

S-1021 (s-103 expanded)
Summer Meeting
Green Industry Research Consortium
C212 Georgia World Congress Center
Atlanta, GA
August 11, 2006

Meeting was called to order at 9:40am with introductions of participants. Roger Hinson, Marco Velastequi (LSU graduate student), John Black, Deacue Fields, Jennifer Dennis, Ursula Schuch, Godfrey Ejimakor, Ben Posadas, Christine Coker, Ken Hood, Randy Little, Richard Harkess, Guihong Bi, Bridget Behe, Charlie Hall, Forrest Stegelin, Alan Hodges, Robert McNeil, Greg Fonsah, Robin Brumfield, and Ron Rainey

A motion to approve the agenda as presented was made by Hall, seconded by Behe.

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Hall, seconded by Behe.

McNeil began the meeting with comments from the Chair discussing the recent experiences with submitting this year's annual project report. He commented on some difficulty with getting some progress reports from project participants for the past year. He overviewed the reporting system commenting on the institutional process for Hatch reporting. Hinson commented that we can send electronic updates of the progress reports that are being submitted along to the president to assist in the timely development of the annual report.

There were no administrative or CSREES reports or updates.

Hall gave an update of the project's website, www.s290.org. In late September 2006, the website link will change to www.s1021.org to reflect the new project number designation. Hall gave an overview of the resources and information listed on the website which includes publications and project participants.

McNeil began the manuscript reporting discussions with an update on the container, field and landscape cost manuscripts. He plans to have the landscape manuscript completed by Nov. 2006.

Hall updated participants on the NRAES arrangement. He commented that the project currently has 2 publications currently being sold on the site. One publication, *Establishing and Operating a Garden Center: Requirements and Costs*, has sold roughly 900 copies to date. The other publication, *Enhancing Profitability in Greenhouse Firms*, has sold roughly 40 copies to date.

Hodges gave an overview of the project's economic impact work. He commented that the study examining the economic impact for the U.S. was completed in April. An article

discussing the study was recently published in HortTechnology. Hodges mentioned that some additional analysis is currently being done which addresses the sod industry.

Behe commented on some consumer analysis studies being developed by Dennis and her. They currently have two studies investigating consumer purchases, with one article being published in HortScience in the near future. Behe commented on some additional work examining cognitive and emotional drivers. She indicated that a manuscript was in development addressing this area with another article examining purchase differences between renters and homeowners which should be available by the end of this year.

Other publications mentioned by project participants included: consumer preferences for Chrysanthemum cultivars (Posada); selection or use of native plants primarily covering zones 7 and 8 looking at why native plants are selected and the motivations (Harkass); an article examining the green industry economics of 9 states (Ejimakor).

Project discussion then moved to current studies. Hall commented briefly on the labor study mentioning that Hannah Mathers' graduate student has a research poster at the 2006 SNA meeting. The poster provides an update of the labor project's activities to date.

Hodges gave an update of the business analysis (benchmark work) that he has been an on-going project. He said that work is underway to continue the development and enhancement of the software system. Hodges commented that there are two more workshops scheduled within Florida for this year. There are also efforts focused on updating the website. He anticipates that by the end of the year the updated site will be available featuring a user log-in and sign-up with open access. The plan is to get the system set up to allow businesses to more easily utilize the resource.

There is currently no funding at this point for the business analysis project, and current plans are to expand participation before seeking additional funding opportunities. Behe and Brumfield commented on the issue of not only getting people to trust placing financial information on the internet but also the need for businesses to organize their information in an appropriate form to submit. Dennis commented on the idea of having a workshop with growers to assist with organizing records and submitting the financial data.

Hall commented briefly that committee representatives are planning to meet with National Agricultural Statistics Association (NASS) in Washington D.C. representatives in the near future. The committee will discuss Green Industry survey procedures in the hopes of improving the survey process.

Although listed, there was no update on the invasive plants report.

Brumfield began discussions on the specialty cut flowers budget. She is in the process of finalizing the budgets (zone 6) with plans to develop 10 different budgets. Hall asked about the methodology used for the budgets commenting on the idea of separating out the

investment (overhead) costs and the variable costs separately on different budgets. He mentioned that modeling the variable cost systems could be a separate publication which could be updated annually. The separate investment publication, which examines the fixed costs, would not need to be updated as frequently. Brumfield invited additional support in terms of additional project participants, growers, or reviewers for the budgets.

The next study discussed was the container cost budget (Zones 7 & 8). Hinson commented that the project's goal was to update costs on a previous study (Zones 8 and 9). The publication will be updated using the Mississippi State Budget Generator (MSBG). He also commented that this project's budgeting process would separate out the fixed and variable costs for the budgets. He indicated that the project has some funding from Risk Management Agency (RMA) and currently has 5 states participating to date. There is a sub-committee meeting scheduled to meet for this afternoon following the project committee. He also commented that Marco Velastequi--an LSU graduate student who was in attendance--would assist with the project's data collection.

Behe led discussions of work on current consumer studies. There are two studies focusing on the consumer perceptions of regret and product guarantees. She is also working with a colleague on analysis of search behavior for internet purchases. This analysis examines mainstream internet plant purchases, examining the characteristics of the purchasers as well as different types of products sought (hard and soft goods).

Discussions then followed about potential future studies. Dennis commented on the idea of exploring organic landscape materials. Coker added the idea of looking at sustainable, environmentally friendly, and natural growers examining perspectives from growers and consumers.

Hinson asked Harkass about RFID ongoing research potential for impacting the green industry. Harkass commented that RFID can now be incorporated into plasticized stick-on labels so the applications in the nursery industry may be more widespread than they have been in the past. We are not sure what the economic dimensions of this new technology will be. As the price of stick-on RFID labels is reduced, then more applications may be investigated. Future S1021 projects may be developed to investigate the applications.

Behe commented on starting a project where you place 8 or 9 sites with the RFID and use data-loggers to track plant responses to temp changes (looking at the winter season). Several project participants indicated interest in participating in this type of project. Behe, Hall, Hinson, Coker, and Schuch indicated an interest in participating in this type of project. Harkass will coordinate setting up the project up and following up with project participants.

Following these discussions, McNiel commented on the idea for adding two sub-committees for the research projects, organics and Radio Frequency Identification (RFID). Everyone agreed and the items will be discussed during the winter meeting as agenda items.

In other reports, Schuch gave an update on Arizona's on-going project examining risk management education efforts. They have a website at <http://ag.arizona.edu/extension/riskmanagement>. The website provides a variety of tools and resources to assist growers with managing risks.

In other discussions, Hall mentioned the S290 website and the links to past meetings, which includes minutes and pictures of meeting tour stops. There was discussion on the multiple benefits of the photos for project participants. Some benefits mentioned included websites, presentations, teaching. Hinson suggested the idea of developing a CD-Rom of photos and making the CD available to all project participants. Everyone was supportive.

The 2007 Winter meeting is tentatively scheduled for February 21-23 and will be held in St. Augustine, Florida (south of Jacksonville). Hodges will begin the planning process for lodging and educational activities.

The 2007 Summer meeting will be held as part of the Far West Show. It is typically the third week in August and is held in Portland, Oregon.

Meeting adjourned at 12:05pm.

Respectfully submitted by:
Ronald L. Rainey, Secretary