Minutes

Meeting of NCAC6

January 23, 2025

The committee met via Zoom videoconference on January 26, 2024, at 9:00 am. CST with administrative advisor Gary Pierzynski (OSU). NCAC6 members present were Michael Day (K State), Catherine Ernst (Michigan State), Dan Shike (Illinois), Pasha A. Lyvers Peffer (OSU), Guillermo Scaglia (NDSU), Michael Schutz (U of MN), John Jaeger (SDSU), Deborah Van Overbeke (UNL), Jason Ross (ISU), Bryan Wiegand (U of MO). The meeting was chaired by Pasha A. Lyvers Peffer. Michael Schutz volunteered to record minutes of the meeting.

After self-introductions, Gary Pierzynski updated those in attendance about a couple of administrative items. First, the inauguration of President Trump and transition to the new administration along with the fact that the Federal Government is operating on a continuing resolution has led to pauses in review of submitted proposals, assembling of grant panels and travel for some federal granting agencies. This is due to program reviews. Administrators believe it is a temporary pause but are in a wait and see mode. Second, the National Association for Agricultural Experiment Station Directors has recently changed identity from NCR to agInnovation, or agInnovation North Central for this region. This includes the twelve 1862 institutes comprising the North Central Region. The two 1890 institutions are part of their own national group. Dr. Shibu Jose (U of MO) serves as the CEO/Chair of agInnovation North Central, and Jeanette Thurston is Executive Director of the office, with Chris Hamilton serving as system administrator. NIFA reps to NCAC6 are Mark Mirando and Robert Godfrey, though NIFA participation in regional project meetings has been rare since the NIFA move from Washington DC to Kansas City.

The committee proceeded to review NC multi-state projects.

**NC1201**

## The midterm review of ***Methods to Increase Reproductive Efficiency in Cattle***was reviewed by Day (primary) and Scaglia (secondary).

# Objectives:

1. Increase the efficiency and predictability of sustainable reproductive technologies and management programs for beef cattle.
2. Evaluate mechanisms that regulate reproductive processes impacting production efficiency in cattle.
3. Disseminate reproductive management information to stakeholders to improve sustainability of cattle enterprises.

## The proposal was reviewed under Appendix I review criteria as a Mid-term review. The project has a long tradition of success through previous versions and includes many key researchers in ruminant reproduction. Outreach has been an ongoing strength of this project with Extension publications and 132 meeting presentations, including many through the Dairy Cattle Reproductive Council (DCRC) and the Beef Reproduction Task Force (BRTF) that many NC1201 members participate in. The committee has met twice since revision with 11 and 14 participants, respectively, at University of TN (2023) and University of GA (2014). As an example of outputs, the project had 58 peer reviewed publications, 4 funded USDA AFRI multi-state grants. Thirteen of the journal articles and 5 proceedings articles include authors from two or more stations. Reviewers noted that constraints to adoption of strategies and outreach to farmers were not clearly laid out, but those details can be overcome by continued work with DCRC and BRTF.

## Day moved to approve, seconded by Scaglia. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

**NC1184 (NC\_temp1184)**

The renewal of **Molecular Mechanisms Regulating Skeletal Muscle Growth and Differentiation** was reviewed by Van Overbeke (primary) and Wiegand (secondary).

Objectives:

1. Characterize the molecular mechanisms controlling skeletal muscle tissue growth, development and composition.
2. Characterize the cellular mechanisms that regulate skeletal muscle metabolism.
3. Characterize mechanisms of protein synthesis and degradation in skeletal muscle.

The proposal was reviewed under Appendix H review criteria as a renewal of an existing project. This is a renewal of a highly successful previous project and includes most of the experts in muscle growth and development. A key focus is molecular understanding of muscle function. This is a group that has excellent representation across the entire region and across the US. It is a robust group that can address the work plan laid out in the proposed project. The outreach plan was noted as a strength of the project, which was very well written overall. That outreach plan includes planning and development of a research symposium at a related national meeting. The elements of the proposed work are sound; and participants are reminded to focus on efforts that are truly multi-state in nature.

