

Agricultural Research Stations Committee
Meeting Minutes – November 1, 2019

Present: Arriaga, Barker, Dawson, Dunigan, Esser, Genovese, Gevens, Luck, Peters, Picasso, Reichert, Sabatke, Townsend

Chair Gevens opened the meeting with introductions and welcome
The Charge to the Committee was reviewed.
The minutes from the March 8, 2019 meeting were approved.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

- Mike introduced Nick Genovese, the new CALS Safety Coordinator. Nick has a strong background in occupational safety, health and emergency management. He will be meeting with CALS departments in the coming weeks to introduce himself and begin assessing the college safety training needs.
- **Greenhouses:** Mike noted the greenhouse program does not foresee a need for the Eagle Heights plot research area after this coming growing season when Dr. Nienhuis completes his work in these fields. Lynn Hummel sent a very expanded email to all the plant scientists in CALS asking them if they would be interested in using this area and received no responses. If there is no interest in using this area, we would probably turn the land over to the Eagle Heights Garden Committee. Julie Dawson expressed some interest in developing a student learning area or an expansion of the FH King work but will follow up with Lynn about this.
- **West Madison:** The pressure for growing space at West Madison continues to increase. The "Operating Procedure for allocating space at CALS Research Stations" has helped us to prioritize space assignments. We are hoping to add a seasonal labor position at the station as an added resource. We will likely establish some native prairie area(s) on the station on lands that are not suitable to research plots to reduce our labor resources currently spent on mowing these open areas.
- **Lancaster:** The station had a lot of damage from the summer rains. The station received over 14" on one week alone. We are in the process of repairing roads that were washed out.
- **Peninsular:** The interim management plan for the Peninsular Ag Research Station worked quite well this summer. The station experienced an expansion of apple and USDA potato research on the station, as well as local Extension staff involvement in the station programs. Dr. Arriaga helped the station with their work and a cover crop field day. We plan to hire a new station superintendent early in the spring of 2020.
- **Hancock:** We have been making minor improvements and increasing supply storage capacity in the Storage Research Facility at Hancock.
- **Arlington:** We are working with campus maintenance and the state Dept. of Facilities Development to do a major boiler repair or replacement in the Arlington Feed Mill, Headquarters, and Horticulture units.
- The internet upgrade project at Arlington had a temporary delay but seems to be back on track after discussions with Spectrum.
- **Rhineland:** We lost one of the plastic covered greenhouses at the Rhineland Station from heavy snows. We are working with State Risk Managements on a claim for this loss. We are planning to increase our sanitation program efforts on the station and are in the process of installing a new road to help with these efforts. We lost an entire research clone line to deer damage this summer, so plans are underway to install some fencing to help minimize this damage in the future.

- **OJ Noer:** The Highway M road project, and the new water drainage design seem to be working to keep storm water from damaging the station. We suffered major damages from flooding on the station the previous year.
- **Kemp:** A burst emergency fire sprinkler caused significant water damage to the Mead Resident Hall. We completed the necessary repairs mostly in-house with funding from the State Risk Management program.
- **Spooner:** The station had a great year in the research and demonstration gardens. The private donor, who has supported the gardens on the station, was very happy and has pledged continuing support. The station support for researchers using the station continues to be very strong.
- **Marshfield:** It was a very wet year at the Marshfield Station, preventing some planting and forcing the station to find innovative ways to meet animal feed needs. The Station had numerous requests from local growers for help adjusting their growing programs because of the wet weather. We installed Calan gate feeders on the station which will allow us to do individual feeding trials in the future.
- **USDFRC:** USDA has approved nearly \$72 million to re-build parts of the station facilities. Planning work has begun on new facilities.

Jeff Breuer, Assistant Superintendent at Arlington, retired this summer. Jeff position had 50% Crop Management responsibilities and 50% ARS Safety Coordinator responsibilities. The new CALS Safety Coordinator hire will allow us to refill this position in the spring with a reduced safety component and allow this position to focus on crop management issues at both Arlington and West Madison. We hope this position can also assist with grain marketing for the stations.

We will be doing house inspections for the state-owned residences on the stations this fall to identify any maintenance improvements that may be needed.

We continue to replace the old bleacher-style tour wagons on the stations with a much safer and accessible design. We have completed three wagons so far and hope to build another three wagons this winter.

The ARS Committee requested Mike share the ARS budget with them. Mike will do this.

Mike confirmed the Peninsular Station is conducting work with CALS Researchers. We are hopeful the new Plant Pathology Fruit Specialist being recruited will utilize the station.

Land Acquisitions and Sales:

1. Appraisals were done for some low research potential areas on the West Madison Station. The appraisals confirmed the value of these areas was not enough to fund some suggested facility additions, so the College has decided not to pursue sale of this land. The College will continue to pursue funding for a new Plant Germplasm Facility with the campus.
2. 50 to 70 acres of land, adjacent to the Arlington Station on Ramsey Road, is likely to come available this winter for an estimated \$13,000 per acre. There is little doubt this land would see high use as demand for space on the station continues to increase.
3. Some potential land donations to the college are being reviewed. It was noted these types of donations often include land use restrictions that make them limited in value to the College programs.

Bill Barker - infrastructure/Facility Updates:

- The college hopes to improve plant research resources by replacing the seeds building on campus. The Horticulture Annex and Carrot/Beet Lab are inadequate for this purpose, so the college is hoping to do something on the West Madison station. The college has approached Rep. Pocan and Senator Baldwin and staff for possible funding and have sensed some progress is being made towards this. Rep. Pocan is trying to get support for a USDA Plant Research Facility and has requested \$12.9 million for this purpose. Senators Baldwin and Johnson both seem supportive. Secretary of Agriculture Perdue has also been briefed on our needs. If we are successful in receiving funding the Campus Planning Committee and UW-System will need to approve this as well. The ARS Committee will need to have input and a role in planning for the facility and in determining management and future maintenance for a new facility. ARS could not take these maintenance costs on.
- We are increasing land allocations for organic research on the stations to meet an anticipated growth and interest in this research.

Kemp Station has proposed a Tobacco-Free Campus policy for the station. A proposed draft policy was reviewed and approved by the ARS Committee. This policy will now be sent to the vice Chancellor for approval before implementation. The question was asked why not apply this to all the stations.

Bill thanked Amanda Gevens for chairing the Ag Research Committee last year and for agreeing to continue to chair the committee this year.