



IR-4 Project Management Committee Summer Meeting

July 8-10, 2025
Agenda and Handouts



AGENDA

IR-4 PROJECT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

2025 Summer Meeting (via Zoom)
July 8-10, 2025 - 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM EDT

- 1) Welcome / Introductions (Hengel)
- 2) [Approval of minutes & new agenda items \(Hengel\)](#)
- 3) Administrative Advisors Updates
 - Hatch/NRSP-4 funds (Lommel/Buhler/Baron)
 - Status of Executive Director Search (Lommel & Chojnacki)
- 4) NIFA Update (Philips)
 - FY 2025 grant status
- 5) CLC & Friends of IR-4 Update (Pitts & Beaudreau)
 - i) Appropriations 2026
 - ii) Other topics
 - iii) New Members
- 6) Unit Updates ([NER](#), NCR, [SOR](#), WSR, ARS & HQ)
- 7) Program/Platform/Committee updates
 - Food Program (Carpenter et al.)
 - i) [Residue Studies](#)
 - (1) Field Program
 - (a) Delayed/Outstanding reports
 - (b) 2025 Challenges
 - (c) [Status of 2025 iAdvantage electronic Field Data Notebook update \(Moore and Byrtus\)](#)
 - (2) Laboratory activities
 - (a) [Backlog](#)
 - (b) Training (Hengel/Dineen)
 - (3) Submissions
 - (4) Quality Assurance Unit (Mazlo)
 - (a) Discussion of EPA inspections/impact on other aspects of the program
 - ii) [Product Performance-2025 overview](#)
 - (1) 2025 overview and delayed/outstanding reports
 - iii) [Integrated Solutions](#)
 - (1) Successes
 - (2) 2025 overview
 - (3) Reboot
 - iv) [Biopesticide Regulatory Support Update](#) (Pike)
 - v) International (Minor Use Foundation)

- [Environmental Horticulture](#) (Kindle, Byrtus, Carpenter, Baron)
 - i) 2024/2025 overview
 - ii) EH Workshop/Proposed plans for 2026/2027
 - iii) Program name change?
 - [Communications](#) (Ross)
 - [NEC/Training Committee](#) (Dineen)
 - [Technology Committee](#) (Byrtus)
- 8) Priority allocations for workshops
- [Key dates leading up to the Food Use Workshop](#)
 - [Status quo - proposed parameters of 2026 field research program \(Axtell\)](#)
 - [Alignment of the field program to laboratory capacity](#)
 - i) Shortfall in funding contract labs to pick up
- 9) [Field trial funding policy- current process and challenges](#) (Baron)
- 10) [Status of Training Modules](#) (Welker)
- 11) [Vital Records Control](#) (NJ Archives) issue
- [12\)PMC Operational Procedures](#)
- [13\)Coordinated Meeting Coverage Process](#)
- 14)Awards
- [Process for National Recognition of Excellence Award at 2026 NEC](#)
- [15\)Future meetings](#)
- 2025 Food Use Workshop – Denver, CO September 9-11, 2025
 - 2025 Environmental Horticulture Workshop – Kansas City, MO October 7-8, 2025
 - Fall PMC - Kansas City, MO October 8-10, 2025
 - NRPM - Raleigh; October 27-29, 2025
 - National Education Conference – Charleston, SC; February 3-5, 2026
 - Spring joint PMC/CLC meeting - Washington; March 3-5, 2026
- 16) Executive Session

Approval of Minutes, New Agenda Items

Presenter: Matt Hengel





MINUTES
Joint IR-4 Commodity Liaison
Committee/Project Management
Spring 2025 Meeting
March 4-6, 2025
Hybrid Meeting - Washington D.C.

MOTIONS AND ACTION ITEMS

Motions/Consensus Items:

1. A motion to approve the PMC minutes for the Fall 2025 and Special Meeting of February 6, 2025, was made by Todd Scholz, seconded by Jerry Baron; **unanimously approved.**
2. A motion was made to approve the "Track B" Commodity Liaison Committee membership list as proposed and extend the end date to 2029, by Todd Scholz; seconded by Mike Bledsoe; **unanimously approved.** Members whose term extended include Mark Arney, National Watermelon Board; James Cranney, California Citrus Quality Council; William Frantz, The Cranberry Institute; Rachel Roberts, American Mushroom Institute; Todd Scholz, USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council; Alan Schreiber, Agricultural Development Group, Inc.; and Lee VanWychen, Weed Science Society of America.
3. A motion was made to maintain coordinated meeting coverage, when appropriate, and to implement a google sheet to log planned meeting attendance by Matt Hengel, seconded by Jerry Baron; **unanimously approved.**
4. A motion to adjourn the regular session at 4:44 pm and to move to Executive Session was made by Jerry Baron; seconded by Mary Hausbeck; **unanimously approved.**
5. A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 12:04 pm by Alvin Simmons seconded by Liwei Gu; **unanimously approved.**

Motions/Consensus Votes Made Via Email In-Between Regular Meetings:

None.

Action Items:

1. **Action Item (PMC):** to discuss the Network Expansion Taskforce goals with the regions and revisit the items discussed in an interim or Summer PMC meeting.
2. **Action Item (Baron):** Consolidate various documents and information into Governance Bylaws for the Project Management Committee.

Members:

Michael Aerts; CLC
Jerry Baron; IR-4 Executive Director
Zach Bagley; CLC
Michael Bledsoe; CLC

Doug Buhler; Administrative Advisor-NCR
Maggie Elliot; CLC
Liwei Gu; Regional Director-SOR
Mary Hausbeck; Regional Director NCR

Members Continued:

Matt Hengel; PMC Chair; Regional Director-WR
Marcel Holyoak; Administrative Adviser – WR
Bob Jones; CLC
Steve Lommel; Administrative Adviser- HQ
Michael Martin; CLC
Armando Monterroso; CLC
Pete Nelson; CLC
Rachel Roberts; CLC
Todd Scholz; CLC Chair

Alvin Simmons; USDA-ARS
Laura Shumow; CLC
Michelle Starke; CLC
Barry Tanner; CLC
Steve Salisbury; CLC
Johnathan Saranger; CLC
Amy Upton; CLC
Simon Zebelo; Regional Director - NER

Presenters:

Alice Axtell, IR-4 HQ
Bill Barney; IR-4 HQ
David Beaudreau; DCLRS
Jimmy Byrtus; IR-4 HQ
Debbie Carpenter; IR-4 HQ
Krystal Chojnacki; IR-4 HQ
Christina Dineen; IR-4 HQ
Brent Elrod USDA-NIFA
Anna Gore; MUF

Johanna Mazlo; IR-4 HQ
Manjit Mirsa; USDA NIFA
Philip Moore; IR-4 HQ
Kimberly Nesci; USDA OPMP
Jaimin Patel; IR-4 HQ
Hannah Ross; IR-4 HQ
Dan Rossi; IR-4 HQ
Robert Welker; IR-4 HQ

Tuesday March 4, 2025 9:30 am

Matt Hengel called the meeting to order at 9:47 am.–

- Welcome and comments from the current PMC and CLC Chairs: (Hengel & Scholz)
 - M. Hengel initiated introductions around the room and on Zoom.
- Approval of minutes, new agenda items. (Handout)
 - M. Hengel asked the PMC if there were any changes to be made to the minutes presented; none offered.
 - **A motion to approve the PMC minutes for the Fall 2025 and Special Meeting of February 6, 2025, was made by Todd Scholz, seconded by Jerry Baron; unanimously approved.**
 - No new agenda items were requested.
- 2024 IR-4 Year End Summary (Handout) -
 - J. Baron presented the statistics from the 2024 Annual Report and Year End Summary document, reporting: that 2024 was a successful year:
 - i. Food Program - IR-4 data/submissions support 52 new tolerances that extrapolate out to 1,024 new product uses. Baron also reviewed upcoming challenges with EPA reviews of new submissions. New research- there were 394 residue trials contributing to 53 Magnitude of Residue studies; 148 efficacy/crop safety trials contributing to 74 product performance projects, and 62 field trials contributing to 35 Integrated Solutions projects. Also there were 3 biopesticide submissions made.
 - ii. EH Program - 671 field and greenhouse trials that contributed to 56 projects;

J. Baron further reported on new information videos produced to assist with recruiting new researchers and stakeholders.

- CLC Report (Scholz)
 - Membership report (Presentation)
 - i. T. Scholz provided an update on: the purpose of this annual meeting; the need to approve the extension of the Track B memberships list
 - a. **A motion was made to approve the “Track B” Commodity Liaison Committee membership list as proposed and extend the end date to 2029, by Todd Scholz; seconded by Mike Bledsoe; unanimously approved. Members whose term extended include Mark Arney, National Watermelon Board; James Cranney, California Citrus Quality Council; William Frantz, The Cranberry Institute; Rachel Roberts, American Mushroom Institute; Todd Scholz, USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council; Alan Schreiber, Agricultural Development Group, Inc.; and Lee VanWychen, Weed Science Society of America.**
 - ii. T. Scholz further reported on the status of the Friends of IR-4 including: Status of membership and Board members;
 - Advocacy Plans - Beaudreau reported that the Congressional visits are being conducted by regional teams this year; reviewed the annual ask of \$25 million; reviewed key takeaways and meeting flow; and the Congressional reception at the House Agriculture Committee Meeting Room.
 - i. A discussion as held regarding dropping off the one-pagers at offices who did not have time to meet and ask when their schedule for appropriation requests is; the logistics for the hill visits; the high quality of the preparation materials; and to express the large delegation making these visits on behalf of IR-4 this week.
 - ii. T. Scholz commended Johnathan Sarager’s leadership of the CLC Government Affairs Committee.
 - iii. H. Ross presented the contents of the Hill visit informational folders, and the regional team leads decided they would be responsible for bringing packets for the group.
- Status of Funding/Grants
 - Jerry Baron reported Congress has not addressed the FY 2025 appropriation; there may be a 1% cut; this year we are due for a full 4 year grant proposal; the implications of delays in funding coming in and partner university responses; ARS cuts of the umbrella account are looking to be permanent moving forward and what work those funds supported
 - A discussion was held regarding the impacts of budget cuts on this year’s continuing resolution versus next year’s budget; the length of the umbrella account funds coming in the past (15 years); the investment University of Maryland Eastern Shore has made to dedicate a new greenhouse to this project and their university efforts to express the importance of these funds.
 - J. Baron reported on the status of NRSP funds; that IR-4 is up for the 5 year review; the NRSP board has recommended a 15% reduction to NRSP-4 to support other projects; the renewal package was submitted in January and included two scenarios, one with the cut and the other fully funded with a justification for such; and that we will hear back in late spring. A discussion was held regarding asking this group for support for the full funding of NRSP funds and whether or not Hatch funding has remained level.
 - J. Baron reported that universities are facing looming reductions in indirect costs and the implications of loss of revenue to the universities; hiring freezes that may occur as a result;

and how the national IR-4 program is working to internally implement savings, namely on travel.

- A discussion was held regarding university reactions to indirect cost loss, what services those fund, and whether or not the cuts were imposed to all universities across the nation.

Break at 10:56 am. The meeting reconvened at 11:10 pm. –

- Global Harmonization of Pesticides/Minor Use Foundation (Presentation)
 - A. Gore presented on: funding from the USDA FAS Assisting Specialty Crop Exports funds were frozen in February not long after it was awarded and resulted in cancelled studies; holding priority setting exercise and they received over 5,000 nominations as a result and reviewed those nominations; they are now holding a 5 week exercise for industry to submit solutions for the nominations; the finalization of the priority setting process will be in May; and they looking at areas where there is overlap with IR-4 Priorities and IR-4 data to get a Codex MRL.
- Priority Setting/New Research(Handout)
 - A. Axtell reported on the outcomes of the Priority Setting session including: 28% requires only residue data, 42% requires residue and product performance, and 30% efficacy data only; the total number of Product Performance trials versus residue; regional allocations and priority distribution by discipline; reviewed the resource allocations to support the various trials and what remains to be allocated.
 - A. Axtell reported on the Integrated Solutions Priority setting outcomes including: the 12 priorities and the associated studies and trials allocated; the distribution of trials by discipline; and the resource allocation.
 - A discussion was held regarding: if the State of California budget cuts will impact the CDFA funds; what constitutes a carryover project and the high number of these types of projects; how many third party funders there are for these projects; and an ask was made to put together how much they actually need to fully complete projects for the congressional asks.
 - A. Axtell reported on the recent Industry Technology Session; important deadlines for the 2025 priority setting cycle; and reviewed a draft agenda for the 2025 Food Use Workshop to be held in Denver, Colorado September 9-11.
 - A brief discussion was held regarding ways of working with the EPA in the future given the current uncertainties.

Break for working lunch at 11:49 pm.

- Dr. Manjit Mirsa, Director of USDA-NIFA, delivered a lunch address expressing the importance of science communications. He specifically pointed out that NIFA has been leveraging the land-grant system for over 60 years in its support of the IR-4 Project; that IR-4 is a critical component of solving pest challenges into the future; how fortunate the US is with our agricultural production versus some places abroad; and the importance of working together to achieving mutual goals for agriculture.
- A brief discussion was held regarding future technological advances in agriculture and when the RFAs may be released.

The meeting reconvened at 1:18 pm.–

- Reboot of Integrated Solutions (IS) Platform (Handout)
 - A. Axtell reported on: the goals and deliverables of the IS program; the technological requirements for inclusion in IS studies; project start date deferrals; limiting the number of annual priorities; priority allocations for equity; oversight and planning working groups; and enhancing outreach efforts for this particular program.
 - A discussion was held as to whether or not this research was being published in peer review journals (yes).

- Comments from USDA- Office of Pest Management Policy (OPMP)
 - K. Nesci reported on the charge of the OPMP when it was developed to represent the needs of the growers; the OPMP group is a small one but many came with expertise from the US EPA; and both participates and reviews interagency decisions in the implementation of EPA strategies to provide growers support for implementation.
 - A brief discussion was held regarding if OPMP gets involved in tariffs, if crop summaries have been helpful to OPMP (yes especially if citable); how the CLC can help share the importance of OPMP to specialty crop growers; and IR-4 thanked this group for all of their work.

- Status of Executive Director Search (Handout)
 - K. Chojnacki reported on: the IR-4 Executive Director position will continue to report to the Associate Dean and Director of the NC Agricultural Research Service; Dr. David Monks will be charged with serving as the Search Committee Chair; committee make-up requirements at NC State; the DRAFT job description; and current outreach efforts of the upcoming position.
 - A brief discussion was held regarding timing of the transition and if a search firm will be used.

- Awards
 - J. Baron presented a National Hall of Fame Award to Dr. Dan Rossi to honor the legacy of his career, his exemplary service to agriculture and the specialty crop community, and service in support of the IR-4 project in his various administrator roles.
 - J. Baron presented a SOAR award to Dr. Kim Nesci for her dedication to the specialty crop community in the areas of Service, Outreach, Altruism, and Research.

Break at 2:50 pm. The meeting reconvened at 3:32 pm. –

- Management Reports
 - Administrative Advisors
 - i. D. Buhler reported: on working with Jerry to get the NRSP renewal submitted through a new agency administering the program; that Jerry is scheduled to give educational presentations to the NRSP Directors on IR-4; that the justification for maintaining full funding was well developed; and asked the group to put in a good word with the state experiment station directors.
 - ii. S. Lommel reported: that there is still great excitement to host IR-4; instituted a hiring pause to understand the financial impacts of new orders and an exception process; many leadership changes in CALS but feels that IR-4 is institutionalized enough at NC State to continue their good works; and that they are installing fiber into almost every experiment station.

- iii. M. Holyoak reported: are searching for a new dean of College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences; the State of California has delayed payments to the University of California and are expecting a 10% deficit in the coming year; and Dr. Hengel got promoted to Full Adjunct Professor.

Break at 2:45 pm. The meeting reconvened at 3:08 pm. –

- Regional/ARS Reports (Handouts)
 - i. NER: S. Zebelo provided a report on 2024 activities including: UMES has a new Associate Dean for Research starting this month; three new university wide systems rolled out recently; 26 food use trials conducted; 14 performance trials conducted; 14 environmental horticulture; and 6 integrated solutions trials.
 - ii. NCR: M. Hausbeck provided a report on 2024 activities including: researchers in the region have been working to implement the eFDB and work through challenges; there are challenges with attracting new researchers and working through delayed funding; and reviewed the number of field trials completed in the region.
 - iii. SOR: L. Gu provided a report on 2024 activities including: Kristen Searer-Jones was hired as the new RFC; a new Chemist – Dr. Isil Gazioglu- has started in the Analytical lab and the lab is on track to have a more successful year in 2025; the QA unit has finished 100% of their work for 2024; and submitted a grant to the Florida State Department of Agriculture to support IR-4 work.
 - iv. WR: M. Hengel provided a report on 2024 activities including: K. Arnold has been working to develop networks and running the field program; filled a FRD position at Oregon state; other platform areas (EHC, IS) are working well; working through the university to get funding out to researchers; the analytical lab completed 11 ASRs but are delayed with storage stability data needed; still working on seismic retrofits on lab building; and they have hired Laurel Hsieh to fill the QA vacancy.
 - v. ARS: A. Simmons reported: that none of the ARS IR-4 team members have been separated from ARS at this time; while there are uncertainties of funding outlook spirits remain high; the Wapato lab has elevated performance since this time last year; the existing five year cooperative agreement with IR-4 HQ expires in July 2025 and at this time there are no funds to support a new agreement; and A. Simmons will be getting trained to conduct QC on eFDB.
 - A discussion was held regarding how vacancies and travel are being handled right now.
 - A. Simmons further reported that the ARS agency Head, Dr. Simon Liu, has announced his retirement.
 - vi. HQ Report (handout) - J. Baron reported: on new responsibilities assigned to HQ staff; the recruitment process for the Environmental Horticulture Manager; and the relationship at NC State continues to thrive with participation on committees and graduate committees.
 - vii. Financial - K. Chojnacki reported on potential delays in no-cost extension or closeout; preparations for the 2025 No Cost Extension; researcher end dates will end on 4/30/2026 as will subawards off the prime

The meeting recessed for the evening 4:07 pm –

Wednesday, March 5, 2025 8:30 am

Matt Hengel reconvened the meeting at 8:40 am --

A brief discussion was held to discuss the coordination of Hill visits for the CLC members, the \$25 million ask with Congress and the upcoming Congressional Reception.

- Program Reports
 - Food Program (Handout)
 - i. Field Program & Submissions: C. Marconi reported: on field data books status through early March 2025; discussed challenges associated with not getting completed field data books according to timelines from FRDs and the analytical backlog;
 - ii. T. Pike reported: there were 8 tolerance actions resulted in 1,024 uses; 9 submissions made in 2024 as well as one final report provided to the registrant for submission; provided crop group updates; and discussed external issues that present challenges such as ESA, lack of submission documents until labels have issued from EPA and others.
 - A discussion was held regarding pollinator study delays, the reduction of studies over the decade in the field research program, and the impact of FDB being submitted late.
 - iii. Laboratory Analysis: C. Dineen reported on: the current status of the backlog and plans for addressing it at Tifton, Wapato, WR Lab and SOR Lab; and the status of the studies at contract labs.
 - iv. Alternative to Storage Stability: M. Hengel reported: that the storage stability is causing delays in ASR; proposed to send storage stability projects to contract labs or to an ARS laboratory
 - An in-depth discussion was held regarding which lab would do method development and day zero, the time benefits to parsing that requirement out, and whether this is moving one problem from one lab to another.
 - Quality Assurance (Handout)
 - i. J. Mazlo reported on: EPA compliance and monitoring; reviewed the activities of the unit including participation on committees, inspections performed, and updating eQA system; QA's work on audit activities of the eFDB; provided a multi-year look at audit and inspections conducted; and provided an update on eQA and eDocs.

Break at 10:05 am. The meeting reconvened at 10:25 am. –

- Product Performance Research & Integrated Solutions (IS) Platform (Handout)
 - i. A. Axtell reported on: 51 final reports have been submitted out of 148 product performance trials; 12 Integrated Solutions priorities have been completed with 27 reports received out of 62 IS trials; shared deliverables from recent IS studies and associated publications; and reviewed outreach efforts of the Biology Team.
- Biopesticide Regulatory Support (Handout)
 - i. B. Barney reported on: pending or submitted projects this year sent to the EPA; submission packages in development; and recent requests assessed through the new vetting process.
 - ii. A brief discussion was held regarding the ease of use of the new vetting process.
- Environmental Horticulture(Handout)

- i. J. Byrtus reported: that 3 new projects have been assigned this year, reviewed which regions trials have been assigned in; and shared a highlight on a potential label change for control of Cornear worms on conifer seed orchards.
- Communications (Handout)
 - i. H. Ross reported on: print, digital and identity updates; completion and posting of the 2024 annual report and YES document; brand refresh on marketing positions; recent stories produced and published; social media highlights; impacts of the newsletter; job promotion efforts; event promotion; award updates form the past year; and provided a preview of the new Intranet.
 - ii. A discussion was held regarding photo shares; if there are leads for each section of the website; if shared drive protected items would be on the intranet; if eduroam can be used for login; search ability in google and key words; and password protections.
- Education & Training Committee (Handout)
 - C. Dineen reported on: planning efforts underway for the 2026 National Education Conference; national SOPs in progress and upcoming SOPs; advisories to National SOPs updates and retirements; and virtual trainings offered.
 - Path Forward 2.0
 - Training Modules (Handout)
 - R. Welker reported: that the outline of new employee orientation topics is complete; presentations are being built; on next steps for internal review; and hosting the trainings on the new intranet.
 - Technology Team (Handout)
 - J. Byrtus reported on: three companies that gave previews of their products to update and standardize our database and the pro's and con's of each; and costs estimated around \$60k and maintenance fees of \$45k per year.
 - A discussion was held regarding cost structure, making the database public and used for other needs worldwide; data ownership; issues with hosting eFDB data in the "new" database; and if there are AI capabilities with the new databases.
 - Network Expansion Taskforce (NET) (Handout)
 - J. Patel reported: on the NET goals; there were 15 new researchers who conducted trials in Plant Pathology and Weed Science in 2024 and 2025; highlighted a published article highlighting IR-4; and reported on talks and poster presentations held recently.
 - S. Zebelo updated that UMES held a small farm conference and Marylee Ross presented on the IR-4 Project.
 - A discussion was held about focusing on the second goal of recruiting new researchers, original goal alignment, research projects dominating time and getting consensus with the Department, GLP researchers being the more difficult researcher to report, ARS researchers retiring, the two goals might be mutually exclusive, and add to website for people to submit their CV and the biologists can manage the list and centrally manage a list.
 - **Action Item (PMC):** to discuss the Network Expansion Taskforce goals with the regions and revisit the items discussed in an interim or Summer PMC meeting.
- Electronic Field Data Book (eFDB) (Handout)
 - P. Moore reported: on the eFDB changes for 2025 trials; changes to forms; on a new administrator- David Schnatter; future issues that are being reviewed to be addressed; the future QC and varying perspectives from participants/administrators.

