S1087 Meeting, Spring 2024

**Location**: DoubleTree Lighthouse Boardroom, Biloxi, MS

**Date**: Feb 22, 2024

**Time**: 1pm—3:30pm

## Attendees and introductions

**In Person:**

* Melinda Knuth (Chair)
* Daniel Tregeagle (Secretary)
* Charlie Hall
* Alicia Rihn
* Guil Signorini
* Julie Campbell
* Ben Campbell
* Hayk Khachatryan
* Ariana Torres

**Online:**

* Simone Valle de Souza
* Bryan Peterson
* Jennifer Gray
* Shuoli Zhao

## Approving the Minutes from Fall 2023

Daniel moved to approve the minutes. Charlie seconded the motion. All in favor.

## Administrative advisor

Our advisor is not present. He has been in contact with the chair and secretary during the year. Any comments received by him will be shared with the group.

## Overview of National Survey progress

Multistate folder walkthrough by Melinda.

All active members of the group are equal owners of the folder.

Simone is a first-time attendee. Melinda added her to the group folder.

Folder is a repository of all current and historical information from the group, including national survey files and the state license operators list.

Several states (9) do not post their nurserymen list online and are not responding to requests. Melinda requests assistance from members to access lists for the states that are not currently collected.

Jen mentioned a project that is compiling a unified database that covers all nurserymen list across the US. It will be held confidentially for 2 years. Sarah White at Clemson is the PI.

* Hayk: firms exiting and entering. Frequency of updates? Jen: probably every 2 years, but still determining this.

Charlie will help with finding the Texas list.

Guil: Only one list in Ohio.

Who did Melinda contact? Perhaps there are others who could help?

Why are we distributing before we have a finalized list of all possible contact?

Melinda: Each state has a plant board contact. They maintain the nurseryman license list and nursery list.

20% of the list in each state will get a physical mailer.

It is possible that a single firm might get an email and a paper survey.

## Discussion of Distribution Plan

Original target was Jan 15.

Already getting physical mailers back.

About 40,000 emails for the online version of the survey. The survey has been distributed through this list.

Also reaching out to horticulture extension agents in many states. This list has not been sent yet.

Alicia is connected to the eGrow newsletter. She has a write-up and link for sharing through this avenue.

Melinda: greenhouse magazine and link through this channel? Association executives could send out links?

Jen: HRI could send to their contact list. Could include in American Hort outreach. Perhaps media partners, too. CapWire and Industry Insider American Hort newsletters, too. Jen needs text and is happy to share.

Charlie: Is this a convenience sample, or is it / should it be stratified?

Hayk: Online was not stratified. Not sure if mail was?

Charlie: Could use Census of Ag, Census of Hort to *ex post* stratification on the sample.

Hayk: Last time used Dun and Bradstreet database for ex post stratification. This database is no longer available.

How to avoid duplicates? Perhaps try to identify likely duplicates *ex post*, perhaps using some machine learning method. Melinda mentioned the Random Forest method.

Check whether we are collecting IP addresses. That can be another avenue for identifying possible duplicates.

Hayk: Perhaps a rebranding could help increase response rates. E.g. “5 year economic impact survey”. Try to brand in a way that makes the benefits to respondents clearer.

Jen has list of Nursery & Landscape Association Executives of North America members who could promote the survey to their members.

Guil: USDA used to do a census of smaller specialty crops and smaller states. The number dictates how much funds the state receives. Could this group and survey become the ‘official’ number for the size of the industry in each state?

Ben: that is a very hard position to be in, because people express strong opinions when they disagree and money is on the line.

Jen: States might be more willing to fund/support state-level detailed surveys if they had a template for running these impact surveys and analyses.

Charlie: We will need to do *ex post* stratification.

Melinda: Later she will create a subcommittee to focus on the stratification methods.

Hayk: Framing the results will be difficult because there might be big differences between the previous round. This was the case between the last two rounds.

Bridging the IMPLAN business categories to NAICS codes etc, is very difficult. It would be great if we could get Alan Hodges to advise our group on how he used to run the IMPLAN analyses.

Need to use the same procedures (or at least fully understand them) so we can retain consistency between waves.

## Roundtable discussion of member activities

Focus on ornamental hort.

**In Person:**

### Melinda Knuth (Chair)

S1087 and North Carolina Green Industry Council (NCGIC) survey distribution.

eCommerce consumer projects with Alicia and Bridget.

Charlie and Melinda looking at the environmental benefits of plants. Planning a series of 5 papers. 2 drafts done. Issues like reducing noise pollution, carbon blanks, contaminated site remediation etc. Funded by HRI.

Charlie notes: The health and wellbeing article series gets 50,000 to 100,000 cites.

Sustainable ornamentals.

Natives and water sources paper.

### Daniel Tregeagle (Secretary)

S1087 and NCGIC survey distribution.

Natives and water sources paper.

### Charlie Hall

Market metrics and benchmarking. Time consuming because much interaction needed with providers/users?

