NCERA013 Meeting Minutes 11/12/2009 – 11/13/2009
Holiday Inn Airport Des Moines, IA

Present

Brad Joern – Purdue University (bjoern@purdue.edu)
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Meeting Opened at 1:00 pm

Important Dates

- Renewal for the committee is September 2010.
- Brad Joern is chair until next September when John Peters from Wisconsin will become chair and Daniel Kaiser will become chair-elect.

Member/State Reports

Indiana – Although Indiana does not have a state-supported soil testing laboratory, hundreds of thousands of soil samples from Indiana are analyzed by commercial soil test laboratories each year. An informal telephone survey was conducted with two of the largest soil testing laboratories in Indiana. Both laboratories reported double digit increases in the number of soil samples analyzed in 2008 compared to 2007 with similar increases in 2007 compared to 2006. The increased number of soil samples analyzed in 2007 and 2008 was likely due to the rapid increase in fertilizer costs during this time period. In 2009, the number of soil samples analyzed was similar to the number of samples analyzed in 2008. The lack of increase in the number of soil samples analyzed was attributed to an unusually wet spring and fall in 2009. Both laboratory managers expressed a strong desire to be more actively involved in NCERA013 in the future. These managers were concerned that the NCERA013 meeting occurs during the busiest time of the year for commercial soil testing laboratories and suggested that we meet informally to discuss how to more actively engage commercial soil testing laboratories in NCERA013 in the future.

Iowa - The number of soil samples received at the ISU Soil and Plant Analysis Laboratory decreased significantly mainly due to bad weather that limited soil sampling in both spring and fall seasons. From July 2008 until June 2009 the lab processed about 15,000 soil samples, of which 5,000 samples were submitted by homeowners or farmers while the others were submitted by researchers or field demonstration programs. We also determined nutrients on about 15,000 pre-extracted soil or plant tissue samples through agreements with researchers, however, and analyzed about 2,300 plant tissue samples, and analyzed 250 limestone samples. During this period the lab also completed work initiated as part of the Extraction subcommittee objectives to study effects of rewetting soil samples and pretreatment with octanol on K extraction by the ammonium-acetate acetate test. The study was summarized in an MS Thesis by Brian Hill (Lab Manager). The octanol pretreatment resulted in no significant correlation between extracted K and corn or soybean yield response to K, while rewetting resulted in correlations intermediate between standard tests based dried samples (worst) or field-moist samples (best). An important soil testing development in the state was that based on research conducted in Iowa and other NCERA-13 committee members, the Iowa Soil Test Certification program accepted the Sikora buffer-pH method as an alternative to the currently used SMP buffer method. These methods provide similar buffer-pH values but Sikora does not include hazardous chemicals. At the present time we are implementing the Sikora method in our lab as our standard buffer-pH method. The University continues having serious budget problems, which resulted in a hiring freeze and planned furloughs. However, the Dean authorized the hiring of a candidate for our new Environmental Soils position, which will start in January. This is the only position that may be filled of four Soils positions lost during the last five years due to retirements or deaths (soil classification & survey, soil microbiology, soil chemistry, and soil fertility).

Michigan - Tough budgetary decisions are being made by the State government, Universities and the K-12 educational system. Michigan State University (MSU) is looking to consolidate or eliminate programs and merge departments throughout all Colleges including the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (CANR). Significant cuts are being made to the Experiment Station and Extension. Cuts to Extension may be as much as 44 %. Some of the cuts may be moderated by stimulus funds this fiscal year and the effects may be worst in the following years. The Extension Service will be undergoing reorganization and restructuring which likely will result in reduction in the numbers of county offices and conversion to a regional office system. There is movement across MSU and in the CANR to make all positions 9 month appointments. It is unclear how this will work for those with Extension appointments. The Department of Crop and Soil Sciences now has two open soil fertility positions as Darryl Warncke retired September 1. We hope to begin a search soon for candidates for one of those positions. In the Soil and Plant Nutrient (SPN) Lab the number of soil samples increased slightly this past year. Total number of routine samples was near 15,000 this past year with approximately 2,000 or so of those coming from homeowners. About 600 PSNT samples were run. Only 75 stalk nitrate samples have been received this fall with about 90 % of those being below the optimum, many having values below 100 ppm. The reorganization of Extension will likely impact the flow of soil samples to the MSU SPN Lab since most of them now come in via County Extension offices. We

are looking at the possible use of self-mailers for soil samples. A web based program for interpretation of homeowners soil test reports hopefully will be finished in the near future.

