This document is designed for projects/committees proposed and approved by the North Central Regional Association (NCRA). The document is a combination of both national and NCRA guidelines and is in lieu of separate national guidelines and regional supplemental guidelines

(revised 8/7/2017 to account for process changes in NIMSS and other website updates).

GUIDELINES FOR MULTISTATE
RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Developed by the State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors

in cooperation with the

National Institute of Food and Agriculture, USDA (NIFA)

and the

Experiment Station Committee on Organization and Policy (ESCOP)

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MISSION STATEMENT FOR MULTISTATE RESEARCH

The mission of the multistate research program is to enable research on high -priority topics among the State Agricultural Experiment Stations (SAES) in partnership with the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), other research institutions and agencies, and with the Cooperative Extension Service (CES). In this way, technological opportunities and complex problem solving activities which are beyond the scope of a single SAES, can be approached in a more efficient and comprehensive way.

INTRODUCTION

The Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (AREERA) amended the Hatch Act of 1887, the Smith-Lever Act of 1914, and sections 1444 and 1445 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1979 (NARETPA). The amendments require USDA-approved Plans of Work from each of the eligible SAES, prior to the distribution of the formula funding provided under these authorities. The AREERA also amended the Hatch Act to identify the Multistate Research Fund (MRF) (previously named the Regional Research Fund). The amendment specifies that:

> "Not less than 25 percent shall be allotted to the States for cooperative research employing multidisciplinary approaches in which a State agricultural experiment station, working with another State agricultural experiment station, the Agricultural Research Service, or a college or university, cooperates to solve problems that concern more than 1 State. The funds available under this paragraph, together with the funds available under subsection (b) for a similar purpose, shall be designated as the `Multistate Research Fund, State Agricultural Experiment Stations'."

Both the Hatch Act and the Smith-Lever Act were amended to require integrated research and extension activities. The amount to be expended was set at not less than 25 percent, or twice the states' FY 1997 expenditures for integrated activities. The Smith-Lever Act was also amended to require that each institution receiving funds under Sections 3(b) of that Act expend a portion of those funds for a multistate program, beginning in FY 2000.

The AREERA also requires that all formula-funded research (including multistate research) undergo scientific peer review. This review requirement is the responsibility of the individual stations, but this responsibility may be delegated to the regional association of SAES directors from which a multistate activity originates. Guidelines for peer review that are understood to meet this requirement are provided in Appendix C. For purposes of multistate research, a peer review is considered to be an acceptable substitute for merit review.

APPLICABILITY

The following guidelines supersede the previous administrative manual for Regional Research, and interpret the administrative guidance developed by NIFA for consistent implementation of procedures by participating SAES and other cooperators. In addition, this document incorporates/merges the national and NCRA guidelines.

The 1890 and 1994 Land-Grant Universities are not required in the AREERA to have any multistate research or any integrated research and extension activities. Also, the 1862 Land-Grant Universities of American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Micronesia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands are exempted from the integrated research and extension activity requirements. However, any of these institutions may voluntarily participate in these types of activities.

ORGANIZATION

The regional associations of SAES directors serve as coordinating entities for multistate research activities. The intent is to bring institutions together, plan for identification of problems and opportunities that can be addressed through multistate collaboration, and plan for shared use of resources. These regional associations are made up of the SAES directors of the following states and territories:

North Central Regional Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

Northeastern Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors: Connecticut (two stations), Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York (two stations), Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and West Virginia.

Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Western Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors: Alaska, American Samoa, Arizona, California, Colorado, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Micronesia, The Northern Mariana Islands, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

These guidelines are intended to provide recommendations on the organization and operation of multistate research activities. For region-specific information on implementation procedures go to the regional associations' home pages at the following URLs:

North Central   http://ncra.info

Northeastern   http://www.nerasaes.org

Southern   http://saaesd.ncsu.edu

Western   http://www.waaesd.org

For more general information, go to the NIFA home page at the following URL:

NIFA   http://www.nifa.usda.gov

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

NIFA: The Secretary of Agriculture is responsible for the administration of the multistate research program and has delegated this responsibility to NIFA. In addition to promulgating rules and regulations for carrying out the program, NIFA is responsible for providing the leadership for the program at the national level and provides administrative oversight and authorization for the individual and collective, federally supported activities of the SAES.

SAES Directors: SAES directors have primary responsibility for the multistate research program in their respective states and for determining the most effective use of federal and non-federal funds in support of multistate research. The directors are responsible for peer reviews of all proposed projects. For MRF projects and certain other activities, peer review is delegated to the regional associations of SAES directors. They also authorize their station's representatives to multistate research activities and determine the resources to be committed [in terms of financial support, and for human resources (SYs, PYs, and TYs)]. They are expected to document all expenditures through appropriate reporting mechanisms. The directors are required to submit CRIS Forms AD-416, AD-417, AD-419, and AD-421 to document their station's participation in, and contributions to, multistate research projects.

It is the responsibility of each Experiment Station Director to monitor their faculty members' participation in multistate projects. Although it is preferred that all participants be involved prior to the writing stage of new projects, it will occasionally be necessary to add a participant to an active project. After an Experiment Station Director approves a faculty member to join a project, it is the responsibility of the AA to facilitate incorporation of the new member into that project. If a concern arises regarding a member's participation in a project, the AA should discuss this concern with the member. If the concern is not resolved, the AA should discuss the member's participation with that member's Experiment Station Director. It is the responsibility of that Director to take whatever action is appropriate relative to that member's future participation.

Regional SAES Directors' Associations: The regional associations are responsible for obtaining (either directly or indirectly) information from organized stakeholder listening activities, establishing the region's research priorities, managing their region's research portfolio, and for establishing partnerships with appropriate entities. The associations are responsible for assuring, through peer reviews, the quality of the science conducted, and the relevance of multistate research activities to stakeholder needs. Regional associations delegate responsibilities to administrative advisors (AA) that ensure the efficient and effective conduct of multistate research and other regional activities.

Each of the SAES Regional Associations maintains a regional association office administered by an Executive Director who coordinates all aspects of the multistate research program. This office is an information resource for Administrative Advisors, committee chairs, and committee members in the development and implementation of multistate activities. The location of these offices can be found on the respective association www homepages (refer to previous page).

Administrative Advisors: An AA is appointed for each multistate research project, coordinating committee, education/extension and research activity, and advisory committee. The AA is responsible for facilitating communication, making arrangements for peer reviews of proposals, if appropriate, applying the appropriate national and regional policies, assuring the

quality of the governance of that activity, authorizing annual and other meetings, ensuring that the reporting requirements of the activity are fulfilled, and facilitating the conduct of an activity's business.

Representative from NIFA: A national program leader (NPL) is assigned by the Administrator of NIFA as the Agency's representative to each multistate research project, coordinating committee, or other activity for involvement beginning with the earliest stages of organization. NIFA representatives provide a national perspective to individual projects or other activities and to the regional associations by assisting in reviews of their multistate research portfolios. NIFA representatives also assist in assuring that a multistate research activity does not represent duplication of effort. In addition, NIFA representatives are responsible for providing communication from and to the federal partner and provide administrative reviews of projects or activity proposals. They also monitor, in conjunction with the AA, the progress and accomplishments of the project. The nature and extent of such involvement by representatives of NIFA greatly facilitates the process for review and approval of projects and other activities.

Regional Multistate Research Committee: Each regional association of directors may choose to have a multistate research committee or subcommittee. This entity may be delegated the responsibility for either approving or recommending to the membership project or activity development, and the evaluation of the progress of all approved activities.

Committee Membership: It is very important that the membership of the NC and NCCC/NCERA committees be inclusive rather than exclusive. Committees should include the scientific expertise to ensure the breadth and depth to address the complex issues facing the North Central Region. North Central multistate committees are national, if not international, in research scope. Therefore, membership from other regions and countries, particularly Canada and Mexico, as well as private sector scientists, and/or commodity organizations is encouraged. The nature and complexity of the problem being investigated coupled with the expertise required to develop solutions should be the primary factors in determining membership.

Representation should include the project leaders or scientists directly engaged on the project. More than one representative of a participating SAES, agency, or institution may serve on a committee where the scope of the multistate project involves more than one subject-matter discipline, or, in the case of the federal agency, involves contributing projects from different laboratories, areas or regions. Other agencies and institutions may participate at the invitation of the administrative advisor. Non-voting consultants may be invited by the administrative advisor, as appropriate.

TYPES OF MULTISTATE RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Multistate Research Projects: The membership of a Multistate Research Project is called the technical committee, and is made up of SAES scientists, an AA, NIFA representative, other public and private sector scientists, and as applicable, extension specialists and/or extension agents. This type of activity involves cooperative, jointly planned research employing multidisciplinary approaches in which a SAES, working with other SAESs, the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), or a college or university, cooperates to solve problems that concern

more than one state and usually more than one region. In addition, the following must be demonstrated in the project proposal:

1. The objectives are clearly focused.

2. Each participant listed has direct involvement in the accomplishment of the stated objectives.

3. The project is multistate and multidisciplinary

4. The project proposal has been peer-reviewed.

5. The proposed project is oriented toward accomplishment of specific outcomes and impacts and based on priorities developed from stakeholder input.

6. The project is responsive to NIFA goals.

NC Projects: The "engine" of the multistate research program is the collection of funded, technical committees. In the North Central Region, these are referred to as NC committees and the associated projects as NC projects. The format for Multistate Research Projects appears in Appendix A. The guidelines and criteria for NC projects are described in the Prioritization Process document (Appendix A-1). Steps for development and approval of Multistate Research projects are described in the AA checklist and proposal time line (Appendix O). Forms to be completed are discussed under Reporting. The format for meeting minutes is shown in Appendix Q. Projects are reviewed, in most cases, every five years with a midterm review within the third year of existence. Instructions and deadlines for setting up all NC multistate projects can be found online at https://www.ncra-saes.org/multistate-handbook.

Multistate Research Coordinating Committees (CC) and Education/Extension and Research Activity (ERA): The membership of a CC or an ERA is made up of an AA, NIFA representative, scientists, and as applicable, extension specialists and/or extension agents. A CC or ERA provides opportunity for scientists, specialists, and others to work cooperatively to solve problems that concern more than one state, share research data, and coordinate research and other types of activities. This is presently one of the most common mechanisms for functionally integrated activities such as the regional IPM programs. The format for requesting establishment of a CC or ERA appears in Appendix B. These activities are reviewed and approved by the sponsoring regional association. (Appendices J and K are suggested as guidelines for regional associations). The steps for development and approval of Multistate Research CCs and ERAs are described in Appendix N.

> **NCCC Committees:** In the NCRA, CCs are referred to as NCCC Committees and provide a mechanism for addressing critical regional issues where multistate coordination or information exchange is appropriate within a function (ie. research, education or extension); have expected outcomes; convey knowledge; and are peer reviewed. The format for NCCC projects appears in Appendix B. These activities are reviewed and approved by the sponsoring regional association. (Appendices J and K are suggested as guidelines for regional associations). The steps for development and approval of CCs are described in the AA checklist and proposal time line (Appendix O). The duration of the committee can be up to five years. Membership of the committee is comprised of scientists appointed by participating state research and extension directors, as appropriate. There is one voting member per SAES, but participation by others is an option of each director. Meetings are

held annually, with provisions for interim meetings upon authorization by the administrative advisor. Minutes are required 60 days after the meeting. (See Appendix Q for an example of minutes.) The review and approval procedures and deadlines for NCCC committees are the same as for NC projects except that the request format is different and requests are limited to three pages.

NCERA Committees: In the NCRA, ERAs are referred to as NCERA Committees and serve to integrate education (academic and/or extension) and research on a particular topic where multistate coordination or information exchange is appropriate; have expected outcomes; convey knowledge; and are peer reviewed. The format for NCERA projects appears in Appendix B. These activities are reviewed and approved by the sponsoring regional association. (Appendices J and K are suggested as guidelines for regional associations). The steps for development and approval of NCERAs are described in the AA checklist and proposal time line (Appendix O). The duration of the committee can be up to five years. Membership of the committee is comprised of scientists appointed by participating state research and extension directors, as appropriate. There is one voting member per SAES, but participation by others is an option of each director. Meetings are held annually, with provisions for interim meetings upon authorization by the administrative advisor. Minutes are required 60 days after the meeting. (See Appendix Q for an example of minutes.) The review and approval procedures and deadlines for NCERA committees are the same as for NC projects except that the request format is different and requests are limited to three pages.

National Research Support Projects (NRSP): NRSPs are made up of four AAs (one appointed from each SAES regional association), a NIFA representative, and scientists from SAES and elsewhere, as appropriate. This type of activity focuses on the development of enabling technologies, support activities (such as to collect, assemble, store, and distribute materials, resources and information), or the sharing of facilities needed to accomplish high priority research, but which is not of itself primarily research. NRSPs are eligible for off-the-top funding.

Specific guidelines for NRSPs have been adopted and may be found at the following website: http://escop.info

Development Committees (NCDC):

NCDC – Regular: Scientists from two or more states may initiate a proposal for a development committee with concurrence of two or more NC SAES directors. The duration of the committee is one to two years. These committees generally are charged to prepare a justification and a proposal outline for a new multistate activity. Membership of the committee is comprised of an AA and scientists appointed by participating state research and extension directors, as appropriate.

NCDC – Proposal: An NCDC-Proposal serves as a platform for development of a multi-state or regional competitive grant proposal for submission to AFRI, NSF, NIH or other programs. Establishment of the committee needs the concurrence of three or more SAES directors and has duration of not more than two years. Membership of the committee is comprised of an AA, preferably the director from the lead institution on the proposal team, and scientists who intend to collaborate on development of the

competitive grant proposal. The committee must have representation from three or more states working collaboratively on the grant proposal. The expected outcome is a grant proposal submitted to a regional or national competitive program involving collaboration among three or more states with a minimum budget of $1M per year. Should the committee not reach consensus on the development of a regional proposal, a summary report of activities is expected in lieu of the proposal. The committee chair is expected to submit a copy of the submitted proposal or the summary of activities to the MRC within 30 days after the grant program due date. A proposal submission or summary report would terminate the committee. Committee activities could be extended beyond the normal two-year period if the submitted proposal was not funded but received good reviews and encouragement for resubmission. Grant proposals and their reviews should be submitted to the MRC for renewal consideration.

Meetings will be held as needed to support the development of the proposal. The NCRA office would assist the committee in scheduling meetings, conference calls, etc. A host institution would take responsibility for local arrangements of meetings. Each state AES represented on the committee is expected to cover the travel cost of its representative(s) to the committee meeting. Costs associated with travel to committee meetings, meeting support and proposal are allowable multi-state Hatch expenditures.

