

MINUTES OF APS FAC/EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Conference Call

May 8, 2003

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Attendance

Present: J. Fletcher, G. Bergstrom, C. Ishimaru, J. MacDonald, R. Ploetz, E. Stromberg, J. Sherwood

Staff: S. Nelson, M. Smith

Absent: M. Matheron, J. Andrews, S. Slack, A. Biggs

Call to Order

President J. Fletcher called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. Central.

Agenda was distributed electronically April 30, 2003 (attachment 1).

A. Issues for discussion/decision

1. APS Crop Biosecurity Workshop and followup activities (Sherwood)

J. Sherwood reported a draft of a white paper and a report from the APS Crop Biosecurity Workshop will be sent to M. Smith and J. Fletcher for review. A final version will be posted on the APS website.

J. Fletcher reported there was considerable interest in the workshop from the Tri-Societies at the CSPP meeting she and G. Bergstrom attended recently. APS is being looked at as a leader in this area, and other societies want to cooperate more with APS on this activity.

J. Fletcher has written a summary of the actions from the workshop and will send it to PPB for input.

Focus sheets, targeting different groups represented in APS, are also underdevelopment.

J. Sherwood indicated the funds for the workshop have not arrived, but are expected soon.

2. National Center for Crop Biosecurity - role(s) for APS? (Sherwood, Nelson, Fletcher)

At the Crop Biosecurity Workshop, the need for a National Center for Crop Biosecurity was discussed. There was also discussion on what activities could involve APS coordination or collaboration, should or should not a Center be established.

The idea of using PMN for training materials and as a communication system was also discussed at the workshop. J. Fletcher mentioned that using PMN in this capacity is gaining outside interest.

J. MacDonald gave an update on USDA interest in PMN. Rodney Brown attended a recent PPB meeting. J. MacDonald and others went to Washington DC and gave R. Brown a demonstration on PMN. He was very impressed. He presented it to Office of Science and Technology and asked J. MacDonald and others to come to Washington to give other demonstration for other branches of USDA and government. He also suggested having someone higher up in EPA see the demonstration. Peter Young from National Science Library might be a future contact.

Future funding for PMN through a contract with USDA isn't assured and hasn't been discussed seriously yet. But, there appears to be considerable interest, as USDA does not want to reinvent the wheel (it has efforts in this direction that are not nearly as developed as PMN). Others are beginning to see PMN as a very powerful tool for biosecurity education.

The need to set up a separate review board for articles in PMN on biosecurity was discussed. M. Wimer contacted G. Schumann about using the Ed Center review panel, but she is not convinced this would be the best mechanism. G. Whisler and G. Schumann will be contacted for further input.

The Tri-Societies are working on lists of people to contact as first responders on biosecurity issues. OPAE will be contacted for input for developing a list of first responder contacts. A booklet from the Institute of Food Technologists contains such a list and could be a model for APS efforts (M. Bjerkness has a copy of the booklet). They established a training program for first responders listed in the booklet. Exec supported the idea of developing a mechanism to train contacts representing APS on biosecurity issues. This discussion led to the related topic of whether or not individuals or laboratories would be certified by the society. APS staff has been involved with AACC in preparing methodologies for certification of laboratories, so staff has some experience with handling these activities.

S. Nelson will put together a descriptive paper on what APS has experience and capability in. This could be provided to agencies considering APS as a partner on biosecurity issues.

3. Phyto News editorial duties and EIC appointment (Ploetz, Fletcher)

R. Ploetz updated Exec that nominations for the PhytoNews EIC were sent to A. Biggs. J. Andrews is currently assuming the responsibilities of the position on a temporary basis. R. Ploetz will contact A. Biggs directly about moving forward with the nominations, as there is some urgency to fill the EIC position. Additional nominations representing mid-career scientists were made by Exec and will be passed onto A. Biggs.

