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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GUIDELINES FOR MULTISTATE RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

THE MISSION OF 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 one 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.

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 State 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	https://www.aginnovationnc.org/
Northeast	https://www.aginnovation-northeast.org/
South	https://www.aginnovation.info/southern-region
West	https://aginnovationwest.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 the 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 stations' 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 REEport project initiations, annual progress reports, final progress reports, and annual financial reports (equivalent to the old CRIS Forms AD-416, AD-417, AD-419, and AD-421) to document their stations' participation in, and contributions to, multistate research projects.

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 (ED) 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.

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 Director 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 Review Committee: Each regional association of directors may choose to have a multistate review 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.

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.

The format for Multistate Research Projects appears in Appendix A. Steps for development and approval of Multistate Research projects are described in Appendix N.

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.

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:

https://escop.info/resources/

Rapid Response Research Activity: The purpose of a Rapid Response Research Activity (Series-500) 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 Research Activity, directors from two or more SAESs 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. Proposals are forwarded electronically by the Executive Director to the Planning, Accountability, and Reporting Staff (PARS), NIFA for review and approval. 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 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 a NIFA representative. Advisory committees provide stakeholder linkages, technical advice and review to regional associations. These committees operate under the purview of regional associations.

Development Committees: Scientist from two or more states may initiate a proposal for a development committee with concurrence of two or more 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 appointed by the chair of the regional association and scientists appointed by participating state research and extension directors, as appropriate.

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; 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.

- 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.
- In addition to SAES scientists, membership to multistate research activities (but not access to formula funding) is open to 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 scientist's 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. 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.
- Changes in an on-going project which cannot be handled by individual state or agency addenda should be affected 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.
- 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. For ERA's, it is recommended that an Extension AA also be appointed by the Extension association in the sponsoring region. In the case of NRSPs, one AA from each region shall be appointed, with one of those to be designated as the lead AA.
- 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.
- 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 https://nimss.org/ This link is also available on each region's WWW homepage.
- Common multistate research activity proposal formats are used by SAES and the regional associations (refer to Appendices A, B, and F for proposal formats).
- Peer review will be conducted following the guidelines (refer to Appendices C and G) and certified in the state Plan of Work.
- The information requested in Appendix E, "Format for Projected Participation Reporting," shall be a required component in all proposals for multistate research activities. The 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 goals, which in turn relates to the state-based Plans of Work. This form will be used by the respective association's Multistate Review Committee for review as per Appendix H.
    3. Identifies the objectives in which each person will be a participant.

- 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.
- All identifiers and titles of terminating projects will be changed at the end of their approved period unless specifically approved by the sponsoring regional association of SAES Directors and NIFA for a renewal.
- 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. NIFA will only approve a

project for a maximum of five 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 and/or midterm evaluations be conducted for all types of multistate research activities.

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

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 Review 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.

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: Forms approved by NIFA through the Research, Education, and Extension online reporting tool (REEport) 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: 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.

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 (see 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.

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 of 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
NRSP	National Research Support Project
PARS	Planning, Accountability, and Reporting Staff
PY	Professional Year
REEport	Research, Education, and Extension project online reporting tool
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.

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, or 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.

APPENDIX A

Format for Multistate Research Project Proposals

***Note**: A project proposal is limited to 15 pages total, exclusive of any appendices. 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. In principle, this page restriction is placed on project proposals to communicate to the authors the need to be succinct. A proposal not meeting these criteria will not be processed for review or approval.*

Project Number: To be assigned by the sponsoring regional association.

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 to 20,000 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 NIFA's current research search tools 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 to 4,000 characters each. 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 to 20,000 characters. 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. 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. 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**: Limited to 4,000 characters each. Timeline-linked accomplishments that need 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).

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 NIFA project classification codes demonstrate the multidisciplinary requirements of AREERA and will assist Directors in completion of the REEport project initiation after the project is approved. It will also allow for the classification of the activity within the state-based plans*

of work, and for USDA's reporting on its responsibilities.

