

NRSP1 Management Committee Call NOTES

Date: Monday, July 20, 2026

Time: 1 pm ET, 12 pm CT, 11 am MT, 10 am PT

NRSP1 Management Committee Members
Chris Hamilton, Chair and NIMSSS Lead, agInnovation North Central Bret Hess (AA), agInnovation-West Jeanette Thurston (lead AA), agInnovation North Central David Leibovitz (AA), agInnovation Northeast Cindy Morley (AA), agInnovation South Rick Rhodes, agInnovation Northeast Gary Thompson, agInnovation South Jennifer Horton, agInnovation-West Alton Thompson, ARD Julie Estrada (NIMSSS User), Purdue University Robin Williams (NIMSSS User), Clemson University Sara Delheimer (agInnovation MRF Impacts Program Coordinator), Ex-officio Faith Peppers (NIFA Director of Communications), NIFA Liaison Tara Warner (NIFA PARS Director), NIFA Liaison Email list: nrsp1@escop.info Committee Page: http://escop.info/committee/nrsp-1-management-committee/

Call Agenda:

1. Roll Call and Welcome – Chris
2. [NIMSSS Updates](#) (written report only) – Chris
3. NRSP1 Renewal Proposal Status - Chris
4. MRF Impact Program Q2 2026 Update – Sara
5. MRF Impacts Language Alignment with NIFA Discussion – Faith, Sara
6. NIFA PARS Update (staffing, NIFA reps, etc.) – Tara (if available)
7. NIFA Communications Update – Faith (if available)
8. Other Items, as needed.



MRF Impacts
Update, 2026 Q2.pdf

Call Notes (AI Fireflies summary):

Call attendees: Cindy Morey, David Leibovitz, Bret Hess, Jenn Horton, Julie Estrada, Robin Williams, Sara Delheimer, Jeanette Thurston, Chris Hamilton

NIMSS System Updates

- Work underway to shift Appendix E objective entry from station directors to participants, reducing director workload and increasing participant ownership.
- Confusing participant prompts are being reviewed and removed to clarify roles.
- Support for allowing participants to review objectives before director approval to reduce back-and-forth.

NRSP1 Proposal Renewal

- NRSP1 renewal proposal progressing; remaining sections are due in the fall (9/15 and 10/1) soon. Chris reminded the group that she would like to step down as NRSP1 chair and NIMSS lead after the renewal officially starts on 10/1/2027.

MRF Impacts & Communications

- Website updated to better explain program structure, roles, and engagement opportunities.
- Five-year proposal drafting continues; team invited to suggest strategic or process improvements.
- Budget considerations include salary, part-time support, and travel; travel needs currently modest.
- Upcoming in-person trainings and meetings identified as opportunities for visibility and engagement.

Newsletter Delivery Issues

- Newsletter bounce rate unusually high; causes may include outdated contacts or platform filtering.
- Plan to analyze bounced emails by region and clean lists; Mailchimp remains preferred tool.

NIFA Relations

- NIFA cannot link to MRF impacts site due to restricted terms in older content.
- Sara will contact Rachel and Faith to clarify restrictions and expectations.
- Archived statements will be reviewed and updated to meet NIFA language requirements.

Professional Development

- Team encourages Sara's continued professional development and participation in conferences and indicated she should build this into her next 5-year budget.
- Opportunities emerging for communication training (e.g., Alan Alda Center).
- Plans to offer impact reporting sessions at upcoming NERAOC and ACE meetings.

MRF Impacts Strategic Engagement & Events to Attend

- agInnovation national meeting identified as key opportunity to highlight program value.
- Increased attendance at regional communication and leadership meetings encouraged.

NIMSSS Updates: Major Features & Initiatives

Forms and Participant Workflow

- Renamed 'Appendix E' to 'Participant Form/Appendix E' throughout the site.
- Added an explicit Chair designation for project editors, allowing a project's chair to be formally identified in project leadership.
- Fixed an issue in SAEs reports where images pasted into text fields were not always saved correctly.

agInnovation Rebranding

- Renamed remaining 'ESCOP/ESS' references to 'agInnovation' in the NRSP rationale and regional review forms.
- Updated 'identified by ESCOP' wording to 'identified by agInnovation.'
- Updated agInnovation regional office web links.

Reviews

- Filtered terminated and expired projects out of reviewers' My Reviews lists to reduce clutter.
- Preserved completed review history for terminated and expired projects so past review records remain accessible.