4. Questionnaire - Emerging Pathogens Committee request

J. Fletcher reviewed the note from A. Vidaver ([see Anne Vidaver's message below](#)). The suggestion was made to use a quick online polling service. C. Ash sets up the quick surveys, which can be sent to selected groups or a proportion of membership for polling on specific schedules or topics. Exec favored polling subpopulations of membership, instead of the entire membership, on this issue. They also supported the idea of asking for volunteer input through the APS News Capsule. J. Fletcher had told A. Vidaver to contact Headquarters for assistance with the survey. Someone on Staff will tell C. Ash that A. Vidaver will be in contact with her. Exec's concern about polling members too frequently on too many issues will also be conveyed to C. Ash.

[Anne Vidaver's message](#)

Jacque:

Doug and I discussed our catch-22 situation with U.S. scientists trying to identify agents with which we are unfamiliar, and thought we might try to get better input by soliciting all APS members. It would give foreign members an opportunity for input and by doing so in confidence enable them to provide information they might be officially told not to mention. The intent is to have a credible list. If you (and Council) believe this would be a problem, let us know. We are still working on the criteria to be used, based on Doug's and my participation in Kitty Smith's exercise with APHIS and the caps list!

Anne

Doug:

My notes aren't the clearest, but I think we discussed having the following notice be sent to all APS members who have e-mail addresses. I haven't talked with Steve Nelson about doing so as yet. We'd have to determine to whom the member should reply, and it probably shouldn't be someone at headquarters, unless every reply was forwarded to one of us. (I don't recall that we discussed this issue.)

Draft memo:

Dear APS member:

The APS is charged with evaluating naturally occurring plant pathogens that present an economic or biological threat to American agriculture, horticulture and natural resources. The Ad-hoc Plant Pathogen Rating Committee has devised a questionnaire with which we seek assistance, recognizing that each of us are expert in certain plant-pathogen: host interactions. We value your input and would appreciate answers based on personal experience or knowledge. Please feel free to consult colleagues. Thus, we seek pathogens of significance on the following commodities as an initial effort to make such evaluations. Colleagues in foreign countries are particularly solicited for information. All answers will be kept confidential. We do however, ask on what basis you make your judgement and your level of experience, i.e. student, grower, research scientist, professor, etc. We include a place for comments that may be helpful to us. We ask for your input by May 30 to enable us to make a preliminary report available to Council by the annual meeting.

Attachment: (Questionnaire)

Please reply to ----- (Doug Luster , Chair?; Anne Vidaver, Subcommittee on Bioterrorism ?)

5. Focus issues for Charlotte "expanded Council"

J. Fletcher reported that the "Expanded Council" would be called the "Strategic Planning and Leadership Forum" from now on. Topics for discussion at the annual meeting with the SPLF:

- The long-term financial strategy. S. Nelson and others are looking at financial models and what APS might do given different financial scenarios.

- Topics of interest to SPLF. No decision made on when or how to get input from SPLF.
- Topics that came to the top of the list at midyear by S. Slack.
- Items continued from midyear: journal issue, membership issue (might not be able to bring enough new information on these topics to warrant their being on the agenda.)

J. Fletcher asked for input on topics. None were given. She asked Exec to send suggestions to her.

6. Other?

a. PMN Development Chair. This issue was discussed at FAC and on the last Exec call. Exec discussed the need for a Development Chair at this time. It was noted that the people we need to reach out to for development are tied in with extension, since extension agents go to meetings attended by potential PMN supporters.

Exec agreed to wait another month to see if a contract with USDA would be forthcoming, as this would impact our development scenarios. S. Nelson will check with M. Wimer about what to do for the time being.

B. Issues for information/discussion (as time permits)

1. Awards & Honors ad hoc committee - Jim MacDonald chair.

This committee is developing (R. Ploetz, J. MacDonald, chair). They are inviting additional committee members.

