

Northeast Pasture Research and Extension Consortium  
Minutes of Annual Business Meeting  
Lakeview Resort and Conference Center  
Morgantown, West Virginia  
March 22, 2005

The meeting was the second largest of the nine annual meetings held to-date -- equaling the number of attendees at Montpelier in 2003, but less than last year at Binghamton. This year, 62 people attended -- 17 producers from 10 states (Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and West Virginia); 18 people from land-grant universities; 9 from the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service; 8 from the USDA-Agricultural Research Service; 5 from non-governmental organizations; 3 from the USDA-Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; and 2 from agribusiness.

a. Executive Director position and future of the Consortium - Ray Bryant

Ray indicated that a new position of Executive Director was approved last year by the Consortium Executive Committee. Chuck Krueger assumed the position on October 1, 2004, following his retirement from Penn State. As Executive Director, Chuck will continue to provide assistance to the Executive Committee as he has done since the start of the Consortium. He will be responsible to the co-chairs of the Executive Committee. This is a part-time position with funding support from a USDA-ARS grant to Penn State.

Chuck agreed initially to serve for one year, but recently agreed to a second year through September 30, 2006. During the second year, Chuck will work primarily on coordinating and facilitating the stakeholder advocacy activities of the Consortium. Ray Bryant will assume responsibility for the logistics of the annual meeting and the planning of the program along with the Executive Committee.

The Consortium will complete its 10<sup>th</sup> year on September 30, 2006. Under the guidelines of the USDA and Northeast Research and Extension Directors, the Consortium can request a continuation for another 5-year period. The request and justification must be submitted in early CY2006. The attendees discussed the matter and recommended that the Executive Committee take the necessary steps to request continuation of the Consortium. The group noted the increasingly important role of the NRCS-GLCI program in the Northeast Region, and recommended that the renewal proposal include appropriate language to acknowledge this fact.

b. Report on the financial status of the Consortium - Chuck Krueger

Chuck indicated that USDA-ARS continues to provide financial support to cover the out-of-pocket expenses of producers to attend Consortium annual meetings and to represent the Consortium at specific meetings when asked by the Executive Committee. It was stated that this funding is critical and needs to be continued. In the future, other public-

sector agencies and organizations involved in the Consortium should be asked to contribute funding to support producer participation.

This year the Executive Committee decided to discontinue covering the registration fee and lodging for producers attending the educational conference held in conjunction with the Consortium annual meeting. The rationale was to reduce the funding per producer and use the released funds to invite more producers to attend the Consortium meeting. This was implemented and seemed to be accepted and worked well.

c. Action items for the Consortium to address in CY2005\* - Jana Malot

- Request members of Congress to restore \$500,000 in the FY2006 federal budget for "sustainable forage livestock systems research and research on nutrient management to protect water quality carried out at the ARS Pasture Systems and Watershed Management Research Station, University Park, PA," that originated as a Congressional add-on in FY2001. (Approved by the Executive Committee in February, 2005)
- Request members of Congress to provide \$600,000 in the FY2006 federal budget to the USDA-ARS Pasture Systems and Watershed Management Research Unit, University Park, PA (including \$200,000 for a specific cooperative agreement with Cornell University) for research on reducing the environmental impacts and improving the profitability of grazing farms through the use of new Best Management Practices (BMPs) for supplemental feeding of animals on high-protein pastures. (Approved by the Executive Committee in April, 2004)
- Request members of Congress to provide \$600,000 in the FY2006 federal budget to the USDA-ARS Eastern Regional Research Center, Wyndmoor, PA (including \$200,000 for a specific cooperative agreement with The Pennsylvania State University) for research on maximizing the market potential of pasture-based animal products by quantifying their human health benefits and developing new production and management guidelines for pasture-based animal systems to enhance these benefits. (Approved by the Executive Committee in April, 2004)
- Send a letter to the Administrative Heads of Agriculture (vice-presidents, deans) in the Northeast Region articulating the need for additional faculty and staff to work on grazing needs with emphasis on an interdisciplinary systems approach (animal and plant biology, engineering, and social science).
- Develop further the University of Massachusetts-Amherst pre-proposal to establish a New England pasture research and education facility.
- Communicate to the appropriate leadership in the USDA-Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) the need for increased competitive funding for interdisciplinary grazing systems research and education that can address the six priority needs identified by Consortium stakeholders.

