

2013 SERA-15 Planning Committee Annual Meeting Minutes

January 21, 2013

The 2013 SERA015 Annual Planning Meeting was held at the Embassy Suites Airport Hotel in Atlanta, GA on Monday, January 21, 2013. Secretary Michael Roberts called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm in the absence of Chair Mary Sowerby. Wayne M. Gauthier served as note-taker and produced the minutes. Dr. Sowerby arrived later and assumed coordination and conduction of the meeting.

Members Present:

David Anderson	Texas A&M	
Wayne M. Gauthier	Department of Ag. Econ. & Agribusiness	LSU Agricultural Center
Joe Horner	Dept of Agricultural Economics	University of Missouri
Bruce Jenny	School of Animal, Dairy and Poultry	LSU Agricultural Center
Peter Krawczel	Department of Dairy Science	University of Tennessee
Mike Roberts (Sec.)	Department of Agricultural Economics	North Carolina State University
Mary Sowerby (Chair)	Department of Dairy Science	University of Florida
Stephanie Hill Ward	Department of Dairy Science	Mississippi State University
Joe West	Administrative Adviser	University of Georgia

Members Absent:

Jeffrey Bewley	Department of Dairy Science	University of Kentucky
Steve Nickerson	Department of Dairy Science	University of Georgia
Stephen Washburn	Department of Dairy Science	North Carolina State University

1. Upon arrival, Mike Roberts introduced himself and explained that he had been in contact with Mary Sowerby who was arriving late because of traffic. Mike was new to the Information Exchange Group (ING-15), but was a retired North Carolina extension economist now working for Virginia Tech. At last year's meeting, he had been elected to the Secretary position in absentia. A motion by Gauthier that Mike Roberts preside in the absence of Mary Sowerby was seconded by Anderson and approved on a voice vote.
2. Roberts provided a financial statement documenting the expected costs associated with the 2013 Southern Dairy Conference (SDC). He observed that Mary Sowerby was to be commended for reducing conference expenses by \$2,000. Note was taken of the relatively high percentage of the registration fee that was going to the University of Georgia's conference center. Roberts indicated that he would be providing financial statements to all members of the planning committee.
3. The issue of seeking sponsorships to offset costs associated with hosting the SDC was discussed. Gauthier recalled that, at an earlier time, a former member of the SDC committee observed that sponsors were part of the reason some dairy conferences no longer existed. Sponsorships tend to erode the objectivity that should dominate university research. It was observed that today's audiences are used to sponsorships and that a sponsor could be given only a name. Jenny moved that sponsor be pursued so as to generate monies to offset the cost of conferences. It was seconded and passed on voice vote.

4. Following Sowerby arrival, she assumed the chair position and invited a report from the research adviser, Dr. Joe West, Assistant Dean from the University of Georgia at Tipton, GA. He indicated that he was assuming the responsibilities of Wayne Green, also a member of SERA-IEG-15, who has retired. He identified the absent Dr. Jerry Jackson from Mississippi State as the extension adviser who is assuming the responsibilities of Dr. Terry Kiser who has also retired. Dr. West identified Dr. Adell _____ as the NIFDA adviser. He then identified the objectives of the Southern Dairy Conference and of the SERA-IEG-15 which are separate entities.
5. Gauthier observed that the first 20 Southern Dairy Conferences were hosted by members of a Southern Dairy Economic Technical Committee (SDETC). The members of the SDETC who probably initiated the first SDC included Dr. William H. Alexander from LSU, Dr. Cal Berry from Arkansas, Dr. Dale Carley from Georgia, Dr. Hugh Cook from Minnesota (?); Dr. Bob Strange (?) from Florida and Dr. Lowell Wilson from Alabama. Over time, other members of SDETC included Dr. Emerson Babb from Indiana; Dr. Richard King from North Carolina; Dr. Bob Beck from Kentucky; and Dr. Hal Harris from South Carolina. Geoff Benson from North Carolina, Richard Kilmer from Florida, Bill Thomas from Georgia, Charles Powe and Bill Herndon from Mississippi and himself from Louisiana. The SDETC ceased to exist. It was then that the members of a dairy SERA-IEG began to be responsible for hosting the SDC. The last nineteen (19) Southern Dairy Conferences have been hosted by members of the SERA-IEG-15. In recent times, their most visible product has been the hosting of the SDC.
6. Dr. West indicated that the annual state reports were due 60 days following the meeting of the SERA-IEG-15 committee. He also indicated that the 2011 state reports needed to be submitted as well. In addition, there is a need to submit a proposal for continuation of the SERA-IEG beyond 2014 when SERA-IEG-15 expires. Mike Roberts, as the incoming chair of SERA-IEG-15, acknowledged that he has the responsibility to assemble the state reports from their university representative to the SERA-IEG-15 and forward them to the advisers. He also acknowledged his responsibility to draft the proposal for a replacement SERA-IEG as the SERA-IEG-15 will expire at the conclusion of the SDC in January 2014.
7. Horner raised a question regarding the identification of institutions where there might be effective “models” for conducting collaborative research work. It was noted that Georgia was engaged in such work on peanuts and that Georgia and Alabama were jointly contributing to the support of an irrigation specialist. Ward observed the need for creating a southeast consortium for the purposes of sharing resources in conducting teaching, research and extension programs. The universal problem revolves around the question on “where is the money coming from?”. She requested and received the names of people interested in pursuing a higher education grant for the purpose of developing a graduate program. Names provided to her included Bruce Jenny and Cathy Williams from the LSU Agricultural Center and Steve Nickerson from the University of Georgia. Sowerby indicated that she would be forwarding a list of people teaching dairy related courses.
8. State reports were given by the members in attendance. Common to all reports were number of cows, number of dairies and production per cow. Unique items reported included:
 - a. North Carolina’s profit team and its 20/40 program. The 20/40 program is designed for farmers between the ages of 20 and 40 to become acquainted with AgPlan, a financial management tool developed at the University of Minnesota.

- b. Florida indicated that the dairy cooperative headquartered in its state was experiencing some upset and that its legislature was seeking to increase faculty numbers.
 - c. Tennessee reported that it was a milk deficit state and that its newest dairy facility was only one year old. Officials at Tennessee are in the process of deciding what to do with their Lewisburg herd. Their undergraduate program is growing.
 - d. Mississippi reported that its new department head was previously with the Noble Foundation and that the majority of its farms are Grade B dairies. Research is focusing on melatonin and its use in supplementation of the diet and quantifying the effects of stress on dairy calves.
 - e. It was observed that the cooperative arrangement between Mississippi and Louisiana in which Mississippi would conduct research on beef cattle and Louisiana would conduct research on dairy cattle would be compromised if the Southeast Research Station at Franklinton were be closed as a consequence of economic conditions in the state. The Louisiana Dairy Refundable Tax Credit Program awarded \$1.72 million to 143 dairy farmers in 2011.
9. A motion was made, seconded and passed to let Mike Roberts, as the incoming chairman of SERA-IEG-15, conduct a poll of the members for purposes of identifying a suitable person for assuming the duties of Secretary.