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 B

Format for
Coordinating Committees 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.*

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. 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. 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. 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

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 Appendix G), and records of the reviewer's 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 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 Termination Reports

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 a **research** commitment, indicate the 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), or Professional Years (PY), or Technical Years (TY). You may want to refer to the classification manual at https://nifa.usda.gov/manual-classification.
- For an **extension** commitment, indicate the FTE (must be <= 1.0, please) and enter your KA code(s).
- Put an "X" under each committee objective under which the participant will conduct their Iowa studies.

Committee Number:_____ **Committee Title:** _____

Committee's Administrative Advisor: _____

Please duplicate this form as needed, one form per participant.

Participant's Name and E-Mail Address: _____

Research							Extension		Project Objectives				
Codes			(=100%)	FTE			(If applicable)		(Check)				
KA	SOI	FOS	Percentage	SY	PY	TY	FTE	KA	1	2	3	4	5
									☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
									☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
									☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
									☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
									☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
									☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
									☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
									☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
									☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
									☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

0 (should equal 100%)

Appendix F
Format for
A Rapid Response Research Activity

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)

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: 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 Review Committee conducts an interim review, but no formal peer review is necessary.

Authorization: Electronic signature of the Chair of the Regional Association, with the date.

APPENDIX G

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

Signature:

_____
Name of Reviewer and Date

APPENDIX H

MULTISTATE REVIEW COMMITTEE EVALUATION FORM

Each Multistate Review Committee member will receive this evaluation form as an e-mail attachment (or via other electronic means) with the project proposal and comments from the peer reviewers, if available.

Current or Previous Multistate Research Project Number: _____

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 search conducted using current NIFA search tools? 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. Is multidisciplinarity clearly demonstrated in the report?

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 peer reviews have been provided, has the Development 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 Review Committee.

Recommendation:

_____ Accept without revision
_____ Accept with minor revision

_____ Accept with major revision
_____ Reject

Signature

_____
Chair, Multistate Review Committee and Date

APPENDIX I

(Optional)

Midterm Review Form for Research Projects

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	_____

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
(Optional)

Evaluation Form for
New Coordinating Committees and
Education/Extension and Research Activities

Activity Number: _____

Title: _____
_____

Administrative Advisor: _____

Proposed Termination Date: _____

Reviewed by: Regional Association_____ **Administrator Advisor**_____

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

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
(Optional)
Midterm Review Form for Coordinating Committees and Education/Extension Research Activities

AA _____ Project #

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 _____
_____ Poor _____
_____Unacceptable_____

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: _____
_____Good _____
_____ Poor _____
_____Unacceptable_____

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

_____ Excellent - Comments: _____
_____Good _____
_____ Poor _____
_____Unacceptable_____

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: _____
_____Good _____
_____ Poor _____
_____Unacceptable_____

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: Chair or Administrative Advisor

APPENDIX L

Guidelines for Home Pages of
Multistate 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:

a. Title and number of multistate research project or activity.
b. Project/group objectives.
c. Abbreviated history, background, and justification. (1-3 paragraphs).
d. Membership list including telephone, fax, and e-mail addresses, and identification of officers and representatives from SAES, Cooperative Extension, and NIFA.
e. Announcements of meeting dates and sites.
f. Significant changes and accomplishments listed in bullet format.
g. Minutes of meetings. (In initial page construction, five years of minutes should be included if available.)
h. Publications related to the multistate research project, information exchange group, or coordinating committee should be listed and linked to the page.
i. The respective regional association header should be included at the top of the page to identify the effort as a particular regional activity.
j. 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.
k. An indication of last update and the person who is 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' 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 through NIMSS)

Date: [*Add transmission date.*]

To: Deputy Administrator, NIFA/USDA

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

Subject: Multistate Research Proposal Transmission

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

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

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,

Executive Director, Regional Association of SAES Director