

Plan of Work and Annual Report Update

Q: We use knowledge areas to sort out our program/priorities. When will knowledge areas be tweaked to adequately reflect the 5 NIFA priorities?

A: There is a formal process for changing the meaning of or adding to Knowledge Areas. At this time there are no plans to change any meaning of Knowledge Areas until the board is petitions to do so. The Knowledge Areas themselves are just a means to catalog activities.

Q: It seems that your examples of good outcomes come from the research side. Any examples from extension?

A: There are plenty of examples of good outcomes for extension. The first example given in the presentation, from Colorado on promoting wheat varieties and return on investment, was an excellent example of good extension outcome. More examples are forthcoming in the 2009 Annual Report Summary to be published on the AREERA Plan of Work web page later this year.

Q: Is NIFA-PLAN going to be required annually now?

A: The new guidelines from the Office of Grants and Financial Management state that the NIFA-PLAN is due annually now by April 1 of each year.

Q: Will there be any national leadership for developing outcomes and indicators for formula funding efforts that don't fit under the 5 core areas?

A: Yes. In fact there are efforts underway now by a National Program Leader for 4-H working on national indicators for that program.

Q: How will reporting multi-state and integrated activities be incorporated into the annual plan of work and reporting software?

A: There are plans in the future for these reports/forms to be incorporated into the Plan of Work software. This will take some time as most software development efforts are being directed to the REEport software.

Q: What type of actions/next steps were taken in light of the recommendations of the panel that met this spring?

A: There are many steps being planned and contemplated. A full report on these plans will be published on the AREERA Plan of Work webpage by the end of the year. Some of these steps require REEport to be fully implemented to allow a data link between the two softwares.

CRIS Update

Q: We understand that non-formula grants are no longer included on the Reporting Checklist, so will not be reported in Line 204 of the AD-419. However, the non-formula grants will still be part of the sponsored research expenditures that we associate with the formula grants, correct? Will we be able to include our non-formula grant expenditures in the "Other Federal Research Funds" section of the AD-419? If so, what line? (if not line 219, then perhaps line 318?) Or are non-formula grants to be excluded entirely from the AD-419 – either as a project or an associated expenditure?

A: Line 219 and Line 318 are only for non-NIFA federal research funds as are the rest of the lines under "Other Federal Research Funds". Line 219 for USDA Contracts, Grants, and Cooperative Agreements which are not NIFA. Line 318 includes Other Federal Funds which are not NIFA, but may have been administered as pass through funds by NIFA. NIFA funds only go on Lines 201, 201, 203, 205, and 231. And these are only for each respective

Formula Grants. Line 204 is as it is now is no longer needed because that is where any NIFA non-formula grant funds would have gone. So there is no place currently for NIFA non-formula grants to be reported on the AD-419.

Q: At the reporting web conference yesterday, there was mention of a project outline that would have to be submitted with the grants.gov application for the formula funds. Could you elaborate on the project outline? For example:

- Is it budgetary or narrative or both?
- Will it require a budget that matches our request for funds (allocation) and match?
- Do you expect us to continue individual CRIS projects, or consolidate them under broader themes (e.g., Plan of Work)?
- Will the project outline require details in terms of deliverables / outcomes, and if so will they link back to the Plan of Work and/or REEport?

What is the level of detail required (budgetary data, effort commitments (SY / PY / TY)?

A: The mention of including the project outline (or proposal) was not in reference to grants.gov, but in reference to the entire package submitted as part of CRIS forms with the AD-416 and AD-417 submission. Currently, the project outline/proposal may be submitted separately and after the AD-416/417 is submitted. In the future, it will have to be submitted simultaneously with the AD-416/417 before it comes to NIFA. Including the project proposals for formula projects is nothing new, nor is its content. It has always been a required part of the package. We just want them to be filed with the project initiation as a complete package instead of separately and often later as they are now. As it stands now, submitting them separately sometimes holds up a formula project being approved in a timely manner. We just want to be more efficient and this process will be a part of REEport.

REEport Update

Q: Is the REEport sandbox still available for practice?

A: No. It was taken down because of further software development.

Q: Will there be any further training at the Administrative Officers Conference in Alaska?

A: If we are asked to be on the agenda by the Administrative Officers planning committee, we will give an update on REEport.