Minnesota – No report on lab volume from Roger of the U of M soil testing lab. Currently most samples and questions coming to extension that are lab related are from homeowners and people outside of production agriculture. The soils department at the University if facing budget cuts. No position eliminations are eminent since there are open positions in the department. Currently have one less soil fertility faculty after the retirement of Gary Malzer and Gyles Randall is on phased retirement. Also, the department is down to a part time soil micro-biologist and a few others will be retiring soon. Lab volume from private labs is up from the past few years. Major labs in the state are Agvise, MVTL, Midwest labs amongst a few others. No major changes noted to soil test procedures from the state certification committee.

Missouri - Division of Plant Sciences was able to get three faculty positions released under the Compete Missouri Program at the University of Missouri. The Division has completed interviews for the Rice Research faculty position at the Delta Research Center, and offer has been made and awaiting acceptance from the candidate. The Turf Pathology faculty position at Columbia campus was advertized and candidates are being interviewed at this time. Search is in the process for a Small Grains Research and Extension faculty position located in Columbia campus. The budget situation remains tight and President Foresee has requested that we continue with restrictions on spending to manage with the anticipated 5% additional cut from State funding for the coming fiscal year.

The soil test numbers remained somewhat the same like last year. The excess rain we had during the fall had delayed harvesting crops this year resulting in a less busy fall than the normal fall season. The labs did more research samples and special tests. Both labs together analyzed a total of 32,158 soil samples. Labs tested 18541 samples for field crops, 4854 lawn and garden, 436 commercial horticulture and 7059 research samples. In addition the MU Soil and Plant Testing Lab analyzed 903 special tests, 1427 plant, 80 water, 41 greenhouse media, and 206 compost samples and 203 manure samples this year. The labs budget remains sound and stable.

A field calibration study is conducted to evaluate the Sikora, Mehlich and Woodruff buffers before adopting the best buffer test method suitable for Missouri soils. The soil fertility working group at MU is still working on revising MU soil test recommendations and the nutrient removal values currently being used are being revised. We have the big task of re-writing the soil test database program to implement all the changes that are being proposed. Finding a source for funding this project is a big challenge. This year we did a project to evaluate the nitrogen management practices and loss of N due to the excess rains in fall and spring in corn by measuring NO3 and NH4 in the soil profile at spring and by doing end of season stalk Nitrate-N test. We used the information collected to educate the producers.

The NRCS is requiring labs to be certified in soil and manure testing in order to be eligible to participate in the nutrient management plans for the state. So Mu lab has joined the Manure Testing Certification Program managed by the Minnesota Department Agriculture.