Van Overbeke moved to approve and Weigand seconded. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

**NC1202**

## The midterm review of ***Enteric Diseases of Swine and Cattle: Prevention, Control and Food Safety*** was reviewed by Schutz (primary) and Ross (secondary).

# Objectives:

1. Focus on emerging diseases: We will identify, characterize and develop improved detection and prevention methods related to newly recognized, novel or emerging causes of zoonotic enteric disease and enteric pathogens of food animals.
2. Focus on preventions and interventions: We will develop and improve preventative measures and interventions to reduce the incidence and prevalence of infections of food animals with enteric pathogens and zoonotic enteric infections of humans with foodborne and waterborne pathogens.
3. Focus on disseminating knowledge: We will provide training or continuing education to disseminate new information to students, producers, veterinarians, diagnostic labs, and others to implement interventions and preventative measures.
4. Group interaction: The group will interact in a variety of ways to facilitate progress including direct collaborations with joint grants and publications, sharing of resources (pathogen strains, gene sequences, statistical analysis, bioinformatics information/expertise), and relevant feedback and facilitation for all research efforts at annual meetings.

The proposal was reviewed under Appendix I review criteria as a Mid-term review. This is a project that has had good participation and been successful in outreach. In the two annual reports examined, there was no clear evidence that any reported publications had authors from more than one participating university. It was good to see that there was discussion at the 2024 annual meeting about fostering interactivity among participants. In that report for the period ending 9-30-2024, there appeared to be a grant with PI and Co-PI from different participating stations….a good start. It appears that the reports addressed accomplishments for each of the first three objectives. Addressing group interaction will be critical if the participants seek to continue this multistate project beyond 2027. All indicators are that the level of participation is great. There are 55 registered participants from 23 states and several allied institutions, including one 1890’s institution. Increasing attendance moving from 31 in 2023 to 40 in 2024 indicates that participants value the interactions at the annual meetings routinely held in Chicago, IL. The committee is urged to continue efforts to leverage the annual meetings to establish true collaborative efforts.

Schutz moved to approve with recommendation that the committee seek ways to focus more on true multi-state activity and Ross seconded. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

**NCERA225**

## The midterm review of ***Implementation and Strategies for National Beef Cattle Genetic Evaluation*** was reviewed by Ernst (primary) and Jaeger (secondary).

Objectives:

1. Provide a venue for the discussion and exchange of information for the many disconnected and diverse research activities--biological, genomic, statistical, computational, and economical--that support National Cattle Evaluation (NCE).
2. Develop through this exchange new tools for delivery and use of beef cattle genetic research, including genomic information, to beef breed associations and beef cattle producers.
3. Update the beef cattle industry on current developments in beef breeding and genetics research including changes in genomic tools and analyses.
4. Collaborate with appropriate groups (eg. BIF, and USDA/NIFA funded Integrated Projects) on research and outreach.

The proposal was reviewed under Appendix J review criteria as a Mid-term review of an Extension and Research Activities (ERA) project. This ERA project includes 9 universities and 15 members. Its strength appears to be in Education and connecting with the commercial beef industry. Outreach, being a large focus of an ERA group, has been excellent with joint efforts to develop symposia, deliver a “Brown Bagger” lunch-time series, and align closely with the Beef Improvement Federation. Focus on the main objectives was noted. The 2024 report listed 5 research and outreach impacts. It appears the group is functioning as an ERA committee should.

Ernst moved to approve, Jaeger seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

An election of officers was held and Pasha Lyvers Peffer agreed to continue on a three-year term as chair, Mike Schutz agreed to continue service as secretary. Pasha indicated she would poll the group to see if the preference was to meet again on January 21 or January 22, 2026.

Jason Ross updated the group on plans for the upcoming national meeting of Department Heads to be held April 23-24, 2025 in Des Moines, IA. He requested feedback on topics to be discussed and will follow up with an e-mail the national e-mail list.

There being no further business, Pasha Lyvers Peffer adjourned the meeting at about 10:20 am.

Respectfully submitted.

Mike Schutz, UMN

Acting secretary, NCAC6