

2017 ANNUAL REPORT

NRSP-001 MRF Impacts Program

Sara Delheimer, Impact Writer
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Self-Assessment Summaries

PROGRAM DIRECTOR

The Program Director for the NRSP-001 Multistate Research Impacts Program provided overall direction and support for the initiative by coordinating with other national communications efforts and serving as a liaison with partners including the NRSP-001 Management Committee, NIFA, kglobal, Cornerstone, the National Impact Database Management Committee, the Communications and Marketing Committee, and ESCOP; supervising the Impact Writer; managing human resources, including hiring the Social Media Specialist; reconciling budgets and expenses; authorizing, approving, and facilitating reimbursement for travel; providing editorial oversight of Impact Statements, social media content, and Impact Writing Workshops as needed; and conducting Impact Writing Workshops.

IMPACT WRITER

Over the course of 2017, the Impact Writer made significant progress on the original objectives outlined in the 2016 annual report as well as the new priorities identified throughout the year. Many changes were made to the Impact Program in 2017 due to the approval of the NRSP-001 2017-2022 proposal (<https://www.nimss.org/projects/18457>) and some of the year was devoted to preparing the program for expansion and improvement in 2018. The Impact Writer played an active role in proposing new initiatives and stepped up to take on new tasks. The Impact Writer maintained a strong relationship with the Program Director; the NRSP-001 Management Committee; the talented researchers and Extension specialists participating in Multistate Research Projects; and colleagues at NIFA, kglobal, and land-grant university communications departments.

Status of 2017 Goals/Objectives

The following table below shows the status of the original objectives proposed in the 2012-2017 NRSP-001 outline and in the Impact Writer's 2016 Annual Report. These activities and accomplishments are elaborated on in the narrative that follows.

| Goal/Objective | Status (as of December 31, 2017) |
|---|--|
| Explore new formats for Impact Statements | Completed; ongoing |
| Develop Impact Statements for 2016-terminating projects | 17 finalized; 2 out for review |
| Develop catalog of completed Impact Statements for 2015-terminating projects | Completed; http://bit.ly/2015-impact-statement-catalog |
| Develop Impact Statements for NRSP | 0 finalized |
| Develop Impact Statements for 2017 award winners | 1 finalized |
| Upload finalized Impact Statements to NIMSS, Land-Grant Impacts Database, and Multistate Research Impacts | Completed |
| Ensure there is one or more tweets about each finalized Impact Statement from @MRFimpacts or @AgisAmerica using #LGUimpacts, #NIFAimpacts, and/or other trending hashtags | 69 tweets |
| Develop and implement new plan for social media | Completed; ongoing |
| Work with kglobal to develop at least 4 press releases for multistate research projects | Not completed* |
| Work with kglobal to develop a press release for the winner of the Excellence in Multistate Research Award | Completed |
| Support kglobal in pitching and publishing of at least one feature story about a multistate research project | Completed |
| Develop plan for offering workshops to multistate research project teams | Completed |
| Co-host two-day Impact Writing Workshop for NIFA | Completed |
| Host at least two additional Impact Writing Workshops | 2 completed |

**Agis America's campaigns and priorities this year were not well aligned with ours. While they continued to feature our content on their platforms, they did not issue press releases about multistate research projects.*

DEVELOPING IMPACT STATEMENTS

The Impact Writer produced almost double the number of Impact Statements in 2017 as in 2016. In 2017, efforts focused on projects that terminated in 2016. In January, the Impact Writer compiled a list of 2016-terminating projects and assessed the quality of annual report material available for each project. The Program Director coordinated with other national land-grant university and agricultural research communications initiatives to provide insight on important, timely topics for Impact Statements. Throughout the year, the Impact Writer gave each Impact Statement a unique, engaging look suited to its content and explored new formats, such as topical Impact Statements, which feature the impacts of multiple projects working on the same issue or topic. In response to comments received during the NRSP-001 2017-2022 proposal review, the Impact Writer found creative ways to boost production. To facilitate faster Impact Statement drafting, the Impact Writer created a quick outline of each project while reading through reports and placing projects in the queue. To expedite the review process, the Impact Writer sent project participants a fully laid out Impact Statement draft instead of an initial text-only draft. This eliminated a step and helped reviewers give more useful feedback. Over the course of 2017, the Impact Writer worked on 23 Impact Statements, 21 for individual multistate research projects and two topical Impact Statements (see table below).