- A discussion was held regarding average findings, how many FRDs have not had an eFDB QC, and RFCs would like to stay a part of the process.
- J. Baron reported: that with the eFDB being electronic – the need to move to electronic signature; acceptable programs with the EPA and offered at the land grants; and releasing an SOP with the move to electronic signature.
- A discussion was held regarding the cost of licenses, use of DocuSign, the discussion was tabled to allow time to consider the implications.

The meeting recessed for Lunch at 12:20 noon and reconvened at 1:19pm --

- Coordination of meeting coverage
 - J. Baron reported: this item was related to cost saving activities around travel – maintaining coordinated coverage at meetings; and establish a google sheet to coordinate meetings among the regions.
 - **A motion was made to maintain coordinated meeting coverage, when appropriate, and to implement a google sheet to log planned meeting attendance by Matt Hengel, seconded by Jerry Baron; unanimously approved.**
- Upcoming Meetings (Handout)
 - K. Chojnacki shared the upcoming dates and asked everyone to populate their calendars.
 - Summer PMC meeting: July 8-10, Virtual
 - 2025 Food Program Workshop: September 9-11, Denver CO
 - 2025 EH Workshop: October 7-8, Kansas City, MO
 - Fall PMC meeting: October 8-10, Kansas City, MO
 - NRPM: October 28-29, Raleigh, NC
 - National Education Conference: February 3-5, Charleston, SC
 - 2026 Joint CLC/PMC meeting: March 3-5, Washington DC
 - A. Axtell noted that this is a centralized document to capture the upcoming meetings and deadlines and will be a living document on the intranet.
- Other topics/Adjourn Regular Meeting Session

A motion to adjourn the regular session at 4:44 pm and to move to Executive Session was made by Jerry Baron; seconded by Mary Hausbeck; unanimously approved.

Break at 2:06 pm. The meeting reconvened into Executive Session at 2:19 pm. –

- Executive Session

The meeting recessed for the evening at 3:30 pm.--

Thursday March 6, 2025 - 8:30 am

Matt Hengel reconvened the Executive Session at 8:31 am. --

Break at 10:10 am. The meeting reconvened at 10:30 am. –

The members reconvened from Executive Session at 11:22 am with no motions and the following reportable action item:

- **Action Item (Baron):** Consolidate various documents and information into Governance Bylaws for the Project Management Committee.
- Adjourn

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 12:04 pm by Alvin Simons seconded by Liwei Gu; unanimously approved.



MINUTES
Project Management Committee
Special Meeting
April 10, 2025
Virtual

MOTIONS AND ACTION ITEMS

1. **Action Item:** J. Baron will ask the Regional Field Coordinators to validate the field trial numbers and bring back a final version for a vote.
2. **Action Item:** J. Baron will take the PMC feedback that there is interest to open dialogue to the Commodity Liaison Committee Government Affairs Committee.

CONSENSUS ITEMS

1. **Consensus:** To continue the practice of QC going forth and re-visit after one year at the March 2026 PMC meeting.
2. **Consensus:** To hold off on implementing esignature software at this time and defer back to the technology team to review how implementation would look/cost for a future year.

Members:

Jerry Baron; IR-4 Executive Director
Doug Buhler; Administrative Advisor – NCR
Liwei Gu; Regional Director - SOR
Matt Hengel; Regional Director-WR/PMC Chair
Moses Kairo; Administrative Advisor - NER
Joseph Munyaneza; Administrative Advisor – ARS
Todd Scholz; CLC Chair
Alvin Simmons; USDA-ARS
Simon Zebelo; Regional Director – NER

Staff:

Deborah Carpenter; IR-4 HQ
Krystal Chojnacki; IR-4 HQ

Thursday, April 10, 2025 10:00 am EST to 11:00 am EST

-- Dr. Matt Hengel called the meeting to order at 10:03 am --

1. Quality Control (QC) of electronic field data notebooks
 - J. Baron stated that this was a follow-up item from a prior meeting and asked for feedback from the regions; and reminded that the QC cost will offset the increased cost of the eFDB software and the regions would need to absorb the costs
 - The regions reported out with consensus to keep QC on eFDB's for a 6 month to 1 year amount of time and then to reassess to consider continued need; and an anonymous survey being developed for FRD's on eFDB feedback.
 - **Consensus:** To continue the practice of QC going forth and re-visit after one year at the March 2026 PMC meeting.
2. Electronic signatures

- J. Baron stated that this was a follow-up item from a prior meeting and asked for feedback from the regions.
 - The regions reported out with consensus that this is not a pressing need at this time and we can stay with manual signatures.
 - **Consensus:** To hold off on implementing esignature software at this time and defer back to the technology team to review how implementation would look/cost for a future year.
3. Funding and funding distribution (Handout)
- J. Baron reported that we still have not received our budget numbers for 2025; we should plan on the proposal to be similar to the last 4-year submission; and reviewed a budget model using the \$15 million dollar budget similar to the prior year.
 - A discussion as held regarding the Integrated Solutions line items; if we have initial costs for contract labs (working on now); the need to prepare a full 4-year budget for this new grant cycle; the grant will be non-competitive; and the new manner in which USDA contracts are currently being reviewed.
 - **Action Item:** J. Baron will ask the Regional Field Coordinators to validate the field trial numbers and bring back a final version for a vote.
4. Keith Pitt's proposal regarding BPIA
- J. Baron reported that Keith Pitt let him know that Biological Product Industry Alliance (BPIA) was having a meeting in Washington, D.C. at the same time as our annual March meeting and if we should consider a joint meeting/reception/legislator visits.
 - A discussion was held regarding the potential for a joint congressional reception; interest from stakeholders to move away from pesticides and into biopesticides; and asking a subset of the BPIA to attend the reception.
 - **Action Item:** J. Baron will take the PMC feedback that there is interest to open dialogue to the Commodity Liaison Committee Government Affairs Committee.
5. Intranet site
- J. Baron reported that the intranet site is now live and a tutorial was put together and distributed to IR-4 project stakeholders.
6. Executive Session
- The Members convened to executive session at 11:03 am.

The meeting reconvened at 11:15 am into general session with no reportable actions.

The meeting adjourned at 11:15 am.

Northeast Region Report

Presenter: Dr. Simon Zebelo



Northeast Region PMC Report

January 1 – June 30, 2025

M. Ross, M. J. Hickman, S. Zebelo and J. Forder

Program Summary

Trials At-A-Glance

Food Use MOR Trials	2023	2024	2025
Trials Placed	31	26	29
Canceled Trials	3	1	1
Completed Trials	28	25	1
FDB's Received at RFC Office	28	16	0
Completed QC Reviews	28	14	0

Food Use Performance Trials	2023	2024	2025
# of Trials	20	18	20
Completed Trials	18	15	0
Reports Submitted	16	11	0

Env. Horticulture – Efficacy	2023	2024	2025
# of Protocols	4	5	4
Projects Placed	4	5	4
Canceled Projects	0	0	0
Reports Submitted	2	0	0

Env. Horticulture – Crop Safety	2023	2024	2025
# of Protocols	4	3	5
Trials Placed	31	19	48
Canceled Trials	0	0	0
Reports Submitted	23	0	0

Integrated Solutions Trials	2023	2024	2025
# of Trials	7	8	1
Completed Trials	7	8	0
Reports Submitted	6	6	0

Update from the Director's Office

The details of NER 2023-2024(Year 3) and 2024-2025(Year 4) sub-sub award contract processing are presented in the following table.

Activities	2023-2024(Year3)	2024-2025(Year 4)
Subawards completed	26	21
Number of Sub awards Signed	24	20
PR completed	19 (plus 5 for UMD)*	N/A*
PO processed	19 (plus 5 for UMD)*	N/A*
Invoices received	21	5
Checks issued	21	5
NCE Requested	11	6

* The University of Maryland's budget has been transferred internally through our financial system. Purchase Requisitions (PR), Purchase Order (PO), No Cost Extension (NCE). N/A*:PR and PO not done in the new Financial System

Eleven researchers for the 2023-2024 fiscal year and six researchers for the 2024-2025 fiscal year requested no-cost extensions (NCEs), respectively. UMES approved these NCE requests. The processing and release of funds for the 2024-2025 fiscal year (Year 4) sub-sub award are progressing well, despite delays in winter and spring caused by the UMES/UMD transition to the new financial system (Workday). Researchers from Rutgers, Thierry Besancon, and Andrew Wyenandt have not signed their Year 3 subawards. Thierry has completed the work and submitted reports; however, Rutgers' sponsored research office failed to process the Year 3 subaward. We are working to expedite this process in collaboration with Marylee Ross and the researcher.

At UMES, we completed 18 crop safety trials for the Environmental Horticulture (EH) program, using two protocols, and submitted the reports.

UMES purchased and distributed residue bags and boxes to all regional offices and the USDA-ARS. Moreover, we have stocked our residual bags inventory at UMES in case any region needs urgent sample bags.

The IR-4 NER team had several regular virtual meetings. Thanks to the hard-working colleagues Marylee, Megan, Jane, John, Josh (UMES research office), SLRs, and the researchers, things are progressing well in the NER.

Regards,

Simon Zebelo

Update from the Regional Coordinator's Office

January 2025 started off with a blizzard. I had plans to attend the Northeastern Weed Science Society meeting in Annapolis, MD to present the SOAR award to Mark VanGessel (Weed Scientist for University of Delaware). Alas, a blizzard hit preventing me from driving. Roger Batts was already in Annapolis and agreed to present the award. Many thanks to Roger for presenting Mark's well-deserved award.

Megan set up an IR-4 table and attended Delaware Ag Week to spread the word about IR-4.

We hosted our Northeast Annual Meeting February 18th. Our liaisons provided us with plentiful information about the needs of the specialty crop growers in our region.

In March, we welcomed a beautiful new person into this world. Megan's baby, Ruth Joan, was born on the eighth of March. Megan and Ruthie are both doing great! I can't wait to see that little girl on a tractor. Megan worked hard before she left on maternity leave to make sure anything she could do before leaving was done. She left me in good shape.

Also, in March RFCs presented a GLP training webinar. Many thanks to Christina Dineen for her help making it happen.

In April, Wesley Bouchelle (an FRD at Rutgers) called me to say he could not conduct the cranberry trial that was assigned to him. We were able to place a second trial of the same study in Massachusetts so no trials were lost.

On May 12th we learned that Keagan Handley (FRD in NY) had left her job at Lange Research with 10 active GLP trials in place. There was no gap in attention to those trials because Aaron Greene, another highly qualified GLP trained researcher at Lange, took over all 10 trials. There was some scrambling to get all of the pieces in place, but the transition went smoothly and I think we all learned some things about how to handle a situation like that with electronic Field Data Books. Aaron is doing great and we will get him onboard with the eFDB.

Just a few days later I was presented with a University of Maryland College of Agriculture and Natural Resources Off-Campus Professional Track Faculty Excellence Award. It was an honor to be recognized.

It was great to get Megan back the first week of June. She picked right up where she left off. I spent 3 days helping to host the Annual EPA/USDA tour. It was a great success. We held our Regional Priority Setting meetings June 23rd and 24th in preparation for the Food Use Workshop.

We have also learned that at least 4 EPA inspections are planned in the Northeast region over the next 2 months. I guess I better pack my bag. I have no qualms about this because our researchers are top notch and confident in their GLP compliance.

Notice I started this letter in a blizzard and as I sign off it is 100 Degrees!

marylee

Program Report

Food Use Program

Magnitude of Residue

In 2025, twenty-nine magnitude of residue (MOR) trials are being conducted in the Northeast Region. MOR field trials were conducted in four locations, including:

- Lange Research, Inc., North Rose, NY (Contract Research Facility)
- Lower Eastern Shore Research and Education Center, Salisbury, MD (University of MD)
- Rutgers Snyder Research and Extension Farm, Pittstown, NJ (Rutgers University)
- UMass Cranberry Station, Wareham, MA (University of Massachusetts)

One set of samples have been shipped and no electronic Field Data Books (eFDBs) have been completed yet. Fourteen Quality Control (QC) reviews have been completed for 2024.

Performance

In 2025, twenty performance trials are being conducted in the Northeast Region. The Efficacy and Crop Safety trials are being conducted at eight locations.

Efficacy and Crop Safety trials are being conducted at:

- Rutgers Center for Blueberry and Cranberry Research and Extension, Chatsworth, NJ (Rutgers University)
- Agricultural Experiment Station, Geneva, NY (Cornell University)
- Long Island Horticultural Research Lab, Riverhead, NY (Cornell University)
- University of Maryland Main Campus, College Park, MD (University of Maryland)
- Carvel Center for Agricultural Research, Georgetown, DE (University of Delaware)
- Wye Research and Education Center, Wye Mills, MD (University of Maryland)
- WVU Plant Diagnostic Clinic, Morgantown, WV (West Virginia University)
- Penn State Horticulture Research Farm, State College, PA (Pennsylvania State University)

No trials have been completed and no reports have been submitted yet.

Environmental Horticulture Program

In 2025, there are four efficacy protocols and five crop safety protocols. Under these protocols, we placed four efficacy projects and forty-eight crop safety trials.

The four efficacy projects are being conducted at:

- Long Island Horticultural Research Lab, Riverhead, NY (Cornell University)
- WVU Plant Diagnostic Clinic, Morgantown, WV (West Virginia University)

The forty-eight crop safety trials are being conducted at:

- Long Island Horticultural Research Lab, Riverhead, NY (Cornell University)
- University of Maryland College Park, College Park, MD (University of Maryland)
- University of Connecticut Agricultural Research Station, Storrs, CT (University of Connecticut)

To date, no reports have been submitted.

Integrated Solutions

In 2025, one Integrated Solutions carry over trial is being conducted.

The trials are being conducted at:

- Penn State Horticulture Research Farm, State College, PA (Pennsylvania State University)

To date, no trials have been completed or reports submitted.

Quality Assurance

During the period of this report, I [Jane Forder] conducted 5 audits of field data books, 9 audits of electronic field data books, 5 final report audits. I performed a second review on 3 final reports, performed 2 closing report checks and typed up 4 QA statements. I conducted 16 field in-life inspections, 6 (including one Canadian trial) in the northeast region and 10 (including one canceled trial) in the northcentral region. I attended and presented at the NAICC meeting in Monterey, CA in January.

Southern Region Report

Presenter: Dr. Liwei Gu



Southern Region Report for PMC

Liwei Gu, Kristen Searer-Jones, Gail Mahnken, and Yavuz Yagiz
June 29, 2025

1. Field program and QC

QC of FDBs: Nine paper field data books are in the process of being QC-ed by Kristen Searer-Jones. Contract QC is being located for the remaining 2024 electronic field data books, as well as 2025 electronic field data books, once they are received.

SOP review: The SOP review was conducted in 2024, and revisions were submitted and approved as needed. All sites are in the process of updating SOPs to reflect and include electronic data entry, which will be reviewed and approved as completed.

2025 GLP assignments: Seventy-five residue trials were assigned at the beginning of the year, with one sugarcane trial to still be placed. As of June, 10 trials have been cancelled due to the manufacturer's decision or ChemSAC. Seven trials have been placed with contract researchers, including sugarcane, peach, and sweet potato.

Food Crop Product Performance Trials: Forty-one performance trials have been assigned in 2025. Twenty-seven reports have been received thus far. Forty-one of forty-eight 2024 reports have been received.

Integrated Solutions (IS) trials: Three 2025 integrated solutions trials have been assigned thus far. Additional trials will be assigned once working groups conclude and protocols are finalized on the remaining prioritized projects. Sixteen of the twenty-one 2024 reports have been received.

Environmental Horticulture Trials: Forty-two environmental horticulture trials were assigned in 2025. Twenty-seven of thirty-seven 2024 reports have been received.

2026 SOR Priority Setting: Three discipline-specific calls were held June 10-12, 2025, with a final priority setting call scheduled for August 19, 2025. June calls were well attended, and southern region researchers are showing interest in attending the Food Use Workshop in Denver, Colorado, in September. Additionally, a virtual Southern Region Environmental Horticulture Priority Setting Call will take place in the fall before the Environmental Horticulture Workshop in October.

Training: All FRDs continue to train on eFDB. Dr. German Vargus has filled the open FRD position at the Tropical Research and Education Center in Homestead, FL. He shadowed Dr. Wilfredo Robles in

Puerto Rico in both May and June, and continues to participate in efficacy trials with experienced researchers at TREC. He has been assigned a total of four residue trials. Additionally, he met with QA Dr. Yavuz Yagiz and received training while in Puerto Rico.

Extension and outreach activities:

- Attended talks at the Southeast Regional Fruit & Vegetable Conference in Savannah, GA, January 9-11, 2025.
- The March 2025 edition of Specialty Crop Grower magazine featured a column about IR-4 and southern region work, put together by Jerry Baron, Hannah Ross & Kristen Searer-Jones.
- Attended Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association Spring Regulatory Tour in South FL, March 10-14, 2025.
- Attended audit with QA in Citra, FL, March 31, 2025.
- Hosted “Coffee Hour” presenting IR-4 to UF Entomology & Nematology department April 11, 2025.
- Attended stone fruit field day in Citra, FL, May 7, 2025.
- Hosted virtual southern region priority setting meetings June 10-12, 2025.
- Will virtually attend Southeast Vegetable Extension Workshop July 14-15, 2025.
- Will host the final virtual southern region priority setting session on August 19, 2025.
- Will attend Food Use Workshop, Denver, Colorado, September 9-11, 2025.
- Will attend Environmental Horticulture Workshop, Kansas City, Missouri, October 7-8, 2025.

2. Analytical Lab

Personnel:

Joe McCray was hired as an analyst in June 2025 to replace a chemist who is scheduled to retire in 12 months. Lab personnel have been attending the inter-lab training sessions, which started in September.

Projects and reports finished:

#	Submission Date	PR No	Pesticide	Commodity	Trial	
					Year	Number
1	03/25/25	13682	Tolpyralate	Blueberry	2024	8
2	05/23/25	13511	Inpyrfluxam	Tomato	2023	17

For 2025, 2 analytical summary reports (ASR) have been submitted, of which 1 was backlogged. One project began in 2023, the other in 2024.

Ongoing Projects and Goals:

Nineteen projects are currently in progress, and of these, twelve are considered backlogged.

The status of the ongoing projects is as follows:

One is in final revision following QA review

One is in QA review

Four in ASR writing/preparation

Three are pending final storage stability interval analysis
 Five are in field trial analysis
 Three are awaiting the receipt of field trials; trials are scheduled for 2025 and 2026
 One is in method validation
 One is in method re-evaluation.

Thirteen projects for which samples have been received remain to be started. Of these, three began in 2023, six in 2024, and four in 2025.

We aim to complete 17 ASRs in 2025, including nine currently backlogged projects.

3. Quality Assurance Unit

The assigned tasks for 2025 are 51% completed.

QA items	Assigned Or planned	Completed	Completion %
Final Petition Audits	0	0	0%
Field Data Book Audits	110	61	55%
Field Critical Point Audits	15	7	47%
Lab Critical Point Audits	25	16	64%
Field/Lab Facility Inspections	1	1	100%
EPA Audits	0	0	0%
Analytical Summary Report Audits	21	3	14%
Contributing Scientist's Report Audits	0	0	0%

Food Program: Residue Studies

Presenters: Cristina Marconi and Thomas Pike



Food Program July, 2025

Thomas Pike, Cristina Marconi

Outline

New Uses - 2025

Submissions – 2025

Crop Group update

Residue Research Program (10-year history)

Outstanding Field Notebooks

Timeline Summary

Regulatory Challenges



2025 New Uses

2 Actions (new uses through June 2025)

- **Cyprodinil (1)**
- **Fludioxonil (1)**

2025 Submissions – 4 (as of June 2025)

- **Acetamiprid**
- **Sulfur Dioxide**
- **Clomazone**

- **Submitted as non-PRIA action**
 - Cycloate/Spinach
 - Cycloate/Garden Beet

Sources of Reduction in New Uses/Submissions

New Uses

Only two tolerance actions associated with IR-4 work published thus far in 2025

- *Delays associated with change in administration*
- *Increased hurdles at EPA related to posting items in the Federal Register*
- *Substantial reductions in staff at EPA to process new uses*

Submissions to EPA

Fewer tolerance petitions submitted to EPA thus far in 2025 compared to historic averages

- *Lack of pollinator data now a significant hurdle to submissions*
 - *Using company meetings to prompt registrants to investigate data gaps*
 - *Many registrants waiting for DCI to generate data = delays to submission*
- *Need to amend final reports delaying some submissions*



Crop Group Update

- **Crop Grouping Initiative**
- **All Commodity Classes have been approved by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.**
- **Remain to be published (IR-4 work is completed)**
 - **Phase VII: CG 17, Grass Forage, Fodder, and Hay Group; CG18, Nongrass Animal Feeds and CG9, Cucurbit Vegetables. Timing TBD.**
 - **CG1, Root and Tuber Vegetables and CG2, Leaves of Root and Tuber Vegetables expected Q2 2026**
- **Analysis for sweet sorghum/sugarcane and CG18 provided to EPA for purposes of harmonizing with Codex, CG9 nearly complete.**



Field Research

2024 Residue Program

- 54 New Studies
- 365 Residue Field trials
- 38 Carryover trials

2025 Residue Program

- 44 New Studies
- 352 Residue Field trials
- 32 Carryover trials

Field Research Program

Region	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
NER	39	27/11*	34	39	36	33	26	28	34	26	65
NCR	59	67/4	66	61	39	50	51	49	81	63	30
SOR	92	78/19	85	78	90	100	95	90	73	74	72
WSR	185	162/16	167	149	164	140	151	128	129	138	125
ARS	62	52/15	67	55	49	62	49	46	56	52	45
Canada	36	32/3	31	19	29	31	10	6	11	12	15
TOTAL	472	418	450	401	407	416	382	347	384	365	352

***indicates 2016 dropped trials, mostly due to study changes.
Other dropped trials not included in numbers reported**



Field Data Notebooks, 7/25

Year	Total	FRD	RFC	QA	HQ
2022	347	0	1	0	346
2023	384	5	3	12	364
2024	365	115*	29	32	189

*Not included: 30 field trials completed after Apr/2025 and 15 delayed trials or missing tentative dates

Field Data Notebooks, 7/25

Timeline Summary

Completion of FDB is critical to meeting timelines.

- *2023 Field Data Books: ~ 95% at HQ;*
- *2024 Field Data Books: ~ 52% at HQ; ~32% still with FRDs*
- *RFCs are moving Field Data Books along once received, there is still 1 book from 2022 and 8 books from 2023 with FRD/RFC. **It is crucial to move these along.***
- *We hoped that eFDB would help ease delayed field data books.*

Outstanding FDB, 7/25

Notebooks with FRD

Year	ARS	WSR	NER	SOR	NCR	CAN
2022	0	0	0	0	0	0
2023	1	1	0	3	0	0
2024*	17	53	4	32	7	2

*Not included: 30 field trials completed after Apr/2025 (based on MS) and 15 delayed trials or missing tentative dates

Notebooks with RFC

Year	ARS	WSR	NER	SOR	NCR	CAN
2022	0	0	0	1	0	0
2023	0	1	0	2	0	0
2024	1	2	6	10	8	2

Regulatory Challenges

Internal challenges

Timeline: Completion of FDB is critical to meeting timelines.