Illinois - In Illinois projects are being conducted to study sulfur response in corn; phosphorus (P) and potassium (K) placement and tillage interactions on availability of these nutrients for corn and soybean; and nitrogen (N) application time, source, and placement efficiency in terms of corn yield and nitrous oxide emissions.
The 23rd edition of the Illinois Agronomy Handbook published in 2002 underwent a very substantial revision and update. The new 24th edition was published in the fall of 2009. A completely new chapter on N management that reflects the new approach of including economics to determine the most appropriate rate of application was added.
The University of Illinois is once again working closely with the Illinois Soil Testing Association. This link was weakened after the passing of Dr. Ted Peck and a period of transition in the soil fertility faculty at the University of Illinois. The association met in the summer of 2009 and plans are underway for a meeting in the winter of 2010.
Two surveys were conducted to determine the general fertility of soils in Illinois and to assess the perception of producers and others linked to crop production on the current soil fertility recommendations from the University. A soil fertility survey was conducted in 2007 and 2008 and results were summarized during 2009. Soil samples were collected from the 0-8 and 8-18 cm depths at random corn fields prior to crop harvest. Most of the 598 fields sampled in 52 counties (out of 102 counties in Illinois) were collected by volunteers conducting the annual European Corn Borer Survey that has taken place for more than 60 years in Illinois. Samples were analyzed for P, K, pH, calcium (Ca), magnesium (Mg), and organic matter (OM). Perception on current soil fertility recommendations was assessed during the Corn and Soybean Classic Conference series in which 833 responses from an audience of approximately 1,100 participants was obtained using the TurningPoint audience response system. The soil survey showed that 17 and 43% of the fields were below the mean critical level of 19 mg P kg-1 and 140 mg K kg-1, respectively. Fifty eight and 30% of the fields were above the mean soil test level of 33 mg P kg-1 and 190 mg K kg-1 at which additional fertilization is not recommended, respectively. Mean soil pH was adequate at 6.7. Mean Ca (2226 mg Ca kg-1) and Mg (366 mg Mg kg-1) levels indicate no need for application of these nutrients. Mean organic matter (OM) was 3.3%. Comparison with an earlier survey conducted approximately 40-years prior indicated that current P and pH levels are higher, but K levels are approximately the same. Phosphorus, K, and OM levels were stratified with surface to subsurface ratio of 2.4:1, 1.5:1, and 1.2:1, respectively. This stratification is an indication that most soils are under conservation or reduced tillage. The lack of stratification in pH possibly indicates that soil acidity in the plow layer can be corrected even when soils are not intensively tilled. In contrast to what was found through the soil survey, the audience survey showed most people agree that current P and K recommendations are adequate (55% of the responses) and most producers are testing their soils frequently (every 4 years). It was also interesting to notice that during the survey (January 2009, when fertilizer prices were very high) 53% of the producers agreed that they would reduce P and K application for the 2009 crop, but 38% would make no

changes. This audience likely represents the more progressive sector of Illinois farmers, and while it is not possible to make inferences from this survey to understand the results from the soil survey, the surveys illustrate the need to continue to educate fertilizer users on the benefits of following sound crop-nutrient management practices. Currently, this information is being used in teaching efforts by extension specialists and educators in Illinois.

North Dakota - North Dakota State University operates a state laboratory on campus in Fargo, ND. The role of the laboratory is to serve as a center for research samples for soil and water analysis, and to analyze farm and home samples as requested. The laboratory has three full-time employees who manage the soil laboratory, the soil and water quality laboratory and serve as accounting respectively. The busy fall and spring sampling seasons are supplemented with part-time help. The soil laboratory analyzes between 16,000 and 18,000 samples each year. About 2/3 of this total come from outside the University, and include farmers, agribusinesses, environmental businesses and others. The NDSU laboratories currently send their check samples to Robert Miller's laboratory due to their long-term relationship.

Within the state, other significant laboratories include Agvise, Northwood; and laboratories operated by Bob Bahm, Minot and Pat Feist, Minnewaukan. Agvise is by far the largest laboratory in the state and last year moved into their new building which was built when their previous building was destroyed by a tornado, which was built a few years previously when the original building was destroyed by fire. All of the laboratories in the state work well with NDSU.

Soil sampling has been a challenge over the last two years, but consultants who soil sample as part of their service are set up to take samples over challenging conditions. Soil sample number is expected to remain at current or slightly elevated levels this year.

South Dakota - Fall 2009 sample numbers are lower than normal because of the late harvest and wet soil conditions. If snows stay away, harvest and soil sampling will proceed into winter. The long term soil sample trend has been downward presumably because of increased private lab competition. Revenues have fallen as well.

An ICP (Varian) has just been ordered for the laboratory to analyze microwave plant digests and DTPA micronutrients as well as NH4Ac extractable cations. New laboratory facilities will be built (same building, 3rd floor). Projected move-in date is June 2010.

The Lab has changed to the Sikora Buffer test from SMP on July 1, 2009 using the same SMP calibrations.

The SDSU agronomy farm (160 acres) is now a research park. Replacement is not yet certain. The SD crop improvement association has recently purchased 160 acres about 8 miles west of campus to use for agronomic research.

Crop Report
The 2009 growing conditions were cool and moist with little moisture stress across the state. Wheat yields were very good although scab was prevalent. Soybean yields were 40 – 55 bu/a and statewide corn yields are estimated to average 150 bu/a. Grain moisture levels are relatively high which is delaying harvest as are wet soil conditions.