| Impact Statement Title & Project Number | Link to Impact Statement |
|--|---|
| NC1030 | http://bit.ly/helping-family-businesses |
| NC1173 (re-designed and re-issued on social media for Pollinator Week) | http://bit.ly/bee-health |
| NC1186 (ESS Excellence in Multistate Research Award winner) | http://bit.ly/NC-1186 |
| NC1190 | http://bit.ly/water-mgmt-programs |
| NC1192 | http://bit.ly/cattle-respiratory-diseases |
| NC1193 | http://bit.ly/young-adult-health |
| NC1196 | http://bit.ly/food-systems-human-health |
| NC1197 | http://bit.ly/nematode-mgmt |
| NCCC212 | http://bit.ly/small-fruit-research |
| NCERA101 | http://bit.ly/controlled-enviro-tech |
| NCERA180 | out for review |
| NCERA219 | http://bit.ly/improving-swine-mgmt |
| NCERA222 | http://bit.ly/North-Central-IPM |
| NE1040 | http://bit.ly/managing-plant-parasitic-worms |
| NEERA1003 | http://bit.ly/pasture-mgmt |
| S294 | http://bit.ly/fresh-cut-produce-safety |
| W2112 | http://bit.ly/cattle-sheep-performance |
| W2173 | http://bit.ly/livestock-stress |
| WERA11 | http://bit.ly/turfgrass-research-extension |
| WERA89 | out for review |
| WERA1017 | http://bit.ly/western-IPM |
| Soil Health (topical Impact Statement) | http://bit.ly/soil-research |
| Cover Crops (topical Impact Statement) | http://bit.ly/cover-crops-research |

The Impact Writer sent all Impact Statements finalized during 2017 to project participants and Administrative Advisors, the NRSP-001 Management Committee, Regional AES Associations, NIFA representatives, and kglobal. The Program Director sent all published Impact Statements to the AES and CES directors who had participants on the project. Project participants were advised to share the Impact Statements with partner trade associations, regulatory organizations, University deans and department heads, and other stakeholders as they saw fit and to consider using Impact Statements in interviews, grant applications, newsletters, and meetings with legislators and others (see feedback in Appendix B).

The Impact Writer uploaded each finalized Impact Statement to the NIMSS database (<https://www.nimss.org/>) and the Land Grant Impacts Database (<http://landgrantimpacts.org>). The Impact Writer also featured and archived each Impact Statement on the Multistate Research Impacts website (www.multistateresearchimpacts.org).

ADDITIONAL COMMUNICATIONS EFFORTS

In 2017, AgIsAmerica featured four multistate research projects on their website (see Table 1). AgIsAmerica also featured these projects in social media posts on facebook and Twitter. Ag is America also used social media graphics the Impact Writer developed to tweet about World Water Day on March 22, 2017, and soil health research on May 3, 2017. They also referenced at least one multistate research project in an AgIsAmerica infographic.

USDA-NIFA featured five multistate research projects and the Soil Health Impact Statement featured in the *NIFA Update* and/or *Fresh from the Field* e-newsletters (see Table 2).

The Impact Writer provided materials that assisted with the development of an article about W3128 in *Irrigation Times*, the monthly e-newsletter of the Irrigation Association. W3128 received the Irrigation Association's 2017 National Water & Energy Conservation Award. The Impact Writer also provided materials used to develop the brochure for the APLU awards program and a press release issued by the APLU about the 2017 Experiment Station Section Excellence in Multistate Research Award (<http://www.aplu.org/news-and-media/News/aplu-names-2017-multistate-research-award-winners>).

