**NCAC14 Meeting Report**

**Basic Information**

Project number and title – NCAC14: Plant Pathology

Period covered: -- 01/01/2023-12/31/2024

Date of Report – 03/23/2024

Annual Meeting Date – 02/29/2024

Location – Columbia Hilton Center, Columbia, SC (in-person and virtual); in conjunction with APS Southern Division branch meeting

**Attendees**

Jane Schuh (Administrative Advisor NCAC14), Steve Lommel (Administrative Advisor SAC11), Rubella Goswami (USDA-NIFA), Steven Harris (Iowa State Univ.; Chair), Ken Korth (Univ. Arkansas; Vice-Chair), Megan Kennelly (Kansas State Univ.), Loren Giesler (Univ. Nebraska), Won Bo Shim (Texas A&M Univ.), Jack Rasmussen (North Dakota State Univ.), Adam Davis (Univ. Illinois), Tesfaye Mengiste (Purdue Univ.), Carolyn Young (North Carolina State Univ.), Ruth Dill-Mackey (Univ. Minnesota), Heike Buecking (Univ. Missouri), Pierce Paul (The Ohio State Univ.), Lawrence Datnoff (Louisiana State Univ.), Robert Franks (North Carolina State Univ.)

**Brief Summary of Minutes of Annual Meeting**

In-person meeting with virtual (Zoom) option – Feb 29th, 2024

The agenda was distributed prior to the meeting

Steven Harris (Chair) opened the meeting with introductions by all participants in-person and online

The meeting included members from the North Central States (NCAC14) as well as the Southern States (SAC11), which demonstrates the broad relevance and impact of this group. The administrative advisors for NCAC14 (Jane Schuh; Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Studies, Kansas State Univ. College of Agriculture) and SAC11 (Steve Lommel; Associate Dean and Director, NC Agricultural Research Service, North Caroline State University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences) provided the committee with an update. The AA serves as a resource who can provide general guidance and clarification that improves the effectiveness of the committee. The AAs reiterated the overall value of Hatch multistate projects as a means to foster collaboration, particularly for new faculty. In addition, they stressed the importance of Department Heads knowing which multistate groups their faculty belong to and encouraging participation in their meetings. They also provided a general overview of the CARET meetings that were held earlier in the week in Washington, DC, which included an update on the Farm Bill and AFRI budget.

The committee’s USDA-NIFA representative (Rubella Goswami; Director, Division of Plant Systems-Protection) provided an update from NIFA. The vast majority of NIFA personnel are working remotely. The institute is working on building stronger relationships with minority-serving institutions. They continue to work on streamlining the application process, which will eventually become web-based. Specific programs (e.g., climate change, citrus greening, methyl bromide/soil amendments) were discussed. These include a commodity board co-funding mechanism that elicited considerable discussion within the group. At the time of the meeting, NIFA were not able to announce awards because the continuing budget resolution. The slide deck for this presentation was made available to all meeting participants.

***Project Reviews***

NC1208; Biology, Etiology, and Management of Dollar Spot in Turfgrass; renewal

<https://www.nimss.org/projects/19055>

Review and discussion of the project was led by Steven Harris and Megan Kennelly. The objective of this project is to develop an integrated set of approaches that will make it possible to maintain control of dollar spot infections on turf grass while minimizing the use of chemical fungicides. The committee provides a compelling rationale for the need to develop more effective control strategies for dollar spot. The committee is well-connected to their stakeholders and appears highly responsive to their needs. Notably, they provide a direct estimate of the current costs for treating dollar spot and the consequences of not identifying alternative control strategies. Conversely, the benefits of the committee's activities are also explicitly stated, particularly as related to best practices for management of dollar spot and spreading this information to all relevant stakeholders. In the proposal, the committee provides a suitably detailed background description of the dollar spot pathogen, the disease itself, and various control strategies. This leads to clearly stated and attainable objectives given the collective experience and expertise of the committee members. Within each objective, interactions between specific state members are explicitly stated. There is ample evidence of coordinated activities that well-justify the need for this multistage group. Lastly, project deliverables, outcomes, milestones, and outreach activities are clearly described. These all very reasonable and aligned with the collective expertise of the committee. Overall, the evidence provided suggests that this committee has done a great job of engaging with stakeholders to identify a relevant issue and seek rational solutions to addressing it. The committee is well-organized and has prepared a sound renewal request that merits support. Overall research outputs (i.e., manuscripts; extension publications) from the committee appear somewhat low at this time, but they note that at least two are in preparation with others forthcoming. Approved.

NCERA137; Soybean Diseases; renewal

<https://www.nimss.org/projects/19054>

Review and discussion of the project was led by Heiki Beucking and Ken Korth. The objectives of this project are estimate yield losses caused by soybean diseases in the US, to investigate management strategies to mitigate yield losses, to develop predictive models for disease, and to share results and management strategies broadly with farmers and other stakeholders. The group has established a strong national network that is highly collaborative and productive. This is exemplified by their receipt of the 2023 National Excellence in Multistate Research Award. Regarding the proposed project itself, planned activities are clearly achievable and unique to the group. The team functions very well together. Approved.

NC1197; Practical Management of Nematodes on Corn, Soybeans, and Other Crops of Regional Importance; midterm review

<https://www.nimss.org/projects/18774>

Review and discussion of the project was led by Loren Geisler and Pierce Paul. Though the committee focuses on nematodes that infect corn, soybeans, and other regional crops, their focus is largely on SCN and other nematodes that target soybeans. They appear to be a well-integrated team with a focus on improving nematode management. Collaborative outputs are well-documented, and include the SCN coalition. There is some overlap with NCERA137, which should be addressed. The committee is also advised to look for additional opportunities that diversify their interests beyond SCN and also their membership to include other nematologists. Approved.

NCERA222; Integrated Pest Management; midterm review

<https://www.nimss.org/projects/18823>

Review and discussion of the project was led by Steven Harris and Jack Rasmussen. The committee remains very active with an extensive list of accomplishments provided in their last report. These accomplishments contribute to the committee’s objectives of disseminating IPM research and facilitating coordination across states as well as with the North Central IPM Center. The committee seems to function in an exceedingly integrated manner with numerous collaborative activities underway or planned for the near future. The extent of the committee’s joint activities suggests that they are fulfilling their mission of providing a venue for participants to integrate activities and explore new directions. In their 2023 annual report, the committee did note the need to update their overall priorities to ensure that they align with areas of concern that are relevant to granting agencies active in the region. They are encouraged to meaningfully engage in this process during the next two annual reports prior to the submission of a renewal. *Folks are largely extension educators and/or entomologists, would be nice to have more plant pathologists involved in this group.*

**State Reports and General Discussion**

State reports were presented by each participant. Topics that were discussed included;

-- enrollment trends for both graduate and undergraduate programs

-- AI-related classroom teaching issues

-- shared courses and tuition models

-- concerns about the impacts of predatory journals

-- defining core courses for graduate programs

**Election of Officers**

Ken Korth will be the Chair for the coming year

Steven Harris will serve as Vice-Chair and will be Chair for the following year.

**Future Meeting Plans**

The current proposal for the 2025 meeting is to meet jointly with the APS Southern Division, whose annual branch meeting is tentatively scheduled for Feb. 2025 in Gainesville, FL. The meeting would once again include both NCAC14 and SAC11.