Rapid Response Research Activity: The purpose of rapid response research (Series-500/ NC-500) activities is to provide a mechanism to assure responsiveness to acute crises, emergencies, and opportunities using the multistate research approach and MRF. Activities may range from formally organized research on targeted objectives to very informal research coordination or information exchange activity, depending on the circumstances. To create a rapid response activity, directors from two or more SAES must agree to form the activity. The proposal is a report of intent which is submitted to the regional association's chair (usually through the ED's office). The Chair of the regional association approves the project and serves as the AA to the project or assigns that responsibility to another director. Neither NIFA nor regional association approval is required. If NIFA does not respond within five working days, the project will be approved. It would not require review by either the appropriate North Central Administrative Committee (NCA) (committee of department heads/chairs) or the NCRA. The technical committee for a Rapid Response Research activity is made up of an AA, NIFA representative, research scientists, and as applicable, extension specialists and/or extension agents. These activities have two years from the date of initiation to convert to an association sanctioned activity; thus, the technical committee has the option, at a later date, to obtain approval as a multistate research project or other multistate research activity, through normal procedures. The format for requesting the establishment of a Rapid Response Research Activity appears in Appendix F. Steps for development of a rapid response research project or activity are described in Appendix N.

Integrated Multistate Activities: Any of the above types of activities may be suitable as an integrated activity with CES. Extension specialists and agents may be invited to participate in any activity deemed appropriate by the responsible research and extension directors. The sponsoring regional association of SAES or CES Directors will document extension's participation. It is the responsibility of CES Directors to document expenditures through appropriate reporting mechanisms.

Research Advisory Committees: An advisory committee is most commonly made up of university department heads/chairs, or other institutional managers, along with an AA and sometimes an agency representative. Advisory committees provide stakeholder linkages, technical advice and review to regional associations. These committees operate under the purview of regional associations and in the NCRA, these are called NCACs.

NCACs: The principal responsibilities of NCACs are to advise the directors on multistate research priorities; to review ongoing multistate research and proposals for new multistate projects/committees; and to advise the directors on overall quality control for the program of multistate research. Committees are made up of department-level administrators. The duration of the committee is indefinite. Meetings are held annually, with the provision of interim meetings upon authorization by the administrative advisor. Meeting minutes are required 60 days after the meeting. The committee reports to the MRC and NCRA regarding status and recommended action to be taken on existing and proposed multistate committees. The committees' functions are to identify priority areas for multistate research; perform critical evaluation of ongoing multistate research; information exchange, coordination, planning on matters of common concern; and others as may be appropriate to mission of conducting multistate research. Each year, NCACs will:

- Rate all ongoing projects/committees under their purview.
- Identify apparent duplication in the multistate research program.
- Characterize future multistate research needs.
- Review proposals for NC and NCCC/NCERA activities.
- Review requests for continuation of ongoing activities.
- Conduct critical midterm evaluations of NC projects and NCCC/NCERAs during the third year of existence.

NCACs must receive requests for such reviews from NC and NCCC/NCERA administrative advisors by December 1 (NCACs usually meet in January/February).

NC projects will be reviewed critically by the NCAC(s) during the **third year of existence**. This input, including an evaluation of progress toward objectives, quality of science, and scientist participation and meeting attendance, will be based on:

- SAES-422 (Appendix D)
- Meeting minutes (Appendix P)
- Administrative advisor evaluations (Appendix I)

The midterm evaluation of NC projects by NCAC(s) should be shared with the chair of the project; the administrative advisor; the chair of the MRC and the Office of the Executive Director. NCAC inputs must reach the Directors' MRC three weeks before the spring NCRA meeting. Recommendations to the MRC regarding requests for revisions of projects will be based on this review plus other information made available to the NCAC(s).

Requests to the MRC for new NC committees will require appropriate NCAC recommendations. These must reach the MRC three weeks before any given MRC meeting.

NCCC/NCERA committees will be evaluated by NCAC(s) during the **third year of existence**. This input, including an evaluation of progress toward objectives and scientist participation, will be based on meeting minutes and other information provided. Critical

midterm evaluations of NCCC/NCERA projects by NCACs should be shared as directed for NC projects. These must reach the MRC three weeks before the spring NCRA meeting. Recommendations to the MRC regarding requests for revisions of committees will be based on this evaluation, the revised objectives, and other information made available to the NCAC(s).

DESCRIPTIONS AND REGIONAL DESIGNATIONS
OF MULTISTATE ACTIVITIES

Description	Northeast Region	North Central Region	Southern Region	Western Region
Multistate Research Project Projects that involve integrated, potentially interdisciplinary, and multistate activities; have expected outcomes, including original research results; convey knowledge; and are peer reviewed.	**NE-xxx**	**NC-xxx**	**S-xxx**	**W-xxx**
500 Series Committees formed, for a maximum of two years, to provide a mechanism for response to acute crises, emergencies, and opportunities using the multistate research approach. Activities may range from formally organized research on targeted objectives to very informal research coordination or information exchange activity, depending on the circumstances; have expected outcomes; convey knowledge; and are peer reviewed.	**NE-5xx**	**NC-5xx**	**S-5xx**	**W-5xx**
National Research Support Project (NRSP) Activities that focuses on the development of enabling technologies, support activities (such as to collect, assemble, store, and distribute materials, resources and information), or the sharing of facilities needed to accomplish high priority research, but which is not of itself primarily research; funded through off-the-top MRF Hatch appropriations; and are peer reviewed.	**NRSP-xx**	**NRSP-xx**	**NRSP-xx**	**NRSP-xx**
Coordinating Committees Activities that provide a mechanism for addressing critical regional issues where multistate coordination or information exchange is appropriate within a function (ie. research, education or extension); have expected outcomes; convey knowledge; and are peer reviewed.	**NECC-xxx**	**NCCC-xxx**	**SCC-xxx**	**WCC-xxx**

Education/Extension and Research Activity Activities that serve to integrate education (academic and/or extension) and research on a particular topic where multistate coordination or information exchange is appropriate; have expected outcomes; convey knowledge; and are peer reviewed.	**NEERA-xxx**	**NCERA-xxx**	**SERA-xxx**	**WERA-xxx**
Development Committee Committees of duration less than two years for the purpose of developing a Multistate Activity (or grant proposal for NCDC – Proposal Committees); have the expected outcome of a full proposal for a particular Multistate Activity; and are peer reviewed.	**NEDC-xxx**	**NCDC-xxx**	**SDC-xxx**	**WDC-xxx**
Advisory Committee Committees of department chairs/heads from a particular discipline that exchange information and serve a multistate administrative function through review of multistate activities, but are not peer reviewed.	**NEAC-xx**	**NCAC-xx**	**SAC-xx**	**WAC-xx**

GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

In order to facilitate the organization and operation of the national multistate research portfolio the four participating regional associations of SAES directors have agreed to the following policies and procedures.

Participation

- The portfolio of projects and other activities should reflect the needs of the region's stakeholders and the priorities derived from those expressions of need. Inasmuch as the collective SAES system is to operate as a national network, any SAES is free to address its priorities through participation in the projects that are sponsored by any of the other regional associations.
- Membership to multistate research activities (but not access to formula funding) is open to all SAES scientists, Extension educators, and others who are in a position to contribute to that activity. This should be seen as encouragement to committees to reach out to others when organizing an activity, recognizing that the multistate research authority is a unique and powerful organizing principle.
- Requests to join an on-going multistate research project must originate with the administrator of the proposed member's institution; in the case of an SAES that would be the director; for a private laboratory that might be the scientists' supervisor. For ARS scientists, ARS administrators have vested the authority to participate in multistate research activities with the scientist him or herself. This correspondence must include the information required in Appendix E. The request is forwarded to the AA who will consult with the technical committee to arrange for implementation. The AA working with the ED's office of the sponsoring regional association and NIFA will arrange for completing the necessary documentation.
- The information requested in Appendix E, "Format for Projected Participation Reporting," shall be a required component in all proposals for multistate research activities. This information:
    1. Demonstrates that an activity is multistate, multidisciplinary, and appropriately, integrated.
    2. Demonstrates that the classification of a multistate research activity relates to the federal-state partnership's five goals, which in turn relates to the state-based Plans of Work. This form will be used by the respective association's Multistate Research Committee for review as per Appendix H.
    3. Identifies the objectives in which each person will be a participant.

Governance

- It is recommended that there be one standard type of governance for all multistate research activities with the election of a chair, a chair-elect, and a secretary. It is encouraged that officers are to be elected for two-year terms to provide continuity. Administrative guidance will be provided by an assigned AA.
- All decisions by a committee will be made in an open and democratic process. To ensure fairness in decision making, voting is restricted to one vote per respective entity; an entity being a SAES, CES, federal agency, private sector representative, etc.
- One AA will represent the sponsoring regional association, having management oversight

responsibilities for that activity. Eligibility for serving as an AA is determined by the sponsoring regional association. All appointments as an AA rest with the authority of the sponsoring regional association. In the case of NRSPs, one AA from each region shall be appointed, with one of those to be designated as the lead AA.

Project Formats (submitted via NIMSS (www.nimss.org)

- Common multistate research activity proposal formats are used by SAES and the regional associations (refer to Appendices A, B, and F for proposal formats).

- The standard format for all printed materials is Times New Roman, in 12-point font size.

Reporting

SAES-422: The AA of each multistate research activity will submit an annual SAES-422 (see Appendix D) to highlight the collective outputs, outcomes, and possible impacts resulting from an activity. The AA is responsible for ensuring that an SAES-422 is submitted but is not responsible for generating the SAES-422.

In lieu of the SAES-422, NCDC - Proposal Projects are required to submit a copy of the completed grant proposal submitted as an outcome of their effort. If no proposal was submitted the committee chair is to submit a summary of activities. Either the proposal or the summary of activities is to be submitted to the MRC within 30 days of the grant program due date.

Project Impact Statements: Effective 10/1/2013, the NCRA no longer requires impact statement submission for both new proposal submission and midterm reviews. Impact statements are now being created at project termination by the national impact writer, employed through WAAESD and NRSP-1.

However, an important source of information in formulating these impact and research needs statements comes from the SAES-422 forms, which are required of ALL NCRA projects. We encourage all committees to submit thorough annual reports in a timely manner (within 60 days of the annual meeting), with a focus on outcomes, impacts, external funding leveraged, and publications.

Peer Reviews

Peer review will be conducted following the guidelines (refer to Appendices C and G) and certified in the state Plan of Work.

Off-the-Top Funding

Decisions on national off-the-top funding are made at the annual meeting of the Experiment Station Section (ESS). Eligibility for voting is defined as one vote per member station.

Project Number Changes

The NCRA has a policy of not changing project numbers upon renewal. However, if you wish to have a number change, please let the NCRA office know at the time you request to write the renewal proposal.

One-Year Extensions

Effective May 2013, one-year extensions are no longer allowed by NIFA/USDA. Contact the NCRA office about this directly. Given sufficient justification, we may be able to offer an extension of several months.

Project Term Length

Any multistate research project may be approved for a period of time appropriate to the activities to be performed. Most importantly, the initial proposal should set out the intended outcomes and set intermediate milestones for judging progress. Normally the time allowed would be for five years, but a regional association is not bound to that amount of time. For example, a plant-breeding project may need to be approved for 15 years. The ultimate responsibility for monitoring the performance and results of a multistate research project rests with the sponsoring regional association of SAES Directors. It is recommended that periodic (e.g., every three to five years) and/or midterm evaluations be conducted for all types of multistate research activities.

Project Amendments

Changes in an on-going project which cannot be handled by individual state or agency addenda should be effected by amendments to the approved Multistate Research Project proposal. These are approved in the same manner as new projects or revisions. The amendment will be added to the original project proposal as an attachment. The amendment should also be reflected in the SAES-422 annual report as part of the minutes of the annual meeting. Note: NIFA must approve any changes to the title and/or objectives of a proposal.

Information Management

The process for record keeping for multistate research management shall be an electronic (paperless) management system identified as the National Information Management and Support System (NIMSS). NIMSS is a web application that allows the management of the Multistate Research Activities in a paperless environment. It is an information technology tool that facilitates the submission of proposals, reports and reviews online. NIMSS also serves as the central repository of records pertaining to multistate research projects and activities since September 2003. Information can be accessed anywhere, anytime at www.nimss.org. This link is also available on each region's homepage.

Publications

As a general principle, the NCRA encourages projects to generate publications from its efforts and encourages multi-authored and multidisciplinary publications. Also, the AA of a project must be able to demonstrate that the publication has been submitted to a peer review process. For peer-reviewed journal papers, the peer review process of the journal suffices. Another mechanism for peer review is using appropriate NCAC(s) to perform the review. Additionally, the project participants must determine how the cost of publication is to be covered. Two unacceptable methods for covering publication costs are invoicing participating stations without prior approval and adding a surcharge to the registration for a meeting of the project. The publication will be identified in the project's NIMSS project/activity homepage and, if web-based, will be posted there.

PROJECT APPROVAL

Multistate Research Projects: Upon approval of a multistate research project by the sponsoring regional association (see Appendix H), the Chair of that association's Multistate Research Committee, through the ED's office, will submit the proposal with cover correspondence (see Appendix M) to NIFA certifying compliance with the requirements of AREERA and NIFA. These requirements are:

- Multistate (i.e., results benefiting two or more states)
- Multidisciplinary/cooperative
- Peer-reviewed
- Clearly focused objectives
- Each participant listed has direct involvement in the accomplishment of objectives
- Orientation on outcomes and impacts
- Based on priorities developed from stakeholder input
- Project is responsive to NIFA goals

NIFA will then, in turn, authorize expenditure of MRF through notification to each participating entity.

MEETING AUTHORIZATION AND LOCATION: NCRA projects may authorize one meeting per year. Committees that fail to meet annually will be terminated.

In special circumstances, committees may meet two times within one calendar year. Examples of exceptions include a committee meeting in conjunction with a national conference or a committee wishing to change their annual meeting rotation. SAES directors have the ultimate say in funding participants from their own stations who attend more than one meeting per year. If the SAES director is not willing to support a participant's attendance at two meetings in one calendar year, the participant should plan to find other funding.

The administrative advisor may not authorize a meeting prior to submitting the SAES-422 of the previous year in NIMSS. The SAES-422 is to be submitted within 60 days of an annual meeting.

Normally, North Central multistate projects will be held at locations within the region. However, there is both merit and wisdom in conducting meetings in locations within and outside the region that offer unique opportunities to the attendees. Examples include the following:

- Meeting jointly with committee(s) from other regions;
- Meeting at unique sites with special facilities, such as biotrons;
- Meeting at national centers or in Washington, D.C. to attract scientists and others with mutual interests that may enhance the success of the meeting.

With the approval of the administrative advisor, multistate meetings may be held in Canada or Mexico without advanced approval of the MRC/NCRA. However, these out-of-country meetings will be subject to individual station policies and NIFA should be informed in advance.

When selecting a meeting site, the committee should be sensitive to the membership (geography) and objectives of the committee, costs associated with a meeting site, the unique opportunities listed above and the perception or image that may be given to those who have oversight

responsibility for the expenditure of federal and state funds.

