

## **Minutes of Extension Ag Team Conf. Call Sept. 3, 2014**

Present on call: Mike Wierda, Paul Brown, Kurt Nolte, Barry Tickes, Shawna Loper, Ayman Mostafa, Randy Norton, Russ Tronstad, Mary Olsen, Peter Ellsworth, Al Fournier, Mike Ottman, Charlie Sanchez, Jim Walworth, Bob Roth, Bill McCloskey

### **I. Introductions**

Mike Wierda – New Assistant in Extension for Pesticide Safety Education Program. Funded through Extension IPM, PSEP funding, PSEP-IMI grant (about a third each). Will interact with IPM teams. Charged with leading a stakeholder committee to develop a business plan for a sustainable PSEP program.

### **II. Paul Brown – update on budget and hiring**

Extension Administration Team (EAT) met yesterday. EAT is trying to move forward with positions as fast as they can. EAT has submitted a hiring plan to the Provost and has had to make various adjustments to fit better with the never settle plan. Plan is in the hands of Dean Burgess and Parker Antin now, soon to be re-submitted for Provost's approval. Extension has funding but the rest of the college does not. First positions to go forward will be county positions. Some of these could potentially be changed to appointed non-continuing positions in the future.

County positions (goal is to hire by new calendar year):

- SE AZ Horticulture – based in Willcox but with regional responsibilities
- NW AZ Livestock & Range Management – Mojave County but with regional responsibilities
- SE AZ Livestock – based in Willcox but with regional responsibilities
- N. Central AZ forest health – most likely based in Gila County with regional responsibilities

Specialists (later):

- Cropping System Agronomist will be the next position to move forward

There will be a re-assessment of some of the remaining positions on the hiring plan after this initial round of hires is made.

Question regarding “salary savings” from not being able to fill positions immediately?: Since hires will be made after July 1, how are salary savings going to be used? Funds could possibly be used for an Extension RFA to support research and outreach projects? Could a pool of money be used to hire shorter-term positions? Paul discussed this possibility and others with Jeff Silvertooth. Some salary savings money could also be used for “one-shot upgrades.” Possibility been also been discussed that Extension will not spend these monies by the end of the fiscal year and work on carrying monies over into next fiscal year? Dean Burgess mentioned in State of the College address that the University is going to a system where carry-over across fiscal years may be possible. Paul confirmed that this is a possibility for the future, but he doesn't know for certain if that will be possible with these new Extension funds. No final decision has been made.

A lot of people and entities across campus are aware that CE has money and have been approaching CE.

Kurt has been asked to provide a tour for a new person who is being considered for hire as a plant pathologist, connected with the MAC Director search. This person will be providing a seminar in the Plant Sciences department and Paul is not aware of much more. There is no certainty of this being a new hire. Peter thinks this is being looked at as only a potential employment opportunity, maybe one of many. No offer has been made to Rick Ward (for MAC Director) or to this person.

There will be money in the budget this year for Extension proposals for working groups and signature programs. There will also be funds for each sector of CE, including funds in ANR. Paul plans to use these funds to support outside speakers, particularly from out-of-state, to support in-service trainings and provide workshop support. Support for new groups is also a possibility and Paul and Linda are working on getting details out in the next couple of weeks. Paul is trying to make a case for a higher proportion of the budget going to ANR, because we have the most FTEs.

### **III. Review of summer workshops and field days**

Kurt – Conducted Cotton workshops in Yuma and La Paz counties in July, with a good turn out. He wants to have a winter workshop focused on small grains in Jan., cotton / alfalfa workshop in spring of next year. Kurt and Barry can work together on this. Yuko Gin does a big cotton meeting in December and he does not want to conflict with this. Needs in La Paz are different from Yuma in terms of farming practices and crops growing. Timing is also different. Had more corn grown in Yuma this year than previously and would welcome a talk on corn for grain. Randy has done variety trials for years and offered to present at Western AZ meetings.

