

**S-290 Technical Committee
Summer Meeting, August 10, 2004
Atlanta, GA.**

Present: Behe, Bellinger, Brooker, Brumfield, Coker, Coston, Dennis, Eakes, Fields, Hall, Harkess, Haydu, Hinson, Hodges, Mathers, McNeil, Posodas, Stegelin, Rainey, Warnock.

The meeting was called to order by chair Behe. Agenda had been distributed previously.

The minutes of the winter meeting of the committee had been posted on the committee's Internet site (www.s290.org). On a motion by Warnock, seconded by Mathers, the minutes were approved.

Administrative Adviser Coston updated the group on the status of the replacement project. He noted that the project has been in the southern region, but that like most others, it now is national in scope. He has requested that the current project be extended one year while the review of the replacement project is completed and all activities requested are completed. He indicated that approval is expected for October 1, 2004.

The procedure for completion of the new project was described as follows

- a pre-proposal is submitted
- a development committee is approved
- The request for participation through completion of Appendix E is needed. Each individual and institution that would like to participate should respond by Sept 10
- A review involves peer or external reviewers, requested from the committee
- Reviewers comment, and we respond to comments
- In our case there is a need for a critical review section
- Then the proposal goes to the Regional Research committee

Behe requested that the Appendix Es be completed and that any recommendations for reviewers to be forwarded to her.

Agenda items:

Webpage update: Hall reported that minor revisions have been made. He suggested that future enhancements might include a library of committee publications. There was a discussion of a descriptive name that name for the group and its site that would be retained through changes in the project's number.

Manuscript reports

Production cost updates: McNeil reported that this is about 90 % complete for the container and field production situations.

Pot in pot: Hall reported that this is done and published.

Landscape preferences: Behe reported that Michigan responses are being removed and analyzed separately because it is quite different from other states' response.

There were no other manuscript reports.

Current studies

Labor survey: Mathers reported that the survey, originally conceived as directed toward the migrant worker and conducted in Spanish, will be expanded to include all workers. The survey will determine sources of education and training for nursery industry employees.

Trade flows and marketing practices survey: Brooker reported that the recently completed survey covered many more states (44) than had past surveys. The information provides a more complete picture of the industry. The overview was used as an SNA research report, and can provide general information for state and national general information. There now is potential for cooperation with NASS since that institution now is aware of what we are doing. The next survey will coincide with the Census of Horticulture in 2009 that will cover the 2008 year.

Hodges provided details of the survey – there were about 1500 responses or a response rate of about 16%. When expanded in the preliminary analysis, the sales and employment numbers are much higher than those from NASS. Brooker reported that a general bulletin is being prepared. Reviewers for the manuscript are Warnick, Posados and Fields.

The 4 trade flows surveys provide data for an overall and over time analysis of product flows and marketing practices surveys. A committee comprised of all S290 economists was appointed to pursue this analysis, and other interested members are invited to participate.

Price study: there has been no activity, but this committee remains active.

Cost of production, zones 7 and 8: There has been no activity to date. Hall has a graduate student and indicated this work might start in fall of 2004. Stegelin has developed some budgets using the old (1990 generation) budgets as a base, but using a product mix that includes dogwood. He is working with a spreadsheet format. There is interest in COP differences between these and the zone 5 & 6 costs.

State promotional program: Stegelin reported that he and Posados have talked with Knight, and have collected materials from 14 states. They have information about history of programs, their funding, administration, the particular format, kind of plant material, lead times, information, etc. He declined to characterize this work as an evaluation, instead more descriptive. A summary was requested for the February meeting, and others are invited to join in this work.

Specialty cut flower budget: Brumfield reported that her grant proposal was rejected. She continues to look for partners. McNeil, Posados, Coker, and Warnock will work on this research. It also was noted that John Dole in North Carolina has been doing some of this work, but no one is aware that it has been published.

Business analysis: Behe noted that information was collected from 10 Michigan firms and they were added to the New York database. Hodges reported that Florida's system is based on online entry, is in the first phase, and growers are being recruited. He expects that acceptance of the system will be slow but sure, and this will become a valuable tool. He agreed to a report in February, with the provisions that this is proprietary and not in the public domain at this time. Workshops are planned to familiarize growers in Florida with the system, and want to tailor the program to growers' needs.

A further discussion of the relationship between financial analysis work at Cornell and Florida is needed, perhaps to integrate at some point or at least to compare. In discussing problems of getting participation by growers, most firms are not business oriented but participate in these programs as a favor to the university. Currently, there are about 30 from New York, 10 from Michigan, and about 15 from New Jersey.

Labor survey: Mathers proposed a study of the ornamentals industry labor force, to include laborers' backgrounds, primary language, wage differences, impacts of education programs and other similar issues. A bi-lingual and bi-cultural graduate student has been assigned. The case study methodology has been suggested.

Retractable roofs: Brumfield reported on this as a technology under development, and is one among others the engineers have been researching. Others include high tunnels, robotics, and alternative energy sources. NE 164 is working in the area controlled structures, and there is potential for cooperation n research. Brumfield will be S290's contact for the technology area, with subcommittees for specific topics. It was suggested that budgets might be used to evaluate the feasibility of these techniques and structures. Also on the committee are Posados, Warnick, and Mathers. Nursery automation was suggested as a title for this committee.

Meeting sites:

The winter meeting will occur on the dates February 23 to 26, 2005, in Tuscon. There will be a tour on Thursday, a full committee meeting on Friday, and subcommittee meetings on Saturday. He also mentioned sight-seeing opportunities in the area, including a desert museum, an air museum, and old Mexico.

Summer 2005 meeting ideas – Barton will be asked to host in Delaware.

Summer 2006 meeting ideas - Haydu offered to host the summer 2006 meeting in the Northwest.

Adjourned 3:30

Subcommittee meetings scheduled to follow.