

## NCAC-15 met virtually on 16 February 2022, 3-4:15 pm CST

### In attendance were:

- **Reddy Palli** (Kentucky)
- **Jeffrey Holland** (Purdue, surrogate for interim head Cate Hill)
- **Brian McCornack** (Kansas State)
- **Heike Buecking** (Missouri)
- **John Ruberson** (Nebraska)
- **Jason Harmon** (North Dakota State)
- **Steven Harris** (Iowa State)
- **Russell Groves** (Wisconsin)
- **James Strange** (Ohio State)
- **Sujaya Rao** (Minnesota)
- **Vijay Nandula** (USDA-NIFA)
- **Erica Kistner-Thomas** (USDA-NIFA)
- **Christopher Phillips** (USDA-NIFA)
- **Michelle Samuel-Foo** (USDA-NIFA)
- **Martin Draper** (Administrative Advisor, Kansas State)
- **Christina Hamilton** (NCRA)

The meeting began with a brief welcome by 2022 chair John Ruberson followed by introductions of attendees.

**NIFA National Program Leader Erica Kistner-Thomas** offered important updates on the competitive grant programs anticipated for AFRI in 2022. She updated the group on staffing changes and key personnel for the grants programs. USDA priorities for 2022 will concentrate on: addressing climate change via climate-smart agriculture and forestry; advancing racial justice, equity and opportunity; creating more and better market opportunities; and tackling food and nutrition insecurity. She shared projected plans for several relevant funding opportunities.

**NIFA National Program Leader Vijay Nandula** updated the group on the NIFA Crop Protection and Pest Management (CPPM) program. The program closes on 28 February 2022. He also pointed to the AFRI Foundational Program (<https://nifa.usda.gov/sites/default/files/rfa/FY-2021-2022-AFRI-Foundational-and-Applied-Science-RFA-Final-07172020.pdf>) for relevant opportunities. He further noted the Organic Transitions (deadline 22 March 2022); Methyl Bromide Transitions (deadline 17 March 2022); IR-4; BRAG (deadline passed in February); Agricultural Genome to Phenome Initiative; SARE; Urban, Indoor, and Emerging Agriculture; and Global Change Programs.

**Administrative Advisor Marty Draper** addressed the value and importance of multistate committees, and asked attendees to encourage their faculty to participate in multistate, multi-institution, multidisciplinary efforts through the multistate committees, per the Agricultural

Research Extension and Education Reform Act ([AREERA](#)) passed in 1998. This act required that at least 25% of federal Hatch funds must be allocated to multi-state activities. The Administrative Committees (ACs), such as NCAC-15, have a special responsibility to ensure that reviews of committee proposals for respective regions are conducted properly. He further noted that there is an annual multistate award presented regionally and nationally for outstanding multistate committees. He encouraged all attendees to connect multistate members in their units with NIFA to improve networking opportunities.

**NCRA Director Christina Hamilton** reported on efforts to influence federal budget allocations for Land Grant Institutions and research efforts, particularly noting that there is an estimated infrastructure deficit of \$14B for research facilities at Land Grant Universities and non-LGUs with agricultural research programs eligible for NIFA funding. The efforts to push allocations upward were unsuccessful, but the efforts continue and appear to be having a positive impact in other ways. She noted the “Land Grant Universities 2 U” (<https://www.ncra-saes.org/nc-lgu2u-initiative>) Program, which brings NIFA personnel to LGUs and takes LGU personnel to NIFA, reinforcing networking and engagement.

The group discussed a pending proposal renewal in the pipeline and requested all feedback be submitted to Russell Groves by Friday, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

James Strange was elected as NCAC-15 Chair for the 2022-2023 year.