

## SERA39 Public Policy Issues Education – Annual Meeting Minutes

February 7, 2010

Marathon Room

Wyndham Orlando Resort Hotel

Participation via Adobe Connect on the web at: [breeze.unl.edu/sera39](http://breeze.unl.edu/sera39)

Amanda Smith, Larry Sanders, Tony Windham, Mark Edelman, Lisa Collins, Steve Smutko

Participation on site: Bradley Lubben, James Novak, Steven Klose, Judy Campiche, Vivian Carro, Mike Dicks, Carl Zulauf, Nathan Smith

Meeting called to order at 2:02 pm

### 1. Review of Agenda and Minutes of January 11 Teleconference

Amanda asked for a motion to approve the minutes as read. Vivian motioned to approve. James seconded. Motion passed with unanimous consent. Minutes approved as written.

### 2. Reports from Leadership and Advisors

Brad Lubben – Chair – Appreciated opportunity to lead the group during the first year of SERA39. Feels we're still in "takeoff" mode, but are in the process of achieving our goals.

Steven Klose - Chair-Elect – No Report

Lisa Collins - Advisor, Research Directors – Plans to assess participation of experiment stations very soon.

Tony Windham - Advisor, Extension Directors – Technical difficulties - will send via e-mail: *Still interested in increasing participation of SERA39 group by discussing the committee efforts at the National and Southern Region Extension Directors meeting. ASRED is currently working on a campaign to increase Smith-Lever funding and we have also discussed the new federal reporting and plan of work requests from Director Beachy.*

Maurice Dorsey - Advisor, USDA-CSREES – Traveling today, unable to participate.

### 3. Committee Structure

Membership and Request for Representation – Number of active participants is low.

Larry Sanders – suggests one way to make the committee function is that if there are one or more people on the committee that have an interest in moving forward and developing a program related to PPIE, that they do so. They should have a way to move forward on a topic with issues and objectives; they would provide updates and an impact statement on an annual basis. This way they can move forward with their program and keep the committee posted. This way others around the country may get attracted to the program as it proceeds.

Furthermore, those who moved forward on a topic would not have to worry about the group leadership trying to generate others to help them out.

- Novak said this is what the Southern Extension Committees have done in the past.
- Mark asked how we would be able to inform others about proposed projects and how would others indicate interest. Can this be done by means of a listserv?
- Brad said there is a SERA39 website on the NIMMS database, but it is not user-friendly.
- Novak favors using the SEPAC (Southern Extension Policy Analysis Committee) Listserv.
- Steven Klose said it may be a challenge to use SEPAC because not everyone on SEPAC participates in SERA39.
- Mark Edelman said the survey that we are going to implement should identify some folks by interest and provide potential expansion by topics. Maybe Sanders suggestions could be integrated into the process. We may have some cheap communication tools available, but more importantly, we need to train ourselves to look for collaborators across states.
- Carl asked about participation with AAEA. Brad said that we have discussed this via Choices Magazine, CFARE and eXtension. Steven said there was some reluctance to AAEA association because some members of SERA39 are not members of AAEA. Carl said that AAEA websites have good communication tools available and the ability to post

information. Novak asked if they charge for these tools, but Carl is under the impression that they do not. Carl said it could be possible that his group may be grandfathered in.

- Brad said we definitely need some tools to encourage collaboration, information, and project sharing. This may be a formal way for us to inform everyone on what we're doing as individuals and collaborators. We need to build the infrastructure.
- James Novak said he would be glad to discuss possibilities with AAEA.

#### Committee Leadership - Tenure and Term

Steven Klose moved that the leadership of SERA39 continue another year in their positions. James Novak seconded. Motion passed.