In 2017, the Impact Writer posted 69 tweets using the @MRFimpacts handle, a significant increase from previous years. Overall, these posts received more engagement than in previous years (see Appendix C for analytics report). In 2017, the Program Director and Impact Writer began planning a revised approach to social media to ensure that multistate research projects are shared on social media in a timely manner and in conjunction with trending news and topics. This new plan was approved and initiated in October 2017. Throughout the rest of 2017, we created a job description and application process, conducted interviews, and worked with Colorado State University Human Resources to hire a student employee to work 10 hours per week as our Social Media Specialist. We hired Ms. Maria Jirele and developed a plan of work that we expect will significantly boost our social media presence and engagement in 2018 and beyond.

Throughout 2017, the Impact Writer maintained and improved the Multistate Research Impacts website, making it simpler to navigate, more attractive and modern, and more consistent with the look of Impact Statements. The website was used regularly in 2017 (see Appendix C for analytics report). Work on the website will continue in 2018 with the help of the Social Media Specialist in conjunction with efforts to improve our online presence.

Table 1. Multistate Research Projects Featured by kglobal/AgisAmerica

| Project Number | Post Date | Social Media? | Blog post? | Link to Blog Post |
|--------------------------|-------------------|---------------|------------|---|
| S294 | December 11, 2017 | Y | Y | http://agisamerica.org/14-land-grant-universities-work-together-to-improve-food-safety-practices-and-quality-control/ |
| NC1190 | November 2, 2017 | Y | Y | http://agisamerica.org/schools-across-the-country-participate-in-project-to-improve-water-quality-nationwide/ |
| NC1030 | July 17, 2017 | Y | Y | http://agisamerica.org/land-grant-universities-team-up-to-help-family-businesses-succeed-despite-crises/ |
| NC1196 | June 23, 2017 | Y | Y | http://agisamerica.org/land-grant-universities-work-together-to-understand/ |
| Soil Health | May 3, 2017 | Y | Y | Link broken |
| W2170 (World Water Day) | March 22, 2017 | Y | N | N/A |
| NE1045 (World Water Day) | March 22, 2017 | Y | N | N/A |

Table 2. Multistate Research Projects Featured by NIFA

| Project Number | Issue Date | Link |
|----------------|--------------------|---|
| NC1173 | June 22, 2017 | http://agisamerica.org/thirteen-land-grant-institutions-advance-fight-against-mycobacterial-diseases/ |
| NE1040 | June 29, 2017 | http://agisamerica.org/improving-equine-farm-sustainability/ |
| NC1030 | July 12, 2017 | http://agisamerica.org/reducing-water-contaminants/ |
| W2173 | November 3, 2017 | https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDANIFA/bulletins/1c1e7c5 |
| NCERA222 | November 15, 2017 | https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDANIFA/bulletins/1c509f1 |
| Soil Health | September 21, 2017 | https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDANIFA/bulletins/1b71164 |

IMPACT WRITING WORKSHOPS

During 2017, the Impact Program continued to deliver the Impact Writing Workshops (see list below). Overall, these workshops received positive feedback (see Appendix B). Throughout the year, we received numerous requests for workshops and the workshop materials. Following the approval of the NRSP-001 proposal for 2017-2022, the Impact Program developed a formal process for selecting and delivering Impact Writing Workshops to multistate research projects during their annual meetings (see Appendix D).