General Guidelines for Requesting and Authorizing Meetings Outside the Country

- Meeting internationally must enhance the efforts of the NCRA committee toward completing its objectives and there must be evidence of direct impact. There must be more than just gaining experience/knowledge or to participate in an international scientific meeting. The individual NCRA committee requesting travel to an international meeting site should document the enhancement in completion of its objectives and the direct impacts. This is the primary criterion for authorizing NCRA committee meetings outside the country.
- Each request for international travel by an NCRA committee will be considered on an individual basis by the MRC and by the NCRA. Approval by the MRC and NCRA is required. NCRA committees need to plan ahead and prepare justification for international travel.
- When considering requesting an international site for an NCRA committee meeting, please be prudent with regard to cost and appearance.
- Travel to Mexico and Canada, states (Alaska and Hawaii) and territories is not considered international travel for NCRA committees. **Not**e: *Individual State Agricultural Experiment Stations or institutions may consider these as international sites.*
- Travel support for participating scientists and the level of travel funding is at the discretion of the individual state's AES director. The NCRA committee may want to suggest some guidelines relative to support level and breakdown of costs as part of the justification.

REPORTING

Attention has been given to limiting reporting requirements to those needed to meet the requirements of AREERA as interpreted through discussion between NIFA and the SAES.

REEport/CRIS Forms: Forms approved by NIFA [the AD Series (-416, -417, -419, and -421) and others] will serve as the basis for planning, implementing and reporting an individual participant's contribution to a multistate activity. SAES directors will continue to be responsible for submitting appropriate forms at the initiation of an approved multistate project as described in these guidelines.

SAES-422 (Appendix D): SAES-422: The AA for each multistate research activity with assistance of its members submits an annual SAES-422 (Appendix D) report to highlight the milestone accomplishments, collective outputs, outcomes, and possible impacts resulting from an activity. The report is due 60 calendar days following the annual meeting. This annual report should also include minutes of meetings or citation of their location (URL) if they are to be found at a website for the activity. The SAES-422 is intended to facilitate a participating station's Plan of Work accomplishments reporting, and should assist national activities that document the contributions of multistate activities. The locations of record for the SAES-422 reports will be the National Information Management and Support System (NIMSS). The AA enters SAES-422 reports directly into NIMSS.

Beginning in Federal Fiscal Year 2003, the NCRA requests that Annual Reports and meeting minutes be submitted using the SAES-422 format. This form is available on the <u>National</u>

Information Management and Support System (NIMSS) main menu under **"Reports/Meetings"** > **"Draft/Edit."** A participant must have editing authorization in NIMSS to submit the SAES-422 report. This access may be assigned ONLY by the Administrative Advisor or System Administrator. See https://www.ncra-saes.org/multistate-handbook for information on how to assign an editor to a project.

Please note that the reporting requirements now apply to **ALL** NCRA projects/committees (NC, NCCC/NCERA, NCDC, and NCAC). Filing the SAES-422 form in NIMSS allows all committee/project reports to be uniform in style and content. It also allows all participants and administration in the MRF portfolio to utilize NIMSS to its fullest potential, making the information easily accessible throughout the country.

NCDC - Proposal Committees are the only exception to this rule. In lieu of the SAES-422, NCDC - Proposal Projects are required to submit a copy of the completed grant proposal submitted as an outcome of their effort. If no proposal was submitted the committee chair is to submit a summary of activities. Either the proposal or the summary of activities is to be submitted to the MRC within 30 days of the grant program due date.

Furthermore, as of May 1, 2005, the NCRA now **REQUIRES** submission of the SAES-422 form **BEFORE** authorization of the next year's annual meeting by the committee's Administrative Advisor. Those committees who fail to submit the SAES-422 may face early termination for failing to meet the reporting guidelines. NIMSS will not allow meeting authorization without a fully submitted and AA approved report from all previous meetings.

For more information on filling out an SAES-422 form, please refer to Preparing an Effective SAES-422 Report by David R. McKenzie, Thomas J. Helms, Daryl Lund, and H. Michael Harrington.

Orientation on Outcomes/Impacts: Activities approved for expenditure of MRF are to be organized around research outcomes/impacts. This reflects the intent of Congress, as stated in the purposes of agricultural research and education in the AREERA, and is expected to give more focus to the activity's intended objectives. The outcome/impact expectations are reflected in the recommended multistate research activity proposal formats (Appendices A, B, and F).

Annual Evaluations: NIFA will use the individual station's annual SAES Plan of Work reports on accomplishments and results and the SAES-422 reports to evaluate the success of multistate research activities.

Procedure for Early Termination of Projects: Early termination of a multistate project/committee is not a common occurrence but it is sometimes appropriate. Any early termination must be justified by the NCRA. Reasons for termination must be openly communicated to members of the terminated project, its associated "NCAC" committee(s) and the NCRA. Formal termination reports are filed on SAES-422 (Appendix D).

Termination Reports: For the last year of an activity the SAES-422 may serve as both the final year annual report and the termination report. The emphasis in the final annual report should be on the accumulative accomplishments and impacts of the research over the duration of the project. The Committee is responsible for preparing the termination report, and the Administrative Advisor is responsible for submission of the report. Termination reports should

be distributed through the same process as annual reports using the National Information Management and Support System (NIMSS) and should be submitted no later that March 31 of the year following termination. Termination reports are NOT required by the NCRA for NCCCs or NCERAs.

COMMITTEE GOVERNANCE

Chair: The chair of the committee is responsible for organizing the meeting agenda, conducting the meeting, and assuring that task assignments are completed. It is encouraged that the chair be elected for at least a two-year term to provide continuity. Chairs are eligible for reelection.

Chair-elect: The chair-elect normally succeeds the chair, and is expected to support the chair by carrying out duties assigned by the chair. The chair-elect serves as the chair in the absence of the elected chair. Normally the chair-elect is elected for at least two years. The chair-elect is eligible for reelection.

Secretary: The secretary is responsible for the distribution of documents prior to the meeting and is responsible for keeping records on decisions made at meetings (a.k.a. keeping the minutes). Normally, the secretary prepares the accomplishments report (i.e., the SAES-422). The secretary normally succeeds the chair-elect. Secretaries are eligible for reelection.

Members: In addition to carrying out the agreed research collaboration, research coordination, information exchange, or advisory activities, project members are responsible for reporting progress, contributing to the ongoing progress of the activity, and communicating their accomplishments to the committee's members and their respective employing institutions.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AA	Administrative Advisor
AC	Advisory Committee
AREERA	Agricultural Research, Extension and Education Reform Act of 1998
ARS	Agricultural Research Service, USDA
CC	Coordinating Committee
CES	Cooperative Extension Service
CRIS	Current Research Information System, USDA
NIFA	National Institute for Food and Agriculture, USDA
DC	Development Committee
ED	Executive Director
ERA	Education/Extension and Research Activity
ESCOP	Experiment Station Committee on Organization and Policy
ESS	Experiment Station Section
FFY	Federal Fiscal Year
FY	Fiscal Year
GPRA	Government Performance and Results Act of 1993
MRF	Multistate Research Fund
NIMSS	National Information Management and Support System
NRSP	National Research Support Project
PY	Professional Year

SAES	State Agricultural Experiment Station(s)
SY	Scientist Year
TY	Technical Year
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture

GLOSSARY

Activity - A generic term to indicate a research project or extension program. The ambiguity of this term allows research and extension directors to coordinate intent without disagreement on terms.

Administrative Advisor - A research administrator that has been delegated the responsibility by his or her regional association to represent the association's responsibilities for a multistate research project, coordinating committee, information exchange group, or advisory committee. Usually the administrative advisor is a current director of an SAES, or, as allowed by individual regional associations, may be an extension director, a department head, or ARS administrator.

Base Funds - A term synonymous with formula funds, but preferred by some research managers as less pejorative.

Coordinating Committee - An authorized group of research scientists and extension agents working on a topic area of shared interests, with coordinated activities and the exchange of outputs (unifunctional).

Development Committee – An authorized group of scientists charged to evaluate the benefit and, if appropriate, to develop a project/activity within the scope of the multistate research fund. The NCRA also now offers NCDC for preparing external grant proposals.

Education/Extension and Research Activity - An authorized group of scientist, extension specialists and agents, and/or teach faculty working collectively (multifunctional) on a top of shared interested, with coordinated activities and exchange of outputs.

Electronic Signatures - Administrative authorizations of decisions and approvals for actions, sent electronically as accepted substitutes for pen-and-ink signatures.

Formula Funds - As authorized by the Hatch Act of 1887, annual federal appropriations that are distributed to states based on state agricultural profiles.

Full-Time Equivalent - A management term used to express time commitment or appointment of people. For example, 0.5 FTE is a one-half-time appointment. FTEs are commonly summed to express amounts of time commitment, such that two one-half-time appointments working on a similar activity are termed 1.0 FTE.

Function - Teaching, research and outreach are the three functions of a land-grant university. In some uses teaching and extension are referred to as education. Extension and continuing education are often referred to as outreach.

Hatch Funds - Payments to State Agricultural Experiment Stations authorized by the Hatch Act of 1887 to provide support for carrying out the purposes of the federal-state partnership in agricultural research. Hatch funding requires an equal state match.

Impact - The economic, social, health, or environmental consequences derived as benefits for the intended users. These are usually quantitatively measured either directly or indirectly as indicators of benefits. (An example of an impact would be improved human nutrition for so many individuals through genetically engineering rice to contain the precursors to vitamin A.)

Indicators - Surrogate measures of research outcomes or benefits, often used when directly measuring research outcomes or benefits would not be feasible. (For example, an indicator of improved water quality might be the increased use of biological control technologies in crop agriculture.)

Input - Resources assigned to a project, program, or activity, usually in the form of finances, human resources, and equipment.

Matching Funds - The Hatch Act of 1887 (as amended) requires that the Hatch formula funds be matched one-to-one with non-federal funds.

Merit Review - Evaluation of a proposed activity by professionally knowledgeable users of an intended technology, especially for relevance and responsiveness to stakeholder needs.

Milestone - A time line-linked accomplishment that needs to be completed before subsequent activities can begin, or can be completed. As an example, to genetically engineer a crop by 2005 a transformation method needs to be reduced to practice by 2002 (a milestone).

Multidisciplinary Research - More than one scientific discipline represented in a project, program or activity. An example would be an agricultural economist working with a geneticist to develop more profitable crop cultivars.

Multistate Research Fund - Formerly called the Regional Research Fund, this was renamed as the Multistate Research Fund in the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act (AREERA) of 1998. The AREERA requires that not less than 25% of all Hatch allocations must be used for multistate research activities, and must be matched by non-federal funds.

National Multistate Coordinating Committee - A committee representing the state and federal partners that is charged with nationwide coordination of the multistate portfolio.

National Research Support Project - Activities that support research needs, but are not research *per se,* are authorized as NRSPs. Examples include genomic sequencing, germplasm collections, and research management databases such as the Current Research Information System. NRSPs are governed by the "Guidelines for NRSPs."

National Information Management and Support System (NIMSS) – An electronic database of all multistate research projects and activities that serves as the official repository for all projects. The Northeast Regional Association, with financial support from the SAESs, maintains the system.

Off-the-Top Funding - Money set aside for approved activities prior to any distribution to the SAES. Agreement to take funding "off-the-top" requires the approval of the SAES directors and authorization by NIFA.

Outcome - Outcomes describe the significance of the results, showing in what ways the end user will benefit. (For example, the outcome from the adoption of a new cultivar might be increased production, or greater profitability.)

Output - Outputs are the results of research activities, such as data, information, biological or physical materials and observations. (For example, the output from a plant-breeding program

might be a named variety. The output from a survey might be the analyzed survey results.)

Peer Review - Evaluation of a proposed set of research activities for scientific quality, relevance and technical feasibility by scientists fully knowledgeable and capable of conducting the research themselves.

Performance Goal - A general target set for a research program, the accomplishment of which would be accepted as success. (An example of a performance goal is to make American agriculture more competitive. Research projects are understood to be contributing their outputs toward some larger performance goal.)

Plan of Work - An organized statement of planned institutional activities that covers multiple years (usually five), and is composed of several programs (i.e., collections of projects) which are functionally integrated whenever appropriate.

Professional Year - This is the portion of time for persons who hold positions in professional categories and who are assigned to research activities of the project. Such professionals usually hold a bachelors and/or masters degree(s). Graduate students, by virtue of their degree and acceptance in graduate school, may be categorized as "professionals."

Program - A well-defined set of projects or activities that share a common theme or purpose. Degrees of coordination for a program's activities range from very informal to highly structured (see Plan of Work).

Project - A well-defined set of research activities. Multistate Research Projects are very much different from typical Hatch Projects in that there are multiple participants at multiple locations in a Multistate Research Project, and a greater total allocation of funds.

Project Proposal - A project or program document that sets out (usually for five years) the objectives of a project, the shared responsibilities for the planned activities, and the expected outputs, among other items. The approved project proposal serves as the contractual agreement among participating institutions.

Scientist Year - This is the portion of time for scientists (Assistant Professor, Assistant Scientist, and above) who are responsible for creative scientific study, thought, originality, judgments, and accomplishments directly assignable to the activity reported.

Stakeholder - Individuals, groups of individuals, or organizations/institutions with a direct interest in the outcome of public investments in agricultural research and education. This could be producers of agricultural products, consumers of agricultural products, or sponsors of research activities from federal and state governments.

Technical Committee - The research scientists, and as applicable, extension specialists and extension agents, participating in a Multistate Research Project, plus the administrative advisor and the NIFA representative make up the project's technical committee.

Technical Year - This is the portion of time for technicians, aids, and laboratory assistants assigned in support of a project or an activity.

Format for NC/Multistate Research Project Proposals

NOTE: FOR NC MULTISTATE PROPOSALS, THE RESEARCH MUST ADDRESS THE PRIORITIES ESTABLISHED IN THE PRIORITIZATION PROCESS (SEE APPENDIX A-1)

Effective September 2011: The NCRA has requested that all new and renewal NC project proposals please make every effort to stay within a 10-12 page limit (the national and previous limit was about 15 pages, based on the combined character limit of each section.) In principle, this page restriction is placed on project proposals to communicate to the authors the need to be succinct and focus on preparing strong outcomes and impacts. A proposal not meeting these criteria may not be processed for review or approval.

Project Number: Changes with each renewal cycle and assigned by the NCRA office. Please contact us for information on valid justifications for retaining your existing number designation.

Project Title: A brief, clear, specific statement of the subject of the research. This should not exceed 140 letters and spaces. Do not use terms such as "Research on", or "Studies of", or "Investigation of..".

Requested Project Duration: From to September 30, (usually five years). [Multistate research projects may be proposed for approval to start at any time of the year. However, it is desirable that a project's starting date be October 1, the first day of the federal fiscal year (FFY). The termination date for all projects will be September 30, the end of the FFY.]

