



MINUTES
Fall 2021 PMC Meeting
Hybrid Format
NC State HQ and Zoom

MOTIONS AND ACTION ITEMS

Motions/Consent Items:

1. A motion for approval of the 2021 Summer PMC and Special Meeting of September 23, 2021 was made by Matt Hengel and seconded by Liwei Gu. **Unanimously approved.**
2. A motion was made to add Amy Roberts as a member of the Commodity Liaison Committee by Todd Scholz, seconded by Jerry Baron. **Unanimously approved.**
3. **Consensus** was given on the top three priorities for the path forward task force:
 - i. Identifying alternative structures of IR-4's Quality Assurance Unit with the goal of maintaining high quality compliance, equilibrating work assignments while reducing the cost of the use of contractors and/or elimination of redundant lines.
 - ii. Exploring the option of downsizing of one or more of the regional analytical laboratories and savings achieved and efficiency improvement through concentrating resources into a smaller number of expanded laboratories and/or the use of contract laboratories.
 - iii. Assessing the current organization regional field operations.
4. **Consensus:** to keep the voting structure as is with voting members consists of the 4 regional directors, ARS member, CLC chair and Executive Director and AA's continuing to serve in an advisory role.
5. A motion was made by Liwei Gu, seconded by Simon Zebelo that IR-4 Headquarters has the authority to make decisions about Quality Assurance audits, inspections, and other associated assignments and funding; unanimously approved. **Motion Passed.**
6. A motion was made by Jerry Baron, seconded by Simon Zebelo that PMC recommends to shut down the North Central Region Analytical laboratory at Michigan State University by July 31, 2022; 1 abstention by John wise. **Motion passed.**
7. A motion was made to adjourn the Friday, October 29th meeting at 11:31 am by Todd Scholz, seconded by Matt Hengel. **Unanimously approved.**

Action Items:

1. **Action Item:** Set up a meeting with the AA's to discuss the IDC's and discuss a uniform policy among all subawards, before the end of the year (Jerry Baron (Lead), Doug Buhler, Marcel Holyoake, Dan Rossi, Tom Bewick, CALS C&G, Liaison committee member).
2. **Action Item:** PMC will appoint a committee to develop a timeline to shut-down and decommission the Michigan lab to and reassign remaining studies, samples, etc. Committee will include John Wise (Chair), Debbie Carpenter, Matt Hengel, Gail Mahnken, Sue Erhardt, Johanna Mazlo, and Jerry Baron (ex officio).

PARTICIPANTS

Jerry Baron; IR-4 Executive Director
Doug Buhler; Administrative Advisor-NCR
Liwei Gu; Regional Director-SOR
Matt Hengel; Regional Director-WR
Marcel Holyoak; Administrative Adviser - WR
Steve Lommel; Administrative Adviser- HQ
Todd Scholz, CLC Vice-Chair
Alvin Simmons; USDA-ARS
John Wise; Regional Director-NCR/Chair PMC
Simon Zebelo; Regional Director - NER

GUESTS

Alice Axtell
Roger Batts
David Beaudreau
Michael Braverman
Debbie Carpenter
Krystal Chojnacki
Jenn Heiss
Katie Jaworski
The'Shaun Jones
Johanna Mazlo
Cristi Palmer
Venkat Pedibhotla
Dan Rossi
Davis Schnatter

Thursday October 28, 2021: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

1) Welcome/Technology check/Introductions: J. Wise

- John Wise called the meeting to order at 8:08 am.

2) Approval of minutes, new agenda items: J. Wise

- **A motion for approval of the 2021 Summer PMC and Special Meeting of September 23, 2021 was made by Matt Hengel and seconded by Liwei Gu; unanimously approved.**
- Jerry Baron requested the following items be added to agenda: IR-4 and climate smart agriculture by Jerry Baron, to be discussed tomorrow morning item # 14; Update on Tactical Sciences (#15); voting by the AA's on items (at item #7); and residue program and successes by Debbie (#9).
- Dan Rossi requested to discuss Path Forward 2.0 priority setting prior to the committee meeting this morning, and also to report out after the committee meeting.

3) Updates from AAs, NIFA, ARS, CLC, NE, SO, WR, NC, HQ

AAs

- Marcel Holyoak: Things have been running smoothly overall; the university is fully open with COVID-19 testing in place; there have been inquiries about the 10% overhead and when it will come through; and the lab is running very well.
- Doug Buhler: NRSP funds are coming in and the next renewal may be easier with the new category for continuing programs; and reported that there were some designated infrastructure dollars for agricultural/climate related research in the house bill but it is yet to be seen if they will remain in negotiations.
 - A discussion was held regarding annual reports for NRSP.
- Steve Lommel: Reported that the IR-4 Headquarters is established here; suggested developing synergies with other regulatory groups on campus and departments (Entomology, Horticulture, Crop Science); reported that they had two SCRI grants funded; reviewed the activities of the new Plant Science Initiative; and reported on the State of North Carolina budget situation.

CLC: Todd Scholz

- Reported that February 10th is pulse day; there is a new candidate for the CLC: (Amy Plato Roberts, Directors of Regulatory Affairs for Lallemand Inc.);
- The government affairs committee (GAC) chaired by Bob Simerly is still meeting along with DCLRS lobbying firm. Bob announced his forthcoming retirement; GAC is working on a charter that describes the relationship between the CLC and DCLRS to help govern the Friends of IR-4; and reported that the PMC/CLC joint meeting in March is coming up in DC and current Chair Mike Bledsoe would be stepping down.
- A request was made for the PMC to vote to add Amy Plato Roberts, Director of Regulatory Affairs for Lallemand Inc. as a member of the CLC as representative for the biopesticide industry. A discussion was held regarding what area she will represent on the CLC (A member to represent biological pesticides); the status of the missing Crop Life member; and the recent participation of Lallemand Inc, in the Industry Technology Session.
- **A motion was made to add Amy Roberts as a member of the Commodity Liaison Committee by Todd Scholz, seconded by Jerry Baron; unanimously approved.**

Northeast Region – Simon Zebelo (Handout)

- Reported that there wasn't more to discuss after the update at the All Hands Meeting besides indirect costs (IDC) which would be covered in the next agenda item.

Southern Region – Liwei Gu (Handout)

- Reported that the University moved to a top 5 ranking and is very well supported by the state, but they will be working to move to a top 3 ranking; the IR-4 Project trials are going well; the new assistant to Janine is starting in 2 weeks; and that he will be using some funds from NIFA for an instrument replacement in the lab.

Western Region – Matt Hengel

- Reported that they have been working to refill a Field Research Director (FRD) position at New Mexico State with no success, so they are reassessing the need for the position.

North Central Region – John Wise

- Reported they are continuing to progress on training a new person on QA; reported on the lab director's retirement and pursuing an interim appointment to cover that role.

USDA-ARS – Alvin Simmons

- Reported that challenges remain from not being at full capacity in both the field and laboratory; that with the federal mandate for vaccination this will allow ARS to get back to full capacity and occupancy in their facilities starting in December and phasing in through January; the Tifton lab is fully staffed and new equipment has been purchased to increase capacity and plans are in place to get a new instrument in the Wapato lab as well.
- A discussion was held regarding the Western Region lab sending an instrument to Wapato for their use in the interim; and the impacts of mandatory vaccination requirements and work off site arrangements at institutions.

4) Indirect cost distribution: Rutgers/Penn State/University of Maryland issue: S. Zebelo

- Led a discussion about the 10% IDC and noted that the University of Maryland issues have been resolved for this year however Rutgers and Penn State want to be subawardees to get IDC for year 1 even though it was waived; information was shared on how the partner university are managing this in year 1 and what partner organizations classifications (subawards, agreements) makes sense; and the 10% is for TFFA and is capped for an overall amount and how to allocate that among all the partner institutions.
- A discussion was held regarding if an amendment can be made to the RFA (or is this limited to the first set of subaward); whether subs on subs are considered co-pi's and subawards on subawards are allowed; and that budgets can be changed if institutions are not willing to cooperate.
- **Action Item:** Set up a meeting with the AA's to discuss the IDC's and discuss a uniform policy among all sub awards, before the end of the year (Jerry Baron (Lead), Doug Buhler, Marvel Holyoake, Dan Rossi, Tom Bewick, CALS C&G, Liaison committee member).

5) HQ Integration Update: J. Baron

- Reported that IR-4 has been greatly supported by the CALS administration throughout the transition; Rutgers offices closed out on October 1 and final bills are being paid before final funds are distributed to NC State; two current positions posted/or posting

soon Chemist and Study Director, and Environmental Horticulture Program Assistant Manager Position; and updated on roles and responsibilities among HQ staff to cover the Plant Pathology work.

- Jerry further reported on a management team retreat; the dynamic work of the biology group; Venkat will be assuming new duties for the international work; updated on a new conference room in the HQ building; the search for long term archive space adjacent to HQ; and how HQ has been managing novel ideas for work efficiencies with compliance and due diligence vetting.
- Debbie reported that a challenge that remains with the study director team is that the team is new and getting everyone fully trained takes time.

– The PMC took a 10 minute break and reconvened at 10:15 AM –

6) Path Forward 2.0 update: D. Rossi

- Reported on the membership of the task force that will be participating in the Path Forward 2.0; shared the official charge and objectives of the group; and that they hope to provide a report back to the PMC at the March 2022 meeting.
- Discussion was held regarding the regional structure of the IR-4 project and relevance with the new funding structure; impacts to personnel but keeping in mind that this is a long term plan; inclusion of regions and stakeholders as part of a feedback loop including Canada; and discussed ranking of the objectives to focus on.
- **Consensus was given on the top three priorities for the Path Forward 2.0 task force:**
 1. **Identifying alternative structures of IR-4's Quality Assurance Unit with the goal of maintaining high quality compliance, equilibrating work assignments while reducing the cost of the use of contractors and/or elimination of redundant lines.**
 2. **Exploring the option of downsizing of one or more of the regional analytical laboratories and savings achieved and efficiency improvement through concentrating resources into a smaller number of expanded laboratories and/or the use of contract laboratories.**
 3. **Assessing the current organization regional field operations.**

7) Administrative Advisor's (AA's) voting: J. Baron

- Provided a reminder that the current voting members consists of the 4 regional directors, ARS member, CLC chair and Executive Director and that AA's are not officially voting members but are rather advisors.
- Discussion was held regarding whether to make the AA's voting members or to keep the voting structure as is; and discussion of the importance of the AA's input in the decision making process.
- **Consensus: to keep the voting structure as is with voting members consists of the 4 regional directors, ARS member, CLC chair and Executive Director and AA's continuing to serve in an advisory role.**

8) Friends of IR-4 comments (Slides) T. Scholz

- T. Scholz: Introduced David Beaudreau, a representative from DCLRS the advocacy firm the CLC has employed to help secure increased funding allocations for IR-4.
- D. Beaudreau: Provided an update on the 2022 appropriation process; debt limit discussion; IR-4 funding increase; governance of Friends of IR-4 and shared the current member listing; and several new potential funding streams.

9) Food Program

- 2021 Food Use Workshop Debrief: V. Pedibhotla (Slides)
 - Provided a recap of the 2021 Food Use Workshop including the format; stats as compared to previous years; that 39 residue projects were funded and shared post workshop survey results; and noted that next year the hybrid model will be implemented.
 - An in depth discussion was held regarding working out issues with hybrid meetings including etiquette, using a strong moderator, how to maintain equity among priorities in a hybrid meeting, how to use individual laptops to save on costs, how to incentivize people coming face to face, and how to deal with the pandemic.

- Break for lunch at 12:09 pm and reconvened at 12:48 pm -

- 2022 Field Program (residue studies/product performance): V. Pedibhotla (Slides)
 - Reported that 11 “Red A” trials were confirmed for 2022 and six upgrades were selected, and reviewed the funding that will support the 2022 program.
- Food Program: D. Carpenter (Slides)
 - Reported on new tolerances and submission for 2021; provided a crop group update; reviewed the 10 year history for the residue research program; reported on outstanding notebooks; and provided a timeline update.
 - A discussion was held on the field data notebook delay and approaching the registrant with questions.
- QA Update: J. Mazlo (Slides)
 1. Distribution of Work for 2021
 - Thanks QA as a whole for stepping up to help while Headquarters was shorthanded.
 - Reported on new hires and retirements; reviewed a three year trend of field in-life inspections and projections for 2022; reviewed QA outputs by region and auditor, and noted disparities; and noted contract QA usage across regions.
 - A discussion was held on how the number of in-life inspections that will be conducted is determined.
- Analytical Laboratory Discussion: M. Hengel (Slides)
 1. Status of Backlogs studies
 - Reviewed the current status of backlog studies by IR-4 Analytical labs
 - A discussion was held regarding the percentage (~50%) of projects that are delayed.

2. ACAC paper

- Provided a background on the request from the PMC to have ACAC propose some new strategies and solutions to the backlog issue, and reviewed the process the group went through to compile the report as well as the factors that were assessed.
- Noted areas for improvement included in the report include: better tracking of method development, increase sample set size, better utilization of alternative techniques, more training and national education, adjusting time consuming procedures, helping on other projects during down time, and increasing analyst ownership of projects.
- Short term recommendations included: transfer projects/samples and utilize contract labs for more challenging projects. Long term recommendations were to change the lab culture and increase cross-training of lab personnel in the national program. No concrete timeline was included.

3. Next Steps/options

- A discussion was held regarding additional measures for productivity and efficiency including national trainings, incentives for being productive, culture and leadership shifts, and balancing benchmarks by trial difficulty levels. Discussion continued further on ways to achieve productivity including: national/HQ input included in the annual review process, and the new funding structure.

- Break at 3:20 pm and reconvened at 3:35 pm –

10) Executive Session I

- The members of the Project Management Committee moved to the Executive Session at 3.35pm.
- The members reconvened at 5:12pm with no reportable action items out of Executive Session.

The meeting adjourned for the evening at 5:12pm.

Friday October 29, 2021: 8 a.m. to Noon

-- John Wise called the meeting to order at 8:09 am—

11) Executive Session II

- The members of the Project Management Committee moved to the Executive Session at 8:09 am.

- Break at 9:55 am and reconvened at 10:04 am –

- **A motion was made by Liwei Gu, seconded by Simon Zebelo that IR-4 Headquarters has the authority to make decisions about Quality Assurance audits, inspections, and other associated assignments and funding; unanimously approved. Motion Passed.**

- **A motion was made by Jerry Baron, seconded by Simon Zebelo that PMC recommends to shut down the North Central Region Analytical Laboratory at Michigan State University by July 31, 2022; 1 abstention by John Wise; motion passed.**
- **Action item: PMC will appoint a committee to develop a timeline to shut-down and decommission the Michigan lab to and reassign remaining studies, samples, etc. Committee will include John Wise (Chair), Debbie Carpenter, Matt Hengel, Gail Mahnken, Sue Erhardt, Johanna Mazlo, and Jerry Baron (ex officio).**

12) Program update/discussions

- Food Program - Additional updates
 1. Thoughts for the future of Food Program: V. Pedibhotla (Slides)
 - Reviewed a proposal for a new submission request form.
 - A. Axtell and R. Batts reported on a new proposed event “IR-4 Research Day” to provide a research update on IS and performance projects.
 - A discussion was held regarding the target audience (researchers, registrants, commodity groups); presenting this as a poster at conferences; recording the sessions; and including environmental horticulture.
 2. Biopesticide Regulatory Successes and Challenges: M. Braverman (Slides)
 - Reported on new regulatory projects and successes; and challenges with projects including varying degrees of interest and ability of registrants to carry registration forward to conclusion and the EPA’s bar continue to be raised.
 - A discussion was held regarding specific projects including cranberry and alum use.
 3. International: M. Braverman (Slides)
 - Reported on IR-4 residue studies, Minor Use Foundation capacity building and residue studies, a recent Asia Regional Priority Setting Workshop, and CERSA capacity building.
 4. Integrated Solutions (IS): V. Pedibhotla (Slides)
 - Reported on the results and financials from the Food Use Workshop as it pertains to IS.
- Environmental Horticulture – Additional updates: C. Palmer (Slides)
 1. 2021 Environmental Horticulture Workshop Debrief
 2. 2022 Field Program
 3. Invasive Species/Pollinator Protection
 - Reported on: the current organizational chart; status of summaries and registrations; number of planned trials and percent completed by region; status of grants; new office facilities and transition updates; workshop debrief; research plans for 2022; future improvements including a research report submission portal; and provided pollinator projects updates.

13) Future meetings: J. Baron

- March 8-10, 2022 – Washington, DC
- July 12-14, 2022 – Virtual
- September 12-15, 2022 – Bloomington, MN

- October 24-29, 2022 – Raleigh, NC

14) Climate Smart Initiative: T. Scholz

- Reported on the new climate smart initiative coming out of D.C. and that IR-4 is aptly positioned to participate; and J. Baron is working to submit a proposal.

15) Tactical Sciences Update: J Baron

- This item was tabled until the next meeting due to time limitations.

A motion was made to adjourn the Friday, October 29th meeting at 11:31 am by Todd Scholz, seconded by Matt Hengel; unanimously approved.