

AoTM meeting minutes

October 11-12, 2011 St. Paul, Minnesota

In Attendance:

Joe Colletti (Iowa State), Administrative link
Larry Lev (Oregon State)
Lauren Gwin (Oregon State)
Christy Anderson Brekken (Oregon State)
Rob King (Minnesota)
Jan Joannides (Minnesota)
Kate Clancy (Minnesota)
Hikaru Peterson (Kansas State)
Keiko Tanaka (Kentucky)
Larry Burmeister (Ohio U.)
Clare Hinrichs (Penn State)
Bill Lacy (UC Davis)
Steve Stevenson (Wisconsin)
Marcy Ostrom (Washington State)
Michelle Worosz (Auburn)

Introductions/discussion of relevant projects/grants – brief presentation by each person.

Kate Clancy & Steve Stevenson – defining key aspects of AOTM and deciding upon the best terminology

This document was written because we and others (USDA, etc.) weren't consistent in our word use talking about AoTM. Conclusion is the "values-based supply chains" works best.

Project Title and Objectives:

Renewing an Agriculture of the Middle: Economic, Social, Environmental, and Policy Dimensions of Values-Based Supply Chains

Organization/Ownership Objective

Determine key factors that influence patterns of ownership, control, and business relationships within values-based supply chains and investigate how all three influence economic performance and viability of participating farms and ranches and other chain partners.

Social Objective

Identify the community-related goals and needs of values-based supply chains and assess the impact these chains have on the communities in which they operate. Examine labor arrangements throughout these chains.

Landscape/Environmental Objective

Identify the environmental goals of values-based supply chains and assess the impact these chains have on the landscapes in which they operate.

Policy Objective

Determine how existing policies influence the performance of values-based supply chains and how policies could be redesigned to change the future performance of these chains.

Nick Jordan's presentation on linkages with agroecology, especially the Green Lands Blue Waters project.

Have had AoTM on radar for years. , will formally sign on if there will be a landscape objective. Key question for us relates to "economies of scope". In ag design, capitalize on multi-functionality, marketable services.

Nick: we are particularly interested in place-based innovation processes. Rural innovation. Your idea of IDing environmental goals – we could operationalize this by, e.g. we're interested in potential of rotational grazing systems in driftless area in western WI & adjoining states. Why has rotational grazing plateaued? What environmental goals could be the basis of a multi-sector coalition. Environmental groups seem to appreciate rotational grazing but aren't doing anything to support it. We would advocate combining participatory environmental planning with spatial decision support (Steve Pulaski notion of where do you put stuff). How do you capitalize on multi-functional productivity of rotational grazing?

End of day.

Wednesday

Joe Colletti on the process

By Nov. 15, Chris Hamilton at UWI-Madison will put note out to land grants and non-land grants to some extent. You have to physically go in and enter your connection with the project with NCTemp1198, Appendix E. Once notification comes out, Larry L. will forward it to everyone in this group.

After Nov. 15, all the other sections of the proposal are due by Dec. 1.

Then Joe has to make sure the form is complete & put supporting comments in.

In late December, goes to national review. Don't be surprised if committee asks you to tighten or clarify some sections. The more it can read as a structured proposal, the better. At most recent experiment section meeting, our region voted to shorten # of words allowed in the sections.

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Assuming all is approved, June/July everything must be completed, and new project starts Oct. 1, 2012.

B/c we're a renewed project – though technically new and quite different objectives – committee will want to know progress of objectives from first 5 years.

Larry will be responsible for entering the proposal in NIMS. He wants volunteers to help. What we need:

- Title – done
- Statement of Issues & Justification – 4000 characters – done
- Related, current, previous work – 20,000 char, it's a review
- Methods – 16K char – let's go back & mine the previous section, but needs to be broad. And with the environmental one, will be different. Need stuff from Nick.
- Measurement of progress & results – 3 sections:
 - Outputs – 4K char – 3 to 5 clear, concise outputs – e.g. a workshop, analyzed survey results, a book. This is for entire group, not per individual – all can be funded projects we know we'll do – start with David Conner's wrap of the last project
 - Outcomes or projected impacts – what this does for research community, practitioner community, etc. Environmental benefits derived, etc. Change in basic knowledge.
 - Milestones – separate timeline for each objective, common for most grants. No one will hold feet to fire – if you go for biocomplexity grant, and you don't get it, that's OK. It's the applying that's the output.
- Outreach plan – 2K char – connecting w/other colleagues at scientific meetings, w/farmers & business entities, expanding case studies. Planning to make a presentation at your state sustainable ag association about some aspect of this project, e.g. Clare's value-added talk. Lauren's webinars from ERS project, etc.
- Organization & governance – how the new committee would work. Joe's thought: if there are subgroups, even informally, taking primary responsibility on different objectives, explain how those subgroups work in relation with the team.

You have to ID the amount of FTE committed to the project. THEN you get into the objectives. But if you commit some % of FTE, you can't use that as a match on a cost-share for a federal grant. Some disagreement on this, given Hatch funding. People typically have salary from Hatch or the state. Those are grants coming to the institutions. We have to account for all the people coming from those grants.

You give a % time that you're allocating to this NC project across all objectives. Then you select the different objectives and don't allocate your time to them. But be careful how you select your objectives. When you write your annual report, you have to write about each objective you signed up for. You may end up writing about objectives that you didn't sign up for, and that's ok. And if you sign up for 4 for the 5 years and in the first year you only work on 2, that's ok. You just have to make progress on those 4 at some point over the 5 years.

Discussion of relationship of multi-state projects and funded projects

Tentative signup by objective:

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- ECON (10): RK, GF, SS, MW, LL, MO, KT, KC, HP, LG
- SOC (9): CH, LB, GF, HP, MW, RK, KT, KC, MO
- ENV (3): CH, LG, MO
- POL (6): KC, KT, HP, MO, MW, LG

Kate – report on Farm Bill

Place & date for next year's meeting, assuming authorization

Aim for Oct. 9-10. Check with Chuck Francis, David Conner, Gail, Shermain, Mike Duffy, Jay Arbuckle, Dawn Thilmany.

Twin Cities again next year. Tues/Weds again. 1.5 days, campus club.

We have enough people, but would like to add new good folks.

Possible recruits: Rich Pirog, Phil Howard, Miguel Gomez (after tenure), Zo-shen(?), Theresa Selfa, Adam Diamond (if travel allowed), Wu Zhaohui, Neva Hassenein, Montana State people in sustainable food systems.

Clare: having geographic diversity helps. Very instructive to see how these phenomena play out in different regions.

And we can do more reporting about what we're doing in the future; this time was so focused on proposal writing. We can use Gail's report as a template.

Committee leadership

Leader interacts with Chris Hamilton, works with local organizer, writes annual report but those are mostly the minutes. Sometimes there are half-term reports which are a real pain to write, says Clare. And then the final report. Temp project doesn't have one.

Larry is leader of temporary project. He will remain chair this coming year.

We'll rotate leadership, to spread the work. Need chair & chair-elect.

Larry is the chair for the next year. Chair elects: Clare, Hikaru, Marcy. We'll need a 4th.

We need to check with Joe on reporting requirements.

We looked at SBIR database and need to coordinate looking through this to find projects/ideas related to our group. http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/sbir/sbir_abstracts.html