Southwest Ag Summit: Charlie set up 3 sessions – one is on alfalfa irrigation. If there is not a cotton-specific session organized for the SWAS, Kurt will organize an Extension meeting in Feb or March around cotton. Peter has heard that the planning committee is trying to streamline the number of consecutive sessions. Cotton sessions at SWAS have not been that affective. Peter recommends a cotton meeting separate from SWAS in Yuma and Kurt agrees. Below are dates discussed for workshops:

- Small Grains mtg: Jan 20, 21 or 22
- Cotton mtg: week of Feb 16

Barry will coordinate La Paz County meetings on the same timetable. He encourages researchers to consider doing research trials in the county. The growers there are extremely supportive and have been underserved for many years. Arizona Western College has a nice venue there. They have a larger room available than was used last time and they are glad to work with CE.

Shawna

- Small grains forage meeting – week of Nov. 17

Is this too late in the year to affect planting decisions, etc.? Nov date would be good for weed management topics if people are planting in late Nov.

Last set of meetings Shawna did was streamed live online, although she thinks most of the participants online were from UA. She would like to continue with the live streaming in future meetings. Pinal County is planning on hiring a media person who can help with the technology.

#### Ayman

- Planning Farmer Field Day at MAC for October 1 (this is the same day that Rick Ward's partner will be at MAC).
  - Randy will be defoliating somewhere around October 1, probably not before that. Plans to present at FD. Some of his fields are next to Bill's. It could be an opportunity to talk about spray technology and methods, avoiding oversprays.
  - Bill: nothing to show on weed control study in the field, but can present results inside.
  - Peter sent Ayman a list of possibilities, including stink bugs, lygus and whitefly trials.
- Pinal and Pima County growers are interested in small grains. May have a combined meeting with Shawna to target Pinal and Maricopa county growers. MAC is a good location.
- Goodyear meeting in November
- Workshop in early Feb – alfalfa and forage at MAC, possibly to include
- Indoor cotton meeting in Goodyear or Buckeye, first week of Feb.

#### Randy

- Corn field day in Bonita Sept 4.
- Grain corn hybrid trials – Randy has good data on hybrid performance and would be glad to present at Kurt's meeting.
- Cotton field day Oct 9 including variety trials around the county. Mary Olsen will be involved.
- Farm Home and Ranch day likely to be 3<sup>rd</sup> week in Feb, but not yet finalized.
- Randy and Barry want to run a field day in La Paz County, probably in mid-Nov. Plots look good. Barry will help coordinate FD there.

#### Peter

Cotton Pest Losses meetings – will probably be held in Dec this year. PCA only meeting, with RSVPs required. Would like agents to encourage PCAs to participate. Yuma is always a challenge this time of the year.

#### Paul

Has funding from USDA to put together climate-related workshops. If any counties are interested in a dedicated workshop, contact Paul Brown or Mike Crimmins. Funded through next September. Randy suggested this could be incorporated into the Farm and Ranch day and would likely boost meeting attendance.

#### **IV. Summary of Calendar Dates**

**Sept 4:** Corn field day in Bonita (Randy)

**Oct 1:** MAC Farmer Field Day (Ayman)

**Oct 9:** Cotton field day, Safford (Randy)

**Mid-Nov (tbd):** field day in La Paz County (Randy & Barry)

**Week of Nov. 17:** Small grains / forage meeting (Shawna & Ayman, possibly at MAC)

**Nov sometime:** West Valley Variety Trial meeting (Ayman)

**Dec:** Cotton Pest Losses workshops minimally 1 mtg each at MAC, Yuma and Parker (Peter)

**Jan 20, 21 or 22:** Yuma & La Paz Small Grains mtgs: (Kurt & Barry)

**Jan sometime:** alfalfa and forage meeting at MAC (Ayman)

**Week of Feb 2:** Cotton mtg in Goodyear or Buckeye (Ayman)

**Week of Feb 16 (tentative):** Farm Home and Ranch Day, Safford (Randy)

**Week of Feb 16:** Yuma & La Paz Cotton mtg (Kurt & Barry)

#### **Dates to Avoid:**

- California Weed Conference Jan 21-23
- Arizona Crop Improvement Association meeting will be on Jan 27
- Weed Science Society of America meeting is entire week of Feb 9
- American Society of Agronomy meets week of Nov 3

Next meeting (face-to-face): **Mon, Feb 2., 10 am – 1:30 at MAC**