

## MEETING MINUTES

**ANR: Research & Extension Centers  
Principal Superintendent of Agricultures' Conference  
TB 140, Davis Campus  
December 4, 2001**

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Attendees: Stan Bergen, Chuck Boldwyn, Jose DeSoto, Bob Keiffer, Don Kirby, David Labadie, Fred Perry, Edwin Scott, Walt Stutsman, and Joanne Watkins

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 a.m. An agenda was not prepared as a handout; however, the following topics were suggested discuss:

- Budget and possible layoffs
- AES review committee in HREC
- Hiring Freeze
- Block Grants
- Income
- Vacant or retiring positions
- Subsidies

### **Center Update**

#### **Desert REC**

- Sugar cane project is currently the largest project, other projects includes alfalfa whitefly resistance, and vegetable trials such as carrots and lettuce
- Two people in physical plant are on sick leave
- Recently hired an Outreach Coordinator who contacts local schools and brings Ag awareness in the Imperial Valley

#### **Hopland REC**

- 50th Anniversary barbeque celebration was held in spring
- Currently average 40 projects many in natural resources category
- The Animal Care and Use Committee revised the sheep management guidelines, and the guidelines are very useful.
- Italian wine grape trials that includes 40+ varieties. Unfortunately the grapes ripen at different times so gathering data is difficult. Pinot Noir was introduced and is very successful in Northern California.

#### **Intermountain REC**

- Due to the water situation at the Center, the staff is trying to accommodate the researchers as best we can.
- Migrant farm workers have left the valley due to unemployment; therefore, the Center staff is doing all the labor.
- New potato grading line
- Installed roads in the new land purchase
- New potato varieties from Europe

**Intermountain REC (continued)**

- New land is uniform and in good shape
- Horseradish farmers had not allowed anyone to enter their farms; however, due to their crop developing brown rot they are now allowing the researchers to help.

**Kearney REC**

- Personnel changes
- Administration reorganization
- Two retirements
- Jim Winter is responsible for administration and EH&S
- Challenges ahead

**Lindcove REC**

- Completion of the Screenhouse expansion for Citrus Clonal Protection Program (CCPP)
- Existing trees are extremely pot bound, most are two years old and need to be rotated
- Completed the utilities for the CCPP
- 35 field projects
- New pumps for pressure washer to wash the fruit at 350 lbs. of pressure
- State-of-the-art donated fruit grader is not operating per manufacturer's promises

**Shafter REC**

- There has been almost a complete turnover of USDA scientists
- Had not had a breeding program in 10 years, and the new scientist will need greenhouses and a Sub-Zero freezer.
- Many auctions in the area due to economy

**Sierra Foothill REC**

- Weed-control program underway
  - Burning is getting great results
- More natural resources projects
- New Animal Science SRA
- So far it's been a good year with the water situation and have good projects

**South Coast REC**

- Major physical plant projects
- Planted three to four acres of avocados
- Three to four acres of citrus to be planted next year

**West Side REC**

- New cotton picker has been a big help
- New alfalfa trial by Ron Vargas
- Planted a row of sugarcane

## Staff Retirement and Extended Leave

The following are the number of people near retirement and on extended leave:

<u>Center</u>	<u>Medical</u>	<u>Retirement*</u>	<u>Open Positions</u>
Desert	2	2	0
Hopland	1	2	0
Intermountain	0	1	0
Kearney	1	2	3
Lindcove	0	0	0
Shafter	0	0	0
Sierra Foothill	0	2	0
South Coast	0	0	0
West Side	1	1	0

\*or near retirement

## Budget

- Governor's budget will come out soon
- Current budget cut is approximately 1%; however, the base is not affected. This will come out of contingency
- State works with projected revenue
- There will be program-by-program cuts, not across the board
- Could have layoff freeze
- If we have 5% to 10% cut
  - Strategic cuts will be made
  - Equity between the Centers, levels of recharge and service will be considered
- If we have a 10% cut
  - Eliminate positions, not necessarily the lower end positions
- It will get worse before it gets better
- We are getting hit faster than the last budget cut in the early '90s
- Collective bargaining has big voice this time
- There's nothing to work with now, and it can be another year before we know anything
- Hiring freeze is in place, but there's a process for exceptions
- We will continue to fill positions

## Block Grants

The money will be released at the same level; however, this money will need to be spent. We have had too much carry forward money in the past; however, carry forward on equipment fund is okay. We currently have \$277,000 in Deferred Maintenance.

## Income

- If it's a sale of commodity, it is farming income
- Annual hunt at HREC is not income, this goes back to HREC
- Pasture rents, building rent, and variety of services should go back to the Center
- SCREC and HREC Cell Tower brings \$18,000 at each site

## Subsidies

Currently there is no farming subsidy policy in place at ANR.

## **Focus Group**

- What are our strengths?
- What are our weaknesses?
- What would make your job easier?

## **Strengths**

- **Staffing**
  - Diversity
  - Experience
  - Maturity
  - Stability
  - Versatility
- **Management Support**
  - Structure
  - Flexibility
  - Sharing Resource
  - Long-Range Planning
  - Research not tied to profit
- **Community Support**
  - Private
  - Industry
  - Internal
  - Cooperative Extension
  - Campus
  - Reputation
  - Credibility
  - Researchers
- **Equipment and Facilities**
  - Good equipments
  - Adequate facilities
  - Location diversity

## **Weaknesses**

The following are the results from the Focus Group discussions:

- **Staff Issues**
  - Mature workforce
    - Productivity
    - Braindrain (when they leave)
    - Cooperation
- **Unable to compete with private industry**
  - Salary
  - Use of staff flexibility
- **Communication problems**
  - Between Centers
    - Administration Office
    - Departments
    - Cooperative Extension
    - Public Outreach

- **Budget**
  - Recharge equity and flexibility (differential between Centers and researchers)
    - Industry support
- **Burden of regulations**
  - Safety regulations
    - Hazardous materials
- **Staffing**
  - Personnel management with problem staff
  - More flexibility with temporary hires (1,000 hours plus)
  - More help
  - Staff dedicated to safety
  - Contracted labor (prevailing wage issues)
- **Policy/Rules**
  - Better documentation/definition of roles/responsibilities
  - Leadership and direction
  - Focus
  - Better understanding of REC AO
  - Less red tape--less written documentation

### **Ways to Make Jobs Easier**

- **Communication**
  - Understanding everyone's role
- **Support**
  - Better computer support
  - Better training and support, e.g., fork lift, safety training, etc.
  - Less program requirements from REC-AO without given resources
  - Generic (canned) training programs from EH&S

### **REC-AO**

- Dave Towle's new appointment as Interim Associate Director was announced; therefore, his old position, Assistant Director, is vacant.
- Dave will be leaving, retiring, in two to three years.
- Our office will rethink the structure--typically an MSO is charged with administration, human resources and business services.

### **Business Services**

- **Purchasing**
  - Credit cards will be available for every account to whoever does the purchasing.
  - Same as DPO limits, up to \$1,500

### **Facilities**

- Shawn Tibor will be busy with upcoming projects, i.e., KREC Greenhouse, DREC Office Lab, LREC and SFREC Conference Rooms.

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Ji Maycon, Recorder