officio* member
- NRSP Review Committee, executive vice chair
- NRSP1 Management Committee, member
- Diversity Catalyst Committee, member
- AgNGINE Advisory Committee, member
- ESS-ESCOP Brand and Digital Marketing Committee, member (*agInnovation ad hoc*)
- Ag Research Infrastructure (ARI) Initiative, member (*agInnovation ad hoc*)
- ESS/FANR/LBA Rapid Response Team, organizer (*agInnovation ad hoc*)
- ESCOP Non-profit Committee, member (*agInnovation ad hoc*)
- National Climate Change Roadmap (NCCR) Core Group, member

Engaging New SAAESD Members

- Kurt Guidry, Associate Director, Louisiana State University
- Michael Stout, Associate Director, Louisiana State University
- Mary Burrows, Director VAES, Virginia Tech
- Henry Awika, Interim Associate Director, University of the Virgin Islands
- Darrin Dodds, Interim Associate Director MAFES, Mississippi State University
- Amir Ibrahim, Associate Director, Texas A&M University

New or Revised Documents

- SAAESD Rules of Operation (update: department heads to serve as AAs on multistate projects)
- agInnovation Rules of Operation
- NRSP Guidelines

Multistate Engagement

- TREAT. Multistate Projects for New Faculty. U Arkansas Division of Agriculture. May 17, 2023
- S1086 Annual Meeting. SAAESD Welcome and Overview. Fayetteville, AR. May 24, 2023
- SERA 46 Annual Meeting. SAAESD Welcome and Overview. Fayetteville, AR. December 7, 2023
- SAC7 Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology. SAAS Meeting. February 4, 2024
- S1095 Annual Meeting. Atlanta, GA. February 6, 2024
- Multistate Project Midterm Reviews

The year ahead

Activities in the upcoming year will heavily focus on providing support for the agInnovation chair. Providing support for the chair-elect is ongoing and will extend through the end of the chair's term in September of 2025. A conference planning committee is developing logistics and agendas for the 2024 agInnovation annual meeting to be held September 22-25 in Raleigh, NC. The agInnovation chair has responsibilities to engage with the membership on a regular basis and attends numerous events as the primary representative of the section. We will also continue to provide programming and administrative support for the ESCOP Budget and Legislative Committee (BLC) and the National Research Support Program Review Committee, both of which will be chaired by a director from the Southern region. Regionally, we will continue to represent the SAAESD directors, implementing strategies that will strengthen our partnerships, increase the visibility of our region, and provide collaborative research opportunities for our members. The Strategic Roadmap Implementation Team will focus on developing regional initiatives in two areas: precision livestock farming and circular bioeconomy. We will build on the success of the inaugural joint meeting between SAAESD and ARD directors to continue developing meaningful relationships among universities in the Land-grant system in the Southern region.

Appendix: New, Developing, and Renewing Multistate Research Projects

New in 2023:

- **1095** Science Communication in Agriculture: Human Science Research and Workforce Development
- **SERA49** Heirs' Property: Impacts at Family, Community, and Regional Levels

Renewed in 2023:

- **S009** Plant Genetic Resource Conservation and Utilization
- **S1072** U.S. Agricultural Trade and Policy in a Dynamic Global Market Environment
- **S1073** Biological Control of Arthropod Pests and Weeds
- **S1074** Future Challenges in Animal Production Systems: Seeking Solutions through Focused Facilitation
- **S1075** The Science and Engineering for a Biobased Industry and Economy
- **S1076** Fly Management in Animal Agriculture Systems and Impacts on Animal Health and Food Safety
- **S1077** Enhancing Microbial Food Safety by Risk Analysis
- **S1079** Peanut Variety and Quality Evaluation for Development of Virginia-type Cultivars with High Oleic Trait, Flavor, and Rainfed Production
- **S1080** Improving Soybean Arthropod Pest Management in the U.S.
- **S1081** Nutritional Systems for Swine to Increase Reproductive Efficiency
- **S1082** Aging in Place: Home and Community in Rural America
- **S1083** Ecological and genetic diversity of soilborne pathogens and indigenous microflora
- **S1084** Industrial Hemp Production, Processing, and Marketing in the U.S.
- **SERA17** Organization to Minimize Nutrient Loss from the Landscape
- **SERA18** Rice Technical Workers Group

Terminated without Replacement in 2023:

- **S1078** Cognitive Influence on Teaching, Learning, and Decision Making Around Critical Agricultural and Natural Resource Issues.
- **SCC84** Selection and Mating Strategies to Improve Dairy Cattle Performance, Efficiency, and Longevity.