11 years of the EAGLE program. The most impactful program in his career.

Boxwood blight project has a 1 year extension.

Floriculture research alliance, including Purdue collaborators. Annual meeting in Oct, funded by grower subscription.

Online education with Paul Fisher.

Index of prices paid report will be released soon. It will go on the American Hort website, which will be a useful reference for documenting increased input cost of production.

### Alicia Rihn

Flat-headed borer beetle project.

Turfgrass improvement project.

Local cut-flowers in TN. Especially small growers.

HRI grants looking at natives with Sue, Ariana, Bridget. Market drivers etc. Marketing potential including wildlife benefits.

### Guil Signorini

SARE grant: minority groups with urban farms, including a component on cut flowers.

Other projects are on food crops and ag inputs / technologies. Large scale CEA project. Adoption of technologies in large-scale high-tech greenhouses. Long-term vision is the development of an autonomous greenhouse. Primarily tomatoes and leafy greens.

Trying to adapt the consumer buying framework to B2B transactions.

Wrap up biopesticides paper.

Has a paper out on pawpaw.

Two SCRI pre-proposals, waiting to see whether they will be invited to submit full proposals.

### Julie Campbell

Ambrosia beetle project.

Consumer motivations for gardening.

Potential project on landscaping with Auburn.

Reassigned appointment to 65% teaching, 30% Extension, and 5% service on the tenure-track.

### Ben Campbell

Three SCRI current proposals.

Ag Census fact sheets, including nursery greenhouse factsheets.

Succession planning projects.

And a hodgepodge of other things.

### Hayk Khachatryan

Continuing projects, but no major new projects.

Consumer research project - ways to differentiate FL grown blueberries. FL is expecting competition from GA blueberries.

Stormwater management - HOA, homeowner etc. preferences for pond edge plantings. Plantings must be natives.

### Ariana Torres

Turfgrass project with Texas A&M surveying turfgrass users to measure the size of the industry. Which traits should the breeder focus on?

Diversifying the Midwest. Other crops and piloting markets, including food, ornamentals, agroforestry, etc.

IPM biocontrol economic feasibility for alternative crop systems.

Organic crop systems including goats and chickens, plants and animals.

Other food-related projects and international work that is not relevant to ornamental hort.

**Online:**

### Simone Valle de Souza

Works primarily with food crops in controlled environment.

Started with vertical farms, but expanding to greenhouses.

Energy use efficiency projects.

Small Christmas tree project: Fraser Fir. Revenue and production practices.

Optimal pricing by age, and alternative distribution strategies.

Circular economy of controlled environment agriculture. Studying the economic impact of reusing outputs from elsewhere in the supply chain.

Carbon impact of CEA.

### Bryan Peterson

Many smaller projects. Currently no large projects.

Invasive potential of blue honeysuckle cultivars.

Crop evaluation, especially woody plants, for horticultural potential.

Cut flowers production, especially Dahlias, in Maine.

Costal Maine Botanial Garden project.

Charlie asks: Aren’t honeysuckles on the invasive plant list in Maine?

Bryan: Generally yes, but not blue honeysuckle. Also, it produces fruits.

### Jennifer Gray

HRI is opening the funding for 2025. Closing on June 1. She is hoping to have submissions from this group.

The S1087 output repository is in the works. She will provide updates when possible.

### Shuoli Zhao

SC Block Grant looking at cut flower market in Kentucky. Perhaps a consumer demand survey.

Designing experiments to measure people’s happiness from plants.

Consumer support or bias against against beginning farmers. Using incentivized experiments to study gender and racial background.

## Update on HRI Proposal

They have funded the national survey distribution.

Melinda presented the survey to the NFF group. Audience members expressed interest in the information created by the group. Melinda suggested HRI could promote the group’s outputs.

## Rules and Data Sharing Protocols

Over 100 people registered to S1087, but only 10-15 regular participants.

Melinda reviewed the data sharing documents.

We will redistribute the bylaws of the group to everyone as a refresher.

Hayk: What happens if a new member signs up and is unwilling to abide by the internal governance rules.

* Currently no formal enforcement, but informal approbation possible.

We will have a more explicit review of the protocols during the Fall meeting.

## Update on the grad student participation initiative

Ariana: There was an idea to involve grad students, but we need to follow group protocols. No notable progress on this initiative.

## Next location

Melinda calls a vote that the next meeting should be held in Hawaii in conjunction with the ASHS meetings. Ariana seconds. Passes by unanimous consent.

Should it be before, during or after the ASHS meeting?

Suggestion: Sunday, 23 September.

Julie: Where will the funding come from? Space?

Melinda: Perhaps public libraries? Hotel room?

Melinda will lead organization of the meeting. Daniel and Jennifer to assist organization.

Follow-up poll after this meeting to gauge attendance and location etc.

Ariana might be able to host in Chicago in Fall 2025.

Jennifer might be able to connect us with an HRI board member who has an operation in SoCal.

## Adjourning the meeting

Charlie moves to adjourn. Alicia seconds.