



Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors

Report to Southern AHS/CARET

Raleigh, NC

August 2017

Unmanned Aircraft in Agriculture Multistate Project

The planning and proposal development process for this new S project began during a meeting in Atlanta March, 2016, with 27 faculty involved representing 14 southern institutions. The new project started Oct 1, 2016, as S-1069, Research and Extension for Unmanned Aircraft Systems Applications in U.S. Agriculture and Natural Resources. Primary objectives include:

- Determine the optimal spatial, temporal and spectral resolution needed for actionable information
- Test applications of UAS in specific real-world, production agriculture situations in multiple locations
- Use UAS to detect stress and determine stressors in plants and related ecosystems
- Develop sustainable, decision-making information that can cross boundaries from multistate down to local agricultural communities in the Information Age.

The first project meeting was held at NCSU in Raleigh in March, where the committee began exploring common interests and protocols to develop research trials across multiple states. Three project subgroups have already submitted three AFRI grant proposals covering various aspects of the project's objectives.

Southern Academic Programs and Experiment Station Directors' Workshop

A fourth joint workshop with the southern region Academic Programs directors was held Sep 7 – 8, 2016, in Atlanta to discuss common issues and concerns, share best management practices, and identify potential joint initiatives. Discussion topics included the role of non-tenure track faculty in teaching and research, ensuring diversity throughout the college, onboarding new faculty into joint appointments, and student professional development.

Cotton Winter Nursery Relocation

In fall 2013, the Cotton Council decided to terminate its relationship with INIFAP in Mexico and withdraw support for the CWN, resulting in closure of the CWN in fall 2014. I worked with Don Jones, Cotton Inc, and Richard Percy, ARS, to identify a new site for the CWN in northeastern Costa Rica. Other than gins, which were relocated from Mexico, every field and office item needed to operate a winter nursery has been purchased during the past 18 months. This was possible due to an ARS grant of \$500,000 over five years to help with relocation costs. The assistant manager from Mexico was hired as Nursery Manager under contract with Cotton Inc. and the first full-scale nursery was successfully grown this past season on our leased site near Liberia, Costa Rica. Generous assistance and advice was also provided by the local Bayer Crop Science staff regarding key agricultural contacts, nursery establishment, crop husbandry, and seed de-linting. Annual fixed costs for the nursery are covered by contributions from ARS, Cotton Inc., and SAAESD, and variable costs are covered by user fees.

Joint Southern Mini Land-grant Meeting

In spring 2019, the Southern region will hold its first joint meeting involving all 1862 and 1890 AHS, research, Extension, and academic programs directors, and CARET delegates. UFL will host the meeting somewhere in FL. An initial logistics planning committee has been appointed consisting of the ED's of each group meeting along with UFL's Vice President, FAMU's Dean, and a representative from UFL's conferences office. The group's first conference call was Mar 20 and the facilities needs of each group are being identified to begin the hotel search.

SAAESD Leadership Award

Dr. George Hopper (MS State) was presented the SAAESD Leadership Award this spring. This award is given annually to recognize those who have served SAAESD, the Southern region, and the Land-grant System with exemplary distinction. Each region now has a similar award program and awardees are recognized each year at the APLU Awards Ceremony during the annual conference in November.

SAAESD Officers

Chair – Bob Godfrey (UVI)

Past-Chair – John Russin (LSU AgCenter)

Chair-Elect – Jackie Burns (UFL)

Member-at-large – Rick Reoder (Univ of AR)