

Agricultural Research Station Committee

Meeting minutes – January 16, 2018

Present: Barker, Chapman, Combs, Dawson, Dunigan, Esser (by phone), Gevens, Laboski, Luck, Parrish, Peters, Sabatke, Stoltenberg, Straub

The minutes from the 10/6/2017 meeting were approved.

DIRECTORS REPORT:

- Lancaster – Doug Wiedenbeck has been hired as the UW Ag Supervisor. He has served in this role on an interim basis for the past year. We will be replacing two old and unserviceable buildings on the station with a new pole shed this spring.
- Marshfield – There is a meeting scheduled for 1/30/2018 with station management to discuss ongoing manure handling issues with the sand separator, bedding manager and manure lagoon. We are still in need of a permanent office for the station. We are currently using a leased office trailer.
- US Dairy Forage Research Center – We are working on developing a cooperative plan among all CALS dairy operations for raising dairy heifers more efficiently.
- Spooner – The dairy sheep equipment that remained after the close of the dairy sheep program on the station was recently sold through an auction service. We are expanding the research and demonstration on the garden.
- Rhinelander – We have made some recent improvements on the station including upgrading the potato storage refrigeration, installing power generator transfer switches, and remodeling a greenhouse head house to eliminate a mold problem.
- Kemp – The new Connor Forestry Classroom building has been completed and is already seeing good use.
- Peninsular – Matt Stasiak (Peninsular Station Superintendent) has announced his retirement as January 3, 2019. We will begin planning for the future station staffing soon.
- Arlington – Mike is visiting with Arlington Station users. Good internet service on the station continues to be a problem
- OJ Noer – The new equipment storage building donated by the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association was recently completed. Construction on Highway M, in front of the station, is underway and will pose some access problems this summer. We are watching the development carefully to be sure there are no drainage issues from the station as a result of the new construction.
- West Madison – Staffing will remain as it is currently through 2018 and we will hold off filling the vice-Wright position. Rod Denu's role in the horticulture, garden and organic programs has been increased.
- Hancock – A hoop-style equipment storage building has been constructed on the station. This hoop structure was previously used for sheep housing at the Spooner Station and was relocated to Hancock to house equipment used in the Storage Research Facility.
- Greenhouses – We are at 95% capacity with an expectation to reach 100% in early spring.
- Administration – FY17 crop chargeback invoices have been sent out. The ARS Winter Conference will be held January 24 and 25, 2018 at the West Madison Station. Among other topics being included in the station are Title IV training, Accommodation Training, and a presentation of, "Delivering Effective Feedback" The ARS Recognition Award Reception will be held on Wednesday evening, January 24 at Monks Grill and Bar in Verona. We are hoping to access state maintenance program dollars for road, roof and building exterior projects this year.

ARS Committee By-Laws Update – Bill will have something to report at the next meeting.

Station Infrastructure Needs and Priorities – Beyond ongoing maintenance our top priorities include discussion of the Feed Mill at Arlington and a new Office Building at Marshfield. The ARS Master Plan provided a guide for use to use as we consider our station needs. A new Research/Instruction/Outreach center for the Arlington Station has been proposed by a number of researchers. A recent Land Grant Infrastructure Study will help shape our decisions as well. It was suggested we might use a “PIRF-like” form to solicit input from station researchers on what infrastructure improvements or additions are needed on the stations. It was suggested we might conduct a “Vision” review of the station as was done for the West Madison Station. If not for all the stations it was suggested it would be very helpful for the Arlington Station at least. It was acknowledged this would be a fairly complex study given the wide range of both crop and animal programs conducted on the station. A number of sub-committees would be needed to complete a review of the Arlington Station. Smaller station reviews would be much easier and complete. One suggestion was to create a vision for the Agricultural Research Stations first and then compare stations to it to see what changes might be needed. Mike said he could share the ARS Planning & Priorities Committee report with current ARS Committee members at the next meeting.

West Madison Vision Committee – Next Steps: Bill reported the report has been very helpful. Development surrounding the station continues as the City of Madison planning process is energized and neighborhood associations are updating their plans. Transportation issues are a priority for these groups. We continue to get inquiries about selling land but these are routinely turned down. Bill reported that it seems clear that plant breeding programs will continue to be a major focus of the West Madison station. The integration of Cooperative Extension into CALS might impact future development of the West Madison station. ARS synergies with cooperating groups need to be explored and developed and more dynamic engagement with the community is encouraged as the station outreach mission will likely become more of an Extension mission. We will need to get past historic Extension models and explore new ways of working together. CALS and Extension need to recognize the value of the current Extension investment in CALS faculty and the important role specialists will continue to play in forwarding the mission of both groups. CALS would like to see some of the recommendations of the West Madison Vision Committee report implemented, particularly the development of an urban agriculture and education program and facility. Bill thought a committee would be needed to develop and push this forward. A partnership with Extension is seen as vital for growth in this area. Bill envisioned at least a dozen members would be needed for this committee, including city planners and community members, six or seven members from CALS (Including representation from the ARS Committee), West Madison urban clientele and Arlington rural production agriculture clientele.

PIRF (Project Information Request Form) Process Improvements – One big change this year is the ability to request multiple station sites with a single PIRF request. Mike would like to get some feedback on how this new feature helps improve participation. Animal and Dairy Science typically operate outside of the PIRF program. One suggestion was to try to incorporate “auto-fill” functions wherever possible to speed up the process when completing multiple requests. The PIRF is largely a documentation and place-holder form.

Other – no additional issues were raised.