2. Young Professionals Committee - Carolee Bull, Chair

This committee is getting on track. The 52 volunteers have been divided into the ad hoc committee itself (15 members) and an accessory consulting group (37 members). C. Bull will begin by email and conference calls, followed by a face-to-face meeting in Charlotte.

To provide an experience that will help volunteers feel connected to APS, C. Bull and J. Fletcher are organizing a breakfast for the 15 committee members at the annual meeting. J. Fletcher will also look into the possibility of inviting them to the Presidential Reception.

3. Governance questionnaire - feedback and next steps?

G. Bergstrom reported there were 702 responses (about 20% of members) to the governance questionnaire. He noted considerable variation in responses. About 80% felt the current governance structure is effective. J. Lundquist (chair of the questionnaire committee) is obtaining feedback from the ad hoc committee on the survey responses.

G. Bergstrom and M. Smith will look into sorting the responses by stage of career (possibly younger members have a decidedly different take on governance?). They will also discuss certain survey questions that seem to be ambiguous.

The ad hoc committee's charge was clarified. Exec expects the ad hoc committee to perform an analysis of the questionnaire responses. Eventually the responses should be discussed by SPLF and developed into a news report for membership. G. Bergstrom will work on putting the survey responses into a digestible form for membership.

J. Fletcher plans to have the survey as a topic for the annual Council meeting.

4. Plenary progress (see attachment 2)

J. Fletcher reported that she is making progress on the list of speakers for the plenary. European crop biosecurity authority Simon Whitby is a potential speaker. J. Fletcher is looking into the availability of APS funds to support his travel to the meeting.

5. PPB spring meeting - accomplishments and plans

J. Sherwood reported that the sustainable agriculture component being focused on by PPB, "CAUSE", is moving along positively within USDA. Funding for the program at the \$10-20 million level is being discussed. The mechanism for funding would probably be the NRI competitive grants program.

PPB is also working on a recommendation for O.W. Barnett's replacement.

6. Issues from FAC meeting

J. Sherwood indicated there were no new issues coming out of the Spring FAC meeting. PMN expenses are still something of a concern. Even though everything looks positive from recent discussions with USDA, PMN revenue is still very low. Ventures into electronic subscriptions are proceeding cautiously. APS has joined in a journal marketing adventure with other journals as a means of competing with Elsevier.

7. Issues from HOC meeting

J. Fletcher, S. Slack, G. Bergstrom, J. Sherwood, E. Stromberg, and S. Nelson met with the three members of AACC to discuss issues about the building, journals and staff. The financial status of AACC has improved. S. Nelson indicated the major outcomes of the meeting included a continuation of a conservative approach to finances until the economy changes. In general, Headquarters is meeting the needs of its services societies. It is looking at developing a policy for taking on new societies and for employee incentives for optimizing services.

8. Other?

As a follow-up to J. Andrew's message on NRC review of PhD programs, Exec learned that the NRC determined there was insufficient numbers of plant pathology PhD graduates to warrant a separate program review. Instead of the 500/ 5 year cut off, only about 60 plant pathologists/year were reported. There was some concern by Exec that the numbers accumulated by NRC were not accurate. It was decided to send a quick response survey to Department Heads for input on the number of PhD graduates over the past five years.

S. Nelson will contact C. Ash to work on developing a survey with an emphasis on the need for a quick turn-around. J. Fletcher will inform J. Andrew of Exec's actions. Only PhDs will be considered, not Masters. She will request J. Andrews write a statement on why this information is needed.

G. Bergstrom mentioned that Rutgers University is planning a S. Johnston memorial sometime in mid September. G. Bergstrom plans to attend on behalf of APS. J. Fletcher indicated a check from APS was sent to the memorial fund. Letters from membership were collated and sent to the family

Adjourn

Call was adjourned at 11:05 a.m. Central.

Next conference call

The next call is scheduled for June 12, 9 am Central

Respectfully submitted,

Carol A. Ishimaru
Secretary, APS

Attachments

1. Agenda
2. Plenary draft