External Data / NRS Integration

- Added contributing states to the single-project API endpoint.
- Enhanced successors API used for NRS integration by adding project objectives and participating states for both predecessor and successor projects, along with performance improvements to speed up data loading.

Bug Fixes

- Fixed an issue prevent Associate Directors from approving participant Participation Forms/Appendix E.
- Fixed an error that occurred when a project had no Station Director assigned.
- Fixed a crash that could occur when an anonymous visitor viewed a project's impact statements.



2026 Q2 Report

April 1-June 30, 2026

Reading this report: This report summarizes the performance of the Multistate Research Fund Impacts program by reporting key indicators and metrics and narrative. Use the Document tabs panel to quickly navigate to section headings. Figures of special note are **bolded**. A green highlight indicates outstanding performance or achievement. Yellow highlights mark action items. Any urgent concerns are highlighted red. Action items are also summarized in the “On the Horizon” section at the end of the document.

Impact Statements

In Q2, Sara and the NRSP1 Management Committee worked to update the Impact Statement boilerplate to highlight capacity funding.

In Q2, Sara **finalized 3 Impact Statements**. Impact Statements for the regional winners of the Excellence in Multistate Research Award are being drafted. See full Impact Statement queue for 2026 [here](#).

S1088: Produce Demand, Marketing, and Policy	posted
SCC80: Strengthening the Future of Plant Breeding	posted
NC1186: Managing Irrigation for Specialty Crops	posted

How we used Impact Statements

Finalized Impact Statements were sent directly to project participants, agInnovation regional leadership, NIFA communicators, and the APLU FANR communications office, and regional communicators.

All finalized Impact Statements were posted on the mrfimpacts.org website and will be shared via @MRFImpacts social media.

All finalized Impact Statements were uploaded to NIMSS and the NIDB.

USDA NIFA featured Impact Statements

USDA NIFA did not share any MRF Impacts content in the NIFA Update or on the NIFA Impacts blog in Q2; however, Impact Statements posted in previous quarters continued to perform well on. In Q2, **three Impact Statements** were among the **top-20 most-viewed Impacts** on the NIFA website, accumulating **436 total views**:

- [W3192 Protective Clothing for Wildland Firefighters](#)
- [NE1610 Eastern White Pine Issues](#)
- [W3009: Automation in Specialty Crops](#)

APLU FANR featured Impact Statements

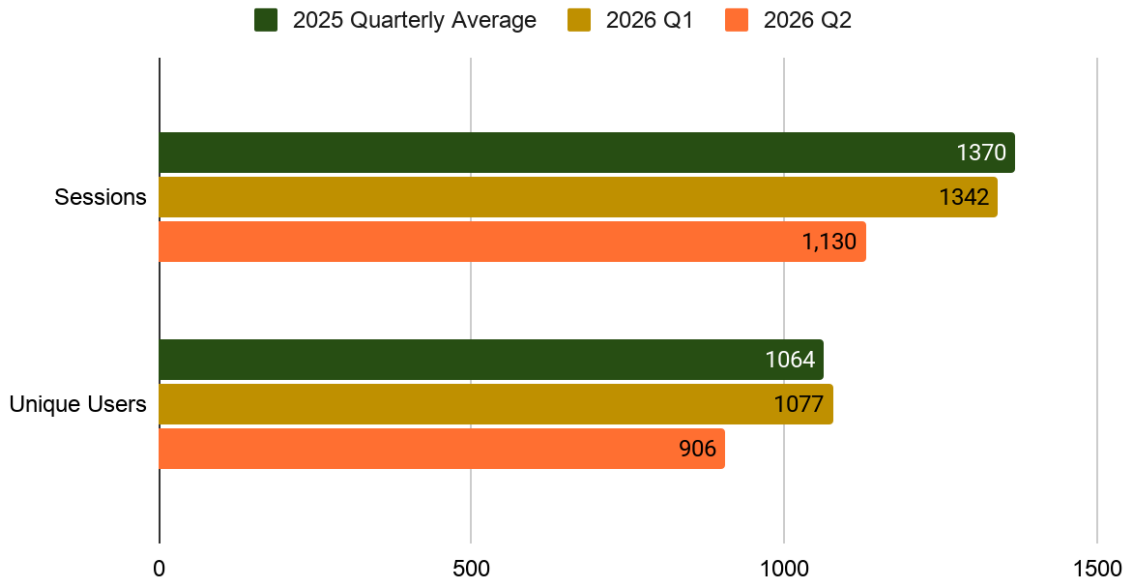
Web Link	Date Posted	Document title	Projects featured	Clicks
Link	April 2026 (toolkit)	Research aims to improve viability of regional wine production	NE1710	

Website

In Q2, numerous improvements were made to the [MRF Impacts website](#). A new widget has improved accessibility across the site. The redesigned [home page](#) highlights the unique qualities and benefits of Hatch Multistate projects. The updated language better aligns with agInnovation and APLU initiatives. A new [About](#) page provides clearer information about how MRF Impacts is managed and operates and our place in the land-grant university ecosystem. The [Engage](#) page outlines ways our audience can interact with MRF Impacts and use and share our materials and resources.