Mid-term Reviews 2023 (end in 2025)

- **S1087** Sustainable Practices, Economic Contributions, Consumer Behavior, and Labor Management in the U.S. Environmental Horticulture Industry
- **S1088** Specialty Crops and Food Systems: Exploring Markets, Supply Chains and Policy Dimensions
- **S1089** Advanced Understanding and Prediction of Pollutants in Critical Landscapes in Watersheds
- **SCC33** Cooperative Variety Testing Programs
- **SCC80** Imagining the Future of Plant Breeding
- **SERA35** Delta Region Farm Management and Agricultural Policy Working Group
- **SERA5** Sweet Potato Collaborators Conference

New in 2024:

- **S_TEMP1096** Selection and Mating Strategies to Sustainably Improve Dairy Cattle Performance, Efficiency, and Resiliency
- 3 new multistate proposals are in progress

Renewing in 2024:

- **S1085** Cover Crops for Sustainable Southern Agroecosystems
- **S1086** Enhancing Sustainability of Beef Cattle Production in Southern and Central US through Genetic Improvement
- **SCC76** Economics and Management of Risk in Agriculture and Natural Resources
- **SERA41** Improving Production Efficiency of the Beef Cow Herd in Southeastern
- **SERA43** Southern Region Integrated Water Resources Coordinating Committee
- **SERA45** Crop Diversification Opportunities to Enhance the Viability of Small Farms
- **SERA46** Framework for Nutrient Reduction Strategy Collaboration: The Role for LGUs
- **SERA48** Turf

Mid-term Review 2024 (end in 2026):

- **S1069** Research and Extension for Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Applications in U.S. Agriculture and Natural Resources
- **S1090** AI in Agroecosystems: Big Data and Smart Technology-Driven Sustainable Production
- **SERA 47** Strengthening the Southern Region Extension and Research System to Support Local & Regional Foods Needs and Priorities

SAAESD FY2023-2024 Budget

**Approved at
Spring Meeting
2023** **Projected Through
June 30 2024**

Annual Revenue (crosses fiscal years)

Base Assessment	\$	435,283	\$	435,283
Cotton Winter Nursery	\$	35,000	\$	35,000
Total Annual Revenue	\$	470,283	\$	470,283
Projected Carryover	\$	123,904	\$	121,388
Total Revenue Available	\$	594,187	\$	591,671

Expenses

Salary and Fringe Benefits

Salary - Gary Thompson	\$	244,078	\$	244,078
Fringe (31.6%) - Gary Thompson	\$	77,129	\$	77,129
Merit Bonus (3% one time)- Gary Thompson	\$	7,322	\$	7,169
Merit Bonus Fringe 16.5% (one time)- Gary Thompson	\$	1,208	\$	1,143
Salary - Cindy Morley	\$	61,551	\$	61,551
Fringe (31.6%) - Cindy Morley	\$	19,450	\$	19,450
Merit Bonus (3 % one time)- Cindy Morley	\$	1,847	\$	1,810
Merit Bonus Fringe 16.5% (one time)- Cindy Morley	\$	305	\$	283
Subtotal	\$	412,889	\$	412,613

Operating

Travel

Executive Director Travel	\$	25,000	\$	22,000
Coordinator Travel	\$	5,000	\$	7,700

Other

Office operations	\$	2,000	\$	1,305
Website & Computers	\$	2,000	\$	453
NC-FAR Dues	\$	500	\$	500
Awards	\$	500	\$	500

Meetings and Sponsorships

Fall Meeting support	\$	500	\$	-
Sponsorships	\$	1,000	\$	845

Subtotal **\$** **36,500** **\$** **33,303**

Subtotal Salaries & Operational Expenses **\$** **449,389** **\$** **445,916**

Cotton Winter Nursery \$ 35,000 \$ 35,000

Total Expenses **\$** **484,389** **\$** **480,916**

Projected Carryover **\$** **109,798** **\$** **110,755**

note: merit bonus and fringe was not included in the Base Assessment

SAAESD FY2024-2025 Proposed Budget

Annual Revenue (crosses fiscal years)

Base Assessment	\$	447,348
Cotton Winter Nursery	\$	25,000
Total Annual Revenue	\$	472,348
Projected Carryover	\$	110,755
Total Revenue Available	\$	583,103

Expenses

Salary and Fringe Benefits

Salary - Gary Thompson (3% COLA)	\$	251,400
Fringe (28.6%) - Gary Thompson	\$	71,900
Salary - Cindy Morley (3% COLA)	\$	63,398
Fringe (28.6%) - Cindy Morley	\$	18,132
Subtotal	\$	404,830

Operating

Travel

Executive Director Travel	\$	25,000
Coordinator Travel	\$	5,000

Other

Office operations	\$	2,000
Website & Computers	\$	2,000
NC-FAR Dues	\$	500
Awards	\$	1,000
Meetings and Sponsorships	\$	1,000

Subtotal	\$	36,500
Subtotal Salaries & Operational Expenses	\$	441,330

Cotton Winter Nursery	\$	25,000
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Total Expenses	\$	466,330
Projected Carryover	\$	116,773

