



Agricultural Research Stations Committee Meeting

Thursday, October 27, 2022

12:30pm-1:30pm

250 Ag Hall

Attendees: Francisco Arriaga, Amaya Atucha, Nancy Esser, Luiz Ferraretto, Claudio Gratton, Brian Luck, Deena Patterson, Mike Peters, Jamie Reichert, Mark Rickenbach, Erin Silva, Philip Townsend (arrived at 1:01pm)

Not present: Doug Reinemann, Doug Sabatke

Minutes by: Katie Datka

Attending as public meeting: None

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by Brian Luck at 12:30pm.

Welcome and introductions

Brian Luck welcomed the committee and introductions were made.

Approval of April 7, 2022 meeting minutes

Deena Patterson brought up two spelling mistakes on the April meeting minutes. She asked to update her name on the first page and change 'regrading' to 'regarding' in one of the first paragraphs. Francisco Arriaga made a motion to approve the April 7, 2022, meeting minutes with two revisions of typos. Nancy Esser seconded the motion. The motion was passed with 9 votes in favor, 0 votes not in favor, and 0 votes abstaining.

ARS Director's report

The ARS budget ended FY 2022 in a fiscally sound state. All revenue operations as well as 101 amounts are in the black. The Dairy Operations in Prairie Du Sac are operating on the plus side of the ledger. ARS has been extremely stable on the area of the superintendents, station leadership, and supervisors. There is still an opening for one vacancy for the assistant superintendent at Marshfield. A search was conducted for a replacement and two candidates were identified. The first person took a different job, and the second candidate withdrew. The position is being vetted again and will be posted soon to attempt to catch some of the new graduates at the end of the fall semester. The hope is to have interviews take place in January or February and have someone in the position by the 2023 cropping season. The ARS director will share the position posting with the ARS committee. Please let the ARS director know of any interested candidates.

Pride was expressed for the ARS investment in staff development. Examples were shared of staff working towards a master's degree. All ARS staff had a requirement to complete an equity, diversity, and inclusion training. The CALS associate dean for diversity, equity, and inclusion is going to attend the winter ARS meetings and help evaluate and increase diversity in the ARS system. It is a goal of ARS to be especially welcoming to the graduate students who come out to the stations.

One project of interest is the UW-Mesonet project throughout the state of Wisconsin. This is moving forward with help from the CALS senior associate dean and Agronomy department chair. The team was able to secure funding from the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation (WARF) and is working on receiving a rural partnership grant. The goal is to hire staff and acquire equipment to expand the fourteen stations to seventy-two across the state. Work on the design has begun and ARS committee member, Amaya Atucha, is part of the team. The team is in the first phases of critical staffing for a web developer and a program director to help with the Mesonet. The Agronomy department chair will be the faculty director. The team is working on long-term funding for the project but feels that they have funding for the first four years. The goal is to be the most elite Mesonet in the US. The ARS director is happy to speak with people after the meeting for more information.

Funding is secured for the West Madison USDA germplasm building. The tentative location for the building is at the corner of Mineral Point and Pleasant View. Recently, the working group finished up the functional statement for the building. The next step is to secure a USDA architectural group to work with the users of the building to design a scope of work. One of the biggest concerns of collaborations with USDA is to make sure UW staff have access to the building. Staff are working together to make sure that this will be a collaborative building. The facility will greatly expand the capacities of WMARS by housing greenhouse additions, the relocation of the potato gene bank from Sturgeon Bay, seed cleaning, tuber cleaning, cold storage, and freezers. The intent is to include showers, bathrooms, conference rooms, and parking. There will be a separate entrance from Pleasant View Road so automobile traffic to the building does not need to drive through the field operations area. There will be remote access to the building as well so things coming from the field don't have to travel on the main highway. The ARS director is very excited about this addition.

Other building projects include the Dairy Research Forage Center with its \$76 million investment in their new facilities. The facility is currently at 35% of the design plan and is expected to be at 50% design plan by November. The goal is to break ground in 2023 with completion in 2025.

Capital expenditure funding from hatch was used to repave bunkers at Arlington. This was needed for long-term capacity to meet research and feed storage needs. This project was completed last week with touch up work this week. The fan control units at Walnut street greenhouses reached their end of life. However, the replacement motors were starting on fire, making people nervous and increasing the risk of lost research. Physical plant engineered a solution that will reduce failure and fire. The fear was that the greenhouses will get too cold without the heaters and risk losing valuable research. The ARS director confirmed that the Walnut greenhouses should be able to run at full capacity.