Website performance in Q2 was down slightly compared to Q1 and the average performance in 2025, which was the website's best performing year on record.

Website Performance



Most traffic to the mrfimpacts.org in Q2 came from direct referrals (e.g., users typing the URL into their browser or clicking links in emails and non-web files such as PDFs, Word docs, or PowerPoint files), organic searchers on Google, links on LinkedIn, and referrals from the agInnovation site.

Pages that received the most visits include the home page and Impact Statements page followed by the monthly toolkits page. The most-visited individual impact statement posts were S1071 Emphasizing STEM in High School Ag, NC1173 Sustaining Bee Health, and W3010 Enhancing Feed Efficiency in Beef Cattle (all three are different than the top posts in Q1).

Social Media

MRF Impacts

In Q1, the Impact Writer posted regular content on @MRFImpacts platforms on X, Facebook, and LinkedIn. We highlighted content related to ...and more.

We shared communications toolkits with NIFA, APLU, and project participants to help them promote Hatch Multistate projects on social media.

Compared to Q1, social media metrics on X and LinkedIn were lower and Facebook metrics were higher in Q2 of 2026.

X

Tweets: 62

Impressions: 1,588

Engagements: 63

Facebook

Posts: 63

Views: 1,483

Engagements: 25

LinkedIn

Posts: 63

Impressions: 3,180

Reach: 1,325

Engagements: 95

USDA NIFA

In Q2, USDA NIFA posted less MRF content on social media platforms compared to Q1 (which had record-high performance).

X

7 posts

2,187 impressions

70 engagements

Facebook

7 posts

1,035 accounts reached

43 engagements

LinkedIn

7 posts

7,002 impressions

105 engagements

APLU FANR

X

6 posts

9 engagements

388 views

Facebook

6 posts

451 accounts reached

4 engagements

LinkedIn

2 posts

337 impressions

14 engagements

Newsletters

Our latest newsletter was released on April 7, 2026 and had a 45% open rate (23 opens). Readers made 2 clicks on newsletter links. Our bounce rate is high (74%) so many of our subscribers are not receiving the newsletter in their inboxes. In Q3, we will explore ways to improve delivery rate.

Impact Writing Workshops

During Q2, the Impact Writer worked with the selected Hatch Multistate project groups to schedule workshops.

Workshops scheduled for later this year:

- NE9: July 14 2026
- S1094: August 24, 2026
- NC2042: October 8, 2026
- S1093: October 29, 2026
- W2196 (Sara has not heard back from this project)

During the Q1, NRSP1 meeting, the committee agreed to serve NCERA137 and NCERA184 with a joint in-person workshop in March 2027.

See details about applicants and nominees [here](#).

Committees & Meetings

- Monthly: Attended APLU Communications and Marketing (CMC) meetings as ex-officio member
- Regular: NIDB Communications Team meetings
- April 9: A Comprehensive Overview of "A Study of Land-grant University Federal Capacity Funding"
- April 30: NIDB Discussion: National/Aggregate Impacts

- May 6: ERA Reporting Tool Deep Dive with Tegan Walker and David Lane
- May 7: Regional Impact Support with Roseanne Scammahorn
- June 9: International Impacts discussion with Jagger Harvey

Conferences

Sara registered to attend the APLU BAA Leadership Summer Meeting in July. The CMC and NIDB Communications Team will meet in person.

Professional Development

- *ScienceWriters Spotlight: Making metrics matter for science communications*. NASW, May 28

On the Horizon

- ☐ Create Impact Statement and other write-ups for the 2026 National Excellence in Multistate Research Award
- ☐ Prepare materials for NRSP1 FFY27-32 proposal (Issues & Justification due 9/15/2026; Management, Budget, Business Plan narrative due 10/15/26).
- ☐ Use the [Benefits of MRF Projects Survey](#) responses to produce materials that promote the overall importance of the MRF and capacity funding.
- ☐ Identify one MRF project/researcher for a researcher spotlight interview/video/story.