- Chair – Brad Lubben
- Chair-elect – Steven Klose
- Secretary – Amanda Smith

#### 4. Old Business

##### Public Policy Issues Survey –

- Intended to go out as a survey of several disciplines to get a sense of policy issues and be used as a needs assessment survey.
- Brad sent out a practice version via SurveyMonkey.com and passed out a paper version of the full draft of the survey.
- The question is who are we going to send this out to? Should this go to social and physical scientists? Answer: Yes, it would be nice to have that connection at some point.
- Mark Edelman said one approach to deliver the surveys would be to ask all Extension Directors and Experiment Station Directors to distribute to all staff to see what comes back. It may capture their interest in what we do from then forward.
- Steven suggested that there are groups that exist beyond the Land Grants.
- Lisa said she was not sure about the best way to distribute the survey, but she sees it of interest to a lot of disciplines, like forestry, plant and soil sciences and biosystems research, for example. Trying to reach a broader audience would generate some interesting information. She said she would be glad to ask Eric Young about his thoughts on distribution of the survey.
- Carl mentioned that the Farm Foundation has small grants available twice a year. To obtain grant funding, we need to have objectives that fall in line with their goals.
- Vivian asked how much this would cost. Brad said it is very inexpensive through SurveyMonkey.com.
- Larry Sanders said we should move the survey forward, but had some minor concerns about the interpretation of the first two categories, how useful responses would be to the one- five- or twenty-five-year questions, and how to be usefully specific on the question regarding primary research/education needs in the \_\_\_\_\_ policy area.
- Steve Smutko had similar comments to Larry's: the response categories for the first two questions per policy topic area are somewhat difficult to understand and interpret.
- Carl asked what the committee wants the three action outcomes of the survey to be. The group responded: What do people think? Who thinks it? And what do they want to work on?
- Mike Dicks said there are so many issues out there now; we need to find out what the hot issues are. Larry Sanders agreed.
- Carl also pointed out that people define things differently: i.e. Food Safety vs Food Security, Animal Welfare vs Animal Rights

Brad stated that we now have TWO TASKS with the survey:

- 1) Revise survey and make sure that it is a feasible and worthwhile instrument.
- 2) Determine what we want to answer with the survey (action outcomes).

Community Vitality Center Mini Grant – Mark will table his discussion on this mini grant until our next meeting. Brad briefly described the grant to the group. We have received about \$5,000 to work on rural policy issues.

eXtension Community of Practice – Vivian mentioned that there will soon be an eXtension CoP on Publications.

## 5. New Business

Farm Bill Education – We need to think about FB 2012 (or more realistically, FB 2013).

- Chairman Peterson wants to start discussions on Farm Bill this spring.
- Historically there has been a national survey of producers
- Historically we have produced Farm Bill Education Papers: Brief reports on Issues, Options and Consequences
- Both efforts were previously supported by Farm Foundation
- We set a date of November 2010 to March 2011 to conduct the survey with results by August 2011.
- Novak said we need to make sure to generate leadership in each state to carry the survey forward.
- Carl suggested we survey commodity group leadership in the states on the web in addition to the farmer survey. Brad asked if we can survey farmers online?
- Larry said that because we normally do a "farm bill" survey that targets producers, it is easy for the general public and other interest groups to see us as a spokesman for the ag industry. We have time to begin to consider a companion study of the general public that may be refocused as a "food policy" survey. He suspects that will frustrate some of our traditional target groups. He also suspects that this would be an opportunity to broaden the base of our membership by doing more than a farm bill survey.
- Our first step is that we should talk to Farm Foundation.
- Carl has heard that NASS is less interested in surveys because of survey overload.
- Mark Edelman said Gallup used to be able to do a national phone sample for about 30-40k a decade ago.
- A question was posed on who would lead the taskforce on the survey. James Novak moved to keep same leadership as last time. Steven told the group that Joe Outlaw will not be able to be a chair, but Steven Klose will still be co-chair. Novak will also still be a chair.
- Novak asked if we should consider putting the survey in Spanish? Vivian said she was not sure. We would need to discuss this in more detail at a later date.

Brad stated that we now have THREE TASKS:

- 1) Approach Farm Foundation
- 2) Define Scope of What We're Interested in
- 3) Determine Funding and Support

Other:

We talked about having state reports or individual reports of our contributions to PPIE and SERA39 at future meetings.

Next meeting: April 5, 2010 via teleconference with details on time to follow.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:02 pm

Respectfully submitted by Amanda R Smith, Secretary SERA39