



Agricultural Research Stations Committee Meeting

Wednesday, January 10, 2024

11am-12:30pm

250 Ag Hall

Attendees: Francisco Arriaga (via Zoom), Jarred Chambers, Luiz Ferraretto (via Zoom), Deena Patterson, Mike Peters, Jamie Reichert, Troy Runge, Erin Silva (via Zoom), Amaya Atucha, Doug Sabatke, Brian Luck, Christelle Guédot (arrived 11:03am)

Not present: Jeff Endelman

Minutes by: Katie Datka

Attending as public meeting: None

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by Brian Luck at 11:01am.

Welcome and introductions

Brian Luck welcomed the committee and introductions were made for those via Zoom.

Approval of December 14, 2023, meeting minutes

Troy Runge made a motion to approve the December 14, 2023, meeting minutes. Jamie Reichert seconded the motion. The motion was passed with 12 votes in favor, 0 votes not in favor, and 0 votes abstaining.

ARS Director's report

- OJ Noer has a new superintendent and will continue to provide service
- A staff member from Spooner is retiring who provides Extension work
 - Can keep full-time office manager and will start a search
- Took occupancy of new hayshed at Arlington last week but continuing to adjust the shed
- Hayshed is being used to store equipment as some electrical work still going on
- A fire in the office building caused damage but no one was hurt
- Follow up from October meeting regarding renewable energy and the question of drone around a wind turbine
 - Other factors to consider other than just distance from drone to turbine
 - Reaction time of pilots to not hit turbines as could be very costly
 - Committee may take interest in automated flights and training for pilots
 - Review campus oversight committee
 - UAVs are a powerful tool and want to have it at research stations going forward
- A buyer is considering purchasing some land, but the revenue stays with ag research station to reinvest
- CALS IT has been helping making internet and WIFI more accessible and robust at the research stations
 - Upgrading equipment and increasing range of WIFI
 - Arlington was first and West Madison is next priority

- Potentially make internet a station service instead of charging PIs for internet
- ARS superintendents meeting next week, and ARS members are invited to the banquet
 - Reservations due by end of today to Mike
 - Crop chargeback will be included at the meeting

Questions/comments from committee:

- CALS Safety Group take on the drone issue – Jeff Nelson may be able to help
- Do students need to be involved with UAVs or should there be a team at the stations responsible for drones?
 - Students need to take an online test to be licensed but it is not practical training
 - Could have a station training to prove students can operate drones safely
- Encouraging everyone to attend the ARS dinner

Crop chargeback program update

- Mike provided a proposal based on feedback from December meeting
- Tier One price has increased as the new model gets rid of the credit researchers get for sale of their crops
- Potatoes would no longer get a price break if over 4 acres
- Tier Three price affects tree research as it takes a long time to clean up and make land usable again. Also need to include a plan for removal in the research proposal.
- Proposal has not been shared with superintendents yet
 - Wanted to gather feedback before sharing with them
- Revenue from crops goes back to the station but does not offset researcher cost
- Non-perennial fruit would be Tier 2 with the vegetables
- West Madison premium could be only applied to Tier One

Questions/comments from committee:

- West Madison is one of the only stations that can do fruit research with vineyards and orchards are also limited
- Studying apples or nuts is ‘fruit’ not ‘tree’ research
- Superintendents should be empowered to make decisions on when to charge
 - Example of BSE using 40 acres for machinery research they would be charged for 2-4 acres
 - Determine if a researcher is on station time or if there is a specific need
 - Use the money to reinvest and service the researchers
 - If using station resources, it should benefit the station
 - Equipment movement will remain a la carte
 - Part of vineyard fee would cover mulching the vineyard
 - Mechanical service will remain a la carte
 - Surcharges will be put into one bill
- Need to add what the services are specifically covered and include any exceptions (tree removal)
- Last year no potato growers claimed revenue from the crops
- Struggling to find buyers for the research crops
 - Not enough crop yield to leverage the market
- Mike is open to leverage the markets for certain crops (table grapes)
 - Waste is the problem for strawberries and raspberries which can’t go to a foodbank from a health standpoint

- Follow up at a future meeting as there are high value perishable crops that could make revenue
- Bring to departments after Mike meets with superintendents next Thursday
- After Mike gets feedback from superintendents he will send committee a second draft to deliver to departments
- Committee to meet in April and discuss and phase into growing season 2025

CALS updates

- USDA Civil Rights Review every 5 years handles a wide range of concepts
- Looks into demographics of researchers and language of signs posted
- Troy is asking for feedback on training, communication, or signage to help improve research
- USDA ARS buildings – there is a functional statement for the West Madison and germplasm will stay up in Peninsular
 - Additional seed storage
 - Eventually will do some infrastructure upgrading at Peninsular
- USDA raised issue of having UW students in federal vehicles
 - Working to make sure they are covered by insurance
 - Troy is open to concerns or ideas on this topic
 - Anyone who is not UW employee has a visitor vehicle use agreement and needs to be doing work for a UW purpose
 - Get your agreement on file for any state vehicle usage and include this in onboarding

Louise Hemstead Leadership Award

- Brian asked for volunteers for a subcommittee
- Review letters
 - Volunteers: Deena Patterson, Jamie Reichert, and Francisco Arriaga
- Brian will send a poll for a meeting time
- Recommendation due mid-February

Questions/comments from committee:

- Committee members will bring the crop chargeback model to departments after Mike implements edits from the superintendents
- Troy will bring this to a department chairs meeting
- Send feedback to Mike or Troy
- Committee feels this is an improvement and can be budgeted for in a grant

General questions & feedback

- The next meeting will be TBD in April 2024.
- Send future agenda items to Brian Luck and Katie Datka.

Adjourn

Christelle Guédot made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Amaya Atucha seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:08pm.