Statement of the Issue(s) and Justification: Limited in NIMSS to 20,000 characters. For NC projects, please limit this section to approx. 16,000 characters. This section should explain why the work needs to be done, and should include statements on the following points:

- The need as indicated by stakeholders. (That is, explain how the proposed research addresses national and/or regional priorities developed following stakeholder input.)
- The importance of the work, and what the consequences are if it is not done.
- The technical feasibility of the research.
- The advantages for doing the work as a multistate effort.
- What the likely impacts will be from successfully completing the work.

Related, Current, and Previous Work: Limited to 20,000 characters. A brief review, using information from CRIS and elsewhere, of related research on the problem and how the proposed work will supplement and extend it. If the proposal is for a replacement project, the accomplishments achieved under the previous project should be reviewed with identification of those areas requiring further investigation. Specific reference should be made to related multistate research projects or other multistate activities. If there is any apparent duplication, the proposed work should be justified. List essential, cited references. It is expected that the proposal will not include a classical in-depth literature review.

Objectives: Limited in NIMSS to 4,000 characters each. For NC projects, please keep this to 0.5 pages, or approximately 2000 characters. Clear, concise, one-sentence statements for each researchable objective arranged in a logical sequence. Include only objectives on which significant progress can be made during the life of the project with the resources committed. Do

not specify the exchange of information, the coordination of research, the development of standardized techniques, or joint publication as objectives, as these are to be organized under other types of activities. Each participant should indicate in Appendix E those objectives in which he/she will participate.

Methods: Limited in NIMSS to 20,000 characters. For NC projects, please try to keep this section to 16,000 characters, if possible. Briefly summarize the research methods that will be used to address each of the objectives. Explicit information should be included to enable the reviewers to evaluate the approach and to discern joint planning and coordination by the technical committee, the sharing of equipment, possible pooling of data, data analysis, and the multistate summarization of findings, in other words, show that this is a collaborative effort.

Measurement of Progress and Results: This section has three purposes. It is intended to show what the products of the research will be, how these products will affect the stakeholder or end user, and what critical points of achievement are needed for progress toward meeting objectives. To do this you should address the following items:

- **Outputs:** Limited to 4,000 characters. For NC projects, please limit this section to 3-5, clear, concise outputs. The results of research activities, such as data, information, biological or physical materials and observations. For example, the output from a plant-breeding program might be a named variety. The output from a survey might be the analyzed survey results.
- **Outcomes or Projected Impacts**: Limited to 4,000 characters. For NC projects, please limit this section to 3-5, clear, concise outcomes/impacts. Outcomes describe the significance of the results, showing in what ways the end user will benefit. For example, an outcome from the adoption of a new cultivar might be increased regional production, or greater profitability. Impacts are the economic, social, health, or environmental benefits derived by the intended users. These are usually quantitatively measured either directly or indirectly as indicators of benefits. An example of an impact would be improved human nutrition to so many individuals through genetically engineering rice to contain the precursors to vitamin A.
- **Milestones**: For NC projects, this section should be eliminated and replaced with a timeline of each objective common to most competitive grants (limit this to 2,000 characters).

Projected Participation: This section is generated automatically as the SAESs enter participants. Any non-SAES participants can be entered by the Administrative Advisor. Include a completed table of resources utilizing the format in Appendix E.

Rationale: This table identifies the name and areas of specialization of the members of the technical committee and other principal leaders by state and agency/institution. It is also intended to identify the committed average annual input of each cooperating state agency and institution in scientist years (SY), professional years (PY), and technical support years (TY), and full-time equivalents (FTE) in Extension. This information is needed to permit others to assess the sufficiency of human resources that are to be devoted to the activity. A minimum of 0.1 SY per participating station is required and the total resources allocated to the project needs to be sufficient to accomplish the stated objectives. The CRIS codes

demonstrate the multidisciplinary requirements of AREERA and will assist Directors in completion of the AD-417 after the project is approved. It will also allow for the classification of the activity within the federal-state partnership's five goals, which are the basis of reporting the state-based plans of work, and for USDA's reporting on its responsibilities relative to the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA).

Outreach Plan: Limited to 2,000 characters. Briefly describe how results of the project are to be made available in an accessible manner to the intended users of the information (e.g., refereed publications, non- refereed but peer reviewed publications, workshops, producer field days, etc.). If applicable, include descriptions concerning equality for service, ease of access to services/information, and any focus on under-served and/or under represented communities/consumers that may benefit from this proposed activity and what the plans are for disseminating information to these and other groups**.** Identify opportunities for the project/activity to interact with and/or deliver value to peer groups, stakeholders, clientele, and other multistate activities**.**

Organization and Governance: Limited to 4,000 characters. Provide a very brief description of the organization of the technical committee with emphasis on unique items such as the formation of an executive committee and its functions, any subcommittees that are planned for specific functions, any anticipated program coordinators/managers and their responsibilities, etc. If you are using the standard form of governance state so. Otherwise, describe the processes that will be used for selecting leadership and for decision making.

Literature Cited: Limited to 50,000 characters. List all references cited within the proposal.

Attachments: Attachments to the proposal such as charts, tables and other materials to better clarify the information within the proposal are allowed such that the proposal does not go over the 15-page limit.

Authorization: Final submission by an AES or CES director or administrative advisor through NIMSS constitutes signature authority for this information.

APPENDIX A-1

NORTH CENTRAL REGIONAL ASSOCIATION

MULTISTATE PRIORITIZATION PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

The human and natural resources of the north central states are both plentiful and diverse. The human resource base is known for its strong work and stewardship ethics, its initiative, and its varied rural and urban communities. These human resources are complemented by the rich diversity of the region's crop and range lands; natural resources, including its forests and fresh water; glaciated and unglaciated lands; geology; topography; and climate. The region's agricultural enterprises are equally as diverse as its population and environment. Its research priorities are directly influenced by stakeholders during both the critical developmental and the review stages. Stakeholders are true partners in the North Central region and they include a broad constituent and customer base that represents the region's diversity. This complex 12-state area has the capacity to lead the nation in the development of multistate research activities with its human and natural resource bases. The North Central Regional Association (NCRA) of State Agricultural Experiment Stations (SAES) is committed to the development of a strong multistate research program that utilizes the inherent qualities of its human and natural resource bases.

The NCRA research prioritization effort is predicated on the belief that the most accurate research needs for the region should be established at the departmental rather than at the director level. The faculty of our land grant institutions are at the cutting-edge of research and educational activities. They have contributed directly to this research planning and implementation process.

The intent of this exercise is to identify North Central multistate research priorities and to rank them either as they are presented or by developing a matrix that places these priorities into broad programmatic crosscutting areas that are best addressed by multistate projects. There was no intent or attempt to program, correlate, or in any way link this prioritization process to those of Experiment Station Committee on Organization and Policy (ESCOP), Users Advisory Board, Joint Council or other organizations.

PROCEDURE

The NCRA charged the North Central Advisory Committees (NCAC) with developing a list of research priorities in September, 1994. The NCACs began submitting multistate research priorities in February, 1995.

The NCRA was briefed in March, 1995 on the status of the prioritization process. A brief, but incomplete, outline of the priorities received was distributed. Following this meeting, the NCRA informed the chairs of the NCACs that it would prepare a new draft of priorities for discussion at its July, 1995 meeting. The Multistate Research Committee (MRC) met with NCAC representatives in September, 1995 to develop a penultimate document for NCRA review in March, 1996.

Priorities and related objectives received from the NCACs were listed in rank order (by committee) whenever possible. However, some committees did not prioritize and did not accompany priorities with objectives. If objectives were not presented, where feasible, the Executive Director (ED) of the NCRA added objectives to clarify the intent of the priority. This listing of priorities/objectives was labeled A and was shared with the NCRA in May, 1995.

Most NCACs developed disciplinary and interdisciplinary priorities and most priorities had objectives that fit into more than one crosscutting area (crosscut). Each priority/objective was assigned to a crosscut, however placement was purely subjective and on the basis of a decision by the ED. The intent was to be direct, rather than indirect, and to lump rather than split assignments. The number of priorities/objectives in each crosscut is an indication of the breadth of that area and the mechanics of placement. This outline was labeled B and was also shared with the NCRA in May, 1995.

The MRC plus Directors from Iowa and Wisconsin met in June, 1995 to: 1) review an updated version of the B outline of priorities and crosscuts; 2) discuss, review, realign and edit the updated B version; and 3) discuss procedures for development and presentation of the next iteration (C) of the research prioritization process to the NCRA at the July, 1995 meeting.

The MRC prepared guidelines for development of the C iteration. They included: 1) development of a statement that recognizes the importance of and need for research in the fundamental sciences, but clarifies that research of this nature is best funded through other than Multistate Research Funds (MRF); 2) development of a statement that identifies and qualifies multistate research activities; 3) review and refinement of crosscuts and assignment of priorities; 4) use of consistent language across all of the crosscutting areas; and 5) further clarification of each crosscut by development of a set of objectives for each. Iteration C was developed and sent to the NCRA.

In July, 1995, the NCRA suggested minor changes in the C iteration and approved distribution of the new document (D) to the NCACs. The NCAC representatives and the MRC met in September, 1995. The purpose of the meeting was to: 1) brief the departmental administrators on the status of the prioritization program; and 2) seek their wisdom, counsel, and input on the development of the penultimate document for NCRA review at its March, 1996 meeting. The discussions with the NCAC representatives resulted in an improved document (E).

Following the September, 1995 meeting the NCRA began the process of identifying the 1996 NCRA commitment to the support of the priority programs (levels of FTE, $ and their source, site of activity, etc.). This information is critical to further decisions about resource delegation to priority areas.

The NCACs and NCRA agree that the seven crosscuts are of equal priority. The NCACs reviewed the E iteration and prioritized the objectives under each of the seven crosscutting areas at their annual meetings and most sent (11 of 14) their comments to the ED's office in February, 1996. The NCRA (21 directors representing 11 SAESs) also ranked the objectives for each crosscut. The penultimate document (iteration F) was presented to the NCRA in March, 1996. The NCRA approved the recommendation of the MRC to accept iteration F with minor changes. These minor changes were incorporated and approved at the July,1996 NCRA meeting (iteration G). It was agreed that iteration G, along with an appendix, should be published and distributed.

Premises and Guidelines

In 1998, congress passed the Agricultural Research, Extension and Education Reform Act (AREERA) which reconfirms the mandate for multistate research. The overriding philosophy of multistate research is that problems are effectively solved by combining the resources and expertise of two or more states. The funds that support multistate research are unique and are set aside to undertake these specific activities. Thus, within the North Central Region, multistate research funds will be used to support research that addresses the region's priorities.

Multistate research is targeted to address problems that bring together a team of scientists with the appropriate mix of disciplines. A combination of fundamental, applied, adaptive and developmental research may be necessary to solve problems. Multistate research must be of the highest quality science and result in measurable impact.

The following guidelines/criteria must be met for all multistate research projects:

- **High Priority Research**. Multistate funds support research that addresses a multistate problem within a high priority research area. Fundamental, applied, adaptive and developmental research in combination or separately may be needed to address the problem. The research program should identify measures for documentable progress within a five-year time frame. Thus, the progress must be clearly defined and specific goals relative to solution of the problem must be explicitly identified. The North Central Regional Association (NCRA) has identified high priorities from within the crosscutting research areas.
    - **Quality of Science**. In order to solve problems it is essential that multistate projects represent the highest quality science. A well-conceived research plan is required to support each proposal.
    - **Multidisciplinary**. Research programs should be multidisciplinary. The NCRA realizes that the essential prerequisite for multidisciplinary research is a strong disciplinary base. Therefore, discipline-oriented research can be a component of the research effort. The NCRA recognizes that multiple representatives from the same station may be required for multidisciplinary projects. In addition to the biological and physical sciences, projects should consider, as appropriate, economic, social and policy dimensions.
    - **Multistate**. The multistate research program builds on the specific research strengths of individual states and blends these strengths into cooperative and complementary research programs, thus capitalizing on the unique characteristics of science and scientists at participating stations.
    - **Impact and Benefits to Society**. Projects must show how proposed research may contribute to society. The research project must identify potential milestones or indicators of progress within a five-year time frame. (Timely annual reports of research accomplishments are required and should include impacts when measurable.)
    - **Resource Development**. Multistate research proposals must consider internal and outside funding in the proposed research and the likelihood of future external support. The opportunities to leverage support from federal or state agencies, as well as from private sources (including in kind donations), can be greatly expanded by successful multistate research programs. Proposals should address internal leveraging developed by bringing researchers from different institutions together.

- **Information and Technology Transfer**. Every multistate project must demonstrate how its results will be delivered to the user (community, extension specialist agents, families, farmers, 4-H and FFA programs, industry, researchers, secondary and post-secondary students, suburban residents, etc.). Projects should include representatives from industry, extension, producer groups, communities, etc., to enhance technology transfer.

Revised 9/30/99

CROSSCUTTING RESEARCH AREAS AND OBJECTIVES

Agricultural Production, Processing and Distribution

Agriculture is the system that produces processes and distributes food, fiber and other products and services from the farm to the consumer. It encompasses aquaculture, forestry and a diversity of natural resource elements, such as soils, surface water, groundwater, wildlife and the atmosphere. In addition, human resources, financial capital and community infrastructure are integral components of agricultural systems.

Priority Research Objectives:

- Develop alternative agricultural production systems to enhance economic competitiveness in the rural landscape.
- Develop improved animal, plant and microbial production, processing and marketing systems that are competitive, profitable and environmentally sound over the long term.
- Develop alternative systems for storage, processing and application of waste products to the land so as to efficiently preserve and utilize nutrients.
- Design economically and environmentally sound methods to convert biomass and secondary products into food and nonfood uses.
- Construct an information base and methodologies to help form sound public policy that minimizes conflicts resulting from divergent viewpoints of citizens, both urban and rural.
- Assemble and maintain regional, national and international data bases on production systems and use them for modeling and decision support.

Genetic Resources Development and Manipulation (Genomics and Germplasm)

Includes the management of genetic resources (animals, aquatic, insects, microbes and plants) and encompasses both germplasm and genome research activities.

Priority Research Objectives:

- Develop new genotypes that increase product value, enhance global competitiveness, improve human nutrition, nurture environmental quality and foster rural development, i.e., new animal/crop/microbial products, alternatives to fossil fuels and value added commodities, added or altered chemical fractions in foods and pest resistant strains that reduce use of agricultural chemicals.
- Broaden and enrich the knowledge base about genomics. Includes the utilization of molecular techniques (gene mapping, est sequencing, functional genomics, etc.) to characterize, mediate, manage and evaluate germplasm, as well as the bioinformatics, the

development of data bases and computerized management systems to store and transfer knowledge.
- Collect, preserve, share, enhance and evaluate germplasm at the molecular, cellular and/or organismal levels.
- Develop strategies that broaden the genetic base and reduce genetic vulnerability (i.e., maintaining genetic diversity).
- Develop increased knowledge of the interactions and interrelationships of the various life forms.