- *One outstanding book holds up the whole study, just like analytical backlog and data quality – increase in number of amended final reports.*
- *Concern that if we miss a submission, it could be years before it can go in.*
- *Is it too early to evaluate if eFDB helps ease delayed field data books?*

About sixty studies in final report processing (Writing/QA etc)

More than 100 studies are TBD for submission. Most are signed and ready to submit.

- *Many cannot be submitted as a safety finding cannot be made or registrant is holding submissions.*



Regulatory Challenges

External issues

Impacts from Endangered species act still a concern

- *Concern about mitigation proposals and how they will impact stakeholders*
- *Once in compliance, will not want to be out of compliance*

Registration status in Europe and impact on support from companies for stakeholder requests.

Lack of submission documents for new submissions until previous labels have issued from EPA, compounded by loss of personnel at EPA

Need for pollinator before registration of new uses may be an obstacle to submissions until current cycle of registration review is completed.

Numerous packages close to submission have been delayed as a result of missing pollinator data, likely more to come

Uncertainty over impact of federal government on operation of EPA

Some communication with EPA limited, though situation is improving



**Thank
You!**



eFDB Update

Presenter: Philip Moore










eFDB Update

July 2025 PMC Meeting

Key eFDB takeaways:






-  **Mission Accomplished ! IR-4 wide competence with the eFDB system is growing!¹**
-  **We're improving the user experience! Continue to refine eFDB: adding benefits and supporting users via training, updated guidance and fixing issues quickly**
-  **Better Oversight! We're able to see data instantly- When a question arises, we can see what was done and how to fix it VERY quickly. QA can remote data audit.**
-  **The eFDB will save hundreds of hours of Study Director transcription time annually.¹ We generate Final Report Field Summaries with a click of a button!**
-  **IR-4 eFDB demonstrates Gov't efficiency via technology: tinyurl.com/IR4DOGE**

¹ Note this is my own qualitative perspective. A formal survey to quantify how users feel and to demonstrate actual cost savings compared to the cost of the licenses is needed.

Improving User Experience in 2025 Details

- **Our #1 priority is a positive user experience:** eFDB should work the first time, every time, and be easy to understand, what is required and how to use it.
- **Guidance and Training for users:**
 - Finalized v. 2 of the eFDB Guidance document and eFDB related SOPs
 - Six FRD web-trainings for 90 participants with a final knowledge quiz
 - Three QC trainings for 10 participants at regional offices: conducting QC for 2025 eFDBs
 - Developing Training for HQ / SD regarding eFDB processes and electronic archiving systems
- **Quick responses to questions and issues from users:**
 - We respond to FRD questions very quickly – typically within minutes
 - We get excellent response times from iAdvantage on most issues for a fix
 - Fewer errors are being discovered, compared to this time last year
- **Revising eFDB, where there are areas of improvement or confusion:**
 - eFDB Revision Cycle: IR-4 wide suggested changes to be vetted for 2026 version by eFDB review team
 - RFCs and other users are reviewing the eFDB Guidance Doc to improve for v. 3
 - iAdvantage releasing a new iPad version with bug fixes to resolve a problem

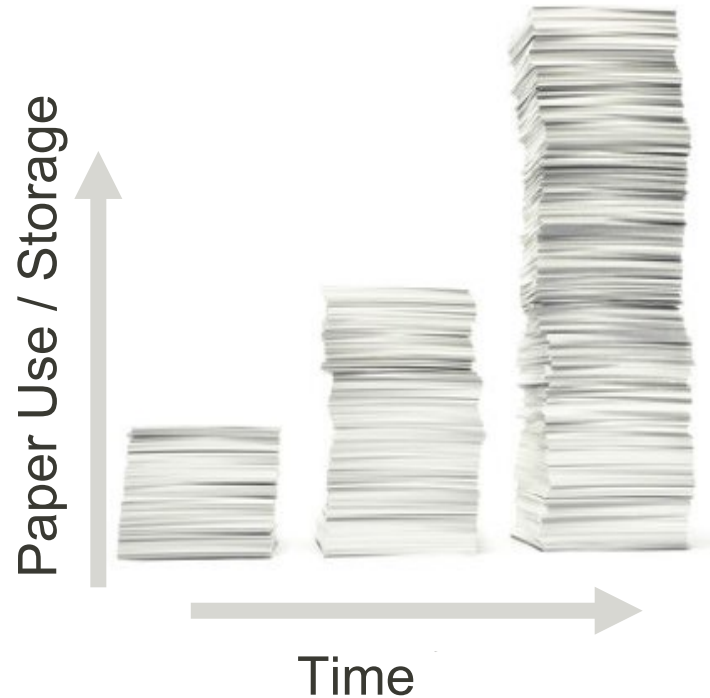
IR-4 Demonstrates Improved Gov't Efficiency

-  **Executive Order 14158: Establishing and Implementing the President's "Department of Government Efficiency" Sec. 4 Modernizing Federal Technology and Software to Maximize Efficiency and Productivity**
-  **GovBrief.US : where federal employees (USDA/ EPA targeted) or anyone can attend topic meetings of interest to them (generally a pitch to use a given product/ service)**
-  **Title: Meeting DOGE Requirements for Data Collection, Compilation, Communication, and Reporting for Projects/Studies: Implementation of e-Study iAdvantage platform for Data Management in IR-4 Sponsored EPA Crop Residue Studies**
-  **[See the recording here: tinyurl.com/IR4DOGE](https://tinyurl.com/IR4DOGE)**
-  **Or just see 2 slides from the meeting with our takeaways for why eFDBs are great for IR-4 (which must maintain all data per GLP forever)**



EPA Crop Field Trials OPPTS 860.1500

- 40 CFR PART 160 – Good Laboratory Practice (GLP)
- 40 CFR PART 169—Books And Records Of Pesticide Production And Distribution
- >100 Pages Raw Data per field trial * 350 trials/ yr
- About ½ of duplicative data for other trials at a site
- IR-4 move HQ in 2020 from Rutgers (NJ) to NC State
- Transferred paper archives from Docusave to Storr
- Timeline from data collection to data review = 1 year



Realized Benefits of iAdvantage eStudy

- Reduced calculation errors during application and instant data availability
- Reduced paper handling, shipping, storage costs, and data loss in transit
- No transcription of data into submission report, auto populate in template
- Timestamped audit trail and backups more secure and robust than paper
- Enables all aspects of the study lifecycle to transition to digital format
- Data quantification across studies, could lead to modeling residue data

Paper raw data of first eFDB received at HQ



A typical trial notebook

Laboratory Update/Backlog

Presenter: Dr. Debbie Carpenter





Laboratory Update/Backlog July 2025

Debbie Carpenter

Outline

Backlog

Current status at each lab

Plans to address backlog

Use of contract labs

Summary

Other

Backlog Details - TIR

Chemical	Matrix	ASR Due Date	ASR Est.	Note	Backlogged
Difenoconazole + Azoxystrobin	Spinach	Mar-23		Sample analysis complete. Waiting only for SS (01/27). Difen only.	1
Difenoconazole + Azoxystrobin	Mint	Oct-23		Only metabolite analysis still needed. Difen + triazoles only.	1
Ethaboxam	Almond	Nov-23		Analysis complete. ASR prep ongoing.	1
Difenoconazole + Azoxystrobin	Tomato	Mar-24		Only metabolite analysis still needed.	2
Ethaboxam	Avocado	Mar-24		Analysis complete. ASR prep ongoing.	1
Cymoxanil	Strawberry	Aug-24		Analysis ongoing. SS will go to 10/27.	1
Fenpyroximate	Lychee	Sep-24			1
Pyriofenone	Lettuce	Dec-24			1
				Total	9

Plans for Moving Forward - TIR

9 studies are backlogged:

- 2 are awaiting storage stability
 - 2 are in ASR preparation (all samples analyzed)
 - 2 require triazole analysis
-
- Concern about funding/personnel

Backlog Details - YAR

PR	Chemical	Matrix	ASR Due Date	Backlogged
12972	Fludioxonil + Pydiflumetofen	Peach	Oct-22	2
12817	S-Metolachlor/Metolachlor	Greens (Mustard)	Dec-22	1
12818	S-Metolachlor/Metolachlor	Turnip Greens	Dec-22	1
11997	Bicyclopyrone	Pineapple	Apr-23	1
13284	Ethaboxam	Lemon	Mar-24	1
13046	Mefenoxam	Passionfruit	Aug-24	1
12028	Uniconazole-P	Basil (GH Transplant)	Oct-24	1
13110	Azoxystrobin	Spinach (GH Transplant)	Feb-25	1
13283	Ethaboxam	Grapefruit	Feb-25	1
13194	Mefenoxam*	Lettuce (Head and Leaf)	Feb-25	1
13285	Ethaboxam	Orange	Mar-25	1
	* To be cancelled. Data must be sent in prior to cancellation.			
			Total	12

Plans for Moving Forward - YAR

12 studies are backlogged

- Ongoing efforts with Davis and HQ staff to address data quality concerns.
- Funding needed if studies to be analyzed move to contract research lab
- Lab Director leaving/unknown when replaced.
- No 2025 studies were assigned to YAR, this impacts the rest of the program.

Backlog Details - CAR

PR	Chemical	Matrix	ASR Due Date	ASR Est.	Note	Backlogged
12634	Sulfosulfuron	Tomato	23-Sep		Waiting on SS (11/25). Transferred from another lab.*	
13217	Fluopicolide	Almond	23-Oct		Awaiting SS (01/26).	1
13311	Spidoxamat	Hops	23-Oct		In QA (done by 09/25)	1
13007	Isofetamid	Hemp	24-Apr		In QA (complete 08/25)	1
13241	Fluopicolide	Avocado	24-May		Complete (Page 3 signed)	
13142	Fluroxypyr	Mint	24-Sep		Fresh and Dried Complete. FSS Ongoing (09/2026). Mint Oil R&D	1
13495	Quizalofop	Hops	24-Oct		Complete (Page 3 signed)	
13048	Abamectin	Hemp	24-Oct		Waiting on SS (10/25).	1
11808	Cyflumetofen	Caneberry	24-Oct		In QA (done by 09/25)	1
13451	Clethodim	Olive	24-Dec		Waiting on SS (07/2026).	1
13450	Ethephon	Hazelnut	24-Dec		In progress (reference standard was delayed)	1
13484	Rimsulfuron	Avocado	25-Mar		Awaiting SS (10/26).	1
13533	Clethodim	Avocado	25-Mar		Waiting on Clethodim/Olive FSS, analysis complete, ASR in prep	1
13079	Fluopyram + Trifloxystrobin	Miracle Fruit	25-May		Complete (Page 3 signed)	
13035	Cyclaniliprole	Hemp	25-Jul		ASR Prep (to QA in July)	1
					TOTAL	11

*study is backlogged but transferred from MIR. Not counted.

Plans for Moving Forward - CAR

11 studies are backlogged –

- 5 are awaiting storage stability
- 2 are in ASR preparation (all samples analyzed)
- 3 are with QA (ASR initial draft complete)
- CAR in the process of moving labs, lots of back and forth
- Hemp studies take much time, many crop fractions
- Will not be able to help other labs by taking on additional studies

Backlog Details - FLR

PR	Chemical	Matrix	ASR Due Date	ASR Est.	Note	Backlogged
12752	Fluazaindolizine	Mint	Nov-23		Method development; redo analysis based on method.	1
11568	Thiophanate Methyl	Radish	Feb-24	Oct-25	ASR in prep.	1
13169	Fluazaindolizine	Radish	Feb-24	June-27	Waiting on SS (4/27).	1
13360	Thiophanate Methyl	Carrot	Mar-24	Sept-25	ASR in prep.	1
13498	Tiafenacil	Cucumber	Sep-24	July-25	ASR QA review complete.	1
07883	Pyridate	Corn (sweet)	Nov-24	Aug-25	ASR ready for QA review	1
13538	Isocycloseram	Sunflower	Dec-24	Nov-25	Not yet started	1
13078	Fludioxonil + Pydiflumetofen	Basil	Jan-25	Aug 25	Trial analysis	2
13304	2,4-D Choline	Strawberry	Jan-25	June-26	Trial analysis. Final SS analysis due April 2026	1
13504	Isocycloseram	Pomegranate	Jan-25	Dec-25	Not yet started	1
13449	Inpyrfluxam	Coffee	Mar-25	Aug-27	Pending mval	1
13407	Isocycloseram	Strawberry (GH)	May-25	Sept-25	Trial analysis.	1
13500	Tiafenacil	Tomato	May-25	Oct-25	Waiting on SS.	1
					Total	14

Plans for Moving Forward - FLR

14 studies are backlogged –

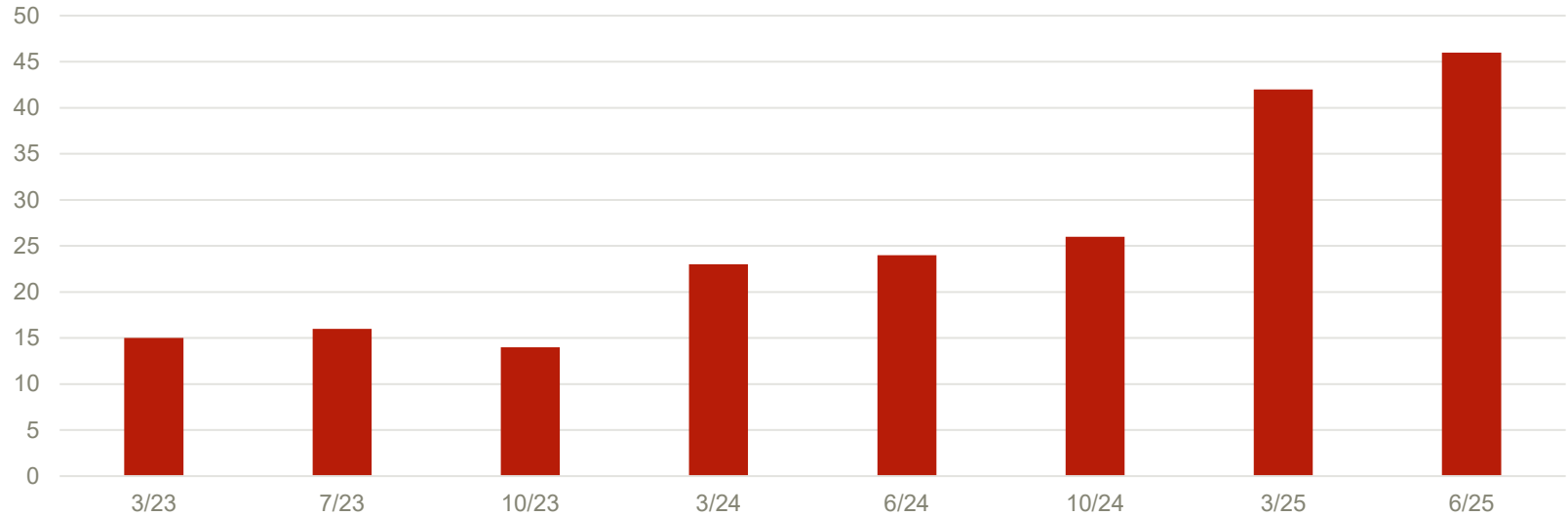
- 3 are awaiting storage stability
- 2 are in ASR preparation (all samples analyzed)
- 2 are with QA or lab addressing QA findings
- Storage stability impacted finalization of studies
- Studies with many crop fractions (ie Pyridate – sweet corn)
- Complex analyses – two fluazaindolizine studies

Studies at Outside Labs

PR	Chemical	Matrix	Original Lab	
12904	Flutolanil	Tomato	YAR (GPL)	1
12675	Emamectin Benzoate	Bean, lima (Succulent)	MIR (GPL)	1
11195	Flutolanil	Pepper (Bell & nonbell)	FLR (GPL)	1
12903	Flutolanil	Radish	YAR (GPL)	1
09520	Flutolanil	Beet (Garden)	MIR (GPL)	1
12757	Abamectin	Beet (Sugar)	MIR (GPL)	1
12816	Linuron	Onion (Dry bulb)	GPL (Adpen)	1
12902	Flutolanil	Carrot	MIR (GPL)	1
11772	Linuron	Bean (edible podded & succulent shelled)	FLR (GPL)	1
12564	Abamectin	Miracle Fruit	MIR (GPL)	1
09102	Flutolanil	Strawberry	GPL	1
11148	Glufosinate	Sesame	Adpen	1
12714	Ethofumesate	Swiss Chard	GPL	1
13027	Metribuzin	Potato	Adpen	1
13092	Norflurazon	Clover (Seed Crop)	GPL	1
13179	Benzovindiflupyr + Difenoconazole	Coffee	Adpen	1
13463	Glufosinate	Peanut	Adpen	1
13732	Linuron	Mint	Adpen	1
13733	Linuron	Stevia	Adpen	1
13734	Linuron	Onion (Green)	Adpen	1
13741	Mefentrifluconazole	Broccoli	BASF	1
13760	Afidopyropen	Lemon	BASF	1
13761	Afidopyropen	Grapefruit	BASF	1
13779	Mefentrifluconazole	Cabbage	BASF	1
12816	Linuron	Onion (Dry bulb)	Adpen	1
13295	GF-4031	Cherry	EUR	1
13355	GF-4032	Strawberry	EUR	1
13928	Abamectin	Sugar beet storage stability	GPL	1
			Total	28

Backlog Graph Post MIR

Backlog Post MIR



Summary

Backlog (ASR not signed one year after last field sample arrived at the lab)

- Does not include studies sent to contract labs for completion**
- Total backlog = 46, slight increase from March (42) much higher than October, 2024 (26)**
- Current situation is unsustainable – expected associated cost with contract lab would end after a couple of years post MIR shut-down.**

Laboratory training is ongoing to bring analysts to same baseline level.

Resources still being used to address quality of data for MIR and YAR



**Thank
You!**





QA Update

July 2025 PMC Meeting

Overview

- QA Update
- 2025 Audit/Inspection Data
- eQA and eDoc Update

QA Update

- **QA functions as a National Team**
 - Working across regions to complete tasks
 - Ex. EPA inspections
 - Increasing alignment and consistency
 - Working to test new eQA version in the sandbox
 - Meet regularly
 - QA shared drive
 - Review National SOPs

QA Update - Participation on Committees

Committee	QA participants	Comments
ACAC	S. Muir Y. Yagiz	Provide QA insights
National SOP	M. Beran	QA team reviewed/provided feedback on draft versions Provided verbiage on specific SOPs
IR-4 Advisory Committee	J. Mazlo	Reviewed Advisories to be moved to National SOPs



QA Update - Participation on Committees

Committee	QA participants	Comments
HQ SOP	J. Mazlo J. Thompson S. Muir	QA team reviewed/provided feedback on draft versions
Technology	J. Peterson	QA subcommittee working with TMS on an eQA update
Education Training Committee	S. Muir J. Mazlo	Provide ideas and topics for the national meeting

QA Update - ARS

- **Wapato Lab**
 - Sherita Normington has reviewed > 12 raw data/Analytical Summary Reports
- **Tifton Lab**
 - Yavuz is performing lab in-life inspections
 - HQ will pick up the analytical data/summary report audits
- **ARS Field**
 - Kathleen/Yavuz picking up Tifton field
 - Martin/Laurel picking up Wapato & Salina fields
 - HQ QA picking up Ohio & Charleston fields



QA Update – Field

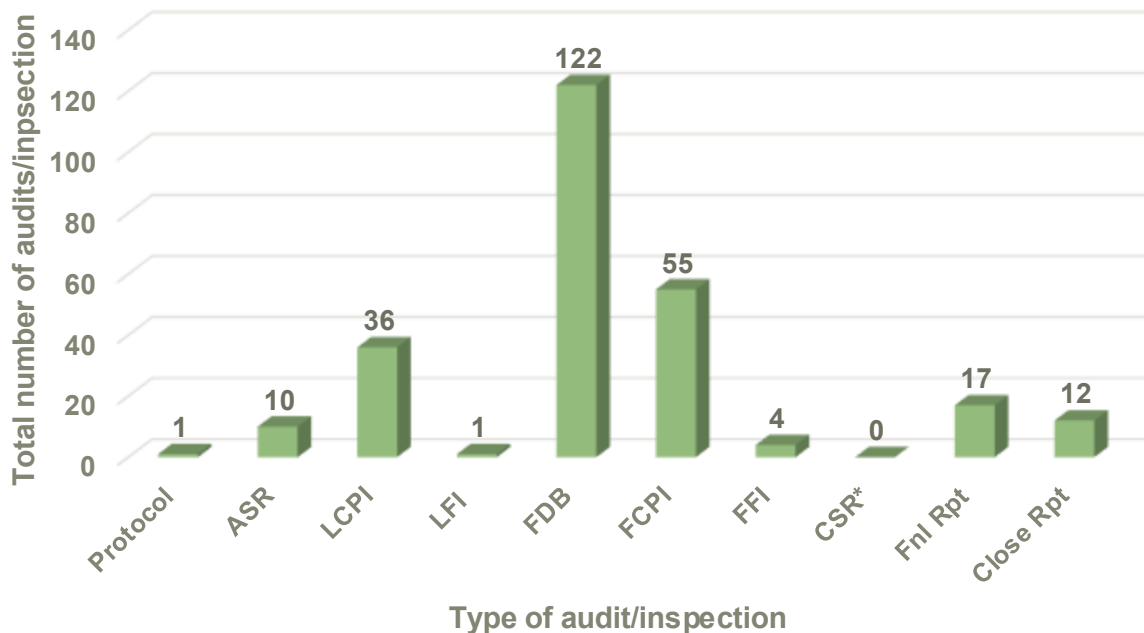
- **Oregon Field**
 - Martin and Laurel:
 - have done training with FRDs
 - continue to work with FRDs
- **Homestead Field**
 - Yavuz has been working with the FRD
 - Jane has completed an in-life inspection

QA Update: Electronic Field Notebook

- QA has been actively engaging with the electronic notebook
 - Bringing questions, issues, etc. from the field
 - Working proactively to anticipate GLP issues
 - Audited validation reports
 - Attending the face-to-face training
 - Regular meetings with QC and P. Moore/J. Byrtus
 - Reviewed National SOP and Guidance Document

Audit/Inspection Data (Jan – Jun 2025)

