



**Minutes of the Nutrient Research & Education Council Meeting  
Illinois Department of Agriculture, Springfield IL  
August 14, 2012**

The NREC convened at 2:00 pm in Conference Room # 1 at the Illinois Department of Agriculture.  
In attendance were:

**Voting Members:**

Fertilizer Industry\*: Howard Brown, Ed Corrigan

Certified Agronomy Organization: Dave Creech

Specialty Fertilizer: Chris Matlock

Grower Organizations: Dale Hadden, Gary Hudson, Matt Hughes

IDA: Jim Larkin

\*Fertilizer Industry Member Matt Duncan was absent but excused due to travel.

**Non-Voting Members:**

IEPA: Marcia Wilhite

ELPC: Mel Nickerson (sitting in for Jessica Dexter)

Sierra Club: Jack Darin (sitting in for Cindy Skrukud)

Research Center: Emerson Nafziger

Also in attendance as interested parties were Jean Payne, Eric Gordon, Ryan Heldt, Carl Kessler, Bruce Kinnett, Robert Hoeft, Gerald Kirbach, Karen Fawns, Albert Ettinger, Jen Walling, Tracy Young and Jen Hensley. Attached are the names, organization affiliation and email addresses of all those in attendance. A list of the organizational representatives on the NREC is also attached.

Jean Payne volunteered to take the minutes of the meeting, assisted by Karen Fawns with IDA. This being the first organizational meeting of the NREC, Jean Payne led the initial discussion as outlined on the agenda (attached).

The Council members introduced themselves and the organizations they represent. Jean Payne provided an overview of HB 5539 amending the IL Fertilizer Act and creating the Nutrient Research & Education Council, including the duties of the Council members, the structure of the funding mechanism and the need for this change in the Act to rebuild Illinois' nutrient research and education infrastructure with the goal of developing programs to optimize yield, enhance crop production and reduce nutrient losses to the environment. Legislation establishing the NREC was supported by the industry and environmental organizations as a method to support the *Keep it for the Crop* nutrient stewardship program and other potential nutrient and water quality programs such as Discovery Farms that may be established in the future under the leadership of the Council on Best Management Practices.

Jim Larkin and Jerry Kirbach of IDA provided information on the Fertilizer Control Fund and how monies deposited from the 25 cent inspection fee would be appropriated to the Bureau of Ag Products Inspection for administration of the fertilizer regulatory programs. Jerry Kirbach also explained a

handout that shows average tonnage reported to IDA for the past several years by the fertilizer registrants and how much assessments of .50, .75 or \$1.00 would generate for NREC (see attached).

Howard Brown discussed the need for innovative new programs to fund long-term research, citing examples such as projects to sustain soil fertility, building a network of industry members to conduct nitrogen soil testing throughout the growing season, and utilizing the CBMP organization to provide leadership to tie these programs together and communicate effectively with industry and growers to assure implementation of the research discoveries. Ed Corrigan expressed similar thoughts with regard to the need to change the dynamic of how we communicate to growers the various nutrient practices that impact nutrient optimization and yield potential.

Dale Hadden and Matt Hughes discussed the funding levels and if they would exceed the levels needed for the programs suggested, not knowing yet what the research and education priorities are. Dale asked about the status of current FREC projects and how they would be completed. Karen Fawns reported that the remaining projects would be concluded with funding remaining in the Fertilizer Control Fund. Dale suggested NREC revisit projects that were not funded due to lack of FREC funds available last year.

Albert Ettinger expressed the interest of the environmental groups that monies from NREC be used in on-farm research and demonstration projects. Jean Payne replied that by statute, 20% of the NREC funds must be allocated for these purposes.

The committee then discussed as a whole what the appropriate funding level should be. Citing concerns over uncertainty on the research/program priorities at this point, Dale Hadden made a motion to fund NREC at 50 cents per ton, Matt Hughes seconded. Dale Hadden, Matt Hughes and Gary Hudson voted in favor of the 50 cents; Howard Brown, Ed Corrigan, Dave Creech, Chris Matlock and Jim Larkin voted to oppose. Motion failed with 3 voting yes, 5 voting no.

There was additional discussion regarding the funding level, including discussion that the level of fertilizer tonnage for the 2013 crop year may be lower than in the previous 2 years due to the drought and uncertainty. Marcia Wilhite discussed the on-going need to address water quality in priority watersheds and that in the future there will likely be additional water quality issues beyond the six priority watersheds. Howard Brown made a motion to fund NREC at 75 cents, Dave Creech seconded. Howard Brown, Ed Corrigan, Dave Creech, Chris Matlock, Jim Larkin and Gary Hudson voted in favor of 75 cents; Dale Hadden and Matt Hughes voted no. The motion carried to set the assessment at 75 cents per ton passed with 6 voting yes, 2 voting no.

The Council discussed the need for a subcommittee of the Council to meet to establish the outline for research proposals and develop a list of long and short-term program priorities for the NREC. The committee members who volunteered for this subcommittee are Howard Brown, Ed Corrigan, Dale Hadden, Jim Larkin, Mel Nickerson (substituting for Jessica Dexter) and Marcia Wilhite. Jean will work with the subcommittee to establish a meeting in the very near future. The goal is to develop the priorities and RFP outlines and present them at the next full meeting of the NREC, which is set for October 31, 2012 at 10 a.m. at the office of the Illinois Fertilizer & Chemical Association, 14171 Carole Drive, Bloomington IL. The Council members expressed a desire to solicit proposals by December 1, 2012 for funding in early 2013.

Jean provided a copy of the draft NREC bylaws and asked the Council members to send back any comments to her, with the goal of a second review and adoption of the by-laws at the October 31 meeting. The Council adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Jean Payne