



July 31, 2020

NREC Research Committee Meeting Minutes
Hybrid meeting – in person at Illinois Soybean Association
Virtual via Zoom

Committee Members Present in-person: Ed Corrigan, Jeff Kirwan, Jenny Mennenga, Dale Hadden, Don Guinnip (incoming council member David Wessels was also in attendance)

Committee Members Present via Zoom: Trevor Sample, Michael Ganschow, David Droste, Robert Mullen, Cindy Skrukud, Chuck Cawley, German Bollero, Paul Jeschke

Staff Present: Julie Armstrong, Shani Golovay

Others attending via Zoom: Austin Omer, Mark Litteken, Lauren Lurkins, Megan Dwyer, Megan Miller

Meeting was called to order by committee chairperson Ed Corrigan at 10:04 a.m. and the meeting agenda and purpose were reviewed.

Chairman Corrigan asked for a review and approval of minutes. Minutes were approved as presented.

Executive Director Julie Armstrong reviewed the conflict of interest policy and the public comment policy. No committee members identified any conflicts on proposals being discussed during the meeting. Armstrong also reviewed the voting procedures.

Julie, Chuck Cawley and Jenny Mennenga reviewed the 2021 Financial position as well as the historic funding for projects and overall investments/budget.

The committee reviewed Renewal projects that were being presented without concern from the subcommittees or staff. These are ongoing projects that are on track with their planned budgets and work. **Dale Hadden moved and Don Guinnip seconded the approval of renewal projects 1-18 (see attached document). Motion passed.**

The committee then reviewed several renewal projects that are either not on track, have exceeded their intended life cycle, or have other concerns that have been raised by committee members or staff.

Web-Based Decision Support Tool for Cover Crops (Coppess) – members expressed concern around the extended timeline and questioned what the eventual outcome would be. There was concern with the group around the use of hairy vetch as a reference crop as that is not a widely adopted crop in many part of the state. The committee asked Dr. Golovay to reach out to Coppess to confirm three main questions:

- 1) If NREC does not fund, can the project be shelved and then picked back up at another date?
- 2) Discussion around appropriateness of hairy vetch

3) Get a general update from Coppess and team on project status.

Don Guinnip moved and Jenny Mennenga seconded a motion to table this discussion and defer the decision to the full Council. Motion passed.

Staff will follow up with Coppess and provide an update before the full Council meeting.

Assessing Suitability and Benefits of Cover Crops in Illinois (Guan) – Committee discussed the ongoing project and also discussed that Dr. Guan has submitted a new proposal for consideration. The committee questioned the need for an additional year of full funding and requested an update on project status. The committee also discussed the level of commitment that Dr. Guan has on many high profile projects and wondered if he is overcommitted. **Don Guinnip moved and Jenny Mennenga seconded to fund this project at \$20,000 for two months to complete the 2020 year. Motion passed.**

The effect of cover crops on surface water quality: A paired watershed experiment in the Lake Bloomington watershed (Armstrong) – This project has long been a joint ISU/Purdue project. Due to some personnel issues, this project is no longer going to be a joint effort but will continue with Dr. Armstrong as the lead PI. This does mean that the project award will go to Purdue with a subaward to ISU but the basic execution of the project will not change. **Dale Hadden moved and Jeff Kirwan seconded a motion approving this proposal as submitted but requesting that Dr. Armstrong submit a longer term proposal in 2021. Motion passed.**

Gentry projects:

- Evaluating nutrient loss reduction strategies: longer rotation with cover crops and bioreactor (Miller Project)
- Integrating Tillage, Soil Carbon Dynamics, and Tile Nitrate Loss
- Nitrogen Management Systems in Tile-Drained Fields: 4R Plus – Rate, Source, Time, Place and Cover Crops

As an integral part of the NREC Research portfolio, work being done at the Piatt and Douglas County research locations is somewhat complex and has a lot of moving parts. The committee reviewed the different projects, reviewed protocols and long range plans for each, and discussed other projects that are related to these two sites. A subcommittee was formed several years ago and Dale Hadden requested that staff find those notes and reinstate the committee to work on the long range plan for these two locations. Staff will follow up.

Dale Hadden moved and Jeff Kirwan seconded to approve project #320 as is and request a new project in 2022. Motion passed.

Jeff Kirwan moved and Jenny Mennenga seconded to approved project #374 as is for one more year. Motion passed.

Nitrogen Rate Research & NREC Project Partnership (Schaefer): Committee reviewed the N-Sentinel sites and discussion was had on pairing back the Douglas County portion of the project. **Jeff Kirwan moved and Cindy Skrukud seconded a motion to approved the proposal for \$313,300. Motion passed.**

Following a short break for lunch the committee returned to discuss new project proposals.

257 – questions around the farmer payment and the rate/acre. Staff will follow up.

421 – committee had concerns around funding commercial products

84 – Jenny Mennenga reinforced the need for funding a livestock integration/grazing project. Committee suggested that wheat be included in the rotation

303 – Dale Hadden expressed concern that this project was economically viable and there was concern around hurdles to establishment

189 – Committee was interested in this project and discussed how well it aligns with NREC priorities. There were concerns about how limited the practice might be in some areas and how it's already an accepted practice in others.

200 – Committee asked if this type of work was being done elsewhere. Staff will review.

183 – Committee was concerned about the financial implications of the project and staff will ask for a review of potential other partners

346 – Don Guinnip shared his belief that outreach to landowners is important and Cindy Skrukud added the importance of outreach and education to all sectors is key.

334 – project was highly rated by subcommittee but may be ahead of it's time

175 – committee was interested in project but wondered if sensors will drive a change in practices

49 – The committee had a great deal of interest in this project and sees the value in revisiting the MRTN. The committee did wonder if the weather data was necessary or added to the complexity of the model. Committee should review this concept and perhaps include it in the 2022 RFP.

46 – there was interest in the isotope work but committee felt it was too soon to pursue.

The committee then voted on each new project individually. Staff tabulated the votes and then reviewed funding levels. **Jeff Kirwan moved and Don Guinnip seconded to fund all projects ranked 3.0 and above for a total investment of \$3,705,995.00. Motion passed.**

Dale Hadden moved and Jeff Kirwan seconded to adjourn the meeting at 4:56 p.m.