

agInnovation NORTH CENTRAL - RULES OF OPERATION

July 1977, July 1980, July 1982, March 1986, March 1991, July 1992, March 1993, November 1994, July 1998, September 2000, September 2001, December 2013, June 2023, March 2024, October 2024, May 2026

agInnovation (national organization) BOARD ON AGRICULTURE ASSEMBLY

Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this organization, the North Central Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors, was renamed agInnovation North Central (agNC) through a unanimous vote taken on 10/11/2024, was established in conformity with the constitution of the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU).

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

agInnovation North Central is one of five regional associations that represent the administrators of the State Agricultural Experiment Stations (SAESs) in the North Central Region (NCR). On matters to be ratified by, reported to, or recommended to APLU, the consensus of agNC will be conveyed to the agInnovation chair by the agNC chair. agInnovation North Central will conduct its affairs in conformance with the stated objectives and procedures of the agInnovation Rules of Operation.

agInnovation North Central and the other four regional associations are an integral part of agInnovation. Through agNC's business meetings, agNC views are determined formally and transmitted to the national agInnovation. These views include new matters or those referred to agNC by agInnovation.

agInnovation North Central provides a forum for the exchange of information and for discussion and debate among members and guests on matters of common concern or opportunity that may or may not require formal action. agInnovation North Central takes actions limited to the North Central Region.

The other functions of the agNC include:

1. Arranges for and conducts its own affairs, elects members to agInnovation, makes recommendations to agInnovation, reacts to proposals of agInnovation, and participates in the handling of [interim] business of agInnovation;
2. Actively participates on agInnovation Committees and with the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and other regional associations in the programming and conduct of cooperative regional multistate research and integrated research and extension activities as authorized by the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (AREERA);
3. Facilitates cooperation among its member SAESs, with federal and state agencies, with industry, nonprofit organizations, and with other stakeholders and partners in planning, programming, financing, implementing, and performing agricultural research;

4. Employs and pays the salaries and/or benefits of the agNC Executive Director (ED) and other agNC Office staff, such as an Assistant Director (AD), and others as needed and approved by agNC membership;
5. Led by the agNC Chair and EC, conducts performance reviews and provides a performance rating for agNC ED and AD and other agNC staff annually. Annual accomplishments report developed by agNC ED and AD to be presented to agNC directors at least 2 weeks prior to performance review meeting. The performance review meeting is to be held in January each year on a date that allows the majority of agNC members to participate. Following this meeting, the agNC Chair drafts annual performance review and rating with input from full agNC membership and provides the report to the ED, AD, and their host university supervisors by mid-February;
6. Annual cost of living or across the board salary adjustments will be assessed per the guidance of the host institutions for the Executive Director and Assistant Director and merit increases will be at the discretion of the agNC directors and within the range or limits set forth by the host institutions; and
7. Collects and disburses dues and enters into contracts with cooperators and/or granting agencies to cover the costs of the programs agreed upon and approved by agNC membership;

ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

1. The voting members of the agNC will consist of the directors (or duly authorized representatives) of its twelve (12) member SAESs eligible for funding under the Hatch Act, as amended in 1955 (69 Stat. 671): Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.
2. Associate and assistant directors of the member SAESs who attend one or more meetings per year of the agNC will also be members. However, the voting privilege will be limited to one vote for each SAES.
3. Nonvoting, ex-officio members of the agNC will consist of: the agNC ED; the administrator or other representatives of USDA-NIFA; Northern Plains and Midwest Area Directors for USDA-ARS; comparable area representatives from other USDA agencies such as, USDA-ERS, USDA-NRCS, and USDA-FS; the director of the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development; the director of the North Central Regional Aquaculture Center, the director of the North Central Regional Integrated Pest Management Center; Lincoln University and Central State University research directors; and designees of North Central (NC) 1994 institutions or their designated representatives.

ARTICLE IV - MEETINGS

1. Three (3) regular in-person meetings will be scheduled each year. These include:
 - Spring meeting - usually in March, and locations will be solicited and approved by membership vote at the previous year's spring or summer meeting, noting that the final meeting hotel/facility will depend upon available venues willing to contract with and agree to the policies of the host institution of either the agNC ED or AD;
 - Summer meeting - usually in July and in conjunction with the NC Mini Land-grant Meeting; and
 - Fall meeting - usually in September and in conjunction with the agInnovation annual fall meeting.

2. Monthly virtual meetings are scheduled each year to discuss ongoing agNC business, provide ED updates for regional and national level activities and news, share member institution updates, meet with key partners (e.g., ARS and NC centers), and have critical discussions on topics agreed upon by members.
3. Other meetings may be scheduled with approval of the Executive Committee.
4. In-person meeting locations will be agreed upon by the membership.
5. At their discretion, agNC directors may invite members of their team to attend agNC meetings. However, the voting privilege will be limited to one vote for each SAES.
6. Agenda briefs and any other meeting materials should be sent electronically to the agNC office no later than two weeks prior to the meeting in question.
7. With the assistance and approval of the agNC Executive Committee, the agNC office will prepare the meeting agenda, compile the agenda briefs, and send the final agenda packet to the membership electronically no later than one week prior to the meeting. Any agNC business requiring a vote, including electronic ballots, must follow Article VIII – Quorum, below.

ARTICLE V - OFFICERS

1. Officers. The officers of agNC will be the chair and chair-elect, each for a one-year term. The chair-elect succeeds the chair. The ED serves as executive vice-chair, and the AD provides administrative services.

The agNC Chair is appointed after the agNC leadership progression, beginning with serving as a member and chair of the MRC. This leadership progression allows agNC directors to learn about the agNC multistate research program and overall association business functions and activities, prior to the opportunity to serve as agNC chair.

During this leadership progression, if an agNC member is unable to serve in a leadership role (e.g., MRC Chair or agNC Chair), the Executive Committee may request nominations from agNC membership to fill the open Executive Committee positions. The Executive Committee also has the option of allowing the current Chair to remain in the role for another year. A simple majority vote of a quorum of agNC members (7 of the 12 agNC institutions) is needed to approve the appointment of new leadership.

2. Elections. The officers and members of standing committees are elected in person or electronically, as needed. New officers assume responsibility at the conclusion of the agInnovation fall meeting.

Officers and committee members may succeed themselves, but the general practice has been to rotate officers and committee members to share the workload and to provide the directors opportunity to participate and provide leadership to different facets of the organization.

3. Duties. The chair is the chief executive officer of agNC and is responsible for ensuring the duties of the Executive Committee are carried out as outlined in the Appendix for agNC Committee Descriptions.

The chair-elect will undertake duties the chair prescribes, will become chair for the remainder of the term should the chair resign or otherwise be unable to serve, and will preside in the absence of the chair.

The ED and the AD, under the guidance of the chair, provide leadership and support for activities of the Association, maintains permanent Association files, maintains liaison with other associations and government agencies, and maintains the agNC website.

New officers will be provided direction and resources necessary in their new role by the agNC ED and AD.

ARTICLE VI - EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee (EC) will be comprised of the chair, chair-elect, past chair; chair of the Multistate Research Committee (MRC), an agNC member-at-large who has been in their SAES role for at