



Agricultural Research Stations Committee Meeting

Thursday, December 14, 2023

10am-11:30am

250 Ag Hall

Attendees: Francisco Arriaga (via Zoom), Jarred Chambers, Christelle Guédot, Jeff Endelman, Brian Luck (via Zoom), Deena Patterson, Mike Peters, Jamie Reichert, Troy Runge, Erin Silva (joined at 10:07am)

Not present: Amaya Atucha, Doug Sabatke, Luiz Ferraretto

Minutes by: Katie Datka

Attending as public meeting: None

MINUTES

A motion was made for an acting chair to run the meeting as Brian Luck was available via Zoom.

Francisco Arriaga made a motion for Troy Runge to lead the meeting. Jamie Reichert seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was called to order by Troy Runge at 10:03am.

Welcome and introductions

Troy Runge welcomed the committee and introductions were made.

Approval of October 25, 2023, meeting minutes

Noting no opposition, the October 25, 2023, meeting minutes were approved.

Crop Chargeback

- Crop chargeback was put in place back in 2010 based on budget cuts and no adjustments have been made since
- The current model applies revenue from harvestable crops to fees. Crops that produce no revenue have been punished by this model
- Looking for input from the committee as no perfect model exists currently
- Want stations to have success and have funding in place to help provide these services
- Mike provided information that was shared with superintendents as background
- CALS is advocating for funds for agricultural research because it is important and expensive and requires support from state and federal agencies
 - This burden should not fall only to the researchers
- Animal research also has a chargeback model, and this is handled by the department of Animal and Dairy Sciences
- ARS is doing well but relies on these revenues to fund staffing and there is a need to adjust for inflation
- Goal is to also make a simple model that can be budgeted for

- Discussed 4 slides that were provided ahead of the meeting
- Current fees are different per crop and per size and did not favor small fruit research
- Any adjustments to the model will have a long lead time so it won't affect research that is already started or budgeted for
- Greatest output is data generated from these lands and less about the crops
- Without ARS, researchers would have to find and pay for their own land and would be lack the support ARS provides
- Arlington rents 240 acres and ARS tries not to put research projects on these acres
 - Most of the land Arlington owns is to grow crops to feed the animals and spread manure
- Mike proposed a model to the superintendents for feedback that had a base acre charge plus an a la carte model for other services but this needs to be consistent across the stations

Feedback:

- Committee will be the defenders for each department to help explain the reasoning and complexity of the crop chargeback model
- The committee discussed how the Animal and Dairy Science Department has their chargeback program setup
 - Tiered system that breaks down staff hour estimates
- The committee discussed where the pushback comes from. It relates to the a la carte model which is hard to budget for
- The desire is to have something that is consistent and easy to follow
- Various pricing models were discussed
- Having a pricing model that can be budgeted for will be helpful for research
- The model would need to be revised or revisited for pricing every 5 years
- Capacity funds have been flat for a decade, and we don't use a lot that to subsidize research like other universities
- The goal of ARS is to support research and push forward the agriculture business
- ARS provides a lot of services – mechanical service, restrooms, internet, staff support
- The committee agreed it would be helpful to have a draft of the tiering/a la carte model to give to faculty to gather feedback
- Tiering may be easier from a planning perspective
- The committee discussed having a flat rate across all stations or having the change in price dependent on which station you use as land is cheaper as you get farther from Madison
 - Researchers go to a station depending on the soil or conditions, not the location
 - Model should be fair and simple with no unexpected bills
 - Research is based on needs of the research and not solely on location
 - The base price will likely not drive more research or turn research away
- Mike will put together a draft tiered model to give to committee to get feedback from faculty
- Send feedback from departments to Troy and Mike
- Model will have as much detail as possible with the intent of getting feedback
- Committee will hopefully receive the model sometime in the spring semester
- Base the tier system on the input of resources vs the crop
 - Low, medium, high tiers
 - Category of crops based on the labor/input (put names of crops to that)
 - This would be the base and if a researcher would put their own input, the tier can be adjusted

- Troy would like a simple model based on magnitude of dollars to make it easy on the research budget as the ARS budget is not that big
- Discussed how Hatch funding plays into this scheme
- Perf document change to reflect a big number of dollars that are able to be pulled in by grants due to ARS and the support that it provides
- Need a system for self-service budgeting for the purpose of research budget
- Researchers will still be charged for a la carte services (trucking, mechanical repairs)
 - Do away with labor charges associated with support

Questions/comments from committee:

- Troy would like to propose having less detailed meeting minutes
- ARS is an official university committee
- Ex officio committee members have voting rights
- ARS is an advisory committee and makes recommendations to the dean, and the committee is comfortable with ex officio members having voting rights

General questions & feedback

- The next meeting will be January 10, 2024.
- Send future agenda items to Brian Luck and Katie Datka.

Adjourn

Troy Runge made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:12am.