Number of Audits/Inspections from
Jan - Jun 2025



Total Equiv.
Days
490.5



Field Notebooks Audited

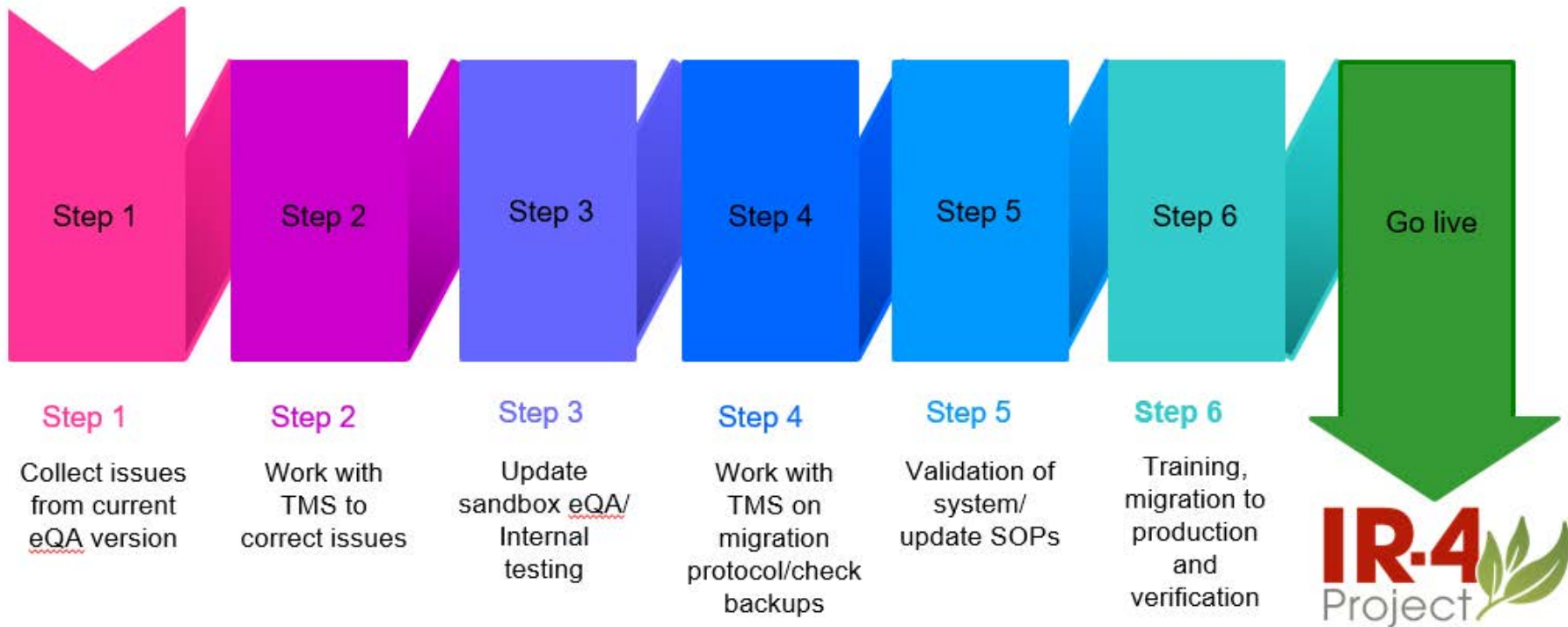
Trial Year	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
2024	2	32	249	31	-
2025 (Jan – Jun)	-	2	23	96	1

eQA and eDoc Update

- eQA
 - 312 audits added in 2025
 - 17,590 total audits
- eDocs
 - 6952 total documents
 - Analytical methods 390
 - Working methods 58
 - Certificates of Analysis 201
 - National SOPs 4



eQA Software Update





Thank you



EPA Inspections

July 2025 PMC Meeting

Overview

- EPA Inspections 2024-2025
- EPA Inspection Data from 2018-2025
- Update on EPA inspectors
- EPA Inspection workload
- Impacts related to the increase in EPA inspections

2024 EPA Inspections

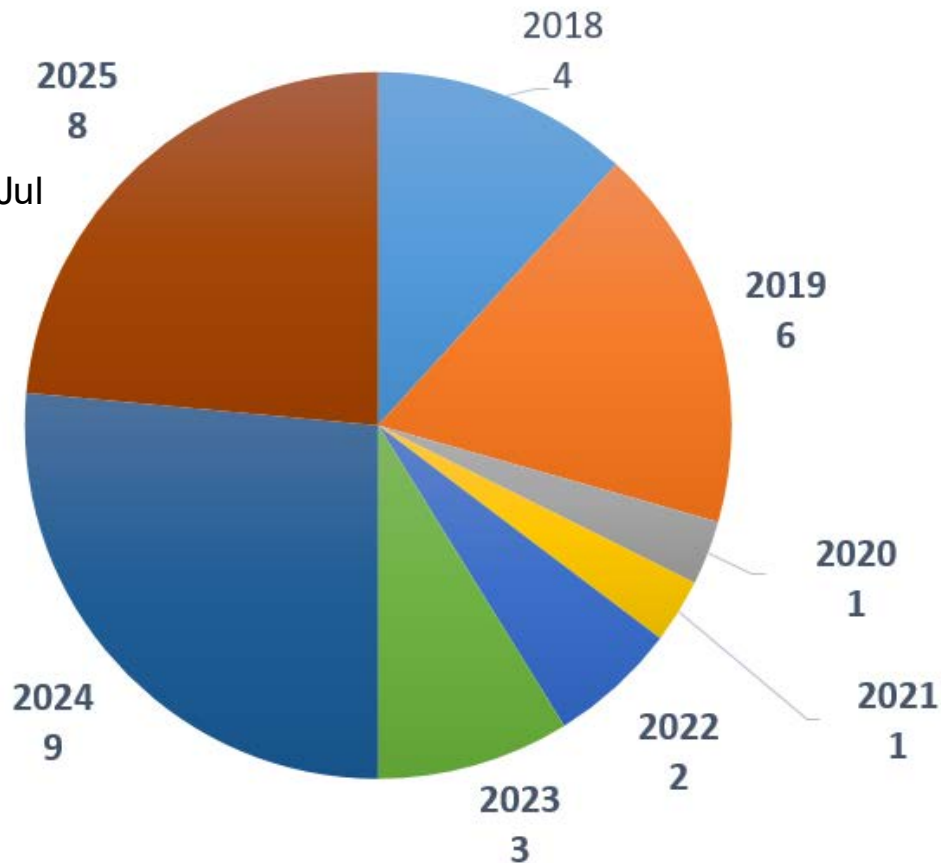
Year of Inspection	Location
2024	University of California – Davis Lab University of California – Davis Field Dragon Run Ag (VA) Turner Ag Research (CA) NC State University - Field Pest Management Enterprises, Inc (LA) SD State University Field Michigan State University –Trevor Nichols Field University of Florida – Citra Field



2025 EPA Inspections

Year of Inspection	Location
2025 (Jan – July)	Oregon State University – Field Texas A&M, Weslaco, TX – Field (desktop audit) AdPen Jacksonville, FL - Lab New Mexico State University - Field Ohio State University - Field USDA ARS Wooster OH - Field University of Wisconsin (D. Heider) – Field University of Wisconsin (S. Chapman) – Field North Dakota State University - Field

EPA Inspections Data from 2018 - 2025



Note: 2025 included Jan-Jul

Number of Studies Reviewed by EPA Inspectors from Jan – July 2025

EPA Inspection	Number of Studies
Oregon State University - Field	3
Texas A&M, Weslaco, TX – Field (desktop audit)	3
AdPen Jacksonville, FL - Lab	1
New Mexico State University - Field	3
Ohio State University - Field	1
USDA ARS Wooster OH - Field	2
University of Wisconsin (D. Heider) – Field	2
University of Wisconsin (S. Chapman) – Field	2
North Dakota State University - Field	
TOTAL	17

EPA Inspectors

- All senior inspectors have retired
- Inspectors are:
 - traveling more
 - on a learning curve
 - want to see more types of sites and more often
 - asking different questions
 - reviewing items with a different perspective
 - changing traditional procedures
- Inspectors have been viewing IR-4's website



Workload with EPA Inspections

- Each inspection requires 2-3 weeks of work
 - Reaching out to registrants for characterization reports
 - Obtaining documents from off-site archives
 - Preparing and reviewing documents:
 - studies
 - audit cover sheets, personnel records, SOPs, org charts, COC, QA audits, etc.
 - Working with the site
 - parking space, conference rooms, etc.

Workload with EPA Inspections

- **Requires QA to be on site for 2-4 days**
 - Arrive at least 1 day early:
 - prepare individuals
 - walk through site from a GLP perspective
 - Greet the EPA inspector/set up conference room
- **After closing of the inspection**
 - Meet with site regarding any issues and next steps
 - Prepare report
 - Discussions with TFM
 - Responding to findings

Affects of Increased EPA Inspections

- Limits the time for normal workload
 - Juliet has limited time to conduct audits
 - Kathleen has decreased number of eFDB audits
 - Other QA also have to stop audits when multiple studies are selected for inspection
 - More travel and travel costs for QA to attend inspections
 - More document transport costs (off site archives/to site)
 - Audit numbers decrease across QA b/c of inspections
 - Transition to new eQA version slowed down

Increased EPA Inspections

- QA spending more time with FRDs in preparation
- Has not resulted in QA missing deadlines or priorities
- QA is strained
- Auditors not sure when to take vacations
- Concern over which studies get selected
- Affecting the eQA software updating timelines

-



Thank you

Product Performance Updates

Presenter: Dr. Alice Axtell





Product Performance Updates

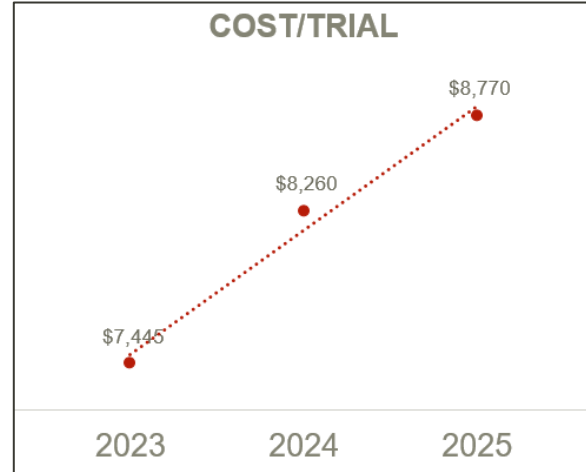
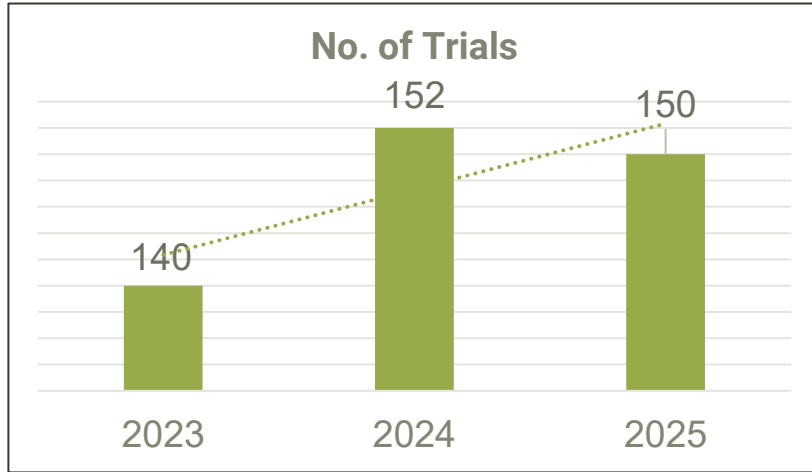
Alice Axtell

2025 General Overview

Total no. of NEW 2025 priorities	39
Total no. of 'A' priorities	22
Total no. of 'H+' priorities	17
No. of trials	96
COST	\$781,111
Total no. of CARRYOVER priorities	40
No. of trials	54
COST	\$410,556
Total no. of trials in 2025	150
TOTAL NIFA COST	\$1,191,667
THIRD PARTY COST	\$123,889

- In 2024, some trials failed due to a variety of factors, and in a few cases, a lack of available researchers prevented the completion of three trials per project.
- 2025 carryover priorities include trials that either failed and require repetition or those that must be conducted to generate sufficient validating data needed to complete the product performance study.
- 2025 carryover trials accounted for approximately one-third of the total trials planned for this year.

Product Performance Trial Trends



- The number of trials increased from 2023, but has been almost the same for 2024 and 2025.
- The average cost of the product performance trials is increasing*

Year	No. of trials	Total NIFA COST	THIRD PARTY COST	TOTAL COST	COST/TRIAL
2023	140	\$ 905,687.00	\$ 136,609.00	\$ 1,042,296.00	\$ 7,445
2024	152	\$ 1,121,111.00	\$ 134,444.00	\$ 1,255,555.00	\$ 8,260
2025	150	\$ 1,191,667.00	\$ 123,889.00	\$ 1,315,556.00	\$ 8,770



*The average cost per trial was calculated including the third-party contributions, which have been relatively consistent over the past 3 years.

Final Report Status

Status of Final Reports (Based on Current Database Records):

- Approximately **95% of final reports** have been received, summarized and uploaded for studies conducted in **2022** and **2023**
- Approximately **60% of final reports** have been received, summarized and uploaded for studies conducted in **2024**
 - Additional reports have been received and are currently **being reviewed** (but have not been uploaded yet)
 - IR-4 will implement an improved process to **track received reports more efficiently**



Thank you!

Integrated Solutions Update

Presenter: Dr. Alice Axtell



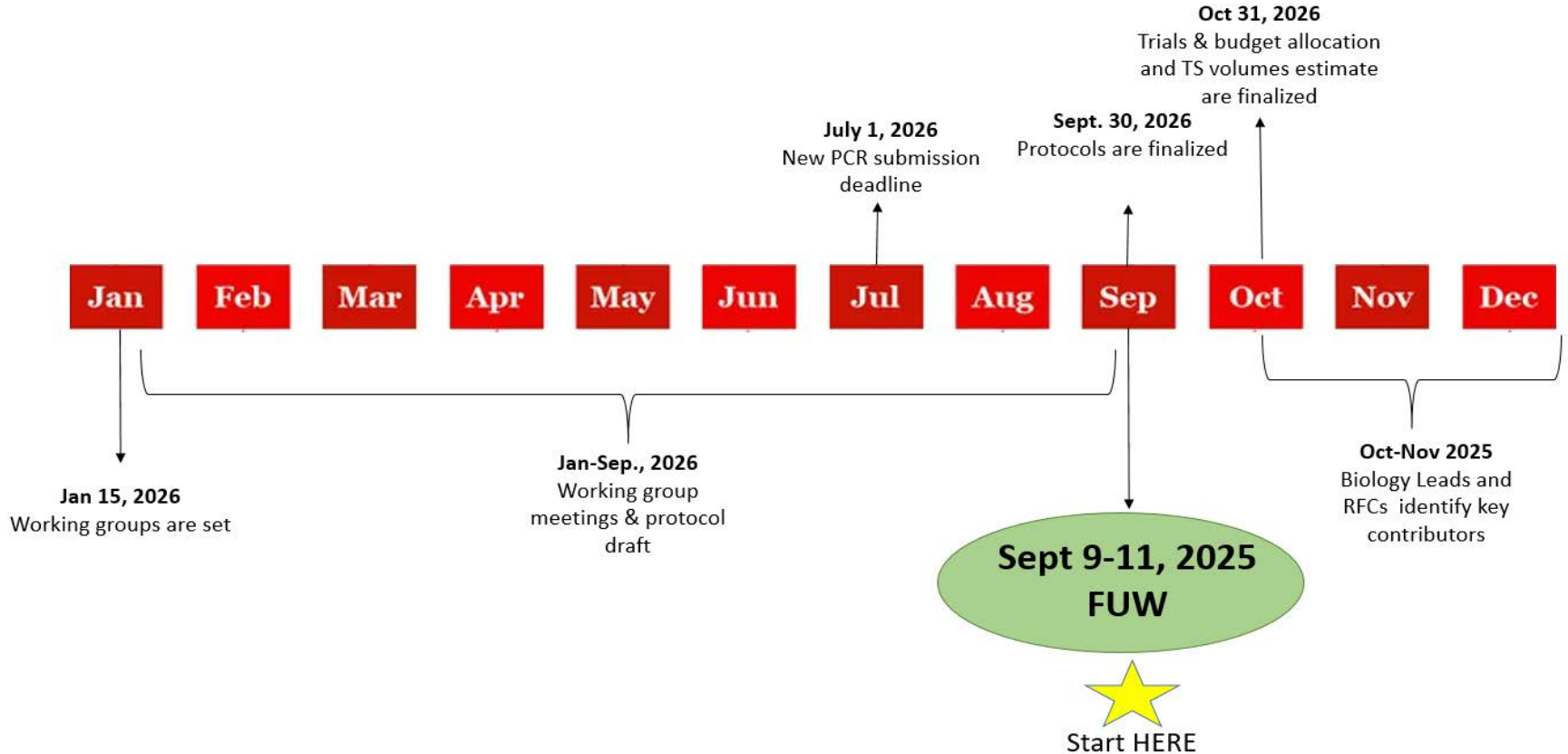


Integrated Solutions (IS) Reboot: Implementation Progress Report

A. Axtell

Overall Timeline

The new IS timeline allows for better efficiency



Forming Working Groups

Engaging stakeholders to build robust protocols

- 2025 priorities have been deferred
- Biology leads and RFCs have identified key subject matter experts
- Introductory meetings have started and are in progress
 - Lots of engagement, dialogue and enthusiasm
 - Good ideas are being brought to the table
 - Protocol drafts are now in progress
 - Monthly IS meetings provide an internal review process
- Registrants are being asked for potential solutions at each company meeting.



Database Changes

The IS database was updated to improve visual presentation, reflect study goals, and achievements



Previous project request layout

Search Integrated Solutions Projects

Download Report in pdf

[Submit Supporting/Similar Request](#)

IS#	Priority	Commodity (Crop Group)	Pest	Project Status	Discipline	Use Site
IS00505	B	AVOCADO (24B = TROPICAL AND SUBTROPICAL, MEDIUM TO LARGE FRUIT, SMOOTH, INEDIBLE PEEL SUBGROUP)	Avocado Branch Canker	Potential Project	Plant Pathology	Field and Greenhouse

Problem Code: PPWS

Requesting State(s): Spann, Tim (CA)

Potential Products: Pristine; Quadris; Bidomil Gold SL Co-Pack; Switch; Tilt; Quash

Reason for Need - Comments:

REASON FOR NEED: Avocado branch canker (ABC) is a fungal disease of avocados that occurs on twigs and branches. Previously, this disease was commonly referred to as Dothiorella branch canker. However, recent research has revealed that the causal agent is several different species of fungi all from the Botryosphaeniaceae family. Thus, the current common name of Botryosphaeria branch canker, or simply avocado branch canker. Twenty-one avocado groves in the major producing regions of California were surveyed in 2018 and 2019. Monthly inoculations of wounded, green, and lignified branches of 'Hass' and 'Lamb Hass' were conducted. Botryosphaeriaceae were the predominant fungi recovered from cankered tissues collected across the surveyed traditional and high-density orchards and caused symptoms on all six sampled cultivars. A total of 15 Botryosphaeriaceae species were isolated from avocado tissue, including Botryosphaeria dothidea, five species of Diplodia, Dothiorella plurivora, Lasiodiplodia theobromae, L. citricola, and six species of Neofusicoccum. These fungi were also recovered in asymptomatic twigs and other organs and thus exist as a potential reservoir for future infections. In their 2022 publication, Avenot et al. summarized the avocado branch canker issue: "In the long term, Botryosphaeriaceae prevalence in avocado orchards could become problematic for the avocado industry, considering the absence of registered fungicides for treating pruning wounds and the difficulty of controlling these fungi once inside the plant." Effective control measures for this disease are urgently needed for avocado nurseries and in commercial orchards.

PROPOSED APPROACH: Twizeyimana et al. (2013) conducted in vitro screenings of 12 fungicides for efficacy against avocado branch canker related pathogens. However, only preliminary field trials and no nursery trials were conducted to determine the in situ effectiveness of these fungicides in controlling avocado branch canker. Thus, a comprehensive field and nursery study is needed to evaluate previously screened fungicides, as well as any new chemistries that have been brought to market since 2013, to determine if any of these products are effective and should be advanced to registration. [CA: 5/25/DS]. Use pattern details for the proposed products can be found in the original copy of the PCR [5/25/DS]

Implemented IS PCR layout



Implemented project request layout

Search Integrated Solutions Projects

[Submit Supporting/Similar Request](#)

Download Report in pdf

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PCR Details:

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Study Goals:

Comments:

Use pattern details for the proposed products can be found in the original copy of the PCR [5/25/DS]

Study Accomplishments:



New PCR Vetting System

Ensuring new project requests fit the goals and objectives of the IS Platform



- Clear IS platform goals, objectives and anticipated deliverables are now in place
- **We have established a new internal PCR vetting process to ensure that project goals and objectives align with the overarching aims of the IS platform.**
- The vetting system also allows us to track new PCR reviews and processing more effectively in preparation for the priority setting meetings

PCR Vetting Process in Detail

1) Preliminary assessment (conducted by the IS Platform Lead):

- a) Was the PCR submitted by a stakeholder from the public sector? (Y/N)
- b) Does the PCR differ from any existing PCR in the IS database (if no, address i, ii, iii)? (Y/N)
 - i) If NO, is the new PCR proposing the screening of different technologies from those in the existing PCR? (Y/N)
 - ii) If NO, is the new PCR proposing the screening of different use(s) for the same technologies that were tested in a completed study? (Y/N).
 - iii) If NO, does the new PCR propose to expand the screening of technologies that have already been tested in a completed study? (Y/N)
- c) Was the PCR submitted for a use that involves a specialty crop or a minor use on a major crop? (Y/N) If no, please specify.
- d) Does the PCR align with the goals of the IS platform? (Y/N)
 - i) If yes, which goal does it fit? (1, 2, or 3)
 - (1) filling pest management voids
 - (2) addressing pest resistance
 - (3) navigating MRL requirements?
- e) Is there anything else to note?

2) Secondary assessment (conducted by the Biology Lead):

- a) Do you agree with the preliminary assessment review (if not, explain why)?
- b) Does the PCR lack suggested technologies? (Y/N)
 - i) If YES, do you have any technology to propose?
 - ii) If NO, list the technologies that have been proposed by the requester and record the relevant AI(s) -if known- and any information related to the proposed use pattern, if available. *Consider reaching out to the requester if the information provided is unclear. This data will be copied by David into the PCR.*
- c) Do you foresee any hurdles that may interfere with conducting trials (i.e. pest is uncommon, pest is hard to establish, lack of testing facilities, etc.)?
- d) Is there anything else to note in the PCR comment section for future reference?
- e) If preliminary data were shared by the requester in support of this PCR, please provide David with the relevant one-liner for database upload.



Regional Priority Setting Meetings

Paving the way for better dialogue and project selection at the regional priority setting meetings

- 3 separate calls are set in place, one for each discipline: entomology, plant pathology and weed science.
- Biology Leads provide detailed information pertaining to the IS project requests, especially those that are most relevant for the region
- More time is allocated for discussion which facilitates well-informed nomination of priorities



Capping the No. of Annual Priorities

A reduced number of new priorities will be funded per year so that more resources can be allocated per project



- Maximum **12** new IS priorities per year
 - Up to 9 NIFA-funded FUW priorities
 - 1 PUP/RU (NIFA-funded)
 - Up to 2 sponsored projects



National & Regional Priorities

A proportional funding model has been implemented to support both national and regional priorities, enhancing transparency in resource allocation

National Priority: A project request that is supported by more than one region at the FUW

Regional Priority: A project request that is supported by ONLY one region at the FUW

While this funding model may vary from year to year, on average:

- **50% of IS funds** will be allocated to support national priorities
- **30% of IS funds** will be allocated to support regional priorities
- **20% of IS funds** will be allocated to cover carryover trials



Enhancing Outreach

Efforts are being made to spread the word about IS & research outcomes

- In progress:

- Updating the IS webpage
- Developing an IS reboot summary for the IR-4 intranet
- Presenting at conferences and events

- Planned:

- Developing outreach materials
- Posting success stories
- Enhancing the request submission form
- Re-evaluating deliverables with registrants at study completion to ensure they will be met

THE IR-4 PROJECT ENVIRONMENTAL HORTICULTURE PROGRAM



Image by Cristi Palmer

The IR-4 Project's Environmental Horticulture (EHC) Program facilitates regulatory approval of sustainable pest management products for environmental horticulture crops.