January | Washington, D.C. | Sara Delheimer and Sarah Lupis | three two-hour workshops for NIFA staff *

April | Reno, NV | Sarah Lupis | three two-hour workshops for statewide AES faculty and Extension specialists

April | San Antonio, TX | Sara Delheimer | 30-minute presentation during a NERAOC 2017 session, which also included presentations by Virginia Bueno, Scott Cummings, and LaRachelle Smith

September | Flagstaff, AZ | Sarah Lupis | two two-hour workshops for Southwest Fire Science Consortium at Northern Arizona University and U.S. Forest Service *

October | Nashville, TN | Sara Delheimer | one two-hour workshop for Multistate Research Project S1062

October | Walla Walla, WA, and Moscow, ID | Sarah Lupis | three two-hour workshops for Washington State University and University of Idaho AES faculty and Extension specialists and grad students

November | Logan, UT | Sarah Lupis | three two-hour workshops for Utah State University AES faculty and Extension specialists and grad students

November | Columbus, OH | Sarah Lupis | two two-hour workshops for Ohio State University AES faculty and Extension specialists and grad students *

** These workshops were performed as contract work. The host institution paid speaker fees and travel costs as per the contract. All other workshops provided by Sara Delheimer and Sarah Lupis were provided under Impact Program and/or WAAESD scope of work. All Impact Writing Workshops are listed in this annual report in order to indicate the broad use and value of the workshop and materials originally created by the Impact Program.*

MEETINGS & CONFERENCES

In addition to the specific meetings and conferences listed below, the Program Director and Impact Writer participated in quarterly NRSP-001 Management Committee conference calls. The Program Director also participated in quarterly ECOP & ESCOP Communications and Marketing Committee calls and quarterly National Impact Database calls.

January | Washington, D.C. | Sara Delheimer and Sarah Lupis

- Met with Terri Baumann, Joe Malunda, and Modupeh Jahamaliah to develop a new plan for press releases and social media about multistate research projects
- Discussed desirable formats for Impact Statements and social media that will make them more useful for different platforms and audiences

April | San Antonio, TX | National Extension and Research Administrative Officers' Conference | Sara Delheimer and Sarah Lupis

- Presented Impact Writing Workshop

June | New Orleans, LA | Association for Communication Excellence in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Life and Human Sciences Conference | Sara Delheimer and Sarah Lupis

- Attended peer review/critique session to get feedback on different Impact Statement designs and content
- Learned about new design tools and principles to implement in new Impact Statements
- Networked with representatives of various land-grant institutions about the possibility of delivering workshops at their institutions

October | Nashville, TN | S1062 Annual Meeting | Sara Delheimer

- Presented Impact Writing Workshop

October | San Francisco, CA | World Conference of Science Journalists | Sara Delheimer

- Learned tips and guidelines for effective science communication
- Networked with fellow science writers
- Learned about new tools for data visualization, collaboration, social media, and design

Goals/Objectives for 2018

In 2018, the Multistate Research Fund Impacts Program's Director and Impact Writer will continue to perform all duties outlined in the 2017-2022 scope of work. In addition, we hope to emphasize the following work in 2018:

- Developing more attractive and useful Impact Statement formats
- Increasing the number of Impact Statements developed
- Supervising and assisting the Social Media Specialist with the development and implementation of an improved social media strategy, the success of which will be indicated by positive trends in the number of platforms, posts, followers, and engagement *
- Improving the Multistate Research Impacts website so that it includes more resources and is easier to navigate
- Refining the Multistate Research Fund Impacts Program brand
- Coordinating with NIFA and kglobal to regularly feature multistate research project stories in e-newsletters and on websites and social media
- Updating materials and determining best practices for delivering Impact Writing Workshop to multistate research project groups (see selection guidelines in Appendix D) and others

** For a description of the Social Media Specialist position, see the NRSP-001 2017-2022 project outline here: <https://www.nimss.org/projects/18457>*

This concludes the 2017 Annual Report. Appendices follow.

Appendices

APPENDIX A: 2016 Impact Writing Productivity Assessment

56 projects terminated in 2016.

7 of the 2016-terminating projects were AC, DC, or TEMP projects.

- Impact Statements are not written for these project types.