Integrated Pest Management

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) focuses on developing systems that combine the use of biological, cultural, physical and chemical pest control tactics to minimize economic, health and environmental risks. IPM practices have the potential to simultaneously reduce environmental, food and fiber safety risks associated with pesticide use, to increase the profitability of agriculture, to enhance the sustainability of natural resources, to enhance the quality of life and to open new export markets for U.S. goods.

Priority Research Objectives:

- Develop alternative controls based on biological control and cultural practices.
- Investigate the genetics of pests and hosts to identify new and different vulnerabilities that can be exploited in pest control strategies.
- Develop and evaluate systems and technology for IPM implementation.
- Refine and develop rapid and positive pest detection and identification techniques to enhance the capability to predict the occurrence and magnitude of pest populations/infestations/infection.
- Reduce reliance on pesticides and the risk of human, animal and environmental exposure to pesticides.
- Identify the economic and social impact of IPM on users, the environment, human health and safety and public appearance of food.

Natural Resources and the Environment

Includes an understanding of the ecological processes defining air, water and soil that influence the natural resource base upon which primary production activities such as agriculture, forestry, wildlife management, fisheries management and mineral management depend. The understanding of ecological processes operating in human, plant and animal communities in their own right is essential. Similarly, the maximization of utilization efficiency is crucial to minimizing impact on natural resources. The interaction of human, plant and animal communities offers potential insights into sustainability of large landscape scale human-resource systems.

Priority Research Objectives:

- Understand the ecological processes of operating in human, plant and animal communities.
- Develop methodology to measure and model air, water and soil quality.
- Identify and apply ecosystem management principles and practices for the utilization and protection of resources, restoration of natural systems and management of rural landscapes.

- Define sustainable principles for resource management, utilization and land use.
- Assess the relationship of agricultural/forestry practices (primary production) upon soil and water systems and biodiversity.
- Understand and identify factors that influence the ecological relationships among production agriculture, wildlife management and human health.
- Develop remediation systems to reduce agricultural, non-agricultural and chemical waste contamination of soil, water and air.
- Develop guidelines for optimal economic, social and environmental management of non cropped farm and natural ecosystems and for restoration of damaged ecosystems.
- Assess the implications of alternative public policies and management practices on our natural resource base/environment within an economic framework.
- Document the link between animal welfare/behavior, care and management and their environment.

Economic Development and Policy

Includes focus on improving economic and social development in the North Central Region related to profitability, domestic market development, global competitiveness, new management decision-making models and non-market evaluation.

Priority Research Objectives:

- Develop profitable technologies and systems. Determine the potential profitability of production, processing and distribution technologies (innovations, i.e., agricultural information, technology, precision agriculture) that are environmentally sound and socially acceptable.
- Enhance U.S. global competitiveness. Enhance international market development by analyzing factors including the increasing adoption of agricultural biotechnology that determine U.S. competitiveness in global markets and analyze alternative policies to modify these factors to the advantage of U.S. agriculture.
- Create new management decision-making models. Design optimal management systems for cropping systems, forest systems, non-cropped ecosystems, animal systems, whole farm and watershed systems, fishery and wildlife and data needs of agricultural businesses, research organizations and consumer groups.
- Improve community and rural economic development, including home-based business and small businesses. Design strategies to develop social and human capital.
- Improve domestic market development potential including assessments of the role of alliances, cooperatives and partnerships. Determine the potential within traditional and emerging markets for U.S. food and fiber products and develop policy options to enhance this potential.
- Determine rural and urban interface issues and compatibility.
- Determine non-market valuation of landscapes, wildlife, trees, etc.
- Measure and assess structural change and industrialization of agriculture.
- Interpret and evaluate North Central regional implications of public policy.
- Develop improved systems for rural economic development which include leisure/tourism of agricultural enterprise.

Social Change and Development

Includes an emphasis on social processes as they work in rural areas, the extent to which they (social processes) are changing and their relationships to urban issues: understanding the relationships and interactions among individuals, families, organizations and communities; creation of community systems that can improve the quality of life of residents.

Priority Research Objectives:

- Improve communities by assessing support services for citizens in education, health, job creation, housing, recreational opportunities, communication, conflict resolutions and other avenues needed to ensure rural vitality.
- Extend communication strategies and technologies that insure opportunities for lifelong learning among all rural and urban residents.
- Determine barriers to use of appropriate technologies and increase the adoption of environmentally, socially and sustainable agricultural and community practices; evaluate social impacts of technological changes on rural residents.
- Identify factors affecting consumer demand for items that would improve human well being, i.e., food choices, nutritional status, housing, support services, health, recreational opportunities, education and quality of life.
- Enhance civic participation in governance structures by increasing contributions from diverse stakeholders in the assessment of social and economic opportunities in organizations and communities.
- Establish new linkages among key interest groups, including those representing family businesses, agricultural and commodity organizations, counties and communities and broad social interests.
- Design successful family survival and adaptability strategies: enhance an understanding of the differences across families in managing stressful events.

Food and Nutrition

Includes the development, production, processing, procurement, handling, safety, preservation and consumption of food products; the functional, nutritional, mechanical and sensory properties of food components; nutrient metabolism and relationship to health and disease; and factors that influence dietary intake

Priority Research Objectives:

- Emphasize research that expands our understanding of the relationship between diet, health and disease prevention with particular focus on antioxidants, dietary lipids, functional foods/nutriceuticals, nutrient bioavailability, nutrient regulation of gene expression and nutrition and physical activity.
- Develop new and improved methods and technologies for processing, handling and storage of foods and food ingredients to provide a safe, nutritious, affordable and environmentally sound and consumer acceptable food supply.
- Enhance food safety by expanding research efforts to identify and control food borne pathogens at all stages of the food system from producer to consumer and to develop and evaluate effective food safety programs for both producers and consumers.

- Elucidate unique aspects of food components including mechanical, structural and functional properties of foods or food systems to enhance processing, storage, food safety and nutritional quality of foods.
- Elucidate health benefits associated with functional or phytochemical properties of food constituents.
- Design effective nutrition education programs and delivery methods that modify human behavior such that individuals including those most at risk (pregnant women, infants, adolescents and the elderly) choose healthier diets.

Revised 9/99

Appendix B
Format for

Coordinating Committee
and
Education/Extension and Research Activity Proposals

Note: The following is suggested to the regional association as a guide to authors when developing a multistate research coordinating committee or an information exchange group. The standard for all printed materials is Times New Roman, 12-point font size. Material should contain one-inch margins and single-spaced text with double spaces between paragraphs and headings. The proposal is limited to three pages, exclusive of any appendices. As of September 2011, please follow the updated guidelines in red for NC projects.

Project or Activity Number: (to be assigned by the sponsoring regional association)

Requested Duration: From _____ to September 30, _____ (usually four or five years). [It is desirable that an activity's starting date be October 1, the first day of the federal fiscal year (FFY). The termination date for all activities will be September 30.]

Project Title: A brief, clear, specific statement of the subject of the research. This should not exceed 140 letters and spaces. Do not use terms such as "Research on," or "Studies of," or "Investigation of."

Statement of Issue and Justification: Limited to 20,000 characters. For NC projects, please limit this section by 1 page/4,000 characters. Should be no longer than 16,000. Include brief statements of (1) the nature and significance of the issue(s) for which multistate coordination is proposed, and (2) how the proposed activity addresses national and/or regional priorities. (Limit this section to approximately one page). In this statement identify the sets of stakeholders, customers, and/or consumers for whom the activity is intended.

Objectives: Limited to 4,000 characters each. For NC projects, please keep this to 0.5 pages, or approximately 2000 characters. Give clear and succinct statements that describe what is to be done, against which the progress of the proposed activity can be measured. Objectives for these types of activities need to emphasize coordination of activities and the exchange of information. They must not be generalized objectives, but rather they should be very specific. They may not necessarily be traditional research objectives. An objective that would be "to prepare a multistate research project outline" is inappropriate, although research projects may evolve from a coordinating activity. If the objective of the activity is to write a multistate research project outline, a request should be made to the sponsoring regional association to create a development committee (DC) for that specific purpose.

Procedures and Activities: Limited to 4,000 characters. Describe the procedures and activities that will contribute to achieving each of the objectives. Cite milestones if appropriate.

Expected Outcomes and Impacts: Limited to 4,000 characters. Limited to 4,000 characters. For NC projects, please limit this section to 3-5, clear, concise outcomes/impacts. Briefly discuss the expected outcomes and the impacts of the proposed activity. Examples of possible outcomes include, but are not limited to:

- Coordination of specific research and extension programs.
- Exchange of ideas and/or information/data.
- Generate interest in a specific research and extension area (e.g., a symposium or workshop).
- Publication of joint research articles and/or review articles on a common issue.
- Evaluation and standardization of methods or techniques leading to the development of a common protocol.
- Identification of critical/key research and education issues.

Internal and External Linkages: This section is generated automatically as the SAESs enter participants. Any non-SAES participants can be entered by the Administrative Advisor. Include a complete table of resources utilizing the format in Appendix E.

> *Rationale: It is important to document the extent of participation in the proposed activity to show integration across functions, disciplines, institutions, and/or states. The names of participants, their employing institution, his or her scientific discipline, the type of appointment (research, extension, joint research and extension, etc.), and SY, PY, and TY commitments should be listed on the "Projected Participation Report."*

Educational Plan: Limited to 2,000 characters. If applicable, include descriptions concerning equality for service, ease of access to services/information, and any focus on under-served and/or under represented communities/consumers that may benefit from this proposed activity and what the plans are for disseminating information to these and other groups. Identify opportunities for the project/activity to interact with and/or deliver value to peer groups, stakeholders, clientele, and other multistate activities**.**

Governance: Limited to 4,000 characters. If standard, state so. Otherwise, describe the processes that will be used for selecting leadership and for decision-making.

Literature Cited: Limited to 50,000 characters. List all references cited within the proposal.

Authorization: Electronic signature of the Administrative Advisor with the date of submission.

APPENDIX C

(The NCRA uses NCACs as peer reviewers. Not all info in this section applies to the NCRA.)

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF PROPOSAL REVIEW

1. The review forms and the proposal sections (including Appendix E) should be aligned and consistent regarding the duties of the writing team and the reviewers.
2. Research committees (NC, S, W, and NE) proposals are distinctly different from Coordinating Committees (CCs) and Education/Extension and Research Activities (ERAs), and these differences should be made clear to the writing committees via directions within the proposal, as well as on the review forms.
3. The format of the review form is less important than gaining thoughtful input from the reviewers (AA, assigned reviewers, MRC) to help achieve consistent meaningful reviews.
    a. The review forms should "help steer" projects toward *approval* (the majority of project review outcomes) rather than focus on reasons for *denials* (the minority).
    b. Reviewer instructions should be provided informing them that the review forms should contain *useful, critical* feedback.
    c. Reviewer instructions may also include:
        i. The importance of including stakeholders in the project development process (Development Committees – DCs)) and throughout the activities of approved projects (research committees and CCs and ERAs).
        ii. The importance of engagement/outreach (this is more important than a few journal articles).
        iii. The importance of specific outcomes and impacts that can be measured (economic, social, or environmental benefits to society).
        iv. The expectation of interdisciplinary involvement.
    d. The reviews should be streamlined when possible with the goal of minimizing project administrative work and maximizing project impacts and outcomes.
4. Review forms must be filed electronically in the NIMSS system.

Review Timing:

> *Research Committees, CCs and ERAs* – Reviewed every five years.
> *Midterm reviews of Research Committees, CCs and ERAs (if applicable)* – Reviewed in their third year of existence.
> *DCs and Series-500 Committees* – Maximum two-year existence.

Research Committees, CCs and ERAs Reviews Based On:

- Evaluation of progress toward objectives, quality of science, scientist participation, meeting attendance.
- SAES-422s, Meeting Minutes, AA evaluations, NCA evaluations
- Research Committees, CCs and ERAs must comply with requirements of NIFA and AREERA

*For additional information on project requirements, refer to the Multistate Guidelines (*https://www.ncra-saes.org/multistate-handbook*).*

Peer Review Guidelines:
Performance Standards and Operational Guidelines for
State Agricultural Experiment Stations

Intention: This appendix sets out performance standards and operational guidelines for peer reviews of research to be supported at State Agricultural Experiment Stations (SAES) by federal formula funds. The intention is to facilitate individual stations and their collective multistate activities in complying with the provisions of the federal Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (AREERA).

Definition: Scientific review of an individual research project proposal is defined as: the evaluation of the conceptual and technical soundness of an intended research activity by individuals qualified by their status in the same discipline, or a closely related field of science, to judge a project's worthiness and relevance to a set of stated program goals.

Scope: The topics covered by this document pertain to research project proposals that are to be sanctioned and funded as part of the federal-state partnership in agricultural research. These standards and guidelines do not apply to proposed research that is subject to peer review by competitive grant agencies and peer review of research publications. However, in the aggregate, all research projects sponsored by stations and the regional association's adopting these guidelines will have been formally peer reviewed, before the expenditure of any federal funds.

Process: Prior to the initiation of any research project (to be supported wholly or in part by federal formula funding or by a special research grant), the responsible SAES director (or, in the case of multistate projects, the administrative advisor) will call for a review of the proposed research activities. A minimum of three peer scientists (i.e., individuals qualified by their status in the same discipline, or a closely related field of science), one of which may be a NIFA representative, will be asked to read and provide written comments on the proposed activities.

Terms of Reference: The terms of reference for the reviewers will focus their attention on questions of the quality of the proposed science, the technical feasibility of the research, the validity of the scientific approach, relevance to stated programmatic goals and on the likelihood for completing the stated objectives. Additional comments may be sought on the project's relevance to a station's (or regional, or national) priorities, the degree of integration with extension (as appropriate), responsiveness to stakeholder needs, and the accuracy of any claims for multi-disciplinary and multistate collaboration.

Responsibility: All review activities for proposed station projects are the responsibility of the station's director. All review activities for a proposed multistate research project are the responsibility of the administrative adviser.

Appointment of Reviewers: Reviewers may be selected from the same campus or from another institution, at the discretion of the SAES director (or the regional associations) or by the person delegated this authority. In the selection of reviewers consideration may be given to the expenses associated with reviewing individual project proposals. Consideration will be given to appointing reviewers who are without any apparent conflicts of interest.

Documentation: Reviewers will be asked to present their findings in writing (see Appendices

NCACs

NCACs

H-1, I, J-1, and K), and records of the reviewers' comments will be preserved for the life of the project, or for a period of three years in the event that a project is not initiated. Document storage will, for the most part, be electronic.

Research not Covered: Projects funded by competitively awarded grants, federal contract research projects, and federal cooperative agreements are not subject to these provisions, as they would be reviewed under other authorities.

Performance Standards: Peer review of proposed projects is expected to provide the following performance outcomes:

- Maintain and/or enhance the quality of science funded by the federal-state partnership;
- Identify more opportunities to partner with other states, federal research agencies, and our Cooperative Extension counterparts; and
- Assure relevance to programmatic goals, and, in turn, provide responsiveness to stakeholder needs.

