

NCA4

HORTICULTURAL CROPS

Annual Meeting of the North Central Region Horticulture Department Chairs - 2009

Attendees

- Marvin Pritz – Cornell University (Ithaca)
- Randy Beaudry (Michigan State University)
- Brian Klubeck (Southern Illinois University)
- Gary Lemme (Administrative Advisor)
- Rich Marini (Penn State University)
- Dale Marinak (Oklahoma State University)
- Jeff Iles (Iowa State University)
- Alan Taylor (Cornell University-Geneva)
- David Graper (South Dakota State University)
- Emily Hoover (University of Minnesota)
- Mike Collins (University of Missouri)
- Stewart Warren (Kansas State University)
- Bruce Branham (University of Illinois)
- Mark Lagrimini (University of Nebraska)

Agenda

Monday, May 4th

7:30am - Walking Tour (UNL City Campus)

8:30am - Depart for meetings (Embassy Suites Hotel)

9:00am - Call to order and introductions (Spring Creek Prairie - Audubon Center)

Reports & business

Noon - Working lunch

1:30pm - Depart for tours (Pioneers Park, McPhee Elementary School, Governor's Mansion)

3:30pm - Discussion of issues facing horticulture departments (Great Plains Art Museum - Hewitt Place)

6:00pm - Dinner Reception (Memorial Stadium)

Tuesday, May 5th

7:30am - Depart for Omaha (Embassy Suites Hotel)

9:00am - Tour at ConAgra

11:00am - Lunch at ConAgra

Noon - Vans to airport

Call to Order – Request for discussion topics

Mergers and acquisitions (1)

Credit for patents (3)

Citizenship (2)

Extension Hires and health (1)

Innovative teaching and courses (1)

Enrollment in horticulture programs (1)

Strategies for the future (long-range planning) (2)

Distance education (1)

Funding traditional horticultural research (1)

Evaluating scholarship (3)

Post-tenure review (1)

Teaching traditional hort classes (1)
Development and endowments (1)
University budget models (3)
Faculty governance (2)

Administrative Advisor Report - Gary Lemme

Intent is to share collegiality and strategies.
Membership is open to everyone.
Broader membership is something we should think about and discuss.
Can invite Canadians and Mexicans to join.
We need to take command of our own future.

At Fed level, CSREES will disappear – to become the national institute for agriculture (NIFA), similar to NIH – a national institute. It is hoped a national institute will change its profile – a chief scientist will be its director. There will be more focus on food safety and nutrition. More emphasis on quality of life is anticipated. Much more emphasis on regional collaborations is to be expected. USDA and CSREES will be under the NIFA umbrella. Need is there to support research

An annual report is expected from the NCAC4. Please submit electronically.

Discussion regarding handling multi-state appointments. Challenges are local legislature and stakeholders. Lagrimini - Why no NC regional support? Lemme – It's thought the best fiscal responsibility lies with the states. Marini – Industry-driven initiatives more fertile ground for this. Several examples exist of successful collaborations across-boarders. Mostly for research. Hatch and Smith-Lever require 25% spent on multistate efforts.

MERGERS and ACQUISITIONS discussion. Who senses pressure – maybe only Cornell. Collins – at Missouri, eliminating administrators, but the greater risk is that smaller units get eliminated. The larger group is less vulnerable and is a primary advantage to merger within the larger unit. Marinak – but doesn't it simply hold off the eventual elimination? Collins – Maybe, but if the groups within have a unique identity and skill set, the risk of elimination is reduced. Helps to bring focus on the future – more opportunity, maybe more challenges.

Marinak – Baird may have a good perspective on unique combined administrative alternative structures. Collins – Some issue associated with physical spacing. A big negative is that some faculty focus on the risk side of relationships – look at “how will it affect my group?” as opposed to enhancing the larger institution. Activities become oriented to turf protection – e.g., not losing a position. Also larger faculty numbers prevents needed chair/faculty relationship from developing. Lemme – an additional problem in multi-disciplinary units – chairs or directors cannot appropriately represent the department. Lagrimini – also a problem that the unit has fewer (relatively) members on P&T committees. Collins – some enhancement for research collaboration. Lagrimini – physical barriers are significantly more important. Lemme – collaborations are relationship-based. Pritz - Deans argue too many Dept. chairs. – want fewer. Collins – no apparent difficulty. Collins – need to spend more time with clientele and fundraisers. Six of the group are Dept. chairs. – Taylor – “We just read the script” Pritz and Marini – less power at unit level – all resources at College level. Most chairs noted that faculty positions revert to the college. Some indicated that even staff positions revert to the college. Only tenure decisions and post-tenure reviews return to the departments.

Kevin Poague – Director of Spring Creek Audubon Center operations manager. Provided a history and described setting (600+ acres. Largest virgin tall-grass prairie).