The Arlington land purchase has closed. The new seventy-two acres grew corn this year but next year it will begin the conversion to certified organic land. The researchers agreed with converting the seventy-two acres to organic land.

Various insurance claims are active. Spooner ARS has a new roof on all structures due to damage from a hailstorm. Lancaster ARS has rebuilt structures that were damaged in a windstorm. Arlington ARS had a fire that burned a shed down. Most of the equipment has been replaced besides a pickup truck and a semi which is in the works but proving difficult to replace. Insurance has committed to making whole all items lost. An architect was hired to work on a replacement shed so equipment will again be under a roof again by next year's growing season. The ARS director was not able to push the new building through this fall as hoped. Currently, the architect firm is going to design a similar building as it was very functional before the fire.

The ARS winter meetings and banquet will be January 18-19, 2023. The banquet will be on January 18 with a location TBD. The banquet and meetings were cancelled last year due to COVID. ARS committee members are invited to the banquet. All superintendents will be in Madison that weekend and it is a good opportunity to meet with them and go over questions.

Questions/comments from committee:

- Will the replacement shed at Arlington ARS be a replicate of the existing shed, or an upgrade?
 - There is no funding for an upgrade, so the replacement will match what was there. The existing shed was extremely functional for the needs of the station. If something different is done, it would need to be at least partially self-funded.
- It would be nice to have more opportunities to have vehicles under cover. There are more machines that could use roofs.
 - Let the ARS director know if there is critical equipment that needs shelter. An ARS space policy was written, and committee approved a few years ago. Please communicate space needs to station superintendents and the director so we can actively allocate space to the funded critical station users.
- Are there any action items for the committee to focus on?
 - Nothing specific currently. Continue to monitor space and storage needs. Please communicate this to departments and reach out if anything is needed.
- What is the status of equipment availability via leases for next year?
 - Availability of equipment through leases has been problematic, especially with harvesting equipment. Superintendents are being advised to purchase critical equipment instead of leasing. Examples include exploring combine purchases at Lancaster ARS and Marshfield ARS and a tractor at Hancock ARS. Budgets are being looked at creatively to allow for purchasing instead of leasing.
- Is there a benefit to having custom harvesters in the future?
 - This is always something being considered; these contracts are used when they are needed to reach the research mission. Combining at Rhinelander ARS is done through custom equipment if the cover crop warrants this need. Dairy Forage and Arlington does custom harvesting for forages.

CALS updates

Glenda Gillaspay started August 4, 2022. She has been very active in trying to visit departments, doing tours, and visiting stations. She has visited Kemp ARS and Arlington ARS and is visiting Hancock ARS next week.

The CALS associate dean for research search was put on hold so the new Dean could be involved. The associate dean for research position vacancy listing is now posted and closes December 1, 2022. The senior associate dean is happy to talk to anyone about the position. The position will be a tenured faculty in CALS so it will be internal hire. Brian Fox, chair of the department of Biochemistry, is the chair of the search committee. There will be on campus-interviews for the position. January 1, 2023, is the hopeful start date for the hire. The role has been recently restructured. Please reach out to the department chair or the CALS senior associate dean if you would like to apply or recommend a candidate.

The ARS director, CALS senior associate dean, and CALS dean for external relations and advancement are continuing to work with Senator Baldwin's office to get federal funding to help

build a new headquarters building at Marshfield ARS. Signs are still positive, and the team is making this a priority as a federal funding route.

The CALS facilities master plan is still in process and is focusing on the on-campus footprint. The plan will touch on the importance of the Walnut greenhouse. The masterplan is currently at 30% completion and the next steps are looking at future scenarios and growth. The Walnut greenhouses are significant to campus, and it is important to see how they fit in our future as well as campus's future.

Questions from committee:

- What do you need from the ARS committee?
 - Dean Gillaspay could be invited to the April meeting to share thoughts and talk with the group.

General questions & feedback

- The next meeting will be TBD in January 2023. A preference was indicated for January 17 or January 20 to align with the ARS winter meeting
- The ARS committee chair encouraged committee members to attend the January 18 ARS winter banquet.
- Send future agenda items to Brian Luck and Katie Datka.
- The ARS director will share the Agronomy position posting with the ARS committee.

Adjourn

Jamie Reichert made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Deena Patterson seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at approximately 1:08pm.