

Association of Northeast Extension Directors

Meeting Notes and Action Items

NEED March Retreat Session 2 – March 6, 2026
12:00 – 2:00 PM ET

Attendance: Amy Harder, Jorge Atilas, Amy Loader, James McKane, Brian Schilling, Erik Ervin, Jenn Volk, Andy Turner, Jeff Hyde, Hannah Carter, Jason Bolton, Lisa Townson, Bill Miller, Lynn McLandsborough, Jinhee Kim, Gulni Ozbay, Chris Callahan, Ali Dunigan,

Agenda item	Action taken/To take
<p>Welcome and NEED Business</p> <p>Brian Schilling offered an addition to the agenda – Discussion of proposed changes with the National Agriculture Statistics Service.</p>	<p>Motion to accept the meeting agenda with the addition of a discussion around the proposed changes to NASS. – B. Schilling/ J. Bolton/Carried</p>
<p>National Agriculture Statistics Service</p> <p>Accessibility for data has gone down as changes to NASS have been implemented. Since becoming regionalized, the Northeast is served out of the Harrisburg PA office. This is OK for someone in NJ, but is not accessible to a person in Maine (for example).</p> <p>There is now a federal conversation about nationalizing the service. This would further erode access, limit staff ability to attend industry events and engage with folks across the county, and otherwise make the information less available and strong.</p> <p>Question: If this is an issue we care about as NEED, should we make a joint statement? Answer: YES.</p> <p>https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2026/02/23/2026-03497/request-for-information-on-opportunities-challenges-and-emerging-areas-in-statistical-data-analysis</p>	<p>Ali will send a note to Rick Rhodes (AgInnovation Northeast) to find someone from AgInnovation to work with Brian Schilling and her to co-author with a submission to the federal request linked below. NEED and NERA will consider the input with the hope that we will submit jointly and separately. NEED members may choose to sample the product for state level input.</p>
<p>Extension Programming and Revenue Generation</p> <p>NEED discussed many elements of this topic through the lenses and questions below. In order to ensure members were comfortable having a robust and open discussion, limited notes were taken. What was made available in the meeting chat follows the formal notes grid.</p>	<p>Ali will resend the link for members to add their program data into the</p>

Part 1: Strategies: Discuss results of fee-based services survey data

- Numerous LGUs did not add information or did not add all of what they have. Therefore, NEED will return to the data at a later date and share it so that folks can use it for benchmarking. Ali will reshare the link to add information.
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1r_GhWkr3Fkw3DrKpug_Vh6bqpfQIjdRABrpfKtvTM/edit?usp=sharing
- Process - What is your process for deciding on fee structures for the programs? How do you assess the full cost of the program and fit the price (or not) to that?
 - o Many different processes.
 - o Consider the value of micro credentialing.
Ex: WVU Mountaineer Micro Academy through safety and health extension.

Part 2: Sponsorship and Advertising: How do you deal with this? How do you navigate the university context to get at these revenue generation opportunities? Examples discussed include...

- UConn – After talking with University Council, UConn Extension will not monetize YouTube videos, BUT the University is open to the perspective of having farm credit east (for example) sponsor a section of a video (pending details).
- UNH – Allows for sponsorship of specific events (like a golf tournament) but otherwise only allow sponsorship for organizations that are involved with or has to do with the programming.
- UDel – Pays for a week of “ag days” through sponsorships. Each sponsor gets a table to display during the huge free public event.
- UVM – Created guidance for the staff handbook. That is copied after the formal notes grid.

Part 3: Navigating perspectives on revenue generation.

- Internal perspectives?
- External perspectives?

Part 4: Competition: During NEED’s January meeting, members discussed how competition for audiences for online programming is inevitable, therefore we need to

intentionally work together on how to navigate this space where collaboration and competition intersect. NEED members agreed that this is a topic to keep an eye on but is not one of concern at this time.	
Adjourn	Motion to adjourn – C. Callahan/B. Schilling/ Carried.

RESOURCES PROVIDED IN CHAT:

Summary generated with light use of AI to assess information provided in the zoom chat.

UVM Extension Lens - Corporate Programming Support for Extension Programs (provided in chat by Chris Callahan)

“Corporate support of Extension programs generally will fall into one of three categories: gifts, sponsorships, or advertising. This summary is not exhaustive and there are many unique ways corporate support of Extension can take form. The way each of these is handled varies within UVM, roughly, as follows:

- Gifts – Corporate gifts are made without expectation of a specific deliverable and without a specific reporting requirement. These are handled through the UVM Foundation with Emily Lappat (emily.lappat@uvm.edu) being the primary contact for Extension
- Advertising - Advertising income is associated with specific placement of corporate branding on programming related materials such as event program booklets, presentation slides, signs, banners, etc. These are handled as contracts and are initiated as a Footprint submitted to the Office of General Counsel.
- Sponsorships - Sponsorships involve a corporation providing funding in support of specific event and program; the funding is being provided so that the event occurs. These are handled as contracts and are initiated as a Footprint submitted to the Office of General Counsel.

It is okay for individual program leaders to explore corporate support leads. If there appears to be an opportunity, the program lead should have a discussion with Extension leadership.”

Internal charges/taxes on revenue-generating accounts:

- **University of Delaware (UD):** No internal "tax" on revenue accounts
- **UMaine Extension:** No centralized service costs currently, though it is under discussion
- **UNH Cooperative Extension:** Not currently charged, but this may change
- **UMass Amherst:** No college or university charge for programming fees, though credit card processing fees do apply
- **UConn (Amy Harder):** College charges 15% to non-Extension revenue-generating accounts; Extension programs have so far avoided this charge.

Volunteer Background Checks:

- **UNH (James McKane):** Background checks are required for **all** Extension volunteers. The level of check depends on the role — volunteers working with youth, personally identifiable information, financial information, or money require the highest level of screening.

PI (Principal Investigator) Status for Extension Staff:

- **Penn State (Jeffrey Hyde):** By policy, staff classifications (including county educators) cannot serve as PIs without a director-granted exemption. Hyde provides a blanket exemption for outreach/extension grants and reviews research grants case-by-case.
- **Rutgers (Brian Schilling):** Staff can serve as PIs.
- **University of Delaware (Erik Ervin):** Has not faced a PI status battle.
- **UVM (Chris Callahan):** PI status for staff is handled proposal-by-proposal; working with sponsored programs on a multi-year termed agreement.

Salary/Buyout Policies:

- **UConn (Amy Harder):** AAUP faculty are permitted to buy a "13th month."
- **UMass Amherst (Lynne McLandsborough):** Has a buyout policy, but 12-month employees cannot receive additional pay due to union agreements.
- **Rutgers (Brian Schilling):** Same restriction as UMass on additional pay for 12-month employees.

Other Notes:

- **UMaine Extension (Jason Bolton):** Raised LMS (Learning Management System) challenges and opportunities as a topic for future sharing.
- **WVU (Jorge Atilas):** Shared contact information for follow-up on their WVU Mountaineer Micro Academy program. The Safety and Health Extension program leader is **Dr. Mark Fullen** (m.fullen@mail.wvu.edu). A first-year ROI summary document was also shared in the group chat.