

Agricultural Research Stations Committee

Meeting Minutes – October 29, 2018

Present: Arriaga, Barker, Combs, Dawson, Dunigan, Esser, Gevens, Luck, Peters, Reichert, Sabatke, Straub

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

- We had a good growing year but the current wet weather is hampering the harvest on some stations. Overall yields look good. The stations hosted a number of successful Field Days this summer including the Marshfield Common Ground event, the Hancock Potato Field Day (over 120 in attendance), several Spooner Evening Garden Walks (over 100 attendees), the Arlington Agronomy and Arlington Organic Field Days, and a Lancaster Weed Walk.
- The Rhinelander Station had to cancel their planned public events this year due to Potato Spindle Virus showing up on the station. The station took a number of precautionary measures to prevent any spread of the virus and immediately initiated extra sanitizing measures. The extra bio-security efforts seem to have the issue under control. Potato Spindle Virus may be spread from direct contact or even transferred via true seed so it is difficult to eliminate.
- The OJ Noer Station was hit hard by flooding in August, sustaining over \$50,000 in damages. Fortunately the damage was to buildings and infrastructure and no research was affected.
- The latest AAALAC inspection was passed with great success for CALS and ARS.
- We will be meeting with the new director of UW's Physical Plant and have prepared a summary snapshot of the ARS physical make-up to share with him. We are hoping to have campus maintenance funding for roofs, roads and building exteriors on the stations restored.

LAND SALES GUIDANCE DOCUMENT: Bill Barker provided a draft of *Guidance Principles for the Dispersal of Agricultural Lands from Research Stations*. WI State Statutes allows for the sale of land from Agricultural Research Stations and the retention of any sale proceeds for use in purchasing additional land or erecting facilities for research and instruction in animal husbandry, agricultural engineering, and agricultural and life sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The handout outlined the conditions CALS Administration would consider in making any decision to disperse land from a research station and how any sale proceeds would be used. The ARS Committee felt these criteria were minimal and should be strengthened to ensure any sale proceeds would be used to enhance agricultural research programs. Bill agreed to rework the document with the ARS Committee comments taken into consideration.

WEST MADISON AG RESEARCH STATION POTENTIAL LAND SALE: CALS is considering the sale of some marginal land at West Madison to help fund construction of a new plant breeding facility on the station. This building would also serve as a replacement for the old Seeds Building that was displaced on campus. A facility of this nature was included in the recommendations of the West Madison Futures Committee. CALS is looking at a 15 acre tract of land that would likely be sold for multi-family housing interests. The ARS Committee felt strongly that any sale must require the new owner to mitigate and prevent any water runoff that might adversely affect the station as a result of the new development. This potential sale would be a one-time sale of land, capitalizing on the low value of the land for agricultural research and high value of the land for residential development, and not part of any continuing plan to disperse the West Madison Station. The next step in this process to identify a potential parcel of land, secure appraisals and then decide if the sale of any land is worth pursuing. Several ARS Committee members felt it would be important to have a written plan for the use of any funds that might be generated before the sale of any land. Bill Barker will consider this as he amends the *Guidance Principles for the Dispersal of Agricultural Lands from Research Stations*. The ARS

Committee was asked to discuss this potential action with their departments and provide additional input to CALS Administration or Mike Peters.

PENINSULAR ARS UPDATE: Matt Stasiak, Superintendent, will be retiring in early January, 2019. There are no current plans to fill this vacancy or to close the station. ARS has developed a plan to continue management and activities on the station that includes collaboration with local Extension agents, an expansion of the current crop scouting position responsibilities, and potentially hiring a seasonal researcher to help support the research programs conducted on the station.

SPACE MANAGEMENT ON THE STATIONS: A draft policy, "Operating Procedure for allocating space at CALS Research Stations", was distributed to ARS Committee members last spring with a request for comments and suggestions for any changes that should be made to the document. Mike Peters received no additional input to the document and we operated successfully under these guidelines this past growing season. We will plan to formally adopt these guidelines for the stations.

NEXT MEETING: January 25, 2019 from 1:30 to 3:00 PM in Room 250 Agriculture Hall.