



You are all in the throes of opening: some of you have started classes and some will be starting next week. For as many organizations that we have in NERA, we have that many different strategies for opening and operating in the era of COVID. My hope is that the strategy that you've adopted works. Best of luck and best wishes!

In the meantime, enjoy your Labor Day holiday! You deserve it!

“What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead.”— Nelson Mandela at Walter Sisulu's 90th birthday celebration, Johannesburg, May 18, 2002, from "Nelson Mandela by Himself; The Authorized Book of Quotations," [Nelson Mandela Centre of Memory](#).

Action items:

- Doug Steele is hosting a small meeting with Benjamin (Benny) Young, USDA Associate General Counsel (General Law and Research Division) for an informal discussion about concerns, challenges and unknowns created by COVID-19. Jan Nyrop, Jody Jellison and I will be representing the Northeast. For those of you that have affiliated ARS scientists on (or off) campus, I'm seeking how your COVID-19 protocols align with the those of the ARS. What are the testing requirements, are there considerations for waivers and are there specific restrictions on your campus (e.g., dining halls, use of facilities, students returning)? We're most interested to hear how having affiliated ARS scientists impacts your institutional pandemic operating procedures.
- We'll be holding the NERA fall business meeting on September 22 from 8:30 – 10:30 AM EDT. To connect, use NERA's Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/5717743008>. The [agenda](#) of the meeting is posted on the NERA website. (This precedes the ESS Fall meeting slated for September 28 – October 1 from 6:00 – 8:00 PM EDT.)
- Registration has opened for the Annual ESS/ARD Meeting which will be held virtually, September 28 - October 1, 2020 in 2-hour slots in the evening (6-8 PM EDT). There is no registration cost, however, you need to [register](#) to join the on-line meeting. The [agenda](#) for the meeting is posted on the ESCOP website.
- We are again seeking pictures of NERA institutions for the NERA website. Please forward those to [David](#).

Reminders/Updates:

- And again: The National Research Support Project Review Committee (NRSP RC, an ESCOP

committee) has recommended the questions that follow as the ballot to be considered by the Experiment Station Section at end of September. (A link to the ballot will be forwarded to each station, one vote per station.) You remember that NRSPs are supported by off-the top, MRF funding. We'll also discuss this at our NERA meeting on September 22.

- Which station do you represent? (Survey logic settings will only allow a station to be selected once.)
- Do you accept or reject the updated NRSP Guidelines as distributed? (Version [posted here](#), dated as 8/24/2020.)
- Do you accept or reject the NRSP Review Committee recommendation to: Support the NRSP4 renewal request as written at the proposed funding level of \$481,182 per year for FFY2021 through FFY2025, while also including in the proposal a clear distinction of NRSP4 from IR-4 and a collaborative discussion for a future model to transition off NRSP funds, with progress on this effort to be reported back to the NRSP-RC no later than midterm review time.
- Do you accept or reject the NRSP Review Committee recommendation to: Reject NRSP6's renewal proposal as submitted. This will result in one additional and final year of funding at \$135,000.
- Do you accept or reject the NRSP Review Committee recommendation to: Support the renewal request of NRSP9 as written at the proposed funding level (\$199,000 for FFYs 2021, 2022, and 2025; \$219,000 for FFY2023, and \$249,000 for FFY2024) with the request to start a collaborative discussion for a future model that transitions off of NRSP funds, with progress to be reported back to the NRSP-RC no later than midterm review time. NRSP9 must also submit a more complete and comprehensive impact analysis than the previous version by midterm review time.

Informational items:

- The NSF has issued a set of [FAQs on proposal preparation and award administration](#) related to the [NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide \(PAPPG\) \(NSF 20-1\)](#). Check them out.
- Last time: The [Northeast Climate Adaptation Fellowship](#) is open to commercial farmers in the Northeast U.S. who grow vegetables and/or small fruit and to agricultural advisors who work with vegetable/small fruit farms in this region. [Applications](#) are submitted online and the deadline for submission of an application is October 1, 2020. The 1-year program provides a peer-to-peer curriculum for farmers and advisors. Its framework is designed to integrate climate science with a land manager's knowledge.



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