EXTENSION HIRES and HEALTH. Marini – Varies from state to state – commodities in Penn. helpful. Branham – changes now include other sources of information, which compete with Extension for audience and resources. Companies put on meetings in some cases, but not widespread. Marini – Original source of information is from faulty/extension experts. Lagrimini – Often repackaged by corporate interests. Pritz – difficult to justify the ‘expense’, since extension folks do not bring in the \$\$ like research and teaching lines. Mariniak – some consider extension as service. Taylor – extension definition has broadened – more outreach than commodity-related (e.g., mol. Biology, biotech.). Collins – still relatively underappreciated in terms of value; little credit given to the university. Logo required in the appropriate places. Pritz – counties not funded by university and are quite independent. Are we still able to locate/hire faculty with extension expertise/capabilities? Marini – in Fruits and vegetables – more positions than people to fill them recently. Lemme – many senior faculty edging toward retirement. Are we educating faculty to take those positions? Hoover – some. Pritz – concerned that in 10 years, there will not be the available talent and expertise. Marini – no one to take our place. Branham – not really training traditional horticulture anymore. Difficult to see the distinction between Ag colleges and the rest of the universities. Genomics programs now beginning to suffer. Few jobs. Collins – but we are getting them to apply for applied positions. Branham – one of the highest rates of tenure success involve people with tenure appointments. Marini – concurs. Extension people document accomplishments. Sidebar- Iles - do departments reflect the breadth of the discipline? Klubeck – movement away from traditional hort. Pritz – as you shrink it’s harder to cover – so it’s often done via disciplinary focus, which overlaps commodity interests. But still trying to maintain a more or less comprehensive representative. Beaudry - comprehensive depts. primarily in states with healthy/large industries. Hoover – difficult to argue for an extension component – lack of faculty reporting and issue.

Migration of extension outreach toward local food production and networking. Brings nonprofits into the conversation. Very strong effort in Minn. Pritz - Small Farms Program very successful in NY. Generally an interest and investment by local and state extension agencies for local food/community food systems. Hoover – large issue with extension information and intellectual property. Mariniak – same problem of ‘free’ information that is re-packaged. Patent and intellectual property rights discussed. Marketing can make materials more valuable – repackaged. Lagrimini – value of information associated with cost. Hoover – is it legislated that the information is provided for free? Federal funds restriction? Mariniak – prices /costs are continuing to increase and clientele still pay. Pritz – becoming more acceptable to charge appropriately. Very difficult to find things! Extension is still a repository of information. Branham – extension may be better used for those industries or interest groups that can’t access the information easily. Mariniak - Fees for extension visits? We’ve looked at that in case the bottom falls out of support. Iles – done in Iowa. Mariniak – build costs into fee for Master Gardener program – some support still exists for travel. Hoover - Not in Minn. – travel is billed as are gifts - indirects now billed on them by the department! Gifts included and the university now taxes most gifts. Pritz – ‘gift’ can only come to department, not to a faculty member. Discussion of IRS limitations – cannot contain a direct or implied deliverable. Lemme – need to keep faculty engaged in securing funding (gifts) but the \$\$ do have costs – associated with the work they engender. Faculty often underprice their activities. Some costs can’t be cut – e.g., graduate costs – must reflect the costs of the activities. VPs of research look at units as being ‘good investments.’ Hoover – extension directors need to engage in the same model for securing funds. Klubeck – like the college of business - can charge much more.

INNOVATIVE TEACHING AND COURSES. Wines and Vines and Floral Design are successful. Often cannot charge lab fees. Marinak – we stopped teaching ours. Didn't fit in with Dept. priorities. We cut credit hours for the major with focus on subject matter necessary for graduates. Lagrimini – we do them as service courses. Lemme – does tuition return model affect the ability to offer these courses? YES. If \$\$ comes to college or Dept, these courses are much more attractive. Marinak - Horticulture business option – can be a business major or Ag Econ and have Hort major. Personnel management, bidding and estimating and other supplementary courses. This is not common with other departments. Pritz – what are trends for general and specific topic courses? Lagrimini & others – trend is toward every other year for specialized courses. Pritz – so who do you hire and what do they (fundamental folks) teach? Hoover – agricultural biochemistry. Medicinal plants and plant chemistry. Mol genetics?? – what should they teach. Stress physiology? May not be competitive with basic plant biology? Iles – publishing class. Branham – topical interest courses that relate to major. Lagrimini - Biotechnology issues? Hoover - Writing class? Graper – often high preference for hands-on experiences – often the most favored courses. Pritz-“Hands-on Horticulture” – best when a 3- or 4-hour block of time needed; need TAs too.

Other courses/ideas: Hoover - You Tube videos for grafting class. Iles - Spanish horticulture class. Marinak – this course works well. Classes for Freshmen/transfers? Some offer – e.g., orientation course Hoover – learning communities class – learn about how to learn, time management, and hort introduction. Warren – similar class, focus on retrospective – what was learned. Marini – similar program – faculty and admin. participate; relatively successful – first year students only. Students build relationships over time – helps in retention and builds unity. Facebook account for Horticulture Club. Doesn't work so much for faculty in terms of recruitment, but Hort Club website valuable. Have to make sure privacy is maintained. Pritz - Service learning? Hoover - Habitat for Humanities program – Masters level.

