



Minutes of the NREC Research Committee  
October 11, 2016  
Conference Call  
8:00 a.m.

Committee Members Present: Dale Hadden, Ed Corrigan, Cindy Skrukud, Chuck Cawley, Matt Duncan, Jenny Mennenga, Jessica Dexter, Robert Mullen, Ted Mottaz, Amy Walkenbach, Paul Jeschke, Curt Zehr, Dean Campbell, and Linda Kull. Also present were Dr. Robert Hoeft (NREC Research Advisor), Julie Armstrong (NREC Executive Director), and Jeff Kirwan (incoming NREC Council member)

Chairman Hadden called the meeting to order at 8:02 a.m.

Chairman Hadden reviewed the purpose of the meeting which is to review the proposals that have been submitted and determine which proposals should be sent for external peer review. He reminded the committee that the purpose of the call is not to determine if projects should be funded or not and discussion should be limited to the need for peer review.

Chairman Hadden requested that Executive Director, Julie Armstrong, review the updated numbering system (attached).

Julie will send minutes for this meeting and the previous meeting prior to the November committee meeting.

Chairman Hadden turned the meeting over to Dr. Robert Hoeft for review of the projects. Dr. Hoeft reviewed the items that external peer reviewers are asked to review:

1. Does this project have scientific merit?
2. Have the authors clearly identified a researchable question? Is this a significant problem in crop production in the Cornbelt?
  - a. Have they directly or indirectly posed a hypothesis?
  - b. Are the objectives of the proposal clearly outlined?
3. Is the design of the project adequate to address the hypothesis?
4. Is the funding proposed adequate to conduct the project?
5. Is it feasible to expect that the amount of work being proposed can be accomplished within the timeframe proposed?
6. Is it feasible that the work being proposed can be done with the labor force and equipment being proposed?
7. Is there a body of research information available that will address the hypothesis?
8. What is the probability that this project will produce results that allow farmers to make informed decisions on nutrient management?
9. What is unique and innovative about this project?

Jessica Dexter asked for clarification on the number of projects that can be/should be sent for review. Dr. Hoeft stated that there is no set number but we have typically sent between 5 and 8 projects for review.

The committee then began to review new projects and Julie reminded the committee that we typically don't send renewal projects or education projects for external review but that we can if necessary.

Project 277 – Dr. Hoeft outlined his concerns with this project and specifically the fact that it includes a proprietary project which typically falls outside the requirements for NREC funding. Jenny Mennenga added that she has concerns around the % of the project funding that is for equipment. Dale added that NREC has typically not funded equipment purchases.

Project 23 – Dr. Hoeft and Dr. Mullen both expressed concern that this project may be premature but also feel that it should be reviewed by someone who is more versed in modeling versus traditional agronomic research.

Project 422 – The group discussed that this project does not need to be sent for review.

Project 433 – Dr. Hoeft suggested that this be sent to review and Linda Kull echoed that sentiment. Dr. Mullen expressed his concern that there is not an agronomist on the project and that the two leading scientists on the issue were not referenced in the materials.

Project 314 – Dr. Mullen and Ted Mottaz both voiced their desire for this project to go to peer review.

Project 222 – Dr. Hoeft indicated that this project should be sent to peer review but to a reviewer who works in modeling as well as an agronomist. Dr. Mullen offered to help identify reviewers.

Project 271 – No need for review – this is IFCA's support role in Lowell Gentry's proposed project.

Project 86 – This is a continuation/expansion of the N15 project to study uptake and release of N and should be sent for review.

Project 593 – This project is a survey and does not require external review. Ted Mottaz offered his comments around that fact.

Project 325 – This project was recommended for external review and Dr. Mullen suggested that they be encouraged to include additional trials.

Project 77 – this project was sent for review last year and received mixed reviews from the reviewers. Dr. Hoeft referenced that little has changed from last year to this year's proposal.

Projects 168,302, and 160 were discussed as a group (Drainage Water Management) and it was suggested that all three be sent for review with a request to the reviewers to rank these projects.

Chairman Hadden asked for any additional comments and Jessica Dexter suggested that Project #23 be sent for review to someone with a specialty in modeling. Linda Kull also added that Project #277 should be reviewed under the same criteria as 23.

**Ted Mottaz moved and Curt Zehr seconded that the following projects be sent to external peer review – 443, 314, 86, 325, 168, 302, 160, 23, and 222. We will ask reviewers to rank 168, 302, and 160 against one another. Projects 23 and 222 will be sent to reviewers that focus on modeling. Motion carried.**

Bob reviewed the focus areas of the projects and Julie reviewed how to use the spreadsheet to sort for specific priority areas.

Julie will send a link to mid-year reports as well as additional information to use to prep for the meeting.

**The meeting was adjourned at 8:51 a.m.**