2 of the 2016-terminating projects had incomplete reports.

- Many others had subpar reports, but NE1046 and S1048 stood out as being nearly impossible to write about given lack of reports. These projects were removed from the writing queue.

47 2016-terminating projects were placed in the Impact Statement writing queue.

28 of the 2016-terminating projects did not receive Impact Statements due to one or more of the following:

- Annual report material was not as strong compared to other projects
- Needed to spread work across regions
- Not deemed a priority topic

19 Impact Statements developed for 2016-terminating projects.

- 17 of these Impact Statements were finalized by December 31, 2017
- 2 of these Impact Statements were not finalized by December 31, 2017, but because the bulk of work occurred during 2017, they are included in 2017 productivity. It is particularly challenging to complete reviews for Impact Statements during November and December due to holidays and project scientists' academic responsibilities.

4 Impact Statements developed for projects that did not terminate in 2016.

- NC-1173 reissue
- NC-1186, winner of the 2017 ESS Excellence in Multistate Research Award
- Soil Health topical Impact Statement featuring impacts of multiple projects
- Cover Crops topical Impact Statement featuring impacts of multiple projects

23 total Impact Statements developed during 2017.

APPENDIX B: IMPACT WRITING WORKSHOP EVALUATIONS

Feedback from the Impact Writing Workshop for NIFA staff:

43% of the total 60 workshop participants submitted an evaluation form.

100% of respondents were either completely or mostly satisfied with the workshop.

- 79% of respondents reported that the workshop increased their knowledge level.
- 88% of respondents were completely satisfied with the presenters' knowledge of the topic. No respondents were dissatisfied with the presenters' knowledge.
- 100% of respondents were either completely or mostly satisfied with the presenters' delivery of the material.
- 71% of respondents reported no vague or confusing material.
- 100% of respondents indicated that presentation visuals and overall appearance were effective and engaging.

Key takeaways from participants' evaluation comments:

- The skills and knowledge that participants gained and the aspects of their work that they will do differently after attending match our intended goals for the workshop.
- Many participants felt that the opening ice breaker exercise was good, but lasted for too long
- Many participants felt more time was needed for the practice exercises.
- Many participants wanted more examples of good impact statements during the presentation and to take away.

Feedback from Impact Writing Workshop at NERAOC 2017:

82% of respondents reported the overall presentation was above average or excellent.

- 88% of respondents reported the presenter was above average or excellent.
- 100% of respondents reported the presenter's knowledge was above average or excellent.
- 91% of respondents reported the usefulness of the presentation was above average or excellent.

Rachel Unger, NERAOC 2017 Organizer: "Overall the responses of the conference indicated it was one of the best – I attribute that to the outstanding speakers that we had for the sessions."

Stephanie Albaugh, University of Vermont Extension: "I attended your two workshops on communicating impact at NERAOC this year. I should first say THANK YOU! I'm using your Big Impact guide a lot these days...it makes so much sense now. I still have work to do (always more to learn), but am so grateful for the boost you've given me."

Feedback on 2017 Impact Statements:

John Bamberg, USDA-ARS, NRSP-6 Administrative Advisor: "We had a reporter from the local paper here last weekend doing a story on the genebank. Among all the voluminous background materials I gave her to look at, she said your impact sheet was the best!"

Falita Liles, USDA-NIFA Impact Stories: "You never fail to amaze me with your outstanding impact statements. We'll be featuring this impact in the very near future. Thank you again for all that you do."

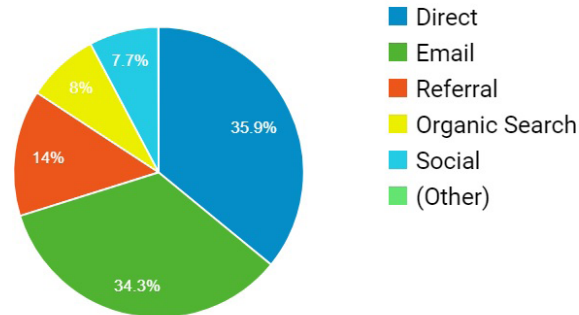
Sonny Ramaswamy, Director of USDA-NIFA: "Colleagues. I appreciate receiving these impact statements. We use the information and often I send them to the Secretary and sometimes even to the WH."