Nutrient Report
Late season N deficiency was apparent in many corn fields presumably because of yield potentials higher than expected yield goals. However, leaf firing did not reach 1 to 2 leaves below the ear leaf on most fields.

Personnel
The first search for Dean of Agriculture resulted in no suitable candidates. The new search is near the interview stage. Peter Sexton (Univ. of Maine) has been on board since July 1. He is in a revamped position (Alternate Crop Systems) and is working in the cover crop area. Soils positions now number six compared to twelve about 10 years ago

Ontario - A combination of high fertilizer prices and aggressive marketing of soil testing resulted in a 14% increase in soil samples analyzed from 2007 to 2008, bringing the total just above the number for 2005. Wet weather in the fall of 2008 limited the amount of sampling that could actually be completed, or the numbers would certainly have been higher. Tissue sample numbers have been stable, while the number of manure analyses has been increasing steadily, up 25% from 2005 to 2008.

There is some research being carried out on N & P availability from manure, and on P sorption characteristics of various soil types. Most of the nutrient research is funded from an environmental perspective, but includes an agronomic component which can be used to improve the profitability of nutrient application by Ontario farmers.

The Lake Simcoe Protection Act has been passed by the Ontario Legislature, which will enable actions to protect and improve the water quality in Lake Simcoe (the largest lake in Ontario aside from the Great Lakes, and only about an hour north of Toronto). The next step is the finalization of a Lake Simcoe Protection Plan, complete with a phosphorus reduction strategy, which must be completed by March, 2010. This is raising lots of questions about quantifying actual P losses from agricultural fields, and predicting reductions based on BMP implementation.

The Land Resource Science department at the University of Guelph will be merging with Environmental Biology, which will require a move across campus. It remains to be seen whether this move is positive or negative.

Crop conditions in Ontario this year have been only fair, with cooler temperatures than normal and uneven distribution of rainfall. This has resulted in late harvest of corn and soybeans, and high moisture contents in the grain. This has reduced the amount of winter wheat planted this fall, and will also reduce the amount of fall soil sampling unless December is warmer and drier than normal.

Wisconsin - The University of Wisconsin-Madison operates two soil testing labs: the Soil and Forage Analysis Lab (SFAL) in Marshfield and the Soil and Plant Analysis Lab in Madison (SPAL). The SFAL continues to assist the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (WDATCP) soil testing lab certification program. A new soil test summary website (http://uwlab.soils.wisc.edu/soilsummary/) was built this year so that the public could query county average soil test results from WDATCP certified labs. The website has been used by various agencies that are interested in track soil test phosphorus trends as one measure of the effectiveness of nutrient management planning.

Publications:
Vitko, L.F., C.A.M. Laboski, and T.W. Andraski. 2009. Effects of sampling time, soil moisture content, and extractant on soil test potassium levels. p. 124-132. *In* Proceedings of the North Central Extension-Industry Soil Fertility Conference. Vol 25. Des Moines, IA 18-19 Nov. 2009. Available online at: http://extension.agron.iastate.edu/NCE/

Laboski, C.A.M. 2009. 2009 – The summer of plant analysis: What did we learn? p. 119-123. *In* Proceedings of the North Central Extension-Industry Soil Fertility Conference. Vol 25. Des Moines, IA 18-19 Nov. 2009. Available online at: http://extension.agron.iastate.edu/NCE/

Vitko, L.F., C.A.M. Laboski, and T.W. Andraski. 2009. Effects of sampling time, soil moisture content, and extractant on soil test potassium levels. ASA-CSSA-SSSA Annual Meetings Abstract available online: http://a-c-s.confex.com/crops/htsearch.cgi?

Opening

- Private labs taking more of the sample load from state labs, state labs turning more into research labs.
- Renewal – September 2010

Website Committee: Sylvie Brouder was working with Manjula Nelson on the website, but has since moved on and Brad has taken her place on the committee. Commitments have been made by Purdue to host the website, but there is not commitment from a programmer to set up the website. Brad agreed to help if the website only needs to be posted. Manjula stated that the committee members need to have input on what needs to be posted on the website and that we could use the SERA-6 website as an example to set up our website. It was agreed that we need to put together a mission statement and list the activities for the group on the website and use it to post copies of meeting minutes. Brad mentioned that we should duplicate some of the contents from the NIMSS website as part of the initial website. It was mentioned that we should have something in place for the next renewal.