EHC research helps green industry growers foster a diverse selection of healthy plants for landscapes, homes, bouquets and urban forests— a service to the environment, to the economy, and to public wellbeing.

The EHC program is divided into three key areas:

REGISTRATION SUPPORT

EHC coordinates research to gather data. Research priorities are identified every two years by growers and industry professionals. Registration

Outcomes

- More than 57,000 horticulture crop uses
- More sustainable crop management

INVASIVE SPECIES

IR-4 investigates mitigation strategies and EHC is currently studying options for new

Outcomes

- Improved management strategies and
- Better understanding of pathogen inf

THE IR-4 PROJECT

Pest Management Solutions for Specialty Crops and Specialty Uses

60 Years Of Impact

For over 60 years, The IR-4 Project has been a trusted ally of the specialty crop community. By facilitating Environmental Protection Agency registration of sustainable pest management products and technologies, IR-4 helps growers access tools to protect their crops. Healthy, abundant specialty crop harvests are vital to public wellbeing.

Food Crops + Environmental Horticulture

Specialty crops include both food and ornamental plants— essential components of a healthy diet and a thriving landscape. Because these crops are under significant pressure from damaging insects, weeds, and diseases, the work of IR-4 is critical to preserving the biodiversity and variety that we enjoy.

Strategic Pest Management

Putting farmers' needs first, IR-4 assesses tools of all kinds for both conventional and organic growers— including reduced-risk chemical and bio-based pesticides, as well as emerging technologies. In addition to working with EPA to secure product and use registrations in the US, IR-4 helps harmonize international pesticide regulations, removing barriers to agricultural trade.

A Verdant Future

IR-4 has championed farmers since its founding by the USDA in 1963, securing over 23,000 pest product registrations on food crops through EPA— along with countless others on ornamental crops. As the future of pest management and its regulation grows increasingly complex, IR-4 has the expertise to guide the specialty crop community forward with innovative, pragmatic, and collaborative solutions.





Thank you

Program Update: Biopesticide Regulatory Support

Presenter: Thomas Pike and Bill Barney





The IR-4 Project, Biopesticide Regulatory Support, Update

Pest management solutions for specialty crops and specialty uses



Biopesticide Regulatory, Submitted / Pending EPA Review

- 1071B, American chestnut, EPA requested withdrawal and resubmission to correct a labelling error of the transgenic trees (change D58 to D54). Additional follow-up meetings with EPA planned
- 1072B, Nudivirus, sterile moths, additional documentation submitted to EPA [*Helicoverpa zea*]
- 1081B, Cucumber green mottle mosaic virus vaccine, re-submitted application to remove references to human studies; additional documentation submitted (inert ingredients)
- 1084B, Citrus tristeza virus, expressing spinach defensin proteins, re-submitted as requested in separate submissions for the three defensin variants CTV-SoD2, SoD2-1, CTV-SoD2* as separate active ingredients. EPA has requested additional documentation for variants (allergenicity, manufacturing, deposition) [Citrus greening]
- 1087B, Citrus CRISPR HLB resistant rootstock. Additional documentation submitted, as requested by EPA to meet deadline for Federal Register publication [Citrus greening]

Biopesticide Regulatory, Other Actions

- 1077B, Alum, Classified as a biochemical-like active ingredient and eligible for review with a reduced data set in BPPD. The Committee recommended that non-target plant data requirements are fulfilled with guideline studies rather than waiver requests or rationales; label under development to request pre-submission meeting [Fireblight]
- FourSure (*Aspergillus flavus* TC16F, TC35C, TC38B and TC46G), submitted additional storage stability data that was a condition of registration
- *Aspergillus flavus* AF36 Prevail and Prime, have requested a pre-submission meeting for expansion to all crops and all states

Biopesticide Regulatory, Submission packages in development:

- 1070B, Bacteriophages, data package under development [Varroa mite of honeybees]
- 1075B, *Pseudomonas soli*, pre-submission meetings held; Section 18 proposed for FL [Fireblight, Citrus canker, Citrus greening]
- 1082B, Walnut rootstock [Crown gall]
- 1086B, *Pseudomonas fluorescens* M18, pre-submission meeting held [fungal and viral diseases]
- T-DNA transformation of citrus with AtNPR1 gene [citrus greening, U FL]
- *Verticillium nonalfalfae* [Tree of heaven] waiting for feedback from EPA on waiver for Experimental Use Permit

Biopesticide Regulatory – New Vetting Process

- ***Streptomyces nourseii* var. *xichangensis***: received a score of 79/100 in the new vetting process, EPA Pre-submission meeting held
- **Magnet** [food grade plant volatiles to be used as attract and kill for *Helicoverpa zea* in sweet corn; received a score of 86/100; plan to request pre-submission meeting with EPA
- ***Pseudomonas fluorescens* strain 14og** [insects], registrant still interested, but scaling production and conducting field testing]
- **Phytogenesis** – novel technology from U of KY [fruits and vegetables] they have renewed contact and provided efficacy data, need PCR submission and letter of support

MUF Update: IR-4 PMC

July 8, 2025

Dirk Drost



Minor Use Foundation



Technical Updates



Assisting Specialty Crop Exports (ASCE) Initiative

The Minor Use Foundation in partnership with IR-4 received a grant from USDA Foreign Ag Service to develop supporting data and submit applications for the establishment of Codex Alimentarius Commission MRLs for specialty crops, and to build global alliances and the technical capacity needed for future Codex MRL submissions.

Codex MRLs are crucial to facilitate trade, but major commodity crops are often prioritized over specialty crops.

Based on priorities from **14** commodity organizations, MUF identified, and registrants have agreed to submit **7** chemical / crop combinations supported by IR-4 data that match chemistries on the 2026 JMPR schedule.

These commodities include proposed Codex MRLs for **hops, olives, ginseng (2), pomegranate, dates and onions**. Note that olives, dates and onions are representative commodities.

The MUF also assisted Bryant Christie in identifying **25** IR-4 reports with the potential to assist these same commodity organizations with their import priority markets of Japan, Taiwan and Korea.

Other MUF Activity/Updates

2025 submissions:

- Pineapple/adavelt: Malaysia, Ecuador, Costa Rica
- Passionfruit sulfoxaflor: Peru, Colombia, Kenya

2027 submissions:

- Avocado/reklemel: Mexico, Chile, Peru

JMPR strengthening:

- Okra/chili comparative residue studies in Kenya, Ghana, Senegal, and Honduras
- Training in LATAM on adoption the Codex Classification Code

Archive Studies:

- 13 out of 14 studies have been completed in the field and the laboratory. All data has been collected, with one exception.
 - one trial for the flonicamid sunflower study was terminated (FRD did not provide Field Data Book) and has been re-assigned to a new Field Researcher. This trial will start at the end of July 2025.
- Draft final reports have been written and are being submitted to QA for their review.
- Two reports (fluopyram + tebuconazole - Guava/Pomegranate) have been through the QA audit process.

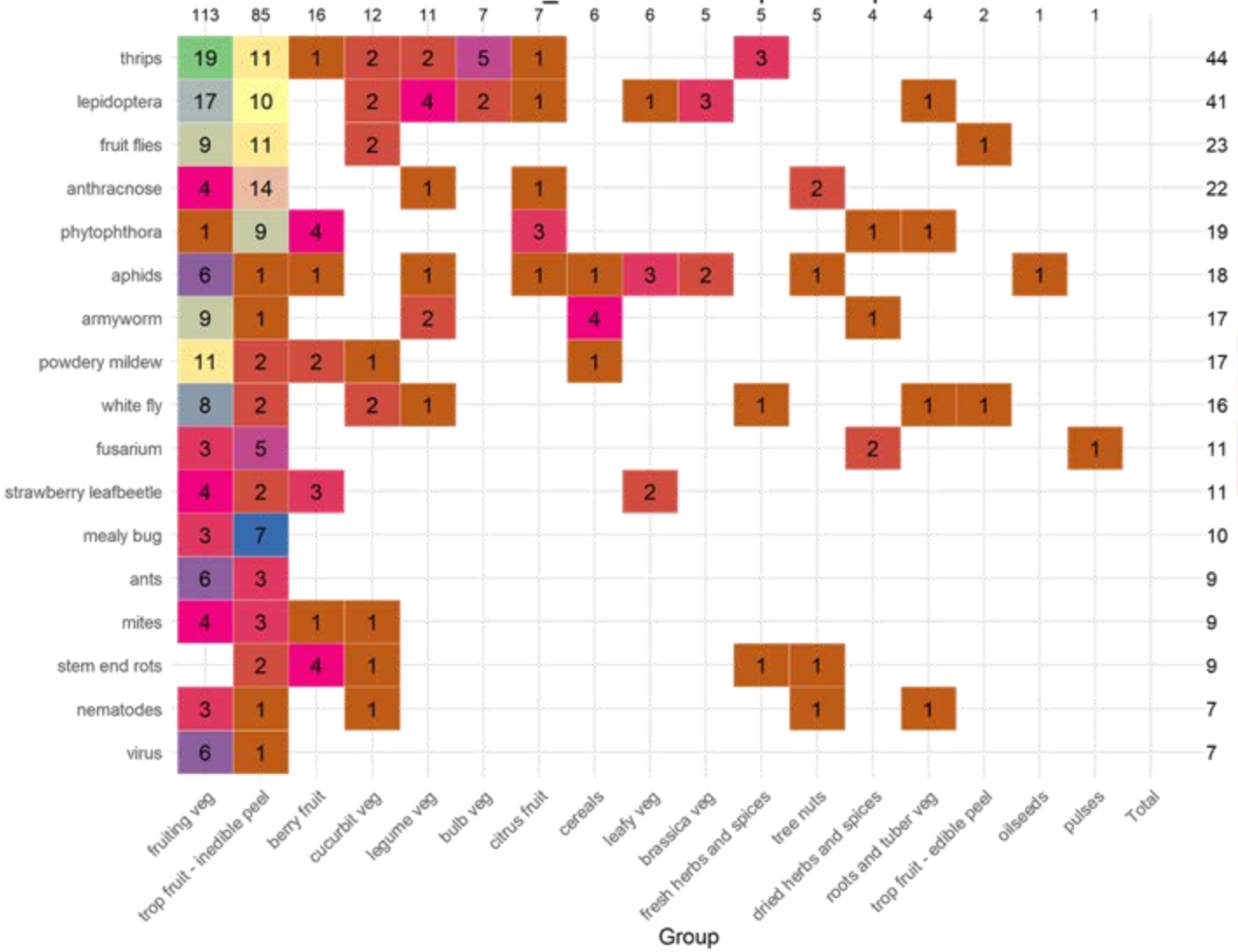
Global priority-setting outcomes

1	Thrips	Fruiting Veg
		Tropical fruits - inedible peel
		Bulb vegetables
2	Lepidoptera	Fruiting Veg
		Tropical fruits - inedible peel
		Legume veg
3	Fruit flies	Tropical fruits - inedible peel
		Fruiting Veg
4	Anthraco nose	Tropical fruits - inedible peel
		Fruiting Veg
5	Phytophthora	Tropical fruits - inedible peel
		Berry Fruit
6	Aphids	Fruiting Veg
7	Powdery Mildew	Fruiting Veg
8	Armyworm	Fruiting Veg
		Cereals
9	White flies	Fruiting Veg
10	Starwberry leafbeetle	Fruiting Veg

MUF priority-setting meetings

- July 17: CAST webinar
- July 28-30: LATAM conference
- September 16-18: Asia conference
- October/November: Africa conference TBD

Global priority-setting outcomes



MUF priority-setting meetings

- July 17: CAST webinar
- July 28-30: LATAM conference
- September 16-18: Asia conference
- October/November: Africa conference TBD



Operational Updates



MUF 2025–2028 Strategic Plan

- Goal 1. Amplify International Attention and Investment in Specialty Crops
- Goal 2. Promote A Regenerative Approach to Agriculture through Increased Biodiversity
- Goal 3. Catalyze Public-Private Partnership to Facilitate the Trade of Safe Food
- Goal 4. Facilitate Uptake of Agricultural Technology for Specialty Crops



Anna Gore
Executive Director



Edwin Samir Barbosa-
Ángel
*Regional Manager and
Study Director, Latin
America*



Bill Barney
Study Director, Africa



Nick Drost
Financial Manager



Patricia Eulalio
Executive Assistant



Mellon Kabole
Africa Regional Manager



Grace Lennon
*Study Director, U.S. and
Asia*



Shannon McNamara
*Website Manager and
Communications
Support*



Rina Palikhya
Social Media Manager



Verónica Picado
*Study Director, Central America
and the Caribbean and
Manager, Technical Operations*



Sasireka Rajendran, PhD
*Global Operations
Manager*

Board Development & Other changes

- MUF Board Expansion:
 - Process underway to add 3 to 4 board members, increase the management, legal and HR skill sets
 - Goal to achieve a broader range of technology and international experience
 - Current board members will remain on board
- Address change- will remain in NC but will not be formally linked to IR-4

Wrap up

- Challenges
 - Maintain and expanding funding while balancing sources among government grants, corporations and philanthropic institutions
- Opportunities
 - Meetings with broad range of stakeholders in Europe, Asia, Africa and Asia

Thank you!

Dirk.drost@Minorusefoundation.org

Environmental Horticulture Updates

Presenters: Josh Kindel, Jimmy Byrtus, Dr. Debbie
Carpenter, Dr. Jerry Baron



Environmental Horticulture

Josh Kindel

July 2025

Outline

- Onboarding & Outreach Initiatives
- October EH Workshop
- Biennial Graphic Update
- 2024 Study Program
- 2025 Study Program
- 2025 Budget
- Program Title Discussion

Onboarding & Outreach

- 3P mantra: “People, Process, Products” to internally map out my first 90 days
 - First 30 days are getting to know the people
 - Next 30 days are about process, i.e., getting to know the intricacies of the IR-4 Project and how it interacts with the regional offices and stakeholders
 - Next 30 days is about “products”, i.e., getting to know the details of the EH workshop and ongoing trials

Onboarding & Outreach

- **Stakeholder interactions**
 - Met with Ken Fisher, CEO AmericanHort
 - Met with Amy Upton, Michigan Nursery and Landscape Association
 - Attending AmericanHort's Cultivate '25 on July 12 - 15

Onboarding & Outreach

- **Industry Interactions**
 - Met with connection at Envu; great buy in to continue our relationship
 - Plan for introductions to technical staff during Cultivate
 - Plan to visit key industry offices around RTP

Onboarding & Outreach

- **Ongoing researcher interactions**
 - In person connections with Joe Neal (NCSU) and Mary Hausbeck (MSU)
- **Regional field coordinator meetings**
 - Met one on one with many of the RFCs
 - Regular meetings scheduled with RFCs to discuss EH Workshop



ENVIRONMENTAL HORTICULTURE WORKSHOP

October 7-8, 2025

Crowne Plaza Kansas City Downtown | Kansas City, MO

Full agenda coming soon

Day 1

- General Session
- Project Proposals– Weed Science
- Project Proposals– Plant Pathology
- Project Proposals– Entomology
- Reception

Day 2

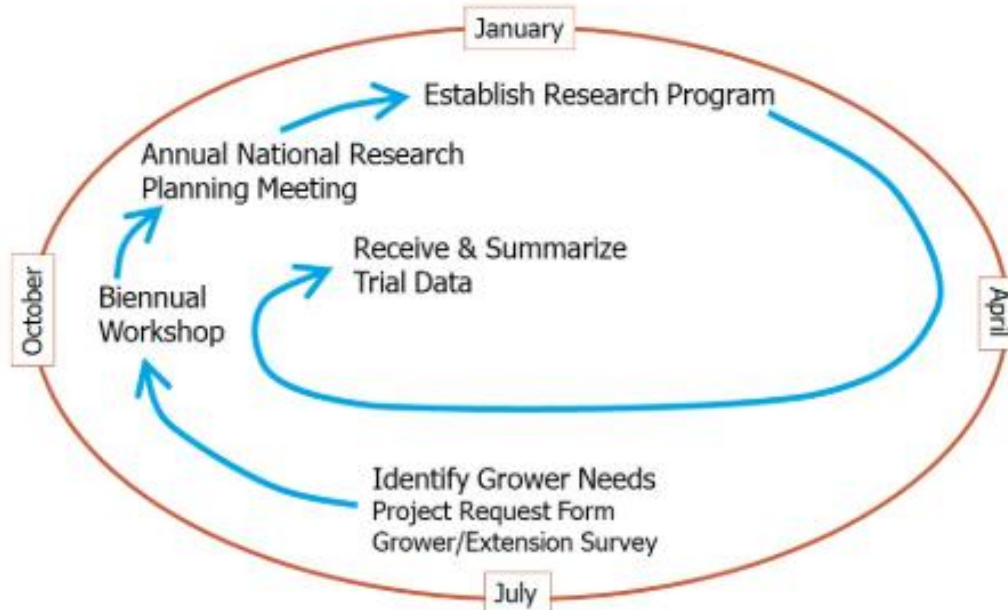
- Regional Priority Discussion
- Priority Refinement Discussions
- Finalize Priority Discussions

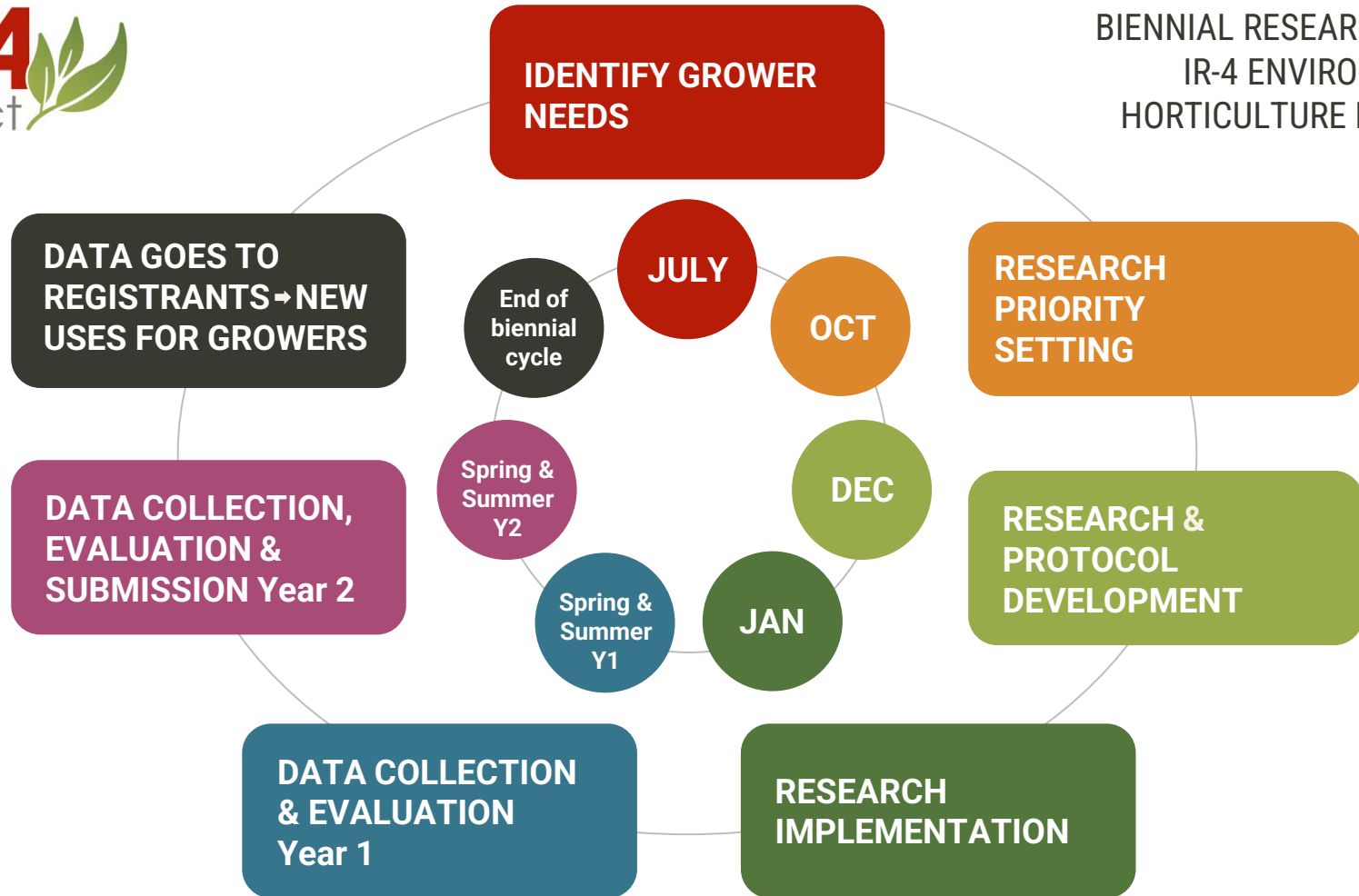
New Biennial Research Cycle Graphic



Current Graphic

Biennial Research Cycle





BIENNIAL IR-4 ENVIRONMENTAL HORTICULTURE RESEARCH CYCLE

STEP	IDENTIFY GROWER NEEDS	RESEARCH PRIORITY SETTING	RESEARCH & PROTOCOL DEVELOPMENT	IMPLEMENT RESEARCH	DATA COLLECTION & EVALUATION - YEAR 1	DATA COLLECTION, EVALUATION & SUBMISSION - YEAR 2
TIMING	July	October	December	January	Spring + Summer Year 1	Spring + Summer Year 2
ACTIVITIES	<p>Grower & Extension Survey (updated biennially)</p> <p>Project Request Form (year-round)</p>	<p>Environmental Horticulture Workshop (biennial)</p> <p>Stakeholder voting & consensus</p>	<p>National Research Planning Meeting</p> <p>Drafting of protocols</p>	<p>Assign trials to researchers</p> <p>Field and lab work begins</p>	<p>Study evaluation</p> <p>Data transfer to IR-4 HQ</p> <p>Interim updates with registrants</p>	<p>Study evaluation</p> <p>Data transfer to IR-4 HQ</p> <p>Transmit data to registrant, allowing new use by growers</p>

2024 Study Program

- **20 Projects**
 - Entomology – 7 Protocols
 - Plant Pathology – 8 Protocols
 - Weed Science – 5 Protocols

2024 Study Program

- **Completed:**
 - 5 Plant Pathology Efficacy Studies
 - 4 Entomology Efficacy Studies
 - 217 Crop Safety Trials (15 Studies)
- **Ongoing / Awaiting Reports:**
 - 6 Plant Pathology Efficacy Studies
 - 3 Entomology Efficacy Studies
 - 173 Crop Safety Trials (13 Studies)

2025 Study Program

- **22 Projects**
 - Entomology – 8 Protocols
 - Plant Pathology – 9 Protocols
 - Weed Science – 5 Protocols

2025 Study Program

- 11 Plant Pathology Efficacy Studies
- 8 Entomology Efficacy Studies
- 2 Weed Science Efficacy Studies
- 352 Crop Safety

2025 Budget

	NCR	NER	SOR	WSR	
Crop Safety	43	48	152	109	Trial Counts
Efficacy	5	4	6	6	
TOTALS	48	52	158	115	
				373	
TOTALS	\$143,652	\$133,038	\$291,082	\$224,313	
				\$792,085	

Program Title Discussion

- Historically titled 'Ornamental Horticulture Program'
- Changed to 'Environmental Horticulture Program' in 2018
- Is it time to change the title to Ornamental Horticulture Program once again?
 - Some confusion in the industry of the true activities of EH program
 - Discussed with some stakeholders



Thank you!

