Advisory Committee on Biotechnology and 21st Century Agriculture (AC21)

Venues and Conveners subgroup meeting
Conference Call Summary
February 26, 2016

A two-hour telephone meeting of the Venues and Conveners *ad hoc* subgroup was held on February 26, 2016. The official members of the subgroup are Latresia Wilson, Leon Corzine, Josette Lewis, Barry Bushue, Melissa Hughes, and Chuck Benbrook. All members participated in the conference call except for Ms. Hughes and Dr. Benbrook. Michael Schechtman, AC21 Executive Secretary and Designated Federal Official, convened the call.

The purpose of the call was to categorize potential venues and conveners according to the role(s) they might play in coexistence discussions, as described in the previous draft summary (previously categorized as initiators, gatherers of all parties, technical experts, mediators, or other useful roles.) The subgroup first refined its thinking on the types of roles the various groups might play. It was noted that there are roles both for neutral hosts/conveners as well as hosts/conveners who might gather stakeholders with a particular perspective to participate or gather information from such a group. The subgroup came up with the following list of categories:

1 *Initiator—calls the meeting, get everyone there*
2 *Neutral/trusted host/convener to bring different perspectives together*
3 *Subgroup host/conveners to gather information and perspectives among like-minded stakeholders*
4 *Technical experts—educating, gathering information*
5 *Facilitation and process specialists*

It was noted that there are at least 3 potential types of situations in which stakeholders might be gathered for coexistence discussions: an entity might wish to gather stakeholders to discuss a potential new identity-preserved production opportunity and discuss with the community what might be required in order to successful produce it; there could be local concerns or tensions that might need to be addressed; or there might be a more general education/extension outreach to discuss the issue of coexistence in a region. Participants recognized, however, that productive discussions would need to involve all relevant stakeholder perspectives. For most discussions, participants on the call saw a role for most or all of the 5 categories of convener listed above.

Participants worked through the earlier list of potential conveners/venues and eliminated redundancies and assigned category descriptions to the remaining list. The attached document shops the revised and categorized list. It was noted that some groups might be considered as falling into category 2 or into category 3 above by different groups of stakeholders.

It was recognized that whatever body initiates coexistence discussions in a community or an area may wish to choose an appropriate participant(s) from each category according to its own situation. There may also be other groups of individuals who might provide the 5 “skill sets” in a given community—the list is provide only as an example.

Participants noted that a final document containing this information should describe the role and importance of having each type of expertise in coexistence discussions. They also noted that this work will easily complement the work of the other 2 subgroups. This information will be of value in assembling an appropriate team to bring stakeholders together to discuss guidance information that is being discussed by the Guidance Document subgroup, and will provide a potential roster of useful participants that can help implement a coexistence-specific model for these discussions, as is being discussed by the Models and Incentives subgroup.

Leon Corzine volunteered to report out to the next AC21 plenary session on March 14, 2016 on the work of the Venues and Conveners subgroup.

Venues and Conveners AC21 Subgroup

Potential Venues and Conveners and Roles They Might Play

Draft 2/29/16

Type of organization	Potential role(s)
• State Departments of Agriculture	1, 2, 4, 5, 3?
• County Departments of Agriculture	1, 2, 4, 5, 3?
• State and County Extension	1, 2, 4, 5
• Crop Improvement Associations	1, 3, 4
• NRCS	1, 2, 4
• Water Districts	4
• Community Supported Agriculture (CSA's) Coalition and local chapters	1, 3, 4
• Chamber of Commerce	1, 2
• State Agricultural Marketing Boards	1, 3, 4
• State Task Force (e.g., OR has one in place on GE vs Non-GE)	1, 2, 4
• State Farm Mediation Boards	2, 4, 5
• Coalition of Agricultural Mediation Programs	2, 4, 5
• County and Town Associations	2, 5
• Agriculture Community Engagement organizations (e.g., in WI; consult w DJ)	?
• Land Grant Universities	1, 2, 4, 5
• Crop/commodity/trade/grower associations	1, 3, 4
• American Farm Bureau Federation	1, 2, 3, 5
• National Farmers Union	1, 2, 3, 5
• Major retailers with contractual relationships with farmers (e.g., Walmart, Krogers etc.)	1, 3
• Seed contractors (could be biotech providers who work their contractees to help them understand what's needed to meet their specs).	1, 3, 4
• Third-party certifiers (e.g. Oregon Tilth, etc)	3, 4
• American Seed Trade Association.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Category classification

1 Initiator—calls the meeting, gets everyone there

2 Neutral/trusted host/convener to bring different perspectives together

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4 Technical experts—educating, gathering information

5 Facilitation and process specialists