Proficiency testing – (Antonio Mallarino and Keith Reid), NAPT is alive and well and is looking for a new coordinator. Janice is moving on and will continue until a new coordinator is in place. Utah State has been doing the contract lab part and is willing to

carry it on. There was a discussion about the PAP (performance assessment program) and that NAPT is the only approved provider for the program from NRCS. Bob Miller is working for a private proficiency testing company and has been advertising it as a less expensive program. His program differs in that there are 3 exchanges a year 3 soils repeated 4 times, but there is no oversight committee of the ALP program. There have been discussions from labs on the NAPT program that samples are not reflective of samples in their lab. However the group mentioned that it may be good for every lab to evaluate samples they are not use to and to have the same sample sent to a number of labs across the state instead of regional samples only.

Previously members considered developing a white paper about the NAPT program. It was recommended that we should have a way to show that there is a level playing field for proficiency testing programs. Brad asked if a similar program was needed for manure. The consensus was that manure analysis proficiency testing is more problematic. However, the Minnesota department of Agriculture already has a program in place for manure proficiency testing that some labs are currently using. There was some agreement in that the NAPT coordinator needs to be able to choose which samples are sent where and that soils should not have to be around the agronomic optimum level or from soils within the state. The idea of creating associate labs came up so that these labs could better communicate and contribute samples to the program, Antonio thought that it would overcomplicate things and that NAPT is not an approval process; but rather it is a way for labs to compare their performance with their peers. Some states currently post certifications for specific labs based on NAPT. Daryl suggested that it may be a good idea to use the CSA news to post articles on what is going on with the NAPT program.

Outreach activities that were identified for the NAPT program

- Identify labs within regions that are not involved with NAPT. 153 labs enrolled now.
- Should have an NAPT lite – provide labs with previously run samples to check on performance based on other labs.

Other Discussion

Keith commented on what was being looked for in a new coordinator. They currently are looking for a individual with a Ph.D. that is involved in soil and plant analysis, has good statistical and data management skills, and is a good communicator as this would be beneficial for trouble shooting with outside labs.

Some discussion took place relative to developing an NAPT online forum so labs can post questions to other labs that potentially can help with technical questions. For this to occur it usually takes some involvement to maintain the forum and police what is written.

- Soil pH and Liming Chapter (Carrie) – Goal was to update the chapter in that publication from the last meeting, but there is nothing to report at this time. Several presentations were given at the meeting in February and some labs and states are switching over to using the Sikora buffer pH method.

Tim Shaver from the WC research and extension center in North Platte has bee appointed the official rep for NC-13 from Nebraska.

- Antonio – got together with Doug Beagle on the P chapter, main thing that was decided add P determination with ICP chapter. Antonio was working with Brian Hill on adding that and has updated Iowa recommendations to add Mehlich-3 determined with ICP. Antonio is looking for help to get the chapter together. It was discussed whether we should revise and put the chapters up on the website as an electronic version as soon as possible because it is important for states to know what soil tests are supported by NCERA013. Antonio recommended moving quickly on updates. However, questions remain about what to do with citations if it becomes web based. Currently the publication is through the University of Missouri. It was also brought up that we need to make sure Brad has a list of current publications from members dealing with soil testing for the NIMSS website.

- Keith provided a survey of labs regarding micronutrients to determine if they test for them and make micronutrient recommendations. Fabian asked if the labs were asked about the source(s) of their critical levels. Antonio stated that Iowa labs cannot recommend micronutrients without calibration data. There was a general discussion that little calibration exists for micronutrients. Brad suggested we need a statement on where and when a producer should sample for micronutrients and provide guidance about situations where certain micronutrient deficiencies are likely to occur. Dave suggested that Extension should proactively put out information in the form of bulletins on what to do if you suspect a deficiency and when and what to sample. Antonio suggested that the group exchange recommendations and information on who has data on micronutrients, especially calibration data. A secondary issue was brought up whether we have issues with lab tests on micronutrients? Is it clear what tests are being used by what labs for determining micronutrients levels? The DTPA and Mehlich-3 tests were brought up, but what kind of data do we have on the usefulness of these tests for some micros, especially for Mn and Zn with the Mehlich-3? Some states have recommendation classes for micronutrients, but would it be better to have a yes/no system for recommendations?