IR-4 Communications Update

Presenter: Hannah Ross





Communications Update

Hannah Ross | Summer 2025



Print, Digital + Message Updates

We continue to learn from our communications successes and challenges, and bring our organization together with a cohesive brand identity, with a focus on our community and what matters to our stakeholders.

LATEST NEWS



Nominations Open for the
2025 SOAR Award

[Read More >](#)



Registration Open for the
2025 Food Use Workshop

[Read More >](#)



New Hire at HQ: Josh Kindel,
Environmental Horticulture
Program Manager

[Read More >](#)



NC State
CALs
Awards

IR-4 Leaders Recognized
With NC State Awards

[Read More >](#)

Read these stories at ir4project.org > About IR-4 > News

SOCIAL MEDIA



Voice your pest management needs for healthy hort crops!

IR-4 Environmental Horticulture Grower & Extension Survey Open for 2025 Input

IR-4



IR-4
New Hire

WELCOME

JOSHUA KINDEL
Environmental Horticulture Program Manager



IR-4 Work Explores Vision-Guided Spraying Technology to Target Problem Weeds

Read the story at ir4project.org

IR-4 Project



Project Request Deadline for Food Crops: July 1, 2025

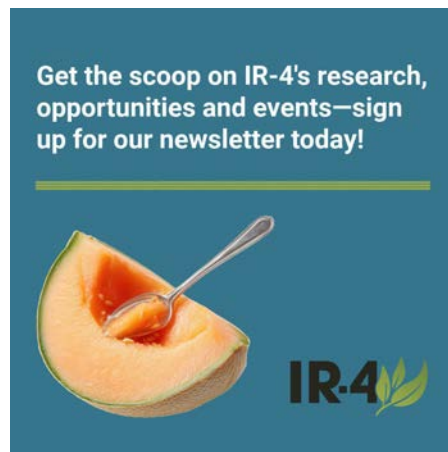
NEW, EARLIER DATE!

IR-4 Project | FOOD USE WORKSHOP | September 9-11, 2025



Project Request Deadline for Environmental Horticulture: August 29, 2025

IR-4 Project | ENVIRONMENTAL HORTICULTURE WORKSHOP | October 7-8, 2025



Get the scoop on IR-4's research, opportunities and events—sign up for our newsletter today!

IR-4

Hootsuite is serving as a helpful tool. For visuals, we are using graphics like the above when needed, but are shifting to focus more on photo carousels; the algorithm favors those kinds of images over graphics.

Top LinkedIn content from this 90-day period based on engagement rate and impressions:

- **EPA tour content**
- **Staff field visits and company meetings**
- **FUW registration & PCR deadline content**
- **Jerry's CALS Award for Excellence**
- **Post giving an overview of our work on hemp (what we do & don't do)**

A big takeaway here is the effectiveness of tagging our influential network members and focusing on images that center people and include a carousel of visually appealing photos. Graphics look nice but don't engage as much as real-life photos of people, crops, landscapes, field work, etc. Graphics may serve us better as print assets than digital ones, although it still makes sense to utilize graphics when text like deadlines and headlines need to be included. Tagging members of our network are effective, and calls to action tend to increase engagement too (for ex, reading a story or registering for an event).

SOCIAL MEDIA

Photo carousels of people and places are favored these days



It's been a great quarter for IR-4 on LinkedIn!

This is the best-performing channel and period of time for IR-4 on social media. LinkedIn is becoming the clear front runner for IR-4 in terms of social media engagement potential, especially when content taps into our research, host institution, industry, and federal agency stakeholder network. We have started consistently gaining followers on LinkedIn. Growth and engagement on other channels is slower. It makes sense that LinkedIn is our top channel since the heart of IR-4 is a highly engaged professional network and stakeholder community. LinkedIn is the channel most designed for professional network expansion over marketing functionalities. **A few highlights from this quarter's analytics on LinkedIn:**

FOLLOWERS

244 new followers in the last 90 days (almost 90% growth over the last 90-day period)

IMPRESSIONS

over 30,000 impressions in the last 90 days (up almost 96%)

VISITORS

over 200 unique visitors to our page in the last 90 days (up over 50%)

REACTIONS

877 reactions to our posts in last 90 days (up over 55%)



News and Updates

Pest Management Solutions for Specialty Crops and Specialty Uses

**One More Week: Submit Project Requests for
Food Crop Research
by July 1, 2025**



**Project Request Deadline
for Food Crops:
July 1, 2025**

**NEW,
EARLIER
DATE!**



- Increased open rate to 37% from 35% over past 90 days
(healthy rate = 20-40%)
- Now have over 2,200 contacts
- Newsletter is key comms channel for us. Best way to encourage new folks to connect and stay in the loop is to have them subscribe.
- To subscribe: visit ir4project.org; scroll to the bottom of the page; select “Sign Up for Announcements”

Visit ir4project.org & select Events & Training to view 2025 event web pages.

Registration is open for both events!

We are regularly promoting event announcements, sponsorship, PCR deadlines, and the EH Grower & Extension Survey.



ENVIRONMENTAL HORTICULTURE

I'm working with Josh to update, refresh and improve EH print and digital materials. We moved quickly to create a Save the Date for the EH Workshop with an updated research cycle graphic for Josh to take with him to Cultivate in July. We'll continue working together to improve and streamline program materials and meet stakeholder needs.

INTEGRATED SOLUTIONS

I'm working with Alice to update written materials about the Integrated Solutions Platform to help communicate the details of the reboot and the platform's key goals and objectives. This is a work in progress but will help stakeholders adjust to the changes. A web page update will come first, and we can use the language developed for the web as a foundation for print and other outreach materials to better educate stakeholders about the platform.



Josh Kindel
Environmental Horticulture Program Manager
jtkindel@ncsu.edu

ir4project.org

AWARD UPDATES

Recent & Upcoming IR-4 Awards

2025 SOAR AWARDS: NOW ACCEPTING NOMINATIONS

This award honors external partners who exemplify the areas of Service, Outreach, Altruism and Research, while supporting specialty crop growers and the mission of IR-4. If you know someone who shows excellence in these areas, we encourage you to nominate them for this award. Anyone involved with IR-4 can be nominated, except for Project Management Committee members or full-time staff. All IR-4 team members are invited to make nominations.

Nominations will be accepted until 11:59 pm PST on Wednesday, July 23.



Visit the Awards page to learn more or submit your nomination.



**Now Accepting
IR-4 SOAR Award
Nominations**





The IR-4 Intranet is LIVE!

Explore this new library of resources to support the IR-4 team in our daily work.

Visit
ir4intranet.org



[General](#)

[Food Program](#)

[EH Program](#)

[Lab](#)

[QA](#)

[Training](#)

 [VISIT IR4PROJECT.ORG](#) →



Welcome, IR-4 team!

The intranet is a library of resources designed to support your daily work.



EVENTS AND DEADLINES

[All Events](#)

**FEB
20**

Thursday | 11:30 AM
**2025 Industry Technology
Session**

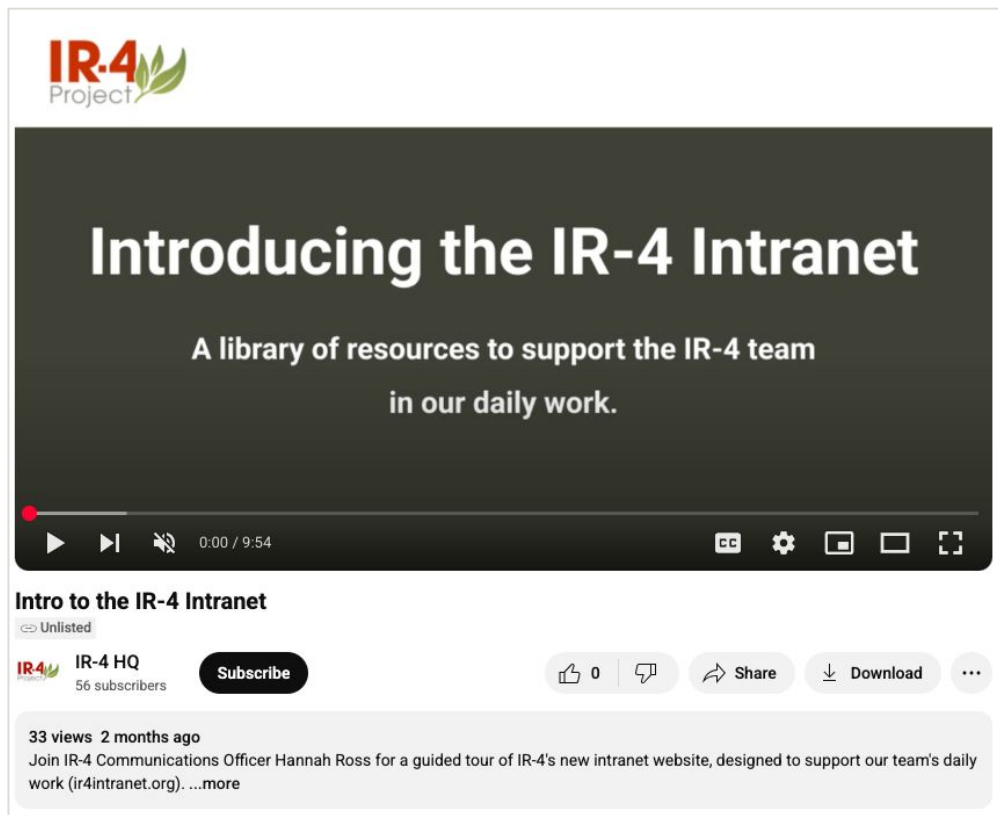
**MAR
04**

Tuesday
**2025 Joint CLC/PMC
Meeting**

**JUL
01**

Tuesday
**Project Clearance Request
Deadline**

Virtual Intranet Tour



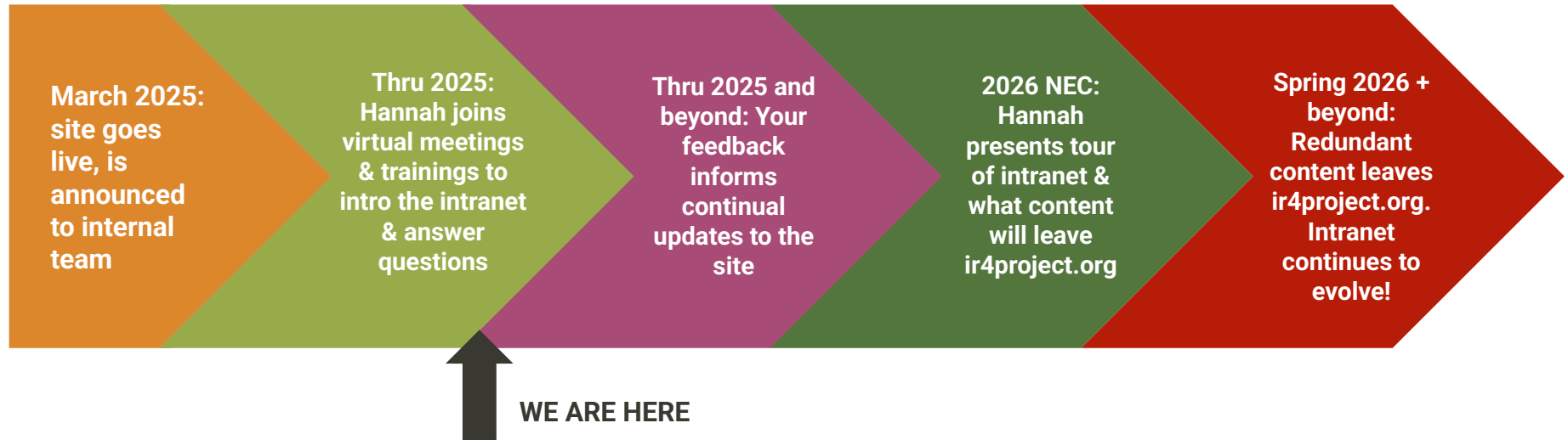
The screenshot shows a YouTube video player with the following details:

- Channel:** IR-4 Project (56 subscribers)
- Video Title:** Intro to the IR-4 Intranet
- Video Description:** A library of resources to support the IR-4 team in our daily work.
- Video Player:** Shows a progress bar at 0:00 / 9:54 with standard playback controls.
- Engagement:** 0 likes, 0 comments, and a 'Subscribe' button.
- Metadata:** 33 views, 2 months ago.

Take a page-by-page tour on YouTube! Find it by visiting ir4intranet.org and selecting Guided Intranet Tour under Updates.



2025-2026 Intranet Launch Timeline

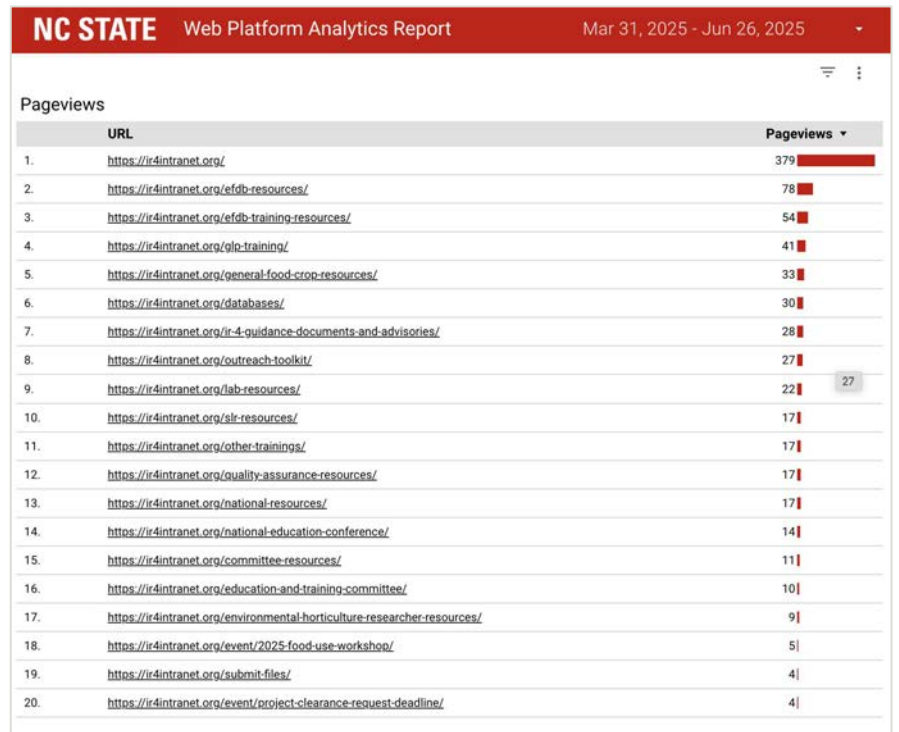
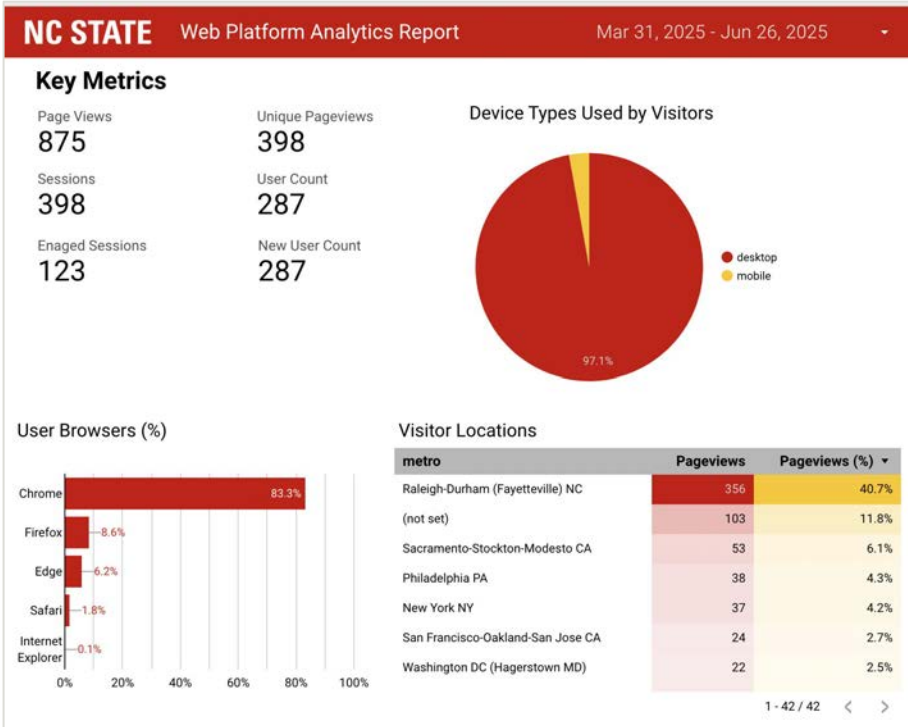


I've been joining meetings and trainings regularly to ensure the whole IR-4 team hears about the intranet, knows how to use and access it, and knows how to provide their feedback. The feedback form is open for responses.



Intranet Analytics

We're getting steady site traffic from our team, including those outside of HQ. EFDB, GLP, and Food Crop research pages are the most viewed pages.



Intranet Feedback Received



IR-4

IR-4 Intranet Feedback

B I U link unlink

Share your feedback to help shape IR-4's new national intranet website. The goal is for the intranet to serve as a resource library for IR-4 team members—across regions, roles, and programs.

Eventually (we'll give you an ample heads up!), internal resources will be removed from ir4project.org and will only live on the intranet, so it's important to us that this site is comprehensive and user friendly. No content will be removed from ir4project.org until 2026, after we've had a chance to acquaint team members with the intranet.

We appreciate your input! Any additional comments beyond this form may be shared directly with Hannah Ross: hross2@ncsu.edu.

“Been meaning to reach out and tell you how great I think the new intranet site turned out. Thanks so much for all your hard work.”

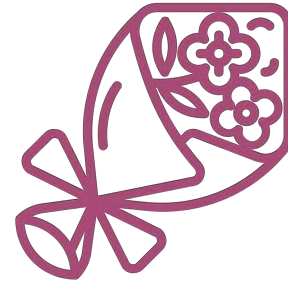
“I was so happy to see your demonstration of the new site at our lab training since we hadn't gotten a look at it yet. I was impressed and I want to mirror what Matt suggested about it being a landing page for our working methods. I think this will end up being very valuable – good job!”

“Is the password going to be the same as for eQA?”

As you can see, feedback received has been largely positive with a couple of questions about the password. I'd love to see more people utilizing the feedback form (so far only my intern has!) so I'll keep talking about it in my presentations. Feedback & questions I have received have come via email.



Thank you!



National Education Conference and Training Committee

Presenters: Christina Dineen





Education & Training Committee Update

IR-4 PMC Meeting

July 2025

Christina Dineen

Planning for 2026 NEC



**NATIONAL
EDUCATION
CONFERENCE**
February 3-5, 2026

- **Committee Planning Items**

- Working on field tour stops/details
- Draft agenda has been put together
 - Identifying potential speakers
 - Continue to fine tune/make changes as needed
- Icebreaker/Networking ideas
- Potential “swag” items
- Ways to keep discussions interactive



National SOPs

- **Finalized SOPs in eQA**
 - Guidelines for National SOPs (N-01.1)
 - QA Inspections/Audits (N-01.3)
 - eFDB Use (N-02.1)
 - TS Container Disposal Approval (N-03.1)
- **Distribution of National SOPs during review**
- **Training on National SOPs**

Committee Members:
Leona Horst
Martin Beran
Mika Tolson
Alex McFall

National SOPs

Committee Members:
Leona Horst
Martin Beran
Mika Tolson
Alex McFall

- **SOPs in Progress**

- EPA Inspection Procedures (N-01.2) – in review
- App. Type Definitions (N-03.2) – in review
- Storing & Maintaining Adjuvants (N-03.3) – with committee

- **Upcoming SOPs**

- See next page for SOPs from advisory team
- Training & Documentation (N-01.4) – to be written

Advisories to National SOPs

Committee Members:
Mika Tolson
Nicole Soldan
Robert Welker
Johanna Mazlo

- **Next to Work on**
 - 2014-01 Maintaining Freezer Storage Systems
 - 2006-01 Inventory & Transfer of Raw Data to HQ
 - 2003-04 Test/Reference Substance Container Labels

- **Retired Advisories**
 - Finalized advisory retirement process
 - Retire & remove from website:
 - 2003-02/2005-01 TS Container Disposal
 - 2003-03 Conflicting Chemistries
 - 2018-01 TS Nominal Formulation Concentration



Virtual Trainings Offered



• Field Training (RFCs)

Completed

Spring Webinar (April 29) Hosted by Kari/Mika

- Pre- & Post-Application Irrigation
- Drip & Drench Applications
- eFDB Guidance Doc Overview
- % A.I. – COA vs protocol

Upcoming

July 22 – NER/NCR

- Intranet overview
- Recent EPA inspections
- QA audit trends/standouts
- eFDB various topics

• Lab Training

Completed

- 03/25/25 – Std prep & Solution stability
- 05/20/25 – Intranet; Method development (extraction)

Upcoming

- **July 24** – Protocol changes, Mobile phase modifiers/HPLC

Technology Committee Update

Presenter: Jimmy Byrtus





Technology Team Update

March 2025

New Target

- We were given a new target for examination, electronic signatures
- Adobe Acrobat, certified signatures
- Adobe Sign
- DocuSign

Benefits/Downsides Adobe Sign

- Adobe Certificate (Adobe Reader): EPA may accept, no audit trail, certificate only
- User creates their Certified e-signature in Adobe Reader (Free)
- Forms can be configured to have read only sections after signature(s) are completed.
- A process will have to be created along with guidance from QA
- Currently waiting on EPA for guidance with regards to certified signatures using Adobe
- Potential for arduous and time consuming validation steps (In-House)

Benefits/Downsides Adobe Sign and DocuSign

- Adobe Sign or DocuSign (paid): includes audit trail.
- User uploads a PDF on website and adds signature boxes. E-mails to recipient to sign. Identity is confirmed by e-mail access. Audit Trail is auto generated in website – must be downloaded and archived with file.
- Cost is a consideration Adobe is on a per signature basis whereas DocuSign is on a per envelope basis, an envelope is essentially a document, regardless of the number of signatures needed for the document.
- EPA is still discussing the use of e-signatures and we are hoping for some guidance in the near future

Costs for Off the Shelf Software

- **DocuSign: \$2.73 per envelope**
- The date and time of the signature
- Confirmation that the person signing was verified (often by using an authenticated ID)
- A record of any changes made to the document during or after signing
- The IP address of each signer
- Auto generated / cloud based
- **Adobe Sign: \$2.85 per transaction**
- Signatures are legally binding
- Verifies signer's identity
- Helps during conflict resolution
- Helps hold parties accountable
- Helps with data security

Potential Implementation

- Deadline: Training, validation, identity verification: National Education Conference (Feb 2026)
- Propose a National SOP to ensure that IR-4 wide can use these tools and reduce paper use, including a TFM letter of equivalency.
- Required to archive e-docs appropriately for GLP: see 160.190 Storage and retrieval of records and data. Same rules for paper apply to e-docs being archived.
- Centralized through HQ? This could limit users and potentially costs.
 - One contact for document creation, dispersal, and archiving?
 - Processes necessary for centralized repository
 - Limit to just Study Directors? TFM, Archivist(s)?