Performance outcomes from reviews will be monitored by the responsible station director (or the regional associations) through the annual process of reporting results and impacts, which is in turn made part of the Plan of Work reporting requirements. Adjustments to this review process will be made, as needed.

APPENDIX D
SAES-422
Format for Multistate Research Activity
Accomplishments Report

Note: This report is submitted each year of an activity's duration and is due 60 calendar days following the annual meeting. The SAES-422 is submitted electronically by AAs into NIMSS. Annual Reports for MRF projects are available to CRIS and NIFA through NIMSS.

Project/Activity Number:

Project/Activity Title:

Period Covered:

Date of This Report:

Annual Meeting Date(s):

Participants: Provide information with a focus on the decisions made. As an alternative, list the URL for the meeting minutes, if that report contains the list of those who were present. And, if available, add the address for the list server as well. (Max characters = 4,000. Suggested Format: "Last name, First name (email) - Institution;" The semicolon is used to separate participant information.)

Brief summary of minutes of annual meeting: Provide information with a focus on the decisions made (Max characters = 12,000. Single line breaks are not preserved, use double line breaks instead or use a <p> tag to separate paragraphs.). As an alternative, list the URL for your meeting minutes.

Accomplishments: This section focuses on intended activities, outputs, and short-term outcomes. Committees should build information built around the activity's milestones, as identified in the original proposal. Please indicate significant evidence of linkages both internal to the project/committee and to external peer groups, stakeholders, clientele, and other multistate activities. The report should also reflect on the items that stakeholders want to know, or want to see. The committee should describe plans for the coming year in no more than one or two short paragraphs. If the committee is filing an annual report, the accomplishments will cover only the current year of the project; for termination reports, list accomplishments from the entire span of the project.

> **Short-term Outcomes:** Quantitative, measurable benefits of the research outputs as experienced by those who receive them. Examples include the adoption of a technology, the creation of jobs, reduced cost to the consumer, less pesticide exposure to farmers, or access to more nutritious food.

> **Outputs:** Defined products (tangible or intangible) that are delivered by a research project. Examples of outputs are reports, data, information, observations, publications, and patents.

> **Activities:** Organized and specific functions or duties carried out by individuals or teams

using scientific methods to reveal new knowledge and develop new understanding.

Milestones: Key intermediate targets necessary for achieving and/or delivering the outputs of a project, within an agreed timeframe. Milestones are useful for managing complex projects. For example, a milestone for a biotechnology project might be "To reduce our genetic transformation procedures to practice by December 2004."

Impacts: This section focuses on actual or intended potential long-term outcomes and impacts. Committees should build information around the activity's milestones, as identified in the original proposal. The report should also reflect on the items that stakeholders want to know, or want to see. List any grants, contracts, and/or other resources obtained by one or more project members as a result of the project's activities. Include the recipients, funding source, amount awarded and term if applicable. If the committee is filing an annual report, the impacts will cover only the current year of the project; for termination reports, list impacts from the entire span of the project.

Additional Definitions of "Impact":

"The economic, social, health or environmental consequences derived as benefits for the intended users. These are usually quantitatively measured either directly or indirectly as indicators of benefits. (An example of an impact would be improved human nutrition for so many individuals through genetically engineering rice to contain the precursors to vitamin A.)"
Source: National Multistate Guidelines - Glossary

"'The quantifiable difference a land-grant program makes in the quality of life for its clients and general citizenry.' Supplementing that brief statement is also the definition of an impact statement: 'A brief document that describes the social, environmental, and/or economic difference that your research, teaching, or extension efforts have made on the public. Specifically, it states your accomplishments and the payoff to society.'"

Source: National Impact Statement Writing Team

Activities: Organized and specific functions or duties carried out by individuals or teams using scientific methods to reveal new knowledge and develop new understanding.

Milestones: Key intermediate targets necessary for achieving and/or delivering the outputs of a project, within an agreed timeframe. Milestones are useful for managing complex projects. For example, a milestone for a biotechnology project might be "To reduce our genetic transformation procedures to practice by December 2004."

Indicators: Qualitative surrogate observations or indirect measures of quantitative performance measures which permit monitoring the achievement of outcomes when direct measurement of performance is difficult, too costly, or not possible. An indicator of cultivar adoption might be seed certification records, rather than actual land area planted to that cultivar.

Publications: For SAES-422 reports list the publications for **current** year only (with the

authors, title, journal series, etc.). If the list exceeds the maximum character limit below, an attachment file may be used. (Max characters = 50,000. Single line breaks are not preserved, use double line breaks instead or use a <p> tag to separate paragraphs.)

Authorization: Submission by an AES or CES director or administrative advisor through NIMSS constitutes signature authority for this information.

*Limited to three pages or less exclusive of publications, details may be appended.

APPENDIX D -1

Description of SAES-422 NIMSS for <u>Termination Reports</u>

The Annual Accomplishments report is submitted each year of an activity's duration and is due 60 calendar days following the annual meeting.

The **Termination** report may be submitted following the annual meeting during the project's final year, but is due no later than March 31 following the termination date of the project. The **Termination** report replaces the Annual Accomplishments report for the final year.

Fields with asterisks (*) are required. If you are adding attachments (for participant lists, meeting minutes, or publications) you will need to add them before you submit as a working copy or final.

For **Termination** reports, provide a comprehensive summary of all accomplishments and impacts of this project, particularly related to each original objective as described in the project outline. Other pertinent information may be reported, such as extension activities, extramural funding or intellectual property generated, etc. If any grants or contracts were acquired as a direct result of this project's activity during this project period, list granting agency, title of project, duration (eg. 1999 _ 2003), and award amount. Also, indicate if there are plans to develop a new or revised MRF project in this area research.

Termination reports should include an impact statement(s) that reflects the overall impact of the project.

For **Termination** reports, list **all** significant publications resulting from the project. If this list exceeds the maximum character limit below, an attachment file may be used. Max characters = 50000. Single line breaks are not preserved, please use a double line break to separate paragraphs.

APPENDIX E

Format for Reporting Projected Participation

Appendix E forms should be submitted by Station/Extension Directors (for SAES/Extension participants) and by AAs (for non-SAES participant) using the National Information Management and Support System (NIMSS). The following are the fields that will be entered for each participant:

For each participant in this activity, include his/ her name; e-mail address, employing institution/agency, and department; plus, as applicable:

- For research commitment, indicate the CRIS classifications [Knowledge Area(s) (KA), Subject(s) of Investigation (SOI), and Field(s) of Science (FOS)], and estimates of time commitment by Scientists Years (SY) (**not less than** 0.1 SY), Professional Years (PY), and Technical Years (TY). Refer to http://cris.nifa.usda.gov/manualvii.pdf for more information.
- For extension commitment, indicate FTE (must be <= 1.0, please) and enter your KA code(s).
- Select Objective(s) under which the each participant will conduct their studies.

Project or Activity Designation and Number (if applicable):_____

Project or Activity Title:_____

Administrative Advisor:_____

Participant Name and E-mail Address	Institution and Department	Research						Extension		Objectives				
		CRIS Codes			Personnel									
		RPA	SOI	FOS	SY	PY	TY	FTE	Program	1	2	3	4	5
Total SY, PY, TY and FTE		XX	XX	XX					XXXXX	X	X	X	X	X

- **Please see the following pages for required information from each national region's projects.**

Appendix E-1

Regional Appendix E Required Information

Information in Appendix E Required for NCRA Committee Participation							
Project Type	Name	Email	RPA/SOI/FOS	SY/PY/TY	Objectives	FTE[a]	Program[a]
NC	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
NCCC	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
NCERA	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
NCAC	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y
NCDC	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y
NRSP	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
NC-500	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

[a]Fill in this info if Extension participant

Information in Appendix E Required for NERA Committee Participation							
Project Type	Name	Email	RPA/SOI/FOS	SY/PY/TY	Objectives	FTE	Program
NE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
NECCC	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y
NEERA	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y
NEREC	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
NEREAP	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
NRSP	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
NE-500	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

NOTE: We no longer have NEAs or advisory groups under the multistate research framework. These have become NERA committees called Administrative Advisory Committees for the 14 discipline areas.

Information in Appendix E Required for WAAESD Committee Participation							
Project Type	Name	Email	RPA/SOI/FOS	SY/PY/TY	Objectives	FTE[a]	Program[a]
W	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
WCC	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
WERA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
NRSP	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
[a]Fill in this info if Extension participant							

Information in Appendix E Required for SAAESD Committee Participation							
Project Type	Name	Email	RPA/SOI/FOS	SY/PY/TY	Objectives	FTE[a]	Program[a]
S	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
SCC	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N
SERA	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N
SAC*	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
SDC	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
NRSP	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Rapid Response	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
* Southern Region doesn't require use of Appendix E for these activities.							
[a]Fill in this info if Extension participant							

APPENDIX F

Format for A Rapid Response Research Activity (NC-500)

Note: To create a rapid response (Series-500) activity directors from two or more SAES must agree to form the activity. A proposal for a Series-500 activity is a report of intent which is submitted to the regional association's chair (usually through the ED's office). The proposal should be limited to two pages or less not including appendices. These activities have two years from the date of initiation to convert to an association sanctioned activity.

Project or Activity Number: (to be assigned by the sponsoring regional association)

Administrative Advisor:

Date of Submission: (month/day/year)

Title: A brief, clear, specific statement of the subject of the planned activity. This should not exceed 140 letters and spaces. Do not use terms such as "Research on...", or "Studies of...", or "Investigation of...".

Statement of Issue and Justification: Include a brief statement of the nature and significance of the issue(s) for which the multistate activity is proposed. (Be sure to limit this section to approximately one-half page).

Types of Activities: A short description of the types of activities to be undertaken should be included here. The organization should fit the needs for forming the multistate research activity. For example, an activity may be organized as a Multistate Research Project with very specific objectives and agreed collaborative responsibilities, or it may be a very informal activity similar to Research Coordinating Committees or Information Exchange Groups.

Objectives: Give clear and succinct statements that describe what is to be done, against which the progress of the proposed activity can be measured.

Expected Outputs, Outcomes and/or Impacts: Briefly discuss the expected outputs, outcomes and the impacts of the proposed activity.

List of Participants: Include a complete table of resources utilizing the format in Appendix E.

Review: In order to expedite implementation of this project, the Multistate Research Committee conducts an interim review, but no formal peer review is necessary.

Attachments: Attachments to the proposal such as charts, tables and other materials to better clarify the information within the proposal are allowed such that the proposal does not go over the 15-page limit.

Authorization: Submission by an AES or CES director or administrative advisor through NIMSS constitutes signature authority for this information.

APPENDIX G

(Does not apply to NCRA activities)

Peer Review Form

Peer Reviews by Scientists of Proposed Multistate Research Activities

Project Number:

Project Title:

Administrative Advisor:

Proposed Termination Date:

Rate the technical merit of the project:

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Unacceptable
* Sound scientific approach	____	____	____	____
* Achievable goals/objectives	____	____	____	____
* Appropriate scope of activity to accomplish objectives	____	____	____	____
* Potential for significant outputs (products) and outcomes and/or impacts	____	____	____	____
* Overall technical merit	____	____	____	____

Comments:_____

_____

_____

Your recommendation (select one):

_____ Approval

_____ Approve with revision

_____ Disapprove

_____

Name of Reviewer (Date)

EVALUATION FORM FOR MULTISTATE RESEARCH PROJECTS
(NC-TYPE PROJECTS)

NCAC committees and Administrative Advisors will submit this form via NIMSS.

NOTE: Each of the responses below will be answered by checking Yes or No. If the reviewer chooses "No," he or she will be required to comment on why he/she chose that answer.

(Check appropriate line - **one only**)

___ NCA- _____ Evaluation (Should reflect input from the **full** NCA committee)

___ AA of Project _____

What other NCA Committees should review this NC Committee: NCA- _____

A. This recommendation relates to NC- _____

____ A proposed new activity

____ A request for continuation/revision of existing activity

I. Statement of Issue(s) and Justification

1. Does the proposal convincingly address the extent of the problem and the importance to agriculture, rural life, consumers and science? Does the proposal explain what the consequences are if the research in not done?
2. Does the proposal adequately explain why this research should be conducted by multiple institutions and other entities (e.g., ARS/USDA) through a regional collaborative effort?
3. Does the proposal indicate how the proposed research addresses national and/or regional priorities?
4. Does the proposal describe the probable impacts from successfully completing the work?

II. Related Current and Previous Work

1. Does the proposal adequately explain how this research relates to previous work in this area and how the proposed work will supplement and extend knowledge in this area? Was a CRIS search conducted? Although a classical, in-depth literature review is not required, does the proposal cite appropriate literature?
2. If the proposal is for a replacement project, are the accomplishments achieved under the previous project adequately reviewed with identification of those areas needing further investigation?
3. Does this proposal duplicate research being conducted through other multistate projects? Did the Development Committee specifically address potential duplication and, if potential duplication exists, did the committee specifically address how duplication will be avoided?

III. Objectives

1. Are the research objectives clear and appropriate for the desired outcomes?

2. Does the proposal clearly indicate the level of participation of each institution and other participating entities (e.g., ARS/USDA, Cooperative Extension, private industry, etc.) for each objective?

IV. Methods (Procedures)

1. Is a procedure or approach outlined for each objective stated in the proposal?
2. Is collaboration and/or interdependence such as the use of common protocols, central data collection or analysis, sharing of equipment, common use of research samples or data, or other evidence of direct collaboration described in the proposal?
3. Are research responsibilities of all the participants clearly stated?
4. Is there a plan for how the research findings will be tied together in a collaborative manner on a regional basis?

V. Measurement of Progress and Results

1. Outputs: Does the proposal describe expected outputs from the research?
2. Outcomes and Impacts: Does the proposal describe the significance of the results, showing in what ways the end user will benefit? Does the proposal adequately explain the potential benefits and impact of the proposed research?
3. Milestones: Does the proposal include statements related to milestones; that is, time-linked accomplishments that must be completed before subsequent activities can begin or can be completed?

VI. Participation (Resources) Report

1. Does the proposal include a complete "Projected Participation Report" as prescribed in Appendix E of the Guidelines for Multistate Research Activities?
2. Does the project represent a multistate participation, which builds on specific strengths of the participants into a cooperative and complementary research project?
3. Does the project include the appropriate mix and balance of disciplinary expertise to address the objectives?

VII. Outreach Plan

1. Does the proposal describe how results of the project are to be made available in an accessible manner to the intended users of the information (e.g., refereed publications, workshops, producer field days, etc.)?
2. If the proposed project is to become an integrated (multifunctional) activity involving participants from Cooperative Extension, is the nature of their involvement adequately described?

VIII. Organization

1. If the organization of the technical committee is to be different from that prescribed in the Guidelines for Multistate Research Activities, does the proposal include an adequate description of the planned organizational structure of the technical committee?

