

Northeast Pasture Research and Extension Consortium
Minutes of Annual Business Meeting
Radisson Hotel
Manchester, New Hampshire
February 2, 2006

The meeting was the second largest of the ten annual meetings held to-date -- approaching our record attendance of 91 at Binghamton in 2004. This year, 83 people attended -- 30 producers from 12 states (Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and West Virginia); 21 representatives from land-grant universities; 12 from the USDA-Agricultural Research Service; 10 from the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service; 4 agri-business suppliers; 4 staff from Congressional offices; and 2 representatives from non-governmental organizations.

One of the highlights of the meeting was a session on the multiple benefits of pasture-based animal production systems presented by private-sector users who articulated the impacts of grazing on farm profitability, local food markets, environmental quality, sustainable communities, and quality of life. This was followed by a discussion of the current Consortium stakeholder pasture priority needs with a panel of Congressional staff who made recommendations on funding strategies to address the priorities.

a. Status of Consortium renewal request (10/1/2006-9/30/2011) - Bruce McPheron

Bruce indicated that the Executive Committee request, submitted in early January, for permission to rewrite the Consortium multistate project outline was approved by the Northeast Agricultural Experiment Station directors. He recommended that the revised multistate project outline be submitted for consideration by the directors at their March meeting with a start date of October 1, 2006.

b. Status of Executive Director position - Ray Bryant

Ray reminded the group that Chuck Krueger agreed initially to serve as Executive Director for one year following his retirement from Penn State, but recently agreed to a second and final year through September 30, 2006. Ray will work with the Executive Committee to identify a suitable replacement and asked for the names of potential candidates for the position.

c. Action items for the Consortium to address in CY2006* - Ray Bryant
(Approved at the Annual Business Meeting, February 2, 2006, except as noted)

- Request members of Congress to restore \$500,000 in the FY2007 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 on February 15, 2006)

- Request members of Congress to provide \$600,000 in the FY2007 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. (Reaffirmed by the Executive Committee on October 25, 2005)
- Request members of Congress to provide \$600,000 in the FY2007 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. (Reaffirmed by the Executive Committee on October 25, 2005)
- Request Senators Santorum (PA), Specter (PA), and Leahy (VT) to restore \$4.1 million of base funding in the FY2007 federal budget to continue the Dairy Processing and Products Research Unit at the USDA-ARS Eastern Regional Research Center, Wyndmoor, PA. (Approved by the Executive Committee on February 15, 2006)
- Request Senator Byrd (WV) to restore nearly \$1.9 million in the FY2007 federal budget to continue the pasture-based beef systems project at the USDA-ARS Appalachian Farming Systems Research Center, Beaver, WV. (Approved by the Executive Committee on February 15, 2006)
- Request in coordination with local stakeholders, appropriate members of the Ohio delegation to restore \$1.3 million of base funding in the FY2007 federal budget to continue the USDA-ARS North Appalachian Experimental Watershed, Coshocton, OH, and request an additional \$1.6 million to establish a new dairy grazing research facility at that location. (Approved by the Executive Committee on February 15, 2006)
- Provide input and support further development of the University of Massachusetts-Amherst pre-proposal to establish an Upper Northeast Pasture Center at Deerfield, MA, for multistate research and education purposes.
- Express support for the continued development of a multistate organic dairy research and education facility at the University of New Hampshire, near Durham, NH.

- Send a letter to the College leadership (deans, directors, and department heads) at the University of Maryland-College Park articulating the need to replace retiring faculty and staff, and continue research and education on stakeholder grazing priority needs in the mid-Atlantic area.
- Continue development of the Consortium website at the University of Maine, strengthen its function to inform graziers of the latest research results, and seek additional funding from public and private sources to support website maintenance and new applications.
- Develop a proposal to renew the Northeast Pasture Consortium (NEERA-1000) for the period, October 1, 2006 through September 30, 2011, and strengthen linkages and coalitions with NRCS-GLCI by including mutual goals and objectives.
- Provide producer input to the 2007 Farm Bill through the Consortium Stakeholder Action Committee and NGOs, such as Environmental Defense and the Coalition for Sustainable Agriculture.
- Add outcome statements for each of the Consortium stakeholder priority needs.
- Develop outreach to equine owners with an emphasis on pasture for feed value and environmental protection.
- Schedule the 2007 annual meeting of the Northeast Pasture Consortium for February and explore opportunities for coordinating the timing of the meeting with the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA) Conference in State College, PA.

* 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 - Richard Swartzentruber

Richard introduced Jon Winsten and Rick Kersbergen who are the incoming members on the Executive Committee and will serve 4-year terms. Jon will be the private-sector member-at-large and is an agricultural economist and program officer with Winrock International, a non-governmental organization in Arlington, VA; Rick will be the public-sector member-at-large and is an extension educator with the University of Maine Cooperative Extension from Waldo, ME.

Richard thanked Nate Leonard and Sid Bosworth 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>.