Several in the group brought up that sulfur deficiencies are becoming more prevalent. Work in Iowa, and other states, has shown responses in areas where no responses were seen in the past, so questions are likely coming from producers on how to assess responsiveness to sulfur. We do not have good recommendations for soil tests and need to be more clear about what to recommend for plant sampling. Some are looking at soil test procedures, but many have not been good for prediction. Recommendations seem to be better tuned to environmental conditions. How do we improve our lab calibration data? Dave offered to investigate data for ICP determination of sulfur relative to traditional analysis. It was suggested that we may want to consider the sulfur index from Wisconsin. Antonio asked about plant analysis for sulfur and suggested that it would be a good first step to investigate plant analysis since it doesn't have the complexity of issues encountered with soil sampling. Fabian suggested that we develop a clear recommendation for plant analysis for sulfur.

Brad showed data from NRCS that summarized manure application rates based on soil test alone. The suggested limits for manure application were below fertilizer recommendation rates in many cases. Many in the group noted that fertilizer recommendations are becoming regulatory in nature and that our recommendations are too prescriptive. The efforts at the Marcell conference to write a regional approach for making P fertilizer recommendations was brought up as a first step to initiate a more flexible approach to making fertilizer recommendations, at least for P and K. This hopefully will build flexibility in our recommendations and give producers options for how they want to manage their fields. Systems like the P-index should provide a good estimate for environmental reasons, but regulators want one number. It was brought up whether P or K should be an on/off application? Also what work has currently been done looking subsoil levels? Most work was done years ago so it was questioned if there has been an effect of mining the subsoil.

Day 2 – new attending Robert Mullen from Ohio

Dave Franzen – NCERA013 has been receiving good reviews but we need to be more timely on meeting reports and minutes. Should be submitted by 60 days after the meeting. We should target 30 days to get the minutes in. Set the deadline for state reports for the minutes by December 21.

Report from Ken Grafton – given by Dave Franzen
Firstly, my apologies that I could not attend this meeting. Circumstances regarding the recent announcement of our university president and the rapid transition of the interim president, along with meetings on campus and in the state, prevent me from attending. I thank Dr. Franzen for agreeing to present this on my behalf.

NCERA 13 has been receiving very good reviews from the Multistate Research Committee (MRC) for its varied activities. However, they have expressed concerns that the annual reports and minutes have not been submitted in a timely manner. Annual reports and minutes need to be submitted, via the AA's office, and posted on NIMMS within 60 days of the meeting. The MRC will be looking at delays such as these in a negative light as committees undergo the renewal process. Please make sure that my office receives these reports in a timely manner. Also, please be sure to submit 1-3 impact statements on the committee's activities that occurred during the year.

NCERA 13 will terminate in Sept. 30, 2011. If the committee members are interested in maintaining the committee, I would strongly encourage that the leadership begin the discussion of revision. The request to write a proposal is September 15, 2010. Below is the timeline for project submission:

NCRA Deadlines (these dates start in the fall, one year prior to the project's expiration date)

a. September 15: Deadline to submit a request to write a proposal in NIMSS and upload the Issues and Justifications section.

i. Each project MUST select an Administrative Advisor prior to submitting a proposal request. Without an AA, the request will not be approved. The NCRA office can no longer assign AAs to projects.

ii. If your project wishes to retain the same number designation, please send a letter of justification to the NCRA at this time as well. Please refer to: http://ncra.wisc.edu/retainnumber.htm

b. October 15: Deadline to upload the Objectives section in NIMSS. Please contact the NCRA office when this is complete and we will send out the national request for participation.

c. November 15: All participants and their AES offices should have submitted completed Appendix E forms into NIMSS.

d. December 1: Completed proposal is due in NIMSS in its entirely. Failure to meet this deadline may result in the project not being reviewed and renewed this round.

e. December 15: AA review forms due in NIMSS.

f. Mid-late December: All proposals are sent to NC regional review committees (NCACs) and multistate research committee (MRC)

g. Late March/Early April: Final project reviews and decisions made at the NCRA Spring meeting. The NCRA office will notify project AAs of results and send any requested revisions to project AAs by mid-April.

h. June 1: All proposal revisions must be completed in NIMSS.

i. Mid-July: the NCRA reviews all revisions and makes any remaining project decisions. When your project is approved, it will be assigned a new NC number unless a request to retain the old designation was submitted with the proposal.

j. September 30: Old projects expire.

k. October 1: New projects begin.