- Communicate to the appropriate leaders in the USDA National SARE and NESARE programs the need for increased competitive funding for interdisciplinary grazing systems research and education that can address the six priority needs identified by Consortium stakeholders.
- Request members of Congress to support grassland conservation programs and youth educational activities (Grassland Evaluation Contest) through legislation in the 2007 Farm Bill and increased appropriations in the FY2006 federal budget.
- Provide copies of research results to producers in a timely manner, possibly on the Consortium website and through fact sheets.
- Request members of Congress to provide \$1.5 million in the FY2006 federal budget to establish a new dairy grazing research facility at the USDA-ARS North Appalachian Experimental Watershed, Coshocton, OH.
- Request members of Congress to restore nearly \$1.9 million in the FY2006 federal budget to continue the pasture-based beef systems project at the USDA-ARS Appalachian Farming Systems Research Center, Beaver, WV.
- Send a letter to e-Extension offering Consortium expertise to develop a pasture module if support funds are made available.
- Facilitate the identification of on-farm internships and develop farmer networks to provide educational opportunities.
- Establish linkages or coalitions with other organizations that have common interests in pasture-based livestock systems to increase leverage and the probability of success, i.e., Environmental Defense, PASA, Rodale Institute, etc.
- Place more emphasis on determining if there are human health benefits of pasture-based animal products and less emphasis on assessing their market potential.

\* All Congressional contacts will be made by the private-sector members of the Consortium and organized by the Stakeholder Action Committee.

#### d. New Executive Committee representatives - Angus Johnson

Angus introduced Gary Bergmann and Fay Benson who are the incoming members on the Executive Committee and will serve 4-year terms. Gary will be the private-sector member-at-large and is an equine breeder from Glen Gardner, NJ; Fay will be the public-sector member-at-large and is an extension educator with Cornell Cooperative Extension from Cortland, NY.

Angus thanked Dick Warner and Ed Rayburn for their excellent service on the Executive Committee and their many contributions to the Consortium during the last 4 years.

A list of the current Executive Committee is available on the Consortium website:  
<<http://www.umaine.edu/grazingguide>>.

e. New Stakeholder Action Committee - Dick Warner

The Executive Committee recently approved a new Stakeholder Action Committee with Dick Warner as chair. The Committee will be responsible for organizing and making stakeholder contacts with Congressional members and staff concerning legislative and appropriation requests approved as Consortium action items.

Dick discussed the Consortium stakeholder federal budget request for FY2006 which was e-mailed to key members and staff on March 1, 2005. It includes both restoration and new funding. The latter addresses two of the six stakeholder priority needs: determine the environmental impacts and profitability of alternate feeding strategies for grazing animals, and quantify the human health benefits of pasture-based animal products. These two priorities were approved for budget initiatives last year. The budget request was distributed to attendees and is posted on the Consortium website:  
<<http://www.umaine.edu/grazingguide>>.

The Stakeholder Action Committee membership is as follows: Dick Warner, Chair, beef producer, Cincinnatus, NY, [dickwarner1@juno.com](mailto:dickwarner1@juno.com); Clyde Bailey, beef producer, Charleston, WV, [cb57sb@aol.com](mailto:cb57sb@aol.com); Steve Derrenbacher, beef producer and veterinarian, Woodsboro, MD, [gardenstylebeef@msn.com](mailto:gardenstylebeef@msn.com); Sam Dixon, dairy producer, Shelburne, VT, [samdixon@sover.net](mailto:samdixon@sover.net); Angus Johnson, dairy producer, Dublin, NH, 603.325.5300; Larry Lohr, dairy producer, Hooversville, PA, 814.754.4480