

Path Forward Communique II April 2016

Earlier this year IR-4 sent out an initial communique explaining the newly formed "IR-4 Path Forward Working Group" and what we are trying to accomplish. The Path Forward Working Group was established to comprehensively consider how IR-4 can best operate after years of flat/decreasing funding; a changing budgetary environment in the Land-grant institutions; challenging regulatory requirements; and evolving industry needs. The Path Forward Working Group has formed five subcommittees with the following members to look at various elements including:

- **Changes Within the Land Grant Universities**- John Wise, Doug Buhler;
- **Impact of a Reduction in Operational Funds** - Jerry Baron, Dan Kunkel, Matt Hengel
- **Regulatory and Environmental Changes**-Dan Kunkel, Jerry Baron, Marty Marshall;
- **Transparent and Open Communication**-Dan Rossi, Mike Bledsoe, Sherri Novack;
- **Alternative Funding Sources**-Jerry Baron; Commodity Liaison Committee representative
- **Organizational Assessment**- Steve Slack, Professor Emeritus, The Ohio State University, former Director of the Ohio Ag Experiment Station; Jim Cranney, California Citrus Quality Council; John Abbott, Syngenta Crop Protection; Brian Scully, USDA-ARS; Kathryn Burkgren, Director of Organizational Development for Faculty and Staff, Cornell University.

The work by many of the Subcommittees are progressing. In fact, most of the subcommittees provided an initial document for review at the March IR-4 Project Management Committee Meeting. For example, **Changes Within the Land Grant University Subcommittee** noted that there is ample evidence that multiple Land-Grant Universities that host IR-4 field research centers, analytical laboratories and coordination offices are putting new processes into place that mandates the collection of funds to cover some administrative costs. **The Impact of a Reduction in Operational Funds Subcommittee** developed some scenarios and models to account for many years of stagnate funding. The Subcommittee documents are being further refined and should be available for review and further input next quarter.

Meanwhile, crop protection product technology and regulation continue to evolve. IR-4 has witnessed some shifts in development of new crop protection products; there are fewer new chemical pesticides in the development pipeline while an increasing number of biopesticides are gaining registration. We expect this trend to continue with EPA's latest concerns over pollinator protection, endangered species, cumulative risk of pesticides, modeling of pesticides in water, worker protection, as well as the consolidation of companies that develop and register new chemical pesticides. Another significant trend is that for various reasons, the amount of data required by IR-4 for a new pesticide registration continues to increase, both in terms of residue exposure and product performance.

In IR-4's most recent strategic plan: [IR-4 Vision 2020](#), the IR-4 Project Management Committee authorized an Organizational Assessment of existing IR-4 infrastructure, capabilities and stakeholder needs for IR-4 services. The goal of the Organizational Assessment is to provide recommendations on how to position the IR-4 Project for the future. The timing of the Organization Assessment fits right in with the larger and more comprehensive Path Forward activities.

The Organizational Assessment Panel (OAP) is scheduled to meet at IR-4 Headquarters the week of May 23. The OAP is being asked to critically evaluate the number and locations of the state and ARS coordination offices, field research centers/field research cooperators and analytical laboratories, as well as future expected workload, and suggest appropriate changes for a responsive and relevant IR-4. Specifically, the OAP is examining operational efficiencies and/or if savings can be achieved through reorganization of IR-4's units. Simply put, if you were starting IR-4 from scratch today, how would it best be structured to provide deliverables to stakeholders? It is anticipated that the Organizational Assessment report will be available July 2016.

That's all for now,
Jerry