

May 6, 2015

TO: Sonny Ramaswamy  
Director, NIFA-USDA

Bart Hewitt  
Director, Planning, Accountability, and Reporting Staff

Katelyn Sellers  
POW & REEport Business Manager

FROM: NEED Directors/ Administrators and Associate Directors  
Dr. Michael O'Neill, University of Connecticut  
Dr. Michelle Rodgers, University of Delaware  
Dr. Albert Essel Delaware State University [has not yet replied]  
Dr. William Hare, University of District of Columbia  
Mr. John Rebar, University of Maine  
Dr. Stephen Wright, University of Maryland  
Dr. Enrique Escobar, University of Maryland Eastern Shore  
Dr. Patricia Vittum, University of Massachusetts  
Drs. Ken LaValley, Lisa Townson, University of New Hampshire  
Dr. Larry Katz, Mary Jane Willis, Rutgers University  
Dr. Chris Watkins, Cornell University  
Dr. Denis Calvin, Pennsylvania State University  
Dr. Deborah Sheely, University of Rhode Island  
Drs. Doug Lantagne, Dan Lerner, University of Vermont  
Dr. Steven Bonanno, West Virginia University  
Dr. Ami Smith, West Virginia State University

Subject: Plan of Work (POW) Panel of Experts Meeting on June 16-18, 2015

We are in receipt of your March 31, 2015 reply to the Northeast Experiment Station Directors/Associate Directors. We appreciate that federal law and regulation dictates what is needed to be reported. Focusing on what is required and needed to evaluate the use of the Capacity funds is understood.

A component of the reporting burden is the redundancy of reporting tools and mechanisms. As you well know, not only does Extension report to USDA-NIFA but also to county officials, state legislators, and University leadership. The ability to access data from one database for multiple functions allows for efficiency of resources as well as consistency in data collection and quality.

We would like to suggest that one database from which a wide variety of reports might be programmed would result in greater efficiency than submitting to multiple databases as is now the practice. While coming to agreement on a single database might not be simple or quick, we do have some models from which to build. By working collaboratively across the land grant system and USDA-NIFA, we can more efficiently utilize our resources.

While the NIFA website states that REEport is NIFA's primary grant reporting system, we understand from your response to NERA Directors that the system is 9 years old and time for an upgrade and a new look.

The land grant university system has developed a data collection system which allows for impacts to be collected based on teaching, research, and extension (<http://landgrantimpacts.tamu.edu/>) and includes the ability to search the database. While a voluntary system, this extensive database might be considered as a foundation for as a new NIFA data collection tool. Additionally, it might be fruitful to consider a single reporting system that enables integration of Extension and Research.

Efforts have been made within the Extension system to educate on what is an effective impact statement. The more we ask people to report in multiple formats the less reliable the data will be. The more a state can report what is required as well as what is useful to the state, the more reliable the data are.

Coming together, as one system, to report data once would be a giant step forward. We ask for your sincere consideration and for the agenda of the June meeting to be adjusted to allow for this critical conversation among all partners to occur. We look forward to participating in that important conversation.

We look forward to partnering with USDA NIFA as we make the adjustments necessary for much needed improvements.