IX. Scientific Quality

1. Does the proposal show evidence of high scientific quality?
2. If copies of discipline reviews have been provided, has the Development Committee or writing committee adequately addressed the concerns and comments provided by the peer reviewers?

X. Format

1. Is the proposal formatted as prescribed in Appendix A of the Guidelines for Multistate Research Activities?

XI. Summary

Please indicate the primary changes you believe should be made before final approval by the Multistate Research Committee.

Recommendation:

_____ Accept without revision

_____ Accept with minor revision

_____ Accept with major revision

_____ Reject

_____

Signature (Determined by Regional Associations)

_____

Date

APPENDIX I

NCAC Committee or Administrative Advisor (AA) **Midterm Review** of **NC Projects**

(Check appropriate line - one only)

_____ NCAC- _____ Evaluation (Should reflect input from the full NCAC)

_____ AA of Project_____

What other NCACs should review this project/committee: NCAC _____

1. Progress Report: Describe results since the project was last approved; compare actual accomplishments with the objectives in the project outline; reasons should be given if project objectives were not met. Rate this project on accomplishment of stated objectives.

	Excellent	**Comments**:
	Good	_____
	Poor	_____
	Unacceptable	_____

2. Linkages: Is there evidence of the interdependence among project participants and with other projects/agencies? Please list relevant examples. How well is the technical committee working together? Document any linkages. Is there evidence of delivering accomplishments to peer groups, stakeholders, clientele, and other multistate activities? Rate this project on linkages.

	Excellent	**Comments**:
	Good	_____
	Poor	_____
	Unacceptable	_____

3. Funding: Has outside funding been obtained from other federal and state agencies or the private sector by the technical committee to support project activities? Rate this project on its accomplishments in leveraging outside funding to help solve the problem being investigated.

	Excellent	**Comments**:
	Good	_____

	Poor	_____
	Unacceptable	_____

4. Information and Technology Transfer. Document information and technology transfer which is required for every project supported by Multistate Research Funds. Rate this project on plans or accomplishments for delivering the results to users which include other researchers (journal articles, technical reports, etc.), Cooperative Extension, industry, producers, students, etc.

	Excellent	**Comments**:
	Good	_____
	Poor	_____
	Unacceptable	_____

NCAC or AA Recommendation:

_____ Approve/continue project with normal revision.

_____ Approve/continue project with revision (provide specific recommendations).

_____ Disapprove/terminate project at termination time (provide specific reasons).

APPENDIX J
Evaluation Form for
Coordinating Committees (NCCCs) and
Education/Extension Research Activities (NCERAs)
(Formerly NCR-type committees)

Each NCAC Committee member or administrative advisor will submit this form via NIMSS.

NOTE: By checking "Fair" or "Needs Improvement," users will be required to submit comments in regards to their answers.

NCCC/NCERA Project Number and Title:

_____

(Check appropriate line - **one only**)

_____ NCAC-_____

_____ Administrative Advisor_____

Review is for: _____New project _____Continuation/Renewal

    1. Goals and objectives clearly stated and appropriate to committee activity(s).

    _____ 1 Excellent _____ 2 Good _____ 3 Fair _____ 4 Needs Improvement

    2. There is a good potential to attain the objectives and plan identified in the activity.

    _____ 1 Excellent _____ 2 Good _____ 3 Fair _____ 4 Needs Improvement

    3. Activity addresses priority research and is not duplicative with existing activities.

    _____ 1 Excellent _____ 2 Good _____ 3 Fair _____ 4 Needs Improvement

    4. Activity has moved beyond individual activity(s) and ideas to a collective, interdependent activity.

    _____ 1 Excellent _____ 2 Good _____ 3 Fair _____ 4 Needs Improvement

    5. For renewal projects only:

       a.   Attendance of the preceding project has been adequate and reflects broad participation by designated project participants.

          _____ 1 Excellent _____ 2 Good _____ 3 Fair _____ 4 Needs Improvement

       b.   The project has developed and demonstrated technology transfer to clientele.

          _____ 1 Excellent _____ 2 Good _____ 3 Fair _____ 4 Needs Improvement

Overall Comments:

Recommendation:

_____ Approve/continue with normal revision.

_____ Approve/continue with revision (provide specific recommendations).

_____ Disapprove/terminate at termination time (provide specific reasons).

Signature (Determined by regional associations)

Date: _____

APPENDIX K

NCA Committee or Administrative Advisor (AA) Critical Midterm Review of NCR Committees

(Used by NCRA Multistate Research Committee)

(Check appropriate line - **one only**)

NCA- _____ Evaluation (Should reflect input from the full NCA Committee.)
AA_____

What other NCA Committees should review this project/committee: NCA-_____

1. **Progress Report**. Describe accomplishments since the committee was last approved; compare actual accomplishments with the objectives in the project outline; *reasons should be given if any objectives were not met*. Rate this project on accomplishment of stated objectives.

_____ Excellent -
Comments:_____

_____ Good
Comments:_____

_____ Poor
Comments:_____

_____ Unacceptable
Comments:_____

2. **Coordination/linkages**. Is there evidence of the interaction among committee participants and with other projects/agencies? Please list relevant examples. Is there evidence of delivering accomplishments to peer groups, stakeholders, clientele, and other multistate activities? How well is the committee working together? Has the committee moved beyond a collection of individual activities and ideas to some collective, integrated activity? Provide evidence of synergy, collaborative output via joint publicity, specific coordinated activity, etc. Rate this project on linkages.

_____ Excellent - Comments:
Comments:_____

_____ Good
Comments:_____

_____ Poor
Comments:_____

_____ Unacceptable
Comments:_____

3. **Information exchange**. Document information exchange and technology transfer. Rate this project on plans or accomplishments for delivering the results to users.

_____ Excellent - Comments:
Comments:_____

_____ Good
Comments:_____

_____ Poor
Comments:_____

_____ Unacceptable
Comments:_____

4. **Attendance/participation**. Attendance and participation at committee meetings are imperative for the committee to be successful. Rate this committee for attendance/participation.

_____ Excellent - Comments:
Comments:_____

_____ Good
Comments:_____

_____ Poor
Comments:_____

_____ Unacceptable
Comments:_____

NCA Committee or AA Recommendation:

_____ Approve/continue committee with normal revision.

_____ Approve/continue committee with revision (provide specific recommendations).

_____ Disapprove/terminate committee at termination time (provide specific reasons).

Signature:

_____   or   _____

NCA Chair (Date)   Administrative Advisor (Date)

APPENDIX L

Guidelines for Home Pages of Multistate Research Projects,
Coordinating Committees, and Education/Extension Research Activities
(A homepage for each project is automatically established in NIMSS)

Note: The intention of this recommendation is to have an easily accessible system and common repository for information such as membership lists, abbreviated history, project objectives, minutes, annual reports, and publications associated with multistate research projects, information exchange groups, coordinating committees, and advisory groups.

Each administrative advisor should encourage the development of a home page for each multistate research project, coordinating committee, information exchange group, or advisory group with which he or she serves. The page should be based at the location of the person who maintains the home page or the administrative advisor, and linked to the respective regional association page in which the project or activity resides. Home pages should be concise and contain the following information:

1. Title and number of multistate research project or activity.

2. Project/group objectives.

3. Abbreviated history, background, and justification. (1-3 paragraphs).

4. Membership list including telephone, fax, and e-mail addresses, and identification of officers and any representatives from SAES, Cooperative Extension, and NIFA.

5. Announcements of meeting dates and sites.

6. Significant changes and accomplishments listed in bullet format.

7. Minutes of meetings. (In initial page construction, five years of minutes should be included if available.)

8. Publications related to the multistate research project, information exchange group, or coordinating committee should be listed and linked to the page.

9. The respective regional association header should be included at the top of the page to identify the effort as a particular regional activity.

10. A link back to the regional association's home page should be provided to create a "loop" between the regional association and projects' home pages.

11. An indication of last update and the person responsible for the page should be included.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS:

The administrative advisor should encourage all home page-related activity to be developed by the secretary, other officer, or appointed member of the multistate research project or activity, which can be transmitted electronically to the base location for posting on the web.

Several URL sites for exchange groups and multistate projects are already posted on several of the regional associations' home pages. These pages should be updated to reflect the respective regional association activities.

Development of a list server, which provides the opportunity for a discussion group, is encouraged.

APPENDIX M

Suggested Proposal Transmission Letter
(generated automatically by the system administrators through NIMSS)

Date: *[Add transmission date.]*

To: Deputy Administrator, Partnership Office, NIFA/USDA

From: *[Add name of Regional Association Chair.]*

Subject: Multistate Research Proposal Transmission

Reference:

Project/Activity Number: *[Add regional accession number here.]*

Project/Activity Title: *[Add title here.]*

Via e-mail

Dear _____:

Attached please find a signed copy (as an electronic signature) of an association-approved multistate project/activity, which can also be found at the following URL:

   [Add URL here.]

This is to certify that the proposal is in compliance with all requirements of AREERA and NIFA as follows:

_____Multistate

_____Multidisciplinary

_____Peer-reviewed

_____Clearly-defined objectives

_____Identified outcomes and impacts

_____Addresses NIFA goals

This project will be directly addressing the needs of stakeholders, which have been identified as priorities in the (plans of work of the participating states) (regional strategic plan). In addition, please note the planned participation by Extension Specialists thereby allowing certification as an integrated, multifunctional project.

I am requesting your certification of this activity as a component of our region's multistate research portfolio.

Sincerely,

[ADD ELECTRONIC SIGNATURE HERE]

Chair, Regional Association of SAES Directors

APPENDIX N

(Does not apply to NCRA projects - See Appendix N-1)

**Steps in the Development of
Multistate Research Projects and Activities**

Action	Responsibility
Approval of an ad hoc writing or development committee	Regional Association
Notify Multistate Research Office	Executive Director
Assignment of Administrative Adviser	Chair, Regional Association
Assignment of NIFA Representative	Multistate Research Office, NIFA
Identification of writing committee	Administrative Adviser
Authorization of first meeting of writing committee	Administrative Adviser
Inform writing committee of all requirements (Appendices A, E, G, H in NIMSS)	Administrative Adviser
Invitation to participate in the project; completion of table of resources (Appendix E in NIMSS)	Administrative Adviser; Station Directors
Review of draft proposal with comments to writing committee	Administrative Adviser
Transmit proposal to each peer reviewer with review form (Appendix G)	Administrative Adviser
Response to peer reviewers' comments	Writing Committee
Proposal with peer reviewers' comments forwarded electronically through NIMSS to the Multistate Research Committee Chair	Administrative Adviser
Proposal and review form (Appendix H) forwarded electronically to Multistate Research Committee	Chair, Multistate Research
Respond to recommendations of Multistate Research Committee	Administrative Adviser; Writing Committee
Final draft of proposal available electronically through NIMSS to Chair, Multistate Research Committee	Administrative Adviser
Final review of proposal and preparation of cover correspondence (Appendix M) addressed to the Multistate	Chair, Multistate Research Committee

Research Office, NIFA, through NIMSS	
Finished proposal with cover correspondence forwarded electronically to the Executive Director with notice regarding proposal status to the Administrative Adviser	Chair, Multistate Research Committee
Assignment of project series number	Executive Director
Finished proposal and cover correspondence forwarded electronically to Multistate Research Office, NIFA	Executive Director
Notification of writing committee regarding disposition of the project	Administrative Adviser
Project approval and notification to Directors of participating Stations and Executive Director	Multistate Research Office, NIFA
Preparation and submission of CRIS Forms (AD-416, -417, etc.)	Directors of participating Experiment Stations

**Steps in the Development of NRSPs,
Coordinating Committees and Education/Education and Research Activities**

Action	Responsibility
Preparation of proposal (Appendix B) and a Table of Resources (Appendix E)	Sponsoring Director and Selected Participants; Directors
Approval of proposal to create the Activity • CC or ERA • NRSP	Regional Association NRSP Review Committee
Notify Multistate Research Office, NIFA	Executive Director
Assignment of Administrative Adviser(s) • CC or ERA • NRSP	Chair, Regional Association Chairs, Regional Associations
Assignment of NIFA Representative	Multistate Research Office, NIFA
Authorization of first meeting and invitation to participate • CC or ERA • NRSP	Administrative Adviser Lead Administrative Adviser

Steps in the Development of Rapid Response Research Activities

Action	Responsibility
Preparation of proposal (Appendix F) with a Table of Resources (Appendix E)	Two or more Sponsoring Directors
Electronic submission of proposal to the Chair of the Regional Association (through the Executive Director)	Sponsoring Directors
Approval of the activity	Chair, Regional Association
Proposal is forwarded electronically to the Multistate Research Office, NIFA	Executive Director
Approval of the activity with notification to Directors of participating stations, the chair of the regional association, and the Executive Director	Multistate Research Office, NIFA
Assignment of Administrative Adviser	Chair, Regional Association
Assignment of NIFA Representative	Multistate Research Office, NIFA
Invitation to participate Amendment of Table of Resources (as needed)	Administrative Adviser
Interim review of the activity	Multistate Research Committee
Decision during second year regarding continuation and development of proposal for an Association-sanctioned activity	Technical Committee

APPENDIX N-1

Renewing/Starting a New NC, NCCC, or NCERA Project

For any questions or assistance, please contact the NCRA Assistant Director/NIMSS system administrator, Christina Hamilton (christina.hamilton@wisc.edu; ph 608-262-2349)

COMMONLY REQUESTED PROPOSAL REVISIONS:

- As of 10/1/2011, the NCRA approved reductions to the size of all NC multistate project proposals. For more specific information on the proposal size limits and sections affected, please see our revised Appendix A and B forms at the end of the NCRA Multistate Guidelines. Currently, these changes ONLY affect NC regional projects; projects from other regions remain the same.
- As you complete your Objectives and Methods/Activties sections, please be clear as to who will be working on each project objective.
- When available, we strongly recommend adding a section on how your Hatch funds will be leveraged with outside sources.
- When in doubt, please refer to our NCRA Project Expectations guide.

NCRA Deadlines and Approval Process (these dates start in the fall, one year prior to the project's expiration date)

1. **September 15**: Deadline to submit a request to write a proposal in NIMSS and upload the Issues and Justifications section.
   - Each project MUST select an Administrative Advisor prior to submitting a proposal request. Without an AA, the request will not be approved. The NCRA office will not assign AAs to projects for you.
   - Effective 2014, all NC projects will retain the same number designation, unless otherwise requested. Please let the NCRA office know by September 15 if you would like a new number.
2. **October 15**: Deadline to upload the Objectives section in NIMSS. Please contact the NCRA office when this is complete and we will send out the national request for participation.
3. **November 15**: Ideally, all participants and their AES offices should have submitted completed Appendix E forms into NIMSS.
4. **December 1**: Completed proposal is due in NIMSS in its entirely. Failure to meet this deadline may result in the project not being reviewed and renewed this round.
5. **December 15:** AA review forms due in NIMSS.
6. **Mid-late December**: All proposals are sent to NC regional review committees (NCACs) and multistate research committee (MRC)
7. **Late March/Early April**: Final project reviews and decisions made at the NCRA Spring meeting. The NCRA office will notify project AAs of results and send any requested revisions to project AAs by mid-April.
8. **June 1**: All proposal revisions must be completed in NIMSS.

