

**Minutes, S290 Technical Committee meeting, July 29, 2003
Montreal, Canada, Conference Center**

Present: Behe, Brooker, Brumfield, Hinson, Hodges, Uva, van Blokland, Warnock

Chair Behe called the meeting to order at 9:00 am. Minutes from the winter meeting in New Orleans had been posted on the S290 website, and were distributed for review. The minutes were approved as distributed.

Behe expressed the group's appreciation for the previous day's tour, which included Planterra (a plant wholesaler and interiorscaper business), Savoura (a greenhouse tomato producer) and the Montreal Biodome. The group expressed its appreciation to Wen-fei Uva for her work in organizing this excellent tour and for providing transportation.

Neither the administrative adviser nor the CSREES adviser attended.

MANUSCRIPT REPORTS:

Landscape Service Quality – Behe. This work, originally intended to be part of a thesis, will be completed by Behe. For Poinsettias, data collected during the year will be sent to Kuehny, who will work with Warnock to complete the manuscript. Behe commented that results from last year seemed to be unchanged from previous years.

There were no other manuscript reports.

STUDIES IN PROGRESS:

Nursery Trade Flows survey, 2004 – Brooker. There has been good response to the email request for participation and to another requesting feedback on the survey instrument. He is seeking contacts in some other important producing states, particularly Washington and Oregon. Any contacts, or identification of persons who might be interested in conducting the survey in those states, should be sent to Brooker. Participation by the major producer states is an objective. Brooker also requested additional comment on the instrument. The question about water use was discussed, and the subirrigation topic was modified. The native plants definition was accepted. In the market channel terminology, descriptive information was substituted for company names in the effort to describe the channel. The survey is scheduled for mailing in January, 2004.

Business Analysis – Hodges. Hodges and Haydu indicate they are about half way into their project to use an online format to collect information for business analysis, indicating the software might be running by yearend. Security is a big issue. An application for support has been submitted to RMA for training sessions that would include general risk analysis and tools to mitigate risk, with some time devoted to introducing the business analysis. When completed, general industry benchmarking will be available to the public on the website, with additional information available to members.

Business Analysis – Uva. This project at Cornell uses traditional data collection, and is in its third year. The program was limited to New York in the first year. Michigan and New Jersey will be collecting information for this project. Brief comment on the New York analysis was presented, with the number of participating firms up about 50% but with most other statistics similar to the previous year. Development of output reports has been dependent on programming, but the preliminary version is expected to be complete by late August.

Business Analysis – van Blokland. It was noted that, in terms of business activities, the kind of budgeting done in agriculture is unlike that done in most other industries. If the standard budgeting approach was adopted, comparisons between industries would be more appropriate. A brief document has been developed that will be circulated to the committee for comment.

MEETING SITES

The winter meeting will be held in San Diego, CA., January 21 thru 24, 2004. A 2-day tour may be scheduled, with the business meeting on Friday and subcommittee meetings at least half day on Saturday.

The 2004 summer meeting will be in Long Island, NY. Uva will coordinate arrangements for the meeting, including large greenhouse operations in that area. The meeting dates are expected to be in late July or early August, scheduled to avoid conflicts with SNA, AAEA, and ISHS.

DISCUSSION OF PROCEDURE FOR A REPLACEMENT PROJECT

S-290 expires in 2004, so we must write and submit a replacement by early next year. Chair Behe indicated she expects to complete a 2 step process prior to the meeting in San Diego. Members will be asked to review the current project objectives for relevance, and to send information about the work they intend to complete related to S-290 along with suggested objectives for the next project. These will be reviewed, collated, and used to develop objectives with brief descriptions. This material will be returned to members prior to meeting in January, and will be used as the basis for developing final statements of objectives and procedures. Attendance at the San Diego meeting is strongly encouraged so that work on the new project can be moved forward using input from the entire committee.

Respectfully submitted,
Roger Hinson, secretary