Please do not hesitate to contact my office (L. Radke@ndsu.edu) for help in getting started.

Thanks for your involvement in this very productive committee.

Ohio will be next in line for secretary. Brad and the executive committee need to complete the renewal. Brad will be done with the project write-up by May. John Peters will head the education committee.

Standing committees

- Education – workshop and educational materials 221 publication and other papers
- Buffer pH committee
- K testing committee
- Website committee – Manjula and Sylvie (now Brad?)
- Manure committee – on standby
- Extraction committee
- Executive committee –

- It was noted that we should start planning the next workshop six months ahead. It was noted that Daryl started within that time from for planning the previous workshop. Do we need individuals from private labs to help in the planning process for the committee? They have been used informally for topics for the workshop. Brad noted that the private labs do a lot of the sample analysis but are not represented on the committee. Brad suggested the labs appoint 2 people, Antonio says this will change things radically and we should not do it before our new proposal for renewal. The committee previously discussed about 2 or 3 individuals to represent private labs on the committee. The committee's main focus has been on NC extension and research personnel. Carrie suggested that some labs may be a good fit but some may cause more problems in the committee meetings. However, it was noted that it would be nice to have a voice on what the labs are seeing and what is going on in the business side of private labs. Maybe have them come in for part of the meeting maybe for the last part of the business meeting. Brad asked if he needs to talk to Randall Warden about the possibility of getting representation. Carrie asked if it would be helpful to meet with the soil test labs in the year without the workshop to get an idea for topics for the workshop. Darryl says responses have been limited in the past for soil test labs on workshop topics. That group may be interested more in the technical aspect. Industry partnership has worked well for the precision ag committee.

- Brad feels we should focus on the renewal, website, and education committees. Antonio thinks we need summaries of what committees are or have been doing for the renewal. There has been a lot of work done in the K committee, but little has been put together formally. Antonio thinks there needs to be a sulfur subcommittee. Dave will lead the sulfur effort and whoever wants to be involved.

Brad needs information on committee accomplishments for the renewal. We should have a direction on committees for the renewal to state what we are doing and where we are going.

- Work that has been done on the soil testing publication was discussed by committee members

Mehlich3- ICP
Organic matter
Buffer pH

Most changes/modifications have been presented at the workshop, but questions arose about what should be included on the website. It was noted that we should make sure to include everything that has been done since the last renewal.

When is the next meeting? The next workshop will be in 2011. We need to meet next fall before the workshop. We can't have 2 meetings during the fiscal year. We will likely have to meet in conjunction with the workshop. However the renewal needs to be done prior to the December 15 deadline. Advantages for the fall meeting are being able to plan for the workshop. Where will the official meeting be, at the extension industry meeting or at the workshop? An official meeting at the extension industry conference would be beneficial. We also need to find out if private lab reps would like to come to the fall meeting or line something up at the workshop.

It was questioned whether we should we move to a unified soil test manual that summarizes all of the regional soil test committees. Keith, a unified manual explaining regional differences in selected tests may be beneficial for labs to know why things are used in some areas. We should focus on the methods specifically and why they are used in some areas and not others. A more detail-oriented description of each method may be needed. Antonio felt we should focus on our publication first since we have not fully updated it yet. Keith stated that this issue comes up frequently, but assumed that none of the committees will go for it. Brian Hopkins was working on AOAC guidelines, but it has stalled due to time and Money. Regional differences in tests do exist, but do we need to explain why these differences exist and how these differences impact results?

A follow up discussion was brought up about micronutrients. Questions were raised on what labs are using for micronutrient analysis. The Mehlich-3 procedure is in the 221 for P and cations, but not for micros. There is an NAPT database on the lab methods used and the variability in samples for micronutrients. Micronutrients are getting more important since more of us are getting questions on the subject. It may be a good step to look at variability or consistency of procedures.

Impacts on soil K was tabled until next meeting.

Meeting was concluded at 11 am.