



NREC Council Meeting

April 2, 2015

Office of the Illinois Fertilizer & Chemical Association, Bloomington IL

Council Members Present: Dale Hadden, Gary Hudson, Chris Matlock, Chuck Cawley, Ed Corrigan, Jessica Dexter, Cindy Skrukrud, Howard Brown, German Bollero. Andy Knepp attended on behalf of the Illinois Certified Crop Adviser Organization; the CCA organization has nominated Andy to replace Dave Creech on the NREC Council; Dave is retiring.

NREC Staff: Dr. Robert Hoelt, Research Coordinator and Jean Payne, Administrator

Guests: Lauren Lurkins, Linda Kull

Call to Order

Chairman Gary Hudson called meeting to order at 10:05 am. He suggested adding an item to #7 on the agenda to include a discussion on future administration of NREC. Motion to amend agenda made by Dale Hadden, seconded by Ed Corrigan, motion carried.

Gary asked new members Chuck Cawley and Andy Knepp to introduce themselves. Andy Knepp is on the board of the CCA organization, works for Monsanto and will be replacing Dave Creech. Chuck Cawley is new to IDA in a management role and is replacing Jim Larkin as the Illinois Department of Agriculture's designee.

Gary asked if we should send the NREC subcommittee members the NREC Council meeting agendas. No motion on that point.

Review & Approval of January 16, 2015 Meeting Minutes

Gary asked the Council to review the draft minutes from the January 16, 2015 meeting. Cindy noted the need to add to the minutes the discussion at the end of the meeting addressing the future administration of NREC as this has become a full time job and Jean has been handling it on a part-time basis. Ed Corrigan made motion to approve amending the minutes as such, Howard Brown seconded, motion carried.

Financial Report

Treasurer Matt Hughes was not able to attend; Jean presented the Profit & Loss and Budget to date. Chuck Cawley provided an update from IDA on their activity in collecting overdue NREC assessments. There is approximately \$21,371 outstanding that IDA is working to collect from the registrants. Chuck also reported that ID is upgrading their computer system which in the future should enable the Bureau of Ag Products Inspection to handle more sophisticated reporting of fertilizer sales as well as units of N P K sold vs. only tons sold. Motion to approve financial report made by Dale Hadden, seconded by Chris Matlock, motion carried.

2015 NREC Projects Update

Dr. Hoelt provided an update on all the projects, including ones that required some follow-up from their original budget proposal that was approved by the Council at the January 16, 2015 meeting and also

projects that were renewed and had carry-over funds. Unless otherwise noted in the project updates below, the budgets and/or carry-over funds were approved for 2015.

Project #14: UI Agronomic & Environmental Assessment of Cover Crops. The initial carry over amounts did not include encumbered funds (equipment orders, salary commitments). This project now has \$15,748 in unspent funds from 2014. In some cases the contracts are only for 9 months, not an entire year that was an issue for some projects in 2014 which will be rectified in 2015 with a full year contract.

Project #3: ISU Farmer Survey Nutrient Mgmt Practices. The project is on-going but since the contract expired December 31, 2014 they are unable to spend funds for expenses occurring as the project continues in 2015; again this can be rectified in the new contract to allow on-going expenditures. Each university handles these issues differently, ISU policy is very strict in relation to contract dates vs. money encumbered by the grant but not yet spent.

Project #29: ISU Nitrogen Mgmt Systems: This project had \$56,000 in carry over; the project is going very well and is on track with treatments and they are also going to create signage at the site acknowledging NREC. Dr. Hoefl proposed that Dr. Armstrong reduce his request in 2015 to \$74,310 instead of the original \$118,609 requested for 2015. Howard Brown made a motion to reduce the 2015 level of funding to that amount, Andy Knepp seconded, motion carried.

Project #4: UI N Mgmt Systems Tile Drainage Project. There is significant carry over as of April 1, due to the fact that most of the 2014 funds were not utilized until November when a site was selected and work commenced at that site. This project has \$230,874 to carry over to 2015 and much of that will be utilized as the tile monitoring systems are installed in early 2015. The contract is now finalized between the farmer and landowner and payments to farmer and landowner payment will be \$10,000 each annually to compensate for land taken out of production and cropping systems required by the research. There are also positions to be filled to manage the project work. Bob will continue to monitor the project and expenditures to ensure the carry over is utilized; there is a significant amount of work underway in 2015 at this site.