9. **Mid-July:** the NCRA reviews all revisions and makes any remaining project decisions. When your project is approved, it will be assigned a new NC number unless a request to retain the old designation was submitted with the proposal.
10. **September 30**: Old projects expire.
11. **October 1**: New projects begin.
12. **March 31**: Termination reports for expired projects due in NIMSS.

Requesting to Write a Proposal (due September 15)

1. Login into NIMSS at www.nimss.org. If you haven't logged into the new NIMSS yet (effective 12/14/2015), use your email address to reset your password under Forgot Password. Going forward, use your email address as your username and new password to log in.
2. Select Project Proposals >> Create New Proposal.
3. On the Basic Information page, select New only if the project is NOT a renewal of an existing project. BE SURE to select Revision/Replacement and select the expiring project number if you are renewing an existing multistate project (most common). If you do not, REEport will not pull the information out correctly, resulting in later project initiation issues for stations.
4. For Renewals, select the appropriate expiring project number. The title and all other information will automatically populate each text box.
5. Only for NEW proposals: Choose the correct Appendix from the second pull-down menu:
   a. Research proposals (NC, W, NE, S-type)- Choose Appendix A (Includes a Methods section)
   b. CC, ERA, or DC proposals – Choose Appendix B (Includes an Activities and Procedures section in place of a Methods section)
   c. 500-series proposals (Rapid Response Committees) - Use Appendix F (Does not include a Methods Section, but does include a section to list the types of project activities expected, requires prior regional office approval. Please contact your regional office prior to starting a new 500-series proposal request.
   d. NRSPs (National Research Support Project), select NRSP from the dropdown.
   e. Only for New projects: Type in the desired project title and enter the five year begin and end dates.
6. For all proposal requests, new and renewal: Enter the Issues and Justification in the appropriate text box then click Save, then Submit to RSA (this button is on the Outline page after clicking the Edit proposal button, in case you need to find it later) to submit the request to your regional office. Your regional office will enter the selected AA name and assign the proposal a temp number to use throughout the uploading and review process. Once the proposal has been fully regionally approved, the temp designation will be removed.

Typing/Pasting the Proposal in NIMSS

1. Anyone wishing to upload proposal or project materials in NIMSS needs to be granted editing access to the proposal. Please contact your AA or regional office

(www.nimss.org/directory/regional_offices) to be granted editing access to a proposal or active project.

2. To begin uploading and editing a proposal, log into NIMSS and under Action Items, select My Project Proposals. You'll see several tabs here. To add and edit text, your proposal request needs to have first been RSA approved before it will appear in your Draft Proposals tab and be available for editing. If it is and you have editor access (assigned either by the AA or your RSA), then click Edit to access proposal sections.

3. After clicking the Edit button, you can navigate between sections via the links on the left. **Be sure to save between each section!**

4. **Formatting Tips**: We recommend you paste sections in as text, then use the text formatting options to add bold, underline, etc. Alternatively, you can paste directly from MS Word, but you may need to do a little extra editing to take out extra line breaks, etc. Be sure to click on the View Project occasionally to check formatting and edit sections as needed (don't forget to save between sections!). MS Word text often contains many hidden HTML tags that may affect how your proposal renders in View.

5. Figures, charts, and graphs may be attached to proposals using the "Attachments" link on the left side of the screen. We recommend converting files to .pdf before uploading to NIMSS.

6. When you've uploaded all sections and you're ready to Submit as Final, go to the Basic (title, dates, advisors) section of the proposal and click the Submit as Final button. This action sends a notice to your regional system admin and AA informing them that the proposal is ready for review.

Completing Participation/Appendix E forms in NIMSS (due November 15)

1. Before starting, be sure the project's Objectives section is complete. This section is required to appropriately populate the Appendix E form for a given project. See section III above for instructions on uploading proposal sections.

2. For AES affiliated participants, Appendix E forms should be completed only with approval from your AES director's office. Please contact your local AES office to ensure your continued participation on renewal project. Membership in the expiring project does NOT roll over automatically into the renewal.

3. For Extension participants, please contact your Extension director for approval to join an AES project. Your Extension office will need complete your Appendix E for you. Your institution's AES may not fund your travel to project meetings, be sure to discuss this with them and your Extension office prior to joining a project.

4. For non-LGU affiliated members, contact your regional system admin to be added. We'll need to know your name, email address, company/institution, which project/proposal objectives you'll be associated with, and your KA, SOI, and FOS codes (or your general field of study, as it relates to the project)

5. Check the NIMSS manual for specifics on completing AppEs in NIMSS.

Finalizing the Completed Proposal (due December 1)

1. When the proposal is in its final form, editors must click the Submit as Final button from the proposal's Basic (title, dates, advisors). This function notifies your RSA that the proposal is ready for review.
2. Along with the new proposal, all projects up for renewal MUST be sure all annual reports have been submitted. Please see our annual report instructions for more information. The final meeting report should be in the form of a summary/termination report.

Completing the AA Review form (for project AAs only)

1. All NC proposals are required to have the AA submit a completed review form in NIMSS by December 15.
2. The NCRA will assign this form to the AA in NIMSS. NIMSS will automatically notify the AA when this assignment has been made, along with instructions on where to find the form in NIMSS.
3. AAs should complete this form, Save, then Submit. The NCRA uses this review as a reference for our NCACs and MRC.

Approval Process for NC Projects by the NCRA and NIFA

1. NCAC Committees (comprised of department heads in a given field, our "expert reviewers"): For renewal proposals, the appropriate NCAC committee(s) is/are contacted by the System Administrator when the proposal has been submitted as final. For new proposals (no previous history), the AA should recommend appropriate NCAC committees to the NCRA office. The ED/AD will consult with the MRC to assign NCAC committees to review the project. In both cases, it is the AA's responsibility to make sure that the System Administrator receives the most up-to date version of the proposal to pass on to the appropriate NCAC committees, including Appendix E information.
2. After NCAC review, the NCRA MRC will also review each project, using the completed AA and NCAC review forms in NIMSS as guides.
3. Final project decisions and revision suggestions will be made during the NCRA Spring meeting held in late March/early April. Shortly after the meeting, revision requests will be sent to the project AA and listed editors. The project AA is responsible for sharing this information with the project members.
4. All requested revisions are due in NIMSS by June 1. Proposals will be returned to the Draft Proposal tab in NIMSS and can be edited by proposal editors and/or AAs.
5. When revisions have been completed, click the Submit as Final button again on the Basic (title, dates, advisors) page.
6. When the NCRA approves of all revisions, usually at the summer NCRA meeting, the proposal will be sent to NIFA for federal approval (NC-research type projects only; NCCCs, NCERAs, and NCDCs do not require NIFA approval).
7. Once NIFA approves the project, the project will start on the first day of the next federal fiscal year, October 1.

8. The System Administrator removes the "temp" designation from the project and AES participants should begin the project initiation process in REEport.

Revised 1/22/2016 to account for new NIMSS proposal process; cmh

APPENDIX O

Administrative Advisor Check List and Proposed Time Line for the NCRA

Project Background:

___ As AA have I reviewed the multistate research portfolio for potential duplication of research project activities.

___ Have I familiarized myself with the nature and the purpose of the regional activity? Have I reviewed the history of the research project activity including consultations with the previous administrative advisor(s) and the NIFA representative? Am I acquainted with the project's website?

___ Are the overall project objectives congruent with regional and national research priorities and program plans? Does the proposed activity fit within the NIFA strategic plan? Do the regional committee activities support the project objectives?

___ Does the project activity demonstrate a level of interdependence in its approach? Is there evidence that the investigators are working together on each objective, or is the work simply a collection of individual investigators conducting research without some demonstrated level of dependence? As AA have you discussed and reinforced the need for demonstrating interdependence in the preparation of annual reports and the SAES 422.

___ In reviewing the outcomes of the proposed activity, are they achievable? Has achievability been discussed with the committee?

Meeting:

___ Have I as Administrative Advisor (AA) authorized the planned regional meeting using the NIMSS paperless environment, 60-90 days prior to the planned meeting or activity? Has the SAES-422 annual report for the previous year been entered into NIMSS?

___ Has an agenda been developed and posted to all participants prior to the regional meeting?

___ How can I assist the regional committee leadership with the preparation of the meeting agenda? Is the agenda built around the project's objectives?

___ Am I going to attend the project's annual meeting? If not, who will take my place?

___ Have I encouraged the USDA/NIFA representative to attend the annual meeting? In the event that the USDA/NIFA representative cannot participate, have I discussed issues which need to be brought to the attention of the committee members?

___ Is there a strong commitment to the regional activity as evidenced by annual meeting attendance?

Reporting:

___ Has the committee developed a systematic approach for assuring timely submission of reports, authorizations for meetings and project revisions? Has the issue of timely submission of the minutes and annual report from the past annual meeting been discussed with the committee?

___ Have/Has the meeting minutes/SAES-422 annual report form been filed within 60 days of the annual meeting? For NC projects, if the project number is scheduled to terminate, have I encouraged the committee to submit the termination report within 6 months of the termination date?

___ As Administrative Advisor, are you acting as an advocate in communicating the findings of the multistate activity? Is there someone that I, as AA, should be communicating with to make USDA, etc. aware of the research and its implications to regional and national needs?

___ Have I checked to see that an annual report has been completed for the past years activities, and properly conveyed?

___ When and where possible the Administrative Advisor can serve a much needed function in dissemination of the result of the multistate research activity into the hands of users.

___ Have I encouraged publications from the project?

Participation:

___ Are the membership and officer lists current? If not, have I contacted the appropriate people to update them?

___ Has the regional project sought to broaden its participation with other scientists working in similar areas?

___ Are all scientists assigned to the research project activity contributing?

___ Are there other investigators from other disciplines that if brought into this project activity would increase the multidisciplinary nature of the activity, including extension faculty?

___ When new members join the regional project activity, have I spend time acquainting them with the project activity.

Funding:

___ Have the scientists engaged in the multistate activity shown any interest or success in seeking and finding supplemental funding to enhance selective objectives of the project?

Reviews:

___ If the project for which I am AA is up for midterm review (3rd year of the project), have I submitted the AA evaluation of the project?

New Projects Only:

___ Have potential officers on the new committee been established?

___ Has a writing committee been established to begin writing the new proposal? Am I providing guidance to that committee?

___ Have I invited all station directors (both regional and national) to add participants to the new proposal?

___ For an NC project if retention of the project number is requested, does the justification meet specifications of the guidelines.

___ Has the new proposal been submitted as final in NIMSS by the December 1 deadline?

___ Have I transmitted the NCAC/MRC comments to the committee for consideration?

___ Have I requested the name of the NIFA rep to the new committee through the Partnership Office?

Other:

___ When and where appropriate have I encouraged linking and meeting with similar multistate activities to expand collaboration? NCACs and NIFA reps may be helpful in monitoring research progress and quality.

___ Have I recently gone over the NCRA Guidelines for updates and changes?

___ Have I communicated the multistate research philosophy and procedures to my committee?

___ Are there any special concerns or developments that the MRC/NCACs need to be aware of and if so, have I contacted them regarding these issues?

Time Line of a Project

(For more specific information regarding steps in the writing process, refer to Appendix N-1)

January (Preceding Year)

- Writing new/revised project begins for submission at March NCRA meeting (one year ahead)

February to November

- Receive inputs from ad hoc and other interested and potentially involved parties

December

- NCRA office sends project (for NC, NCCC/NCERA and NCDC) in a timely manner to the appropriate NCAC(s) for consideration at the annual meeting.

January

- NCAC(s) review project at annual meeting

February

- The administrative advisor of project and the NCAC chair forwards evaluation (Appendices H-1 or J-1) to the Executive Director's Office
- The administrative advisor forwards proposal to the Executive Director's office by February 15.

March/April

- Multistate Research Committee (MRC) reviews new/revised proposals and makes a recommendation to the NCRA at the March meeting of the NCRA
- NCRA approves/disapproves MRC recommendation.

July

- Opportunity to revise and critique from March meeting
  - Last chance of opportunity to have proposal reviewed by the MRC at the July meeting

APPENDIX P

Format for Minutes of NC Projects

Project/Activity Number:

Project/Activity Title:

Period Covered:

Date of This Report:

Annual Meeting Date(s):

Participants: Provide a list of those who attended each meeting, and their employing institution. As an alternative, list the URL for the meeting minutes, if that report contains the list of those who were present. And, if available, add the address for the list server as well.

Adopted Agenda: Include everything added during meeting.

Brief summary of Minutes of Annual Meeting: Same as on SAES-422 form.

Key Discussions: For example, elaborate information by objective or by state.

Assigned Responsibilities/Deadlines/Target Dates:

Signature:

Authorization: Submission through an AES or CES director or administrative advisor's e-mail constitutes signature authority for this information.

*Limited to three pages or less exclusive of publications, details may be appended.

APPENDIX Q

NCAC Advisory Committee for Multistate Projects/Committees

NCAC	NC	NCCC	NCERA	NCR	NCT
1 **Crop and Soil Research**	7, 202, 205, 213, 218, 1012, 1017, 1018, 1020, 1021, 1022, 1142		184	3, 13, 31, 46, 59, 84, 103, 137, 167, 173, 180, 192, 207	202, 205
2 **Animal Health Advisory Committee**	107, 229, 1004, 1007, 1010, 1019			57, 131	
4 **Horticultural Crops**	7, 140, 202, 1142			22, 84, 101, 125, 192, 193, 204, 205	
5 **Human Sciences**	170, 219, 1001, 1002, 1011, 1013, 1167			52, 65	
6 **Livestock Production**	107, 131, 229, 1004, 1006, 1007, 1008, 1009, 1010, 1012, 1020, 1021, 1119			42, 57, 87, 89, 97, 131, 173, 190, 199, 204, 206	
10 **Forestry and Forest Production**	1005				
12 **Agricultural Economics**	213, 1003, 1014, 1016, 1100, 1119			9, 170, 194	198
13 **Rural Sociology**	1001, 1002, 1003, 1100			170, 194	
14 **Plant Pathology**	129, 1015		184	13, 137, 193, 200, 201	202, 204, 206
15 **Entomology and Economic Zoology**	205			46, 148, 193, 200, 201, 202	204, 205, 206
16 **Biological and Agricultural Engineering**	136			9, 101, 180, 197, 207	201
22 **Food Science and Human Nutrition**	136, 219, 1001, 1007, 1016, 1167				203
23 **Fisheries and Wildlife**					
24 **Agricultural Education Research**	1003				