Beaudry – Opportunities for joint study abroad programs – joint programs. Mutual interest in several depts..

MEETING with SUSAN FRITZ (UNL Associate Vice-Chancellor)

Greetings – Ag & Nat Res. – 1970s – dev. from College of Ag. Developed the Institute on Ag. & Nat Resources within University – Director is Chancellor VP. State pop 1.3 M. 1/3 pop in Omaha and Lincoln. 22K students, 4K of which are Grad. College percentage increasing at U. Climate and water an area of excellence. 15 academic units in Institute. Shared appointments across campus. About 70% UGs take first position in NE. About 20% get int'l experience. Specialty crop interest 'low' in terms of investment, reflects state ag interest. Increasing interest in specialty crops will be difficult given state's leanings. Have a 2-year Ag. Tech. institution, ~225 students. Some significant competition with other colleges. May be opportunities in retraining. Economy somewhat protected, but will feel the pinch within the next year. About 1/3 from tuition, 23% from State.

STATE REPORTS

(See reports)

Iowa – Deep cuts (>10%). Hard to think long term.

Illinois – Budget unsure, Gov. trial forthcoming., Leut. Gov wants income tax increase, 2.5% rescission. Positions going unfilled - requests No budget, may be late this year. 5&8% reduction plans in place, not sure of plans.

U. of Ill. – One retirement, now 15 faculty. Department now moving to a joint dept with Crop Science from INRES. One or more faculty will stay back in INRES. May lose another faculty following a leave of absence. Did hire ¼ of a genomicist and offer to landscape person. No rescission, but the state is so far in the hole, it may be imposed at end of fiscal year.

Missouri – Budget serious – instructed to plan for 25%. But by keeping tuition level, no cut given. Planned for 5% rescission also – but no call for \$ back. Money lost anyway. One position lost (retirement). Seven vacancies and four frozen at interview process. No go-ahead on these. Staff may be forced to contribute more to retirement, but with no increase, may result in decline in pay for staff.

OK State – two new faculty (one in turf). Allocations dither – all faculty allocations go back to dean. Keep staff \$. Given 50% of budget for next year and MAY receive add'l supplemental funding. No raises. Teaching 10% cut. Instructed to plan for 10 to 15% cut – which will come from staff. Micromanaging travel – Dept. had to approve all travel – following article in paper regarding \$\$ U spent on travel. Used to have \$1500/FTE

Penn St. – 6% rescission – Gov proposed 6% cut for coming year. Tuition will increase 3%. Targeted hires still happening. Lost staff, but may be gone permanently. Hired one instructor.

Michigan St. – Greetings to Ron Perry.

South Dakota – Major cuts with extension - \$200K and \$400K for Exp. St. but now have Grad assistantships. Was A temp. freeze – but now looking to fill one position and may have another opportunity. Student numbers holding in Hort, but lower in Landscape.

Nebraska – Two fac. hires. Two nutritional genomics positions – also focus on international nutritional issues. Trying to hire director for landscape architecture unit. No retirements this past year, one this year and may be one next year. No incentive program. Small surplus in state coffers. May be a small increase in U. budget. Were told to plan for 6% cut this next year and 6% the following year. Animal Science may be hardest hit because of expenses. Some production hort may be cut. Two primary areas – turf and landscape management and horticultural entrepreneurship – focus on business start-up. Success in the entrepreneurship classes and univ. competitions, causing the center for entrepreneurship to ask hort to join. Faculty will have to come up with some of their salaries. No incentives.

Minnesota – Still need a senator. Told to plan on a 5 and 8% cut. Dean knows no \$\$ in units. Accounting and IT folks pulled from depts.. Retirement incentives program – need an dept. administrator – will be filled. Dean has been holding positions – may not lose any funding in Dept. due to dean's fiscal diligence. Open search for arboretum director. Permission to hire enology prof. administrative assistant. Not many PhD enologists around.

Cornell (Geneva) – Off campus – grape station in Fredonia will be redeveloped – some focus on wine in addn to juice. Treefruits genomics person to be hired (Xu, 70/30 R/E). New faculty from Syracuse on woody plants for biofuels/breeding/genetics. Bad news – overextended on new a\projects so existing depts. suffered. About 7% reduction expected. Incentives only for non-faculty. 423 people (staff) at U. to be lost. In addition to cuts, college is reaching into endowments within departments. Trying to be strategic in terms of future investments – attrition not going to happen quick enough.

Cornell (Ithaca) – Cornell sold \$800M in bonds. Vit and enology major going well - \$800K student winery just finished. Root physiologist hired. Weed Sci offer made. May not have new grad students on dept. funds for the next couple years. Have had to cut into principle. Provost and president being transparent in budget discussions. GRAs reduced to 9-month positions. Phasing in full payment of technicians.

Kansas State – Frozen hiring process. Anything open, will be lost as of next fiscal year. But hired nursery extension specialist this past year. Had one retirement. Rescission for 5% and planning for 10% reduction. May be a 5% salary rollback. Still silly season.

Meeting Adjourned