Key Dates Up to the Food Use Workshop

Presenter: Dr. Alice Axtell



Key Dates up to the FUW

Alice Axtell

List of Key Dates

Event	Date
Company Meetings Wrap up	Friday, Jul 25
DEADLINE (TENTATIVE): EPA Stoplight analysis is due	Friday, Aug 8
Project requests are eligible for online nomination	Aug 15-25
The list of nominated requests is posted on the public website	Friday Sep 5 (12:00 pm ET)
FUW	Sep 9-11
PUP & RU submission	Sep 12-26



Thank you!

2026 Resource Allocations

Presenters: Dr. Alice Axtell, Dr. Jerry Baron, Dr.
Debbie Carpenter





2026 Resource Allocations

Alice Axtell
Jerry Baron
Debbie Carpenter

The Big Picture

Some background before crunching numbers...

- We are anticipating a flat NIFA budget for 2026
- ARS anticipated funding is unclear at the moment, therefore we are exploring 3 different case scenarios¹:
 1. ARS funds IR-4 at 100%
 2. ARS funds IR-4 at 70%
 3. No ARS funds

¹The 70% ARS fund assumption is due to the full loss of the Salinas (CA) sites and the 50% loss of the Wooster (OH) sites.



Proposed 2026 allocation versus current funding

	2025 Allocation \$15 M BUDGET	2026 Allocation \$15 M BUDGET		
		100% ARS Funds	70% ARS Funds	NO ARS Funds
Core	\$8,475,287	\$8,475,287	\$8,475,287	\$8,475,287
Field Program Discretionary	\$368,113	\$368,113	\$368,113	\$368,113
NIFA Residue Trials	\$2,250,000	\$2,250,000	\$2,295,000	\$2,400,000
NIFA Performance Trials	\$1,200,000	\$1,200,000	\$1,170,000	\$1,100,000
Integrated Solutions	\$600,000	\$600,000	\$585,000	\$550,000
Environmental Horticulture	\$650,000	\$650,000	\$650,000	\$650,000
TOTAL	\$13,874,400	\$13,874,400	\$13,874,400	\$13,874,400



The potential loss of ARS funding would result in reduced support for Product Performance and Integrated Solutions trials, while funding for NIFA Residue trials would increase to help offset the decreased ARS contribution.



Resource Allocation for Residue Trials & Resulting NEW “A” Priorities

In 2026 IR4 can support between 36 and 41 NEW “A” priorities (pending ARS funding)

Funding Source	No. of Residue Trials ¹		
	2026		
	100% ARS Funds	70% ARS Funds	0% ARS Funds
NIFA	290	296	309
ARS	+50 ³	+35	+ 0
Canada	+ 14	+ 14	+ 14
California	+ 0.0	+ 0.0	+ 0.0
Estimated No. of RED “A” trials	- 40	- 40	- 40
TOTAL No. of Trials	= 314	=305	= 283
TOTAL No. of A Priorities²	314 / 7.7 = 41	305 / 7.7 = 40	283 / 7.7 = 36
No. of PUPs/Regional Upgrades	6	5	5
NEW FUW Priorities	41-6 = 35	40-5 = 35	36-5 = 31

¹Cost of each residue field trial remains unchanged (including 11.11% IDC)= **\$7,777**

²Average No. of residue studies per project was **7.5** in 2024 and it has increased to **7.7** in 2025 and 2026.

³Recent number of trials in 2025 was approx. 50.

Contrary to 2024, the California contribution is NOT included at this time.

Resource Allocation for Product Performance Trials & Resulting “H+” Priorities

In 2026 IR-4 can support Between 11 and 13 “H+” priorities (pending ARS funding)

	100% ARS Funds	70% ARS Funds	0% ARS Funds
2026 NIFA funds available for performance trials (from slide no. 4)	\$1,200,000	\$1,170,000	\$1,100,000
Funds needed to complete 24/25 research plan (approx.)	- \$350,000	- \$350,000	- \$350,000
Funds left for new performance trials	= \$850,000	= \$820,000	= \$750,000
No. of 2026 trials that can be funded	$\$850,000 / \$8,800^1$ = 97	$\$820,000 / \$8,800^1$ = 93	$\$750,000 / \$8,800^1$ = 85
TOTAL No. of new priorities that can be funded (assuming 3 perf. trials per project) ²	$97 / 3$ = 32	$93 / 3$ = 31	$85 / 3$ = 28
“H+” PRIORITIES (~40% of total no. of priorities)	$32 \times 0.4 = 13$	$31 \times 0.4 = 12$	$28 \times 0.4 = 11$
Approx. 60% of NEW “A” priorities has a performance component	$41^* \times 0.6 = 25$	$40^* \times 0.6 = 24$	$36^* \times 0.6 = 22$
Anticipated No. of new ‘A’ priorities with a performance component that can be completed in 2026 (includes PUPs & RUs)	$32-13$ = 19	$31-12$ = 19	$28-11$ = 17

¹ The average cost of a performance trial (including the 11.11% indirect cost rate) was \$8,300 in 2024 and \$8,800 in 2025. These figures will be adjusted if accounting for third-party contributions (i.e. NIFA cost would decrease if contribution is received).

²The attempted no. of performance trials for each new priority is = 3

*No. of 2026 FUW “A” Priorities from slide no. 6

Resource Allocation for IS

2026 IS Funding distribution

- Allocate approx. \$50,000 to perform carry trials from 2023/2024.
- Approx. 65% of the remaining funds to national priorities and 35% to regional priorities.
 - Five National Priorities
 - Four (one per region) Priorities
 - Two Sponsored Projects are available

In 2026 IR-4 can support 5 national & 4 regional IS priorities

	100% ARS Funds	70% ARS Funds	0% ARS Funds
2026 NIFA funds available for IS trials (from slide no. 3)	\$600,000	\$585,000	\$550,000
Carryover cost (approx.) –to cover 23/24 projects	- \$50,000	- \$50,000	- 50,000
Funds left for new priorities	= \$550,000	= \$535,000	= \$500,000
National Priorities (65%)	\$357,500 (\$550,000* 0.65)	\$347,750 (\$535,000*0.65)	\$325,000 (\$500,000*0.65)
Regional Priorities (35%)	\$192,500 (\$550,000*0.35)	\$187,250 (\$535,000*0.35)	\$175,000 (\$500,000*0.35)

Proposed Cost Per IS Project

	100% ARS Funds	70% ARS Funds	0% ARS Funds
No. of National Priorities	5	5	5
Cost per project	$\$357,500 / 5$ = \$71,500	$\$347,750$ = \$69,550	$\$325,000 / 5$ = \$65,000
No. of Regional Priorities	4	4	4
Cost per project	$\$192,500 / 4$ = \$48,125	$\$187,250 / 4$ = \$46,812	$\$175,000 / 4$ = \$43,750

Thank you!

Alignment of Field Program to Laboratory Capacity

Presenter: Dr. Jerry Baron





Agenda Item 8

Alignment of Field Program to Laboratory Capacity

Background

- **Perennial issue → Whac-A-Mole**
- **What PMC controls...Closed NE (Cornell) and NC (Michigan State) laboratories to address inequity in capacity.**
- **What PMC does not control Closure of Beltsville Analytical Laboratory and potential closure of Wapato Laboratory**
- **Contract Research Laboratories and Field Contractors help keep the balance → Higher Costs**

Current Situation

- **Backlog continues at the laboratories - More complex methods/0-day storage stability/UCD laboratory renovation/Wapato**
- **Bids for contract laboratory is above allocated \$, budgeted \$175,000 with low bids totaling \$585,000.**

This situation is not sustainable.

Options

- **Increase laboratory capacity**
 - **Greater investment in existing laboratories**
 - **Establish a new laboratory**
 - **Budget more funds for the contract laboratories**
- **Reduce the number of new residue priorities to better match IR-4's existing laboratory capacity.**
- **Combination of the above**

Field Trial Funding Policy Current Process & Challenges

Presenter: Dr. Jerry Baron





Agenda Item 9

Field Trial Funding Policy

Issue

How do we handle modification and associated funding changes to the research plan for field trials in residue (and other) studies?

Process

- **Field Trials assigned to FRDs at NRPM → we use an application that tracks the assignments and associated funding**
- **After NRPM, before validation by RFC, dropped trials are removed from the Funding App, and new trials are assigned.**
- **RFCs validate field trials and funding → After validation, the funding distribution is presented to the PMC for concurrence.**

Post-PMC approval

- **We do not reduce funding for trials that are dropped → give regions some wiggle room to offset costs or add new trials.**
- **For added trials, funds covered by either the offset from lost field trials or pre-allocation from next year's budget**
- **Problem: Lost trials within the region are not always equal to gained trials → Funding accountability is limited**

2025

- **Many changes this year**
- **In some cases, FRD spent significant funds only to have the trial dropped.**
- **Allocated 50% of funding for most removed trials....when it made sense**

Givens

- **Due to various reasons, a higher number of changes are occurring in the research program.**
- **Funding is tight, FRDs cannot afford to lose field trials**
- **No accountability for field trials that are removed & FRD receives full funding**

Proposal

- **Guarantee \$1,000 to the FRD for any field trial that is on the IR-4 work plan on February 15.**
- **Increase the guarantee to 50% of the total cost once the first application of the test substance is applied. Develop a mechanism to adjust the guarantee according to specific circumstances.**
- **Reconcile the differences between the funding allocation per region for trials eliminated and for new trials added once the NIFA funds are received at HQ. Adjust the subward amount to reflect the changes.**



Back-up Study Process

- **Because of all the changes in 2025, Cole Smith, proposed to HQ that we establish a new category of priority projects at the Food Workshop to serve as “next project up” when cancellation occurs→ We tried this in the past, and it was very confusing for the Workshop participants.**
- **We do have a process now to identify the most logical projects to serve as a replacement. Considerations: Inverse order of downgrading – last projects downgraded from A to B are considered first AND being the same commodity or ability to “drop in” to proposed field sites**

Accountability vs. Best use of funds

QUESTIONS?

- **What do we do when a FRD is underfunded because of the cancellation of studies?**
- **What do we do when a FRD does not do the work?**
- **For product performance/IS/ornamental - What do we do when there is no pest pressure, leading to an unsuccessful field trial?**

Training Update

Presenter: Rob Welker





Training Update

PMC Summer Meeting
July 2025
Rob Welker

- Module prep from the master slide deck is underway
- The overview of the program, Facility Freezers, Trial Site, Test Substance and Sampling modules were included in the meeting information packet as examples of what information they will contain

- Comments on draft modules will be requested from Management, QA and Study Directors. Once comments are received and additional photos/graphics are added, I will be working with Hannah to confirm formatting and brand identity to finalize modules and post them to the IR-4 intranet
- I have been working with Christina Dinneen to change several advisories to SOPs and as those are completed, their associated modules will be completed (i.e. application types)



- Modules will be finalized and moved online as soon as possible (pending Hannahs availability). The goal is to have all modules commented on before the Food Use Workshop (SOP completion may delay some modules – i.e. application SOP)

The Big Picture

Overview of IR-4

IR-4 Mission

To facilitate regulatory approval of sustainable pest management technology for specialty crops (fruits vegetables, nuts, ornamentals and other horticultural crops) and other minor uses that promotes public well-being

IR-4 is the only publicly funded program in the US that addresses these issues

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IR-4
Project 

Why is IR-4 Needed?

- **Lack of Economic Incentive for Registrants to register products in specialty crops**
 - Development costs from ‘discovery to jug’ are estimated at \$250-350M
 - Limited patent life
 - Small acreage crops = relatively small amount of product sales
 - “Just not worth the registration expenses and efforts” (‘Carrot’ is too small)
- **Liability for Registrants**
 - Specialty crops generally have a higher value per acre than row crops (Potentially large ‘stick’)
- **This is not a new scenario. IR-4 was established by USDA in 1963 because of these same factors.**

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IR-4
Project 

How IR-4 Helps Overcome these Hurdles

- **Increase the Economic Incentive for Registrant**
 - IR-4 will conduct the EPA-mandated Magnitude of Residue trials to establish a Maximum Residue Level (MRL), a.k.a 'Tolerance' for a particular pesticide on particular crop. This saves the registrant >\$150K per project.
 - Pesticide Registration Improvement Act (PRIA) fees are waived for IR-4 submissions. In 2023, IR-4 PRIA fee savings to registrants was more than \$4.4 million.
 - Adding specialty crops to product labels can result in data protection extensions for registrants.
- **Reduce liability concerns**
 - IR-4 sometimes conducts product performance trials to help registrant make decisions on application timings and rates of crop protectants in fruits, vegetables and other specialty crops.

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Programs Within IR-4

Food Crops



Environmental Horticulture Crops



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Programs Within IR-4

Environmental Horticulture Program

- Initiated in 1977 to assist with pest problems in commercial production of ornament and landscape crops
- No residue trials needed for non-food crops, so only Product Performance studies are conducted.
- Nearly 60,000 uses established from IR-4 trials
- Very active in control of invasive species
- Substantial efforts dedicated to pollinator protection in the past several years

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IR-4
Project 

Programs Within IR-4

Food Crop Program

Majority of IR-4 effort and resources are dedicated here. Selection of research priorities based on stakeholder input (grower groups, food processors, university research and extension specialists, etc.)

Four primary subprograms

1. Residue study management and EPA submissions to establish MRLs, maximum residue levels (a.k.a. tolerances)
2. Product Performance (efficacy and crop safety) studies related to specific product/commodity requests, when needed.
3. Biopesticide & Organic Support (initiated in 1982)
 - Regulatory guidance for registration of products. Previous research activities have now been transferred to the Integrated Solutions Program
4. Integrated Solutions Program (Initiated in 2018)
 - Research support for Organic producers, including non-chemical and non-traditional technologies
 - PPWS (Pest Problems Without Solutions) projects. Screening of multiple products to identify potential solutions for the Residue Program
 - Research support to help mitigate Pesticide Resistance. Screening trials to help deepen the toolbox and reduce the risk of resistance.
 - Residue Mitigation. Research support to help meet domestic and international mrl levels while maintaining good pest control.

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IR-4
Project 

Who Benefits from IR-4?

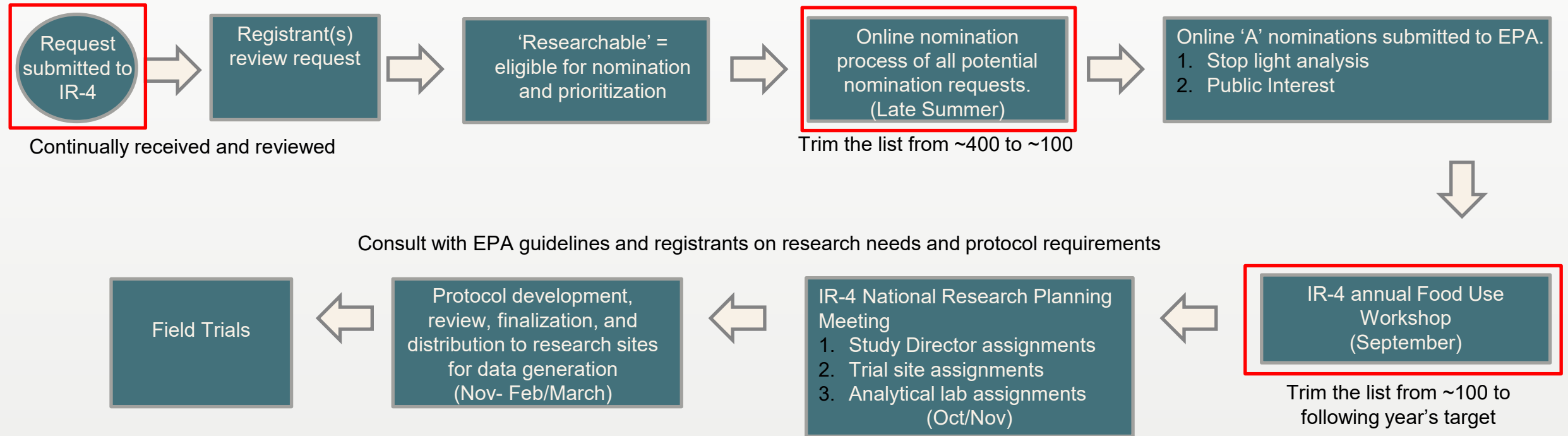
- **Growers**
 - Legal access to safe & effective pest management tools
 - Protect and sell a higher proportion of their crop
- **Food Processors & Food Retailers**
 - Consistent supply of materials
- **Crop Protection Industry**
 - Expanded registrations & potential sales
 - Exclusive Use of Data Extension
- **Public**
 - Plentiful and more economical supply of fruits & vegetables that contribute to a healthy diet.

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IR-4
Project 

The Life of a Project at IR-4 Prioritization and Planning

 = Stakeholder input is critical



Simultaneous Activities

*Annual IR-4/registrant meetings spring and summer

*Regional stakeholder priority meetings spring through late summer

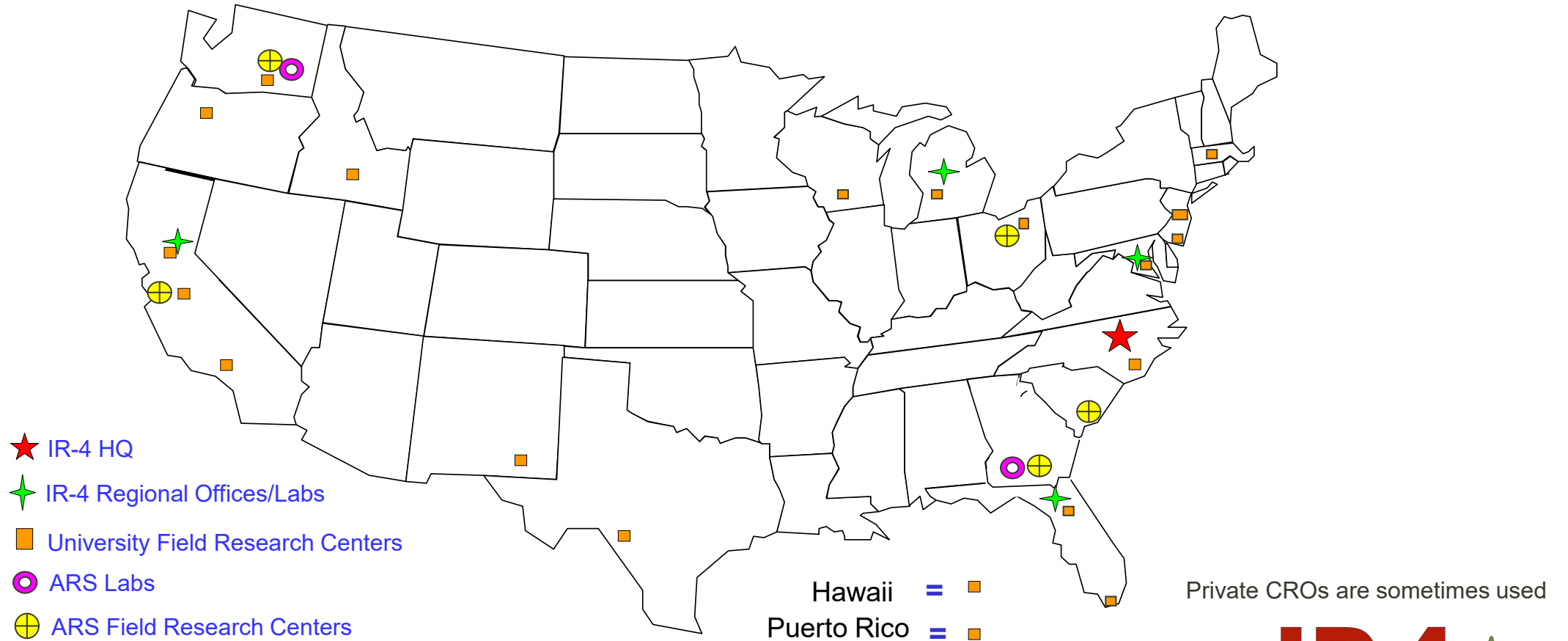
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To Submit a Request:

<https://www.ir4project.org/about-ir4/submit-a-request/>

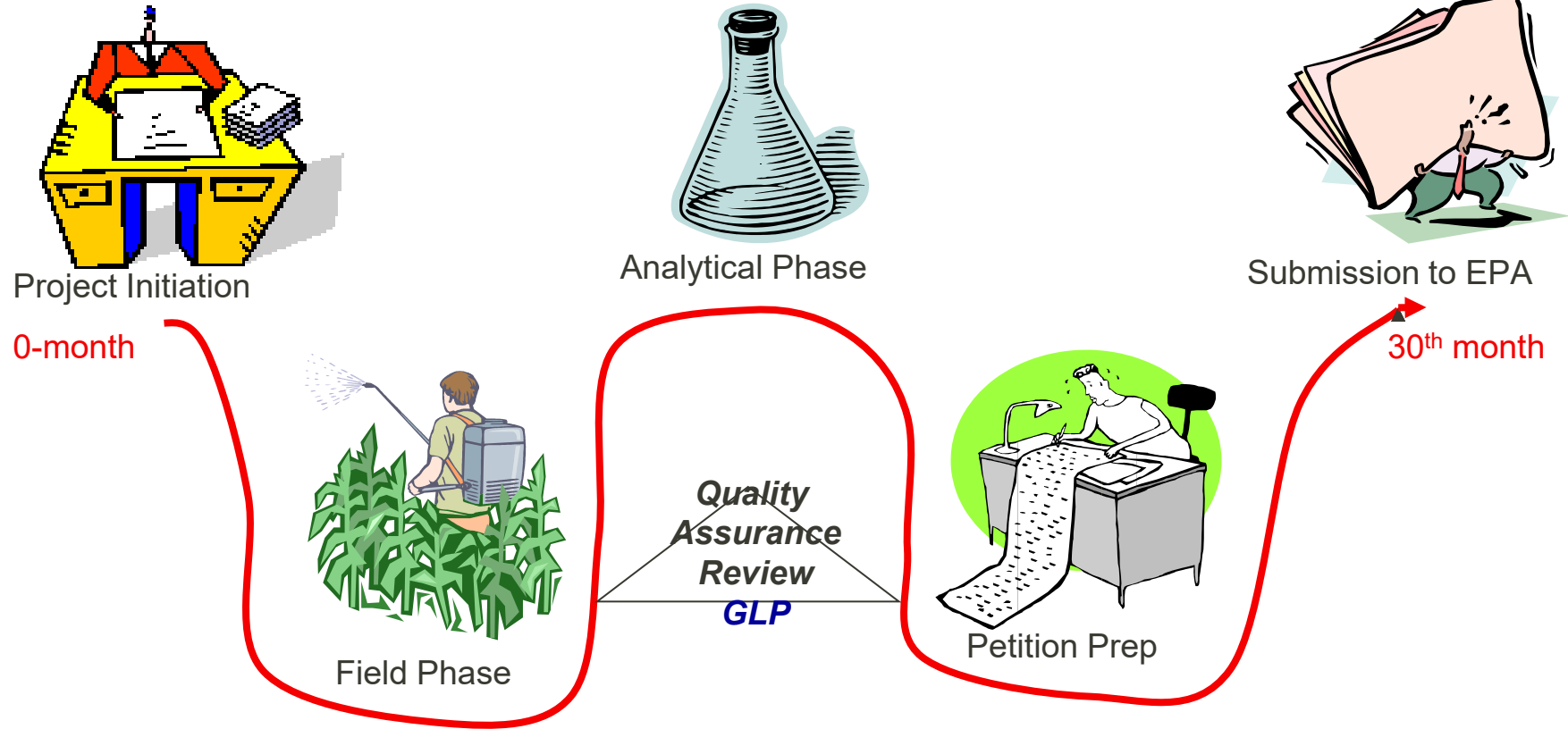
The Life of a Project at IR-4 Data Generation



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The Life of a Project at IR-4 Data Generation



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• **Delays pile up!**

- Every step in this process relies on the work before it. Delays in critical steps can slow overall study progress.
- It is essential that FRDs initiate and complete the field portion, ship samples and move raw data forward as soon as possible.