APPENDIX C: Website & Social Media Analytics Summaries

Multistate Research Impacts Website Analytics Summary January 1, 2017 - December 31, 2017:

- 2,286 sessions
- 1,449 unique users
- Session duration over 2 minutes
- 2.26 pages per session
- Traffic spike after sharing an Impact Statement via email or social media
- Most users visited site directly (users type in URL to their web browser) and via emailed links, followed by links to our page on other sites, organic searches, and social media links

Top Channels



Twitter Analytics Summary January 1, 2017 - December 31, 2017:

- 69 tweets by @MRFImpacts
- 28,018 impressions
- 104 likes
- 44 retweets
- 104 link clicks

APPENDIX D: Selection Process & Guidelines for Multistate Research Project Impact Writing Workshops

BIG IMPACT

Why Impactful Reporting Matters and How to do it Better

IMPACT WRITING WORKSHOPS FOR MULTISTATE PROJECTS

To address increasing demand for Impact Writing Workshops, we have adjusted the NRSP-1 Impact Writer travel budget to accommodate more in-person workshops and make them regionally accessible. Available time and funds (\$6,500 each year) will allow us to offer workshops at one multistate group's annual meeting in each region, each year. Any remaining travel funds will be carried over to the following year. Workshop participants will complete evaluations so that we can gather feedback and measure success. The following provides an outline of the process by which multistate research projects will be selected for Impact Writing Workshops.

SELECTION PROCESS & CRITERIA

The Impact Writer will send information about the Impact Writing Workshop to regional AES offices and make it available on www.multistateresearchimpacts.org. Regional AES offices may develop their own procedures for sharing this information with multistate groups in their regions and selecting groups that will receive workshops during their annual meetings; however we also offer the following recommendations/guidelines to Regions:

We recommend that Regions:

- Work with project AAs and current Chairs to ascertain if a two-hour Impact Writing Workshop is feasible during their upcoming annual meeting;
- Nominate two projects: a top nominee and a "back up" nominee. If the top nominee from a region is unable to accommodate the Impact Writing Workshop in their annual meeting agenda or is meeting in a location that would incur exceedingly high travel costs or if the Impact Writer is unable (e.g., due to scheduling conflicts, planned leave, or insufficient travel funds) to offer a workshop at the time and place of the top nominee's annual meeting, we will move forward with an Impact Writing Workshop for the back-up nominee.
- Give priority to projects that have had successful midterm reviews and/or that have completed annual reports for all years to date;
- Consider nominating multiple projects that are meeting in the same location at the same time, so that travel funds may be used to provide workshops to as many groups as possible, and;
- Keep in mind that if a Region nominates a project meeting in Denver, CO, or Nashville, TN, where the workshop instructors are based, there are no travel costs, and unused travel funds may then be available for workshops for other projects in the region.

Final project selections should be communicated to Sarah Lupis and Sara Delheimer (via email to sarah.lupis@colostate.edu and sara.delheimer@colostate.edu) no later than July 1st for an annual meeting to take place in the following project year (i.e., October 1 - September 31).

For this first year only (FY18) we ask that Regions communicate selected projects (with annual meetings happening prior to September 31, 2018) to the Impact Communications Team no later than January 15, 2018. Please note that while the Impact Writing Workshop is designed to help projects submit better reports, and better reports help the Impact Writer develop Impact Statements, simply participating in an Impact Writing Workshop does not result in that project receiving an Impact Statement. The Impact Writer will continue to select projects to receive Impact Statements upon termination based on sufficiency of annual report material as well as other criteria.