Project #17: UI Measuring Soil Quality Changes in Corn/Soy Rotations. Bob reported that this project will increase in activity in 2015 and should utilize the carry-over funds.

Project #18: UI Updating P & K Removal Numbers. This project had a carryover due to a smaller number of samples collected than was anticipated. They were relying on volunteers to submit samples in 2014 and while many did, the number of samples were not as high as anticipated. In 2015 the sample collection is being revised to include personnel from UI collecting samples from elevators statewide during harvest. Cindy pointed out that this is a 3 year project, and budgeted lower costs in years 1 and 3 than in year 2; the project also plans to purchase a mailing list of farmers in year two to encourage farmers to submit samples. Gary stated that more samples should not be collected in 2015 just to spend available money. The Research Committee will monitor this project and review the budget status again in the fall of 2015.

Project #31: SIU Late Application of Nitrogen. This project saved on equipment costs last year; Howard stated that Dr. Cook is the foundation of the research program at SIU-C and we should trust leaving the money with her to support the project as she manages it this year, and re-evaluate her project this fall. She can work with Dr. Hoefl on the details of the budget in 2015; Jessica pointed out the money could be used for a plot combine and this was discussed. Howard Brown made a motion to allow the carry over funds to be used for a plot combine, Andy Knepp seconded, motion carried.

Project #32: ISU Paired Cover Crop Study. This project also received an IEPA 319 grant to extend it from a 2 year to a 3 year project by leveraging NREC dollars. Equipment was purchased but not paid for yet because the company was still in the process of testing the equipment.

Project #21: UI Residue Management & Tillage Study. 2015 will be the last year of this project to collect data, project will wrap up in 2016 and funds should be utilized in the final data analysis.

Project #22: UI Comprehensive Corn N Program. The carry over funds will be used to expand N rate trials outside of the priority watersheds being funded in the CBMP project. The Council does not want to overlap with CBMP as they are paying for some N rate trials within that project as well. Bob will follow-up with Dr. Nafziger to ensure carry over dollars are used to expand the number of on-farm sites within this project accordingly. The Council discussed the number and location of trials being done by CBMP and those being done by Dr. Nafziger. The Council asked why there might be a difference in cost of the trials, and just how many trials Dan Schaefer with IFCA could complete in one year. Jean stated that for Dr. Nafziger's trials, any work Dan does to facilitate those will be covered by UI because Dan is a vendor for UI. In the past, all the trials were done through CBMP and CBMP covered Dan's expenses. Dale asked about the farmer agreement for participating in the trials, and Jean stated there is a one page agreement the farmers sign allowing the sharing of the information with UI. Dale made a motion to continue the project as proposed and hold on the \$42,854 until Dr. Nafziger clarifies where his trials are located. Bob said he would also follow-up with Emerson on a revised budget that includes additional sites. Chris seconded the motion, motion carried. Chuck noted that it was critical that farmer contracts for N rate trials discuss the fact that results would be made public.

Project #2: UI Multifunctional Buffers. There was only \$300 in carry-over for this project, which can be used in 2015. Bob stated he was expecting them to host a field day in 2015.

Project #30: CBMP Outreach/Education Proposal. There are three distinct projects within this proposal: cover crops, demonstration farmers and nitrogen management education. Their carry over is less than 10%, Bob, Gary and Dale will meet with CBMP over the summer to clarify the details of their 2015 work plan.

Project #16: UI Tracking Soil N Availability. This project had a contingency on it pending the drafting and approval of a farmer data agreement. The agreement was reviewed by the Council and Howard explained the nature of the farmer agreement is to allow current and past participation in the N-WATCH program to be shared with Dr. Nafziger for this project. Ed moved to remove the contingency on this project, Chuck Cawley seconded, motion carried.

Project #23: UI Assessment of NOx Emissions. This project studies methods to reduce nitrogen losses to air; no changes recommended.

Project #26: TWI Wetlands for N Removal. There are two areas within the proposal: UI-Chicago campus is doing some research based work on wetlands, and TWI is designing wetlands for producers which is a service rather than research or education. Bob met with them in late March regarding his concern about them being paid to design wetlands as a service, and they confirmed they will seek funding elsewhere for that portion of the work.

Project #33: SIU N Leaching in Cover Crops. This complements the UI Cover Crop Study but with more emphasis on Southern Illinois fields.

Project #15: CCA 4R Training: They adjusted the budget downward to \$64,200 and will do more webinars instead of face to face meetings to reduce costs.

Project #1: ISU/UI Turfgrass Nutrient BMP Manual. This budget was also adjusted downward to \$36,428 by reducing face to face meeting costs and provides more digital sharing of the information to the industry.

Project #24: Notre Dame Indian Creek Water Analysis: This is a one year project, no changes to the budget recommended.

Gary and Dale will sign all the contracts; NREC will require a revised budget for the ISU Nitrogen Management Project before issuing that contract.

2014 NREC Annual Report

Bob asked the Council for suggestions on how to ensure the annual report is widely distributed and includes distribution to a more consumer based audience. The Council recommended the project include an executive summary and also links to stories and full reports on the projects as those are developed. The report should be ready by mid May and the Council will have an opportunity to review the report before it is finalized and released.

Discussion of NREC Policies

Gary and Jessica suggested NREC establish a committee willing to work on policies and solicit the Council for areas they feel policies are needed. The Council discussed starting with the existing Governance Committee as the basis for this subcommittee; the current members of the Governance Committee are Gary Hudson, Dale Hadden and Matt Hughes. Chuck Cawley and Andy Knepp volunteered to be added to the committee. Motion to approve Chuck and Andy as new committee members made by Dale, seconded by Howard, motion carried. This committee will work over the summer on the policy development.

The Council discussed the current policies and also surfaced ideas for additional policies which include the following: policy on overhead/indirect costs, policy on carry over funds, policy on equipment purchases, policy on duration of contracts, policy on subcontractors, policy on project changes in general, policy on website use, and policy on education metrics. Howard made motion for committee to evaluate policies and report proposed policies at the August NREC meeting; Andy seconded, motion carried. Jean will email existing policies to Council and any gather suggestions on policies to forward to the Governance Committee over the summer. Council members were asked to send Jean additional policy suggestions.

Gary asked Jean to post the NREC bylaws on the website and also be sure that the August meeting agenda is displayed so that people will know the Council will be voting on new policies.

NREC Executive Director Position

Gary led the discussion and explained that there are three main roles to NREC administration: The daily business of the Council (meetings, public relations, outreach), and research and financial management.

The Council discussed launching a job search for an Executive Director. Dale indicated that IL Farm Bureau Human Resources would be willing to post the job (much like they did in the search for the CBMP Director) and collect resumes for the Council to review and Gary indicated the Council could review the job description as well. Gary also indicated that the Executive Committee would work to bring one or two top candidates to the August Council meeting for consideration by the full Council.

Ed moved for IL Farm Bureau to start the job search process, Howard seconded. The goal would be to have someone hired in the fall of 2015, and bring potential candidates to the August 18 meeting for the Council to interview. Motion carried.

Upcoming Schedule of Events to Occur:

1. Send out poll to establish a meeting of the Governance Committee after June 8.
2. The Executive Committee will meet on the afternoon of June 24th regarding the job search.
3. Send out doodle poll for a meeting of the Research Committee to discuss the 2016 RFP process, look at week of June 22 for this meeting.
4. At the June Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy Meetings, solicit ideas for NREC projects to fill research/outreach gaps. Jean will survey ag retailers as well to solicit ideas. Need to stay open minded and innovative on project ideas—with goal of gathering ideas to send to the universities.

Adjourn

Having no further business, Gary asked for motion to adjourn. Motion made by Dale, seconded by Howard, motion carried and meeting adjourned at 2:35 p.m.

Minutes Recorded by Jean Payne, Reviewed by Dale Hadden, Secretary