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• **Examples:**

- An FRD decides not to conduct a trial in the year it was assigned.
- Raw data is not forwarded to HQ until the year after completion.
- Samples are held in on-site storage until the end of the season before shipping to the labs.

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- **Delays impact study completion and submission to EPA which will delay label changes that directly impact growers / stakeholders.**
- **Once we submit the petition to EPA, we do not get instant results...**

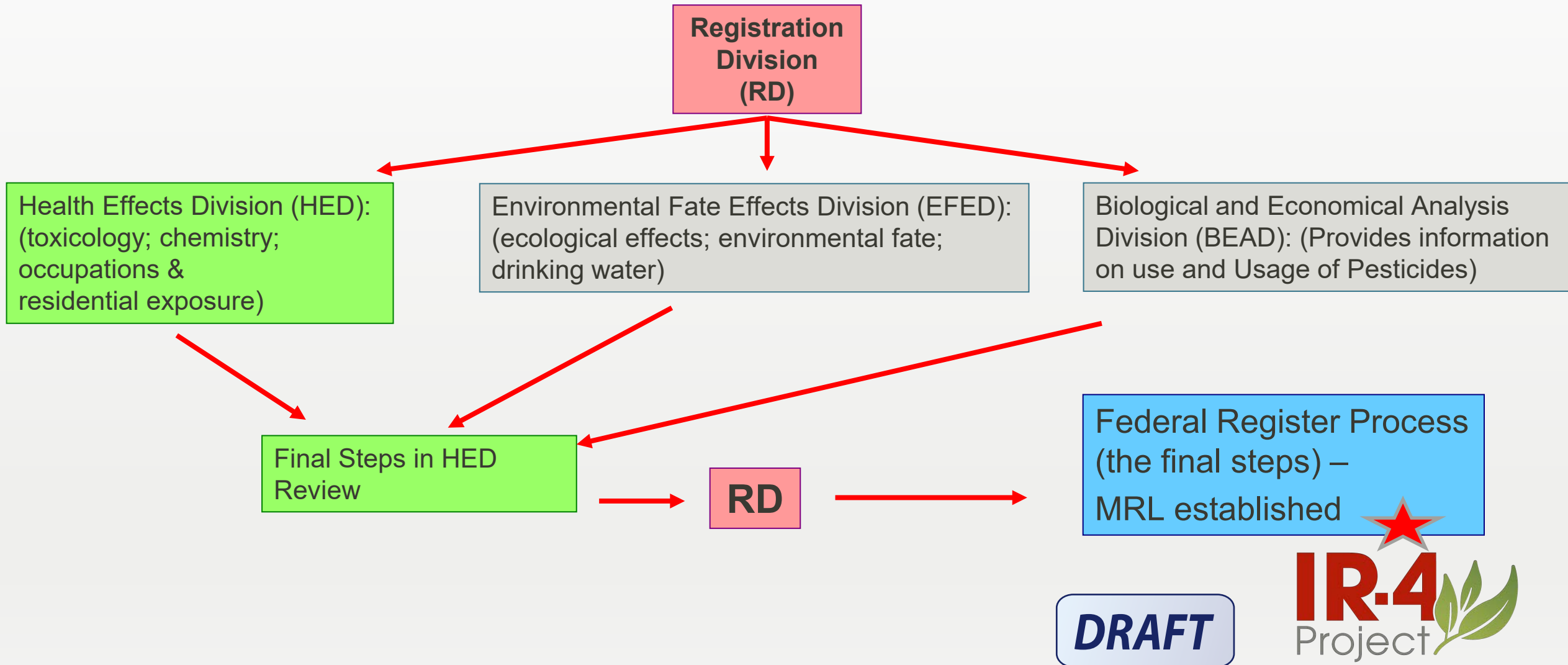
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The Life of a Project at IR-4 EPA Review



15+ month process



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The Need for IR-4 Continues to Increase

- Increased regulatory requirements means even lower economic incentive to registrants to pursue specialty crop labels
- Industry consolidation likely means fewer and smaller pool of registrant personnel devoted to specialty crops
- Specialty crop community will continue to need access to international markets. IR-4 will continue harmonization efforts, possibly including international field sites in residue studies.
- The crop protection industry is requiring more robust crop safety and product performance testing on specialty crops. IR-4 will likely need to increase activities and funding for its Biology team to conduct Product Performance and Integrated Solutions research.

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The FRD Plays a Critical Role in This Long Process

These Training Modules are Here to Help

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Field Facility

Freezers

Freezer Storage

Keeping samples frozen from the time they are placed into freezer storage through the time they are analyzed at the lab is critical to the integrity of the study

It is advisable to move samples from field storage to transit (i.e. freezer truck or dry ice shipment) as soon as possible after collection

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Freezer Storage

Site SOPs need to be in place to address the following:

- Freezer maintenance and cleaning
- Sample Separation (non-treated controls vs treated)
- Temperature monitoring and backup monitoring
- Temperature alarms and notification systems
- Emergency procedures to prevent sample loss due to thawing

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Freezer Maintenance and Cleaning

Freezers are equipment and need SOPs, maintenance logs (to record routine and non-routine maintenance) and inventory logs. Examples of routine freezer maintenance that should be outlined in freezer SOPs:

- Good idea to inspect door seals and clean freezers on a set schedule as well as when needed due to a spill
- If freezers are turned off for part of the year, this should be addressed in a SOP and should outline startup procedures (allow time for the freezer to cool and equilibrate prior to placing samples in the freezer)
- All recorded in a **maintenance log**

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Sample Separation

Examples of Treated (TRT) and Control (UTC) Sample Separation:

- Use separate freezers for TRT and UTC samples
- Use physical barriers (i.e. wooden boards or box TRT and UTC samples separately prior to placing into a freezer)
- Use separate shelving areas within walk-in freezers to keep UTC and TRT samples separate

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Temperature Monitoring

Freezer temperatures must be monitored

- SOPs in place for monitoring system
 - System operation
 - Calibration
 - Maintenance
 - Schedule to record (or download) values

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Temperature Monitoring

Other recommendations to verify samples remain frozen and keep their integrity:

- It's recommended that a backup system (min/max) is in place in the event of a malfunction of the primary system
- It's a good idea to have a thaw indicator in the freezer. This can be as simple as ice cubes in a zip-loc bag, or a stone sitting on a cup of frozen water – it's a visual confirmation that no thawing has occurred

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Freezer Alarm Systems

An alarm system must be in place to notify people if the freezer temperature starts to warm

- The alarm must be equipped with a feature (call, text, etc) that can notify a responsible party at any time of day or night in the event of freezer warming
- The alarm must be tested periodically to verify performance
- The alarm should be set at a temperature that is above the normal operating temperature of the freezer, but not so warm that samples would thaw before remedial action can be taken
- All systems covered by SOPs and maintenance logs

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Emergency Procedures

SOPs need to be in place that describe what to do in the event of a malfunction or electric interruption

- Generators are a good backup plan for power outages, but these need periodic inspection, testing and maintenance to ensure that they operate when needed
- Move samples to adjacent working freezers in the event of a unit failure (freezer inventory logs)
- Load freezers with dry ice to maintain sub-freezing temperatures (DANGEROUS with walk-in freezers due to CO2 buildup)
- Emergency procedures need to be outlined in facility SOPs including locations of dry ice if needed

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Field Facility

Trial Site

Trial Site

Described in protocol section 2.3

Always try and simulate commercial practices for your area (row width, plant spacing, etc,)

If unfamiliar with a crop, use state recommendation books, extension service or local growers for assistance/advise



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Trial Site

Place UTC plots upslope from TRT plots or use appropriate separation for greenhouse trials

Follow protocol requirements for buffers and plot markers

Trees require 4 treated trees for sampling - 4 can be use if a handgun or similar treatment is used to treat individual trees, 6 are needed if treated in a row to avoid “end” trees

Plot maps and measurements (to permanent markers or GPS locations) must allow the plot area to be located in the future



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Maintenance Chemicals

- It is important to manage pests to maintain the integrity of the crop
 - Use only chemicals that are labeled for use on the crop. If nothing is registered, check with the Study Director
 - Make identical treatments to the UTC and TRT plots
 - DO NOT use chemistries that are similar or may interfere with analysis of the test chemical. If there is any doubt, contact the Study Director

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Crop Destruct

Since MOR trials are using non-registered chemicals or use patterns, all treated crops must be destroyed after sampling is complete. These can not be consumed by humans or animals.

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Field Facility

Test Substance

Test Substance

- Identified in section 2.1 of the protocol – confirm the correct material is received
- Adjuvants are NOT considered test substances, but need to be labeled and handled as closely to GLP as possible. See National SOP N-03.3 for details

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Test Substance Receipt

Upon receipt:

- Document the lot/batch number
- Record the condition of the container and report immediately to the Study Director if the container has leaked
- Record the amount received and if it has been GLP characterized
- Keep all documentation from the shipment (GLP characterization form, MSDS/SDS, etc.) and the MSDS/SDS should be available at all times

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Test Substance Receipt

Test Substance Container Label Must Contain:

- Chemical name
- CAS or code number
- Batch number
- Expiration date
- Storage conditions

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Test Substance Storage

Test substances need to be stored:

- Restricted access
- According to label requirements (TEMPERATURE!!)
- Temperature Monitored
 - SOPs/calibration and maintenance of temperature monitoring device

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Test Substance Use

Always keep the test substance in its original container

- Monitor temperature if moved to the field for use
- Record amount(s) removed in use logs
- Use appropriate devices for measuring amounts of TS to be used (i.e. calibrated balance, appropriately sized syringe or graduated cylinder)
- If test substance is dispensed into a secondary container for measuring, NEVER return remaining amount to the original container

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Test Substance Disposal

Test substances must be kept in their original containers in limited access, temperature monitored storage until the final report for the study is signed

- Once it is verified that the container can be removed from inventory, the remaining test substance should be used for a labeled use, the container triple rinsed and disposed of according to local regulations

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Field Facility

Sampling

Harvesting VS Sampling

Harvesting is removing a plant part or whole plant from the field. Sampling occurs when the needed plant part is placed into a sample bag.

Wet samples or very small samples (i.e. small seeds) should be placed into a resealable plastic bag prior to placing into plastic lined IR-4 sample bags

Complete the tag on the IR-4 sample bag with the protocol required elements. It's also a good idea to include the same information on a label or index card that gets sealed inside the IR-4 sample bag in case the outside tag is damaged

PLEASE do not double knot the strings on the sample bags. A simple slip knot is sufficient. The cloth string can be hard to undo at the lab once moisture and freezing temperatures turn them into a solid mass

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Sample Collection

- Follow protocol instructions for harvest & sampling; if something looks off during draft protocol review, say something!!
- Typically, the plot ends are not sampled (exception for trees that are individually treated) and sampling less than 50% of the plot helps ensure that sampling is not bias
- Be sure and document:
 - Harvested crop growth stage MATCH PROTOCOL LANGUAGE– “commercially mature cantaloupe” vs “fruit”
 - Actual number of plants and locations on plants collected.
 - Sample cleaning procedures – dirt, stem removal, leaf removal. It is important for the lab to receive clean samples



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Sample Collection

- Modification procedures – DOCUMENT where and how samples were modified before collection
- How were harvested crop/samples moved from field to freezer. Document all steps
- Cleaning and contamination prevention measures
- Remember the goal is to document everything so the study could be recreated EXACTLY as it was done – auditors and reviewers look for that.



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Sample Modifications



Why Modify Samples?

- Overall sample size reduction (too much weight)
- Individual crop parts too big (DANGEROUS to try and grind a large frozen sample)
- To remove non-edible parts (i.e. pits or leaves – see green book)

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Sample Modifications



Get samples into freezer as soon as possible after any modifications – Why?

Enzymatic activity can have an impact on residues. As soon as samples are cut, enzymes are released. EU and other countries look at this and expect samples to be frozen after modifications, so export tolerances can be impacted. Possible these standards also move to US.

- **Recently added protocol language regarding sample modifications**
- *If samples are cut, and the cut samples cannot be placed in a freezer within one hour, then it may be best to do the cutting at the facility where the freezers are located or use an appropriate method of cooling and temperature-monitoring samples in order to maintain integrity*
- **Good habit to use a min/max thermometer when transport from field to freezer (current protocol says after 1 hour) and cool samples where possible**

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Shipping to Analytical Labs

- Remember why we do what we do –
 - Make applications, grow crops, analyze for residues
 - **Result:** tolerance/MRL/registration so growers have access to more tools!
- Field portion is only half the battle

BE SURE TO SEND SAMPLES TO THE APPROPRIATE LAB

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Why are Sample Modifications Necessary?

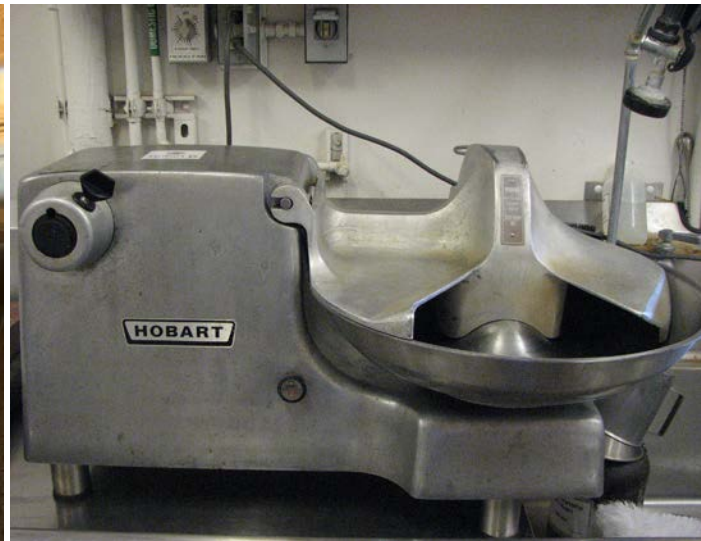
- The labs have to finely ground/chop/homogenize the samples



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Homogenization Equipment



Samples are homogenized using a chopper/food processor such as Hobart or Robot Coupe.

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Homogenization Process

- Knives, cleavers, hammers, rubber mallets, electric knives, etc. are needed to get **frozen** samples ready to go into processors.
- “It is so nice when things come quartered/sliced and then we don’t have to work so hard to reduce the pieces in order to have them fit and easily homogenize.”

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Bronson’s personal chopping assistants



Sweet Corn

Whole cobs
received from
field



Cobs reduced
by $\frac{1}{2}$ from field



Cobs after
lab chopping
before Robot
Coupe



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Our Labs Thank You!



If you ever are unsure,
communicate with Study
Director and LRDs!

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Vital Records (NJ Archives) Control Issue

Presenter: Dr. Jerry Baron





Agenda Item 11

Vital Records Archives

Data Archives

- **We have successfully relocated over 3,000 boxes of data from Vital Records Control in New Jersey to a private, managed archive location near RDU Airport.**
- **Took excellent coordination from the legacy Rutgers staff and the NC State team members**
- **Unfortunately, 47 boxes are still unaccounted → Triaged missing contents, and 40 boxes contain info for studies that support active registrations.**
- **Currently assessing if we can rebuild the supporting data**
- **Time for formal disclosure to the EPA?**



PMC Operational Procedures

Presenter: Dr. Jerry Baron





Agenda Item 12

PMC Operational Procedures

Started - but far from Completion

- Most of the “stuff” is in a large number of documents. (e.g., Project Statements, Grant Applications, Strategic Plans, reports).
- Easy to assemble, just having other priorities and this task keeps falling off the table.

Go Big or Go Home

- Establish an IR-4 Project Manual with multiple chapters containing various important documents and information that can be found in one location.



Proposed Chapters

1. History
2. Strategic Plan
3. IR-4 Operational Handbook
4. PMC Operation Guide
5. National SOPs
6. Job Expectations
7. Laboratory Guidance Document
8. Grant Narrative
9. Headquarters Employee Manual



Coordinated Meeting Coverage Process

Presenter: Dr. Jerry Baron





Agenda Item 13

Coordination Meeting Process

Awards

Presenter: Dr. Krystal Chojnacki





Awards: 2026 National Education Conference

Krystal Chojnacki

Meritorious Service Award

- **One** recipient from each region, ARS and Headquarters based on the following criteria:
 - Length of service to IR-4
 - Special service to IR-4
 - Innovation in program development and implementation
 - Scientific merit encompassing IR-4 contributions
- **Regions**/ARS/HQ will identify the recipient they want to receive the award and submit the recipient to Headquarters.
- Due by close of business PT on Wednesday, November 5, 2025
- HQ will have the awards made for presentation at the 2026 NEC



Technical Service Award

- **One** recipient from each region, ARS and Headquarters based on the following criteria:
 - Outstanding technical service to the program over several years
- **Regions/ARS/HQ** will identify the recipient they want to receive the award and submit the recipient to Headquarters.
- Due by close of business PT on Wednesday, November 5, 2025
- HQ will have the awards made for presentation at the 2026 NEC

National Recognition of Excellence

- One nomination from each region, ARS and Headquarters based on the following criteria:
 - Demonstrate outstanding achievements well beyond normal job performance, resulting in a significant positive impact on the IR-4 Project.
 - Select a field researcher, lab researcher or QA professional.
- Nominees can be anyone associated with IR-4 except active PMC Members.
- The nomination must include two letters of recommendation.



National Recognition of Excellence

- Submission will be via a google form
- **A max of three nominees will be selected to receive an award by the PMC or their designee**
- Due by close of business PT on Wednesday, November 5, 2025.
- HQ will have the awards made for presentation at the 2026 NEC.

PMC Duties/Decision

- May elect to delegate the authority to select the three recipients to the HQ Management Team, **or**
- The PMC may select the three recipients at a special meeting in November.



LEARN MORE

ir4project.org

ir-4_project@ncsu.edu



**NATIONAL
EDUCATION
CONFERENCE**
February 3-5, 2026

Awards Presented at the National Education Conference

Meritorious Service Awards (1 of each per region, ARS and HQ)

Deadline for Nomination: Wednesday, November 5, 2025

- One award will be issued to an IR-4 employee from each region, ARS, and headquarters at the National Education Conference based on the following criteria:
 - Length of service to IR-4
 - Special service to IR-4
 - Innovation in program development and implementation
 - Scientific merit encompassing IR-4 contributions
 - Recipients of these awards will be identified by regional/HQ management including the Regional Director, Laboratory Regional Director, Regional Quality Assurance Coordinator, Regional Field Coordinator and HQ Management.
 - Regional, ARS and Headquarters Management should send their one identified recipient to IR-4 HQ via email at ir-4_project@ncsu.edu by close of business (PT) on Wednesday, November 5, 2025. Please send the one selected recipient by copying and using [THIS TEMPLATE](#).
-

Technical Service Awards (1 of each per region, ARS and HQ)

Deadline for Nomination: Wednesday, November 5, 2025

- One award will be issued to an IR-4 employee in each region, ARS, and headquarters for their outstanding technical service to the program over several years at the National Education Conference.

- Recipients of these awards will be identified by regional/HQ management including the Regional Director, Laboratory Regional Director, Regional Quality Assurance Coordinator, Regional Field Coordinator HQ Management.
 - Regional, ARS and Headquarters Management should send their one identified recipient to IR-4 HQ via email at ir-4_project@ncsu.edu by close of business (PT) on Wednesday, November 5, 2025. Please send the one selected recipient by copying and using [THIS TEMPLATE](#).
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National Recognition of Excellence

Deadline for Nomination: Wednesday, November 5, 2025

- The National Award of Excellence will be given to a field researcher, lab researcher, or quality assurance professional who goes above and beyond to keep operations moving.
- The award is given only during the National Education Conference which occurs every three years.
- Nominees must demonstrate outstanding achievements well beyond normal job performance, resulting in a significant positive impact on the IR-4 Project.
- Once a person has received this award, they cannot be nominated again.
- Nominations will come from the four regions, ARS and IR-4 Headquarters, and only one nomination will be submitted per region, ARS and headquarters.
- Nominees can be anyone associated with IR-4, except active members of the PMC.
- A maximum of three nominees will be selected to receive the award.
- Two letters of recommendation will need to be provided in the nomination application.
- The PMC, at their Summer or Fall 2025 meeting may elect to delegate the authority to the HQ Management Team to receive nominations and select the three national recipients of the award; otherwise, a special meeting will be held to review nominations and select recipients.
- Regional, ARS and Management should submit their nomination by completing [THIS FORM](#) (and uploading or emailing at least two letters of recommendation) by close of business (PT) on Wednesday, November 5, 2025.

Future Meetings

Presenter: Dr. Krystal Chojnacki





Agenda Item 15

Future Meetings

Future Meeting Lineup

- Food Use Workshop – Denver, CO September 9-11,
- EH Workshop – Kansas City, MO October 7-8
- Fall PMC - Kansas City, MO October 8-10
- NRPM - Raleigh; October 27-29
- National Education Conference – Charleston, SC;
February 3-5, 2026
- Spring joint PMC/CLC meeting - Washington; March 3-5, 2026



Heads Up

EH Workshop/Fall PMC October 7-10

- Originally planned to have “All Hands” during late afternoon on October 8 → We need time for the EH Workshop/NIFA meeting.
- Defer “All Hands” to the end of NRPM on October 29. RFCs, Study Directors and some PMC members will be there, others join virtually.