

## MRF IMPACTS PROGRAM 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

### 2020 ACTIVITIES & IMPACTS

- Faith Peppers began serving as the MRF Impacts Program's NIFA Liaison in June 2020. Integration with NIFA has helped us tackle important topics with wider reach.
  - We have seen more reach and engagement on social media this year as Faith and NIFA retweeted our content (see Twitter link clicks and retweets in table below).
  - We took advantage of opportunities to feature multistate projects on the NIFA blog, in talking points, etc. Projects featured in 2020 (that we tracked) included:
    - W2009 on [NIFA blog](#)
    - W3147 in *NIFA Update* newsletter
    - W3004 shared in talking points for Secretary and UnderSecretary
    - NOTE: *Western Region projects were not shown particular preference; these projects were selected based on topic and impacts. That said, we will make an effort to ensure other regions are featured throughout 2021.*
- Sara delivered all required Impact Writing Workshops.
  - Two workshops were conducted in person in early 2020 before travel restrictions; three workshops were delivered via Zoom (see table below for details).
  - All feedback received through post-workshop surveys and follow-up emails was positive. A majority of respondents increased their knowledge of impact statements and how to write and use them; all respondents indicated plans to change their behavior or take a new action that will improve their impact statements/impact reporting. All respondents were confident in the presenter's (Sara's) knowledge and delivery of the material.
  - We gained some insights about doing virtual workshops and plan to expand on this in 2021 to provide more workshops to more multistate groups.
- We launched Researcher Spotlights to provide a closer, more personal look at multistate research projects.
  - Scientists who participated were excited and appreciative.
  - Our team enjoyed doing the interviews.
  - Researcher Spotlight videos and associated content did well on social media
    - For example:
      - We gained new followers with each release.
      - Our Researcher Spotlight with Lori Yancura (University of Hawaii, NC1171) had 47 views on YouTube. Q&A clips from the interview had 76 views on Instagram and 39 likes/shares on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. (*As of the time of this report*).
      - Our spotlight with Dina Fonseca (Rutgers University, NE1443) had 24 views on YouTube. Q&A video clips had 110 views on Instagram and Facebook. Spotlight content was retweeted 15 times. (*As of the time of this report*).
      - Our Researcher Spotlight with Daniel Leskovar (Texas A&M, W3168) were featured in *AgriLife Today* and *The Eagle* (Texas A&M publications)
  - These videos helped establish our YouTube channel.
- Sara launched our MRF newsletter as a new way to distribute Impact Statements, Researcher Spotlights, and other content.
  - The newsletter performed on average or higher than peers in our "industry" (see details in table).

- We updated our website to provide a clearer overview of the program and make Impact Statements easier to find.
  - Website visits were up this year, with many stemming from social media links, direct email links, and links on NIFA and Regional AES Association webpages.
- We increased our Social Media Specialist's hours to 15 hours per week (up from 10 hours per week) in order to allow more time for planning and engaging with content.
  - Sunday created a Linked In account for MRFimpacts so that users can discover and connect with our team and program description and key resources.
  - Sunday brainstormed and scheduled weekly content for @MRFimpacts on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Linked In; collected quarterly insights on social media performance; and engaged with our followers.
  - Sara created numerous series of graphics to feature multistate projects on social media in conjunction with specific themes, holidays, or trending topics.
- Sara and Faith participated in numerous meetings with opportunities to introduce MRF Impacts and share our resources.
  - In January, Faith and Sara participated in the National Impact Database writing team meeting.
    - Many multistate projects were featured in the impact stories and summaries that were written and shared on the website.
  - Faith attended the National Agricultural Communicators Symposium and promoted MRFimpacts to research and academic faculty.
    - Faith led a focus group conversation on how to improve communications and marketing across the system and was able to highlight MRFimpacts and encourage engagement with our content, particularly social media.
  - In March, Faith attended the AHS/CARET meeting and distributed MRFimpacts postcards for all delegates to include in their packages for Congressional visits.
  - In May, we put out a request for contact info for ag research communicators at LGUs. We received contact info from 22 LGU ag research communicators
    - This list enables us to increase the reach of our social media and Researcher Spotlights through direct contact. Many also signed up for our newsletter
  - During one-on-one meetings with communications directors and Congressional relations directors at land-grant universities, Faith directed them to MRFimpacts materials and resources.
  - Faith encouraged AFRI and SoAR partners to follow us on social media and sign up for our newsletter.
  - In December, Faith and Sara highlighted the MRF Impacts program and resources during two impact writing trainings for the University of Arkansas and Virginia Tech University.

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**TABLE 1. MRF IMPACTS ANNUAL PROGRESS TRACKER**

		<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>
<b>Impact Statements</b>	<b>number</b>	11 (including 2 rolled over into 2020)	9 (including 2 rolled over from 2019 and 1 rolled over into 2021)
	<b>projects</b>	NC1200, NE1336, S1054, W2009, NC2169, S1032, NCERA210, NEERA1306, S1056, W3147, NC2040	W3147, NC2040, W3168, NC1171, NE1443, W3004, W4001, NCERA137, W3190
<b>Twitter</b>	<b>impressions</b>	125900	125848
	<b>likes</b>	404	419
	<b>retweets</b>	91	247
	<b>link clicks</b>	128	224
<b>Facebook</b>	<b>reach</b>	4614*	4618
	<b>engagements</b>	840*	476
<b>Instagram</b>	<b>weekly reach</b>	~240**	~300**
<b>Website</b>	<b>users</b>	1729	2763
	<b>time/session</b>	1:49	1:59
<b>Workshops</b>	<b>number</b>	5	5
	<b>projects</b>	W3009, NE1710, S1063, NC2172, W2006***	W3173, NE1731, SER46, NCERA137, NC1193****
<b>Researcher Spotlights</b>	<b>number</b>	N/A	4
	<b>projects</b>	N/A	Ali Missaoui (UGA, NE1710), Lori Yancura (UHawaii, NC1171), Dina Fonseca (Rutgers, NE1443), Daniel Leskovar (TAMU, W3168)
<b>Newsletters</b>	<b>number</b>	N/A	4
	<b>subscribers (at year end)</b>	N/A	70
	<b>open rate (average for year)</b>	N/A	49.40%

\* We ran a few promoted (paid) posts in early 2019 that likely affected these numbers; we did not do any paid promotions in 2020, so it's great to see similar number relying on organic reach

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*\*\*Instagram analytics currently do not let us view specific time ranges, making reporting and comparison difficult (for part of the year, we could only see metrics for the previous one-week period; by the end of 2020 we could see metrics for the previous 30-day period)*

*\*\*\*This workshop was originally planned for 2018, but occurred in 2019 due to scheduling issues*

*\*\*\*\*This workshop was done as a special mini virtual "reminder" workshop (it also helped Sara test our remote workshop setup)*