

## Agricultural Research Station Committee

Meeting Minutes – March 24, 2017

Present: Barker, Combs, Dawson, Dunigan, Gevens, Groves, Laboski, Luck, Parrish, Straub

The minutes from the December 5, 2016 meeting were approved.

Dwight Mueller, ARs Director, will be retiring next fall (2017). The College will begin recruiting to fill this position and an overlap between hiring a new Director and Dwight's retirement is planned. The recruitment will be open to either a faculty or academic staff. A Search and Screen Committee is being formed that will be chaired by Kevin Shinnars.

### Station Updates:

- We have hired Matt Lemke to a one-year position to manage the garden, horticulture and organic plot areas at West Madison. We are also expanding Rod Denu's duties on the station to help support the expanding horticulture research programs on the station.
- We are holding off on filling the vice-Bill Meyer position at the Lancaster Station and have assigned lead duties to Doug Wiedenbeck to help manage the crop and soil research on the station. Bill Meyer has agreed to continue to lend support to help Doug with this through the 2017 growing season. We are also hiring a fixed-term Ag Research Equipment Operator to provide additional help.
- Bruce Schweiger has been hired as the new Superintendent for the OJ Noer Turfgrass Research and Education facility, replacing Tom Schwab who retired last fall. Bruce's position will be split funded with the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association providing 15% funding, CALS researchers providing 15% funding and ARS providing 15% funding.
- We are in the process of filling the vice-Kim Meyer Assistant Superintendent position at Arlington. An offer has been made and we hope to have this filled very soon. Kim has agreed to help our new hire with the nutrient management plan for the station.
- The I-90 Reliever Expansion Project that would have impacted the Arlington Station will not be going forward.

A draft of the West Madison Vision Committee Report has been presented to the Dean. What happens next will be up to the Dean and her administration. CALS Administration will consider the report seriously as development pressure continues to increase around the station. While the committee was able to identify many needs and wants for the station, it will be much harder to implement and afford many of the recommendations from the committee. Philosophically there is not much use to the plan if it is not acted upon, at least in some manner. CALS might wait to move forward with any major changes until the CALS Redesign Project is completed. The committee wondered if we should do something similar for other stations, but the committee did not feel sure this would be very productive. Recent changes to the Spooner station, brought on by Dave Thomas' retirement and the closing of the dairy sheep program was mentioned as an example of how external changes can significantly impact a station. Committee members wondered if contraction or reduction of ARs facilities is inevitable.

There was a meeting is being set up between CALS administration and Peninsular Ag Research Station stakeholders to consider possible partnerships and increased support for the station. Major decision makers from the fruit industry hope to meet with CALS, Peninsular Station staff and the US Potato Gene Bank program at the station to gauge industry and other potential partner support for the station. The UW Foundation will also be assisting.

Russ Groves distributed a handout that detailed ARS efforts supporting crop and soil research on the Ag Research Stations. Many differences between the stations were noted. This report is a first step in identifying some cost of operations and it was suggested the report might be refined and used to review the current Crop Research Cost Recovery Guidelines. One suggestion for changing the Cost Recovery rates was to consider a tiered system that better reflected the varying degree of effort supplied by ARS and an individual researcher. ARS needs to identify what is included in the current basic charges and what is not included. This would help researchers submitting grant requests. ARS should look at any outsource opportunities, sharing of resources across stations, and consolidation of any efforts that might provide some operational savings. ARS should critically review refilling open positions to see if there are ways to increase the effectiveness of our staff. **A motion was made and approved to table further work on collecting Crop Research Impact Data at this time.**

State maintenance program funding for maintaining roads, roofs and facilities on ARS has been held back for the past two years. Any maintenance and repairs are currently being funded by ARS. We are hopeful these funds will be returned in the new state budget.

The ARS Committee approved 12.5 % increase in charges to Dairy Science for the heifer operations on the Marshfield Station did not result in any increased income to ARS. Dairy Science is planning to reduce the number of heifers in response to the increased rate. This change may require some downsizing of staff at the station.

ARS is on track to meet the \$750,000 budget reduction in state-funding. The \$300,000 annual Hatch support that was provided by CALS to help as ARS made this budget reduction will be reduced by \$250,000 in FY18.