

February 19, 2009 NC-FAR Board Minutes

RTVA Revised 032309

ACTION HIGHLIGHTS:

- Glasener (CoFARM) & Taylor (ASPB) Elected to Board
- Existing Outreach and Advocacy Action Plan Reaffirmed
- Balanced 2009 Budget Approved, to Be Reviewed Mid-year
- 2009 Annual-Board Meeting Thursday, April 16, 2009

- NC-FAR President Stephanie Patrick (ADA) called the Board meeting to order, with the following participants:
 - Board members in attendance: Layton (ASA), Glenn (BIO); John Baker (AVMA); Glasener (CoFARM); Stallman (AFBF); Taylor (ASPB); Norman (NCC); Meeker (NRA); Chaddock (AAVMC)
 - Board members by phone: Perry (CARET); Reid (IFT); Bonner (CAST); Ritter (CAST)
 - Board members unable to participate: Pueppke (NABC); Barr (NCFC); Leholm (ESCOP)
 - Others attending: Weber (ADA-ROC Chair); Cahill (ASTA); Krisoff (ERS Liaison); Harsch (Agri-Pulse); Redpath (Leshner & Russell)
 - Others by phone: Danforth (WU-St. Louis, West Campus); Six (Iowa State); Goldstein (Danforth Plant Science Ctr); Paul (ASA); Apple (FS Liaison); Olson (JDIP)
- **Quorum:** A quorum was determined to exist.
- **Board Rep Changes:** Karl Glasener (CoFARM) and Crispin Taylor (ASPB) were elected on interim basis to fill vacancies until annual meeting.
- **Minutes:** The April 1, 2008 Board minutes were approved.
- **ROC Report & Recommendations:** ROC Chair Weber reported on 2008 action highlights and activities underway on the 2009 hill seminar series.
 - **ACTION**—Board approved moving forward with 2009 Hill Seminar Series. Consensus was that the hill seminars are highly successful in informing hill staff about the value of federal investments in food and ag REE.
 - **ACTION**—After discussion, Board encouraged the ROC and staff to explore creative ways to continue Success Profiles series through in-kind contributions, with distribution via e-mail only. It was pointed out the back of hard copy success profiles could be used to transmit additional information, resources.
- **REE Funding Efforts Update:** Redpath led discussion about unsuccessful efforts to include AFRI funding in the stimulus package and what is needed to be more effective in future budget-appropriations process.
 - Danforth spoke about the need for REE stakeholders to make a more concerted and effective effort to seek funding increases now that the USDA REE mission has been reorganized.
 - There was also considerable discussion about perception vs. reality concerning the quality of research being a barrier to increased funding as contrasted with research funded through NIH and NSF, indicating that he believes there is a real quality gap that needs to be addressed. Others spoke to the need to do a better job of telling the story about quality ag research being funded.

- **Proposed NC-FAR Role in Seeking Increased Funding:** Layton proposed that NC-FAR head a new initiative seeking an increase of \$400 million/year for 5 years to fund NIFA/AFRI at an adequate level to meet America's needs for food, fuel, ag global competitiveness, etc. NC-FAR's role would be to reach out to other stakeholders, with ASA support in recruiting involvement of farm/commodity organizations.
 - There was considerable discussion about the lack of resources to take on the new initiative and questions about whether other farm and commodity groups would commit to actively support elevated funding policy advocacy.
 - Layton also reported that the Farm Foundation and USDA NAREEE Advisory Board will be co-convening a session about REE needs on April 28, where additional discussion could take place on how to achieve increased funding.
 - No action was taken.
- **Finance Report:** Stallman, Finance Committee Chair, with assistance of the Treasurer, presented the following report and recommendations:
 - 2008 budget [see attached] ended with a (\$24,000) deficit, slightly above the deficit contained in the 2008 budget approved by the Board.
 - While there were several new members, others dropped out due to their own budget issues.
 - Membership dues down 10%, 54 members in good standing.
 - \$7,000 of deficit due to net unrealized losses on reserve investments, even though not part of annual operating budget.
 - Sponsorship support up significantly, though since restricted account surpluses not credited to annual budget bottom line.
 - Expenses 15% below budgeted, largely due to reduction in retainer for consultant.
 - 2009 year-beginning reserves are equivalent to about 7 months operating budget, meeting the Board-approved criterion (at least 6 months).
 - 2009 Balanced Budget proposed [see attached]. Key assumptions:
 - While proposed budget shows \$10,400 year-end loss, this would be offset by shift of Hill Seminar fund from restricted to unrestricted, making \$10,400 balance carried forward from 2008 available to offset the deficit.
 - Membership dues assumed to remain same, with anticipated attrition offset through new member recruitment. Baker recommended target outreach to Experiment Station directors re membership and support.
 - Sponsorships assumed to be 90% of 2008 level.
 - Consultant retainer remains at reduced level, as approved at April 2008 Board meeting.
 - Stallman noted that given serious economic times, it will be difficult to maintain sustainable membership and revenue.
 - **ACTION**—After discussion, the Board approved a motion by Stallman to approved the 2009 budget as presented.
 - Looking to 2010, staff noted that alternative funds or savings to replace the one-time use of available funds in the sponsorship account for 2009 would have to be found to achieve a sustainable budget in 2010.
 - **ACTION**—It was also agreed that the Board would review the budget mid-year to determine how to proceed for the remainder of 2009 and 2010. If revenues are determined not to be sustainable, with a goal of achieving a balanced budget in 2010, the Board would have the option of proceeding with a shutdown at 2009 year-end, using reserves as needed.

- **NC-FAR Role and Action Plan:** Following roundtable discussion about National C-FAR's role and available resources, the Board:
 - **ACTION**—Reaffirmed National C-FAR's emphasis on the Hill Seminar Series as a value-added product, with continuing involvement in the farm bill implementation and budget-appropriations process as appropriate.
- **Next Board-Annual Meeting:** April 16, 2009, location and format to be determined.
 - Discussion re annual meeting format included option of possible webcast to facilitate increased participation without necessitating travel in tight budget times.
- **Executive Session:** There being no further business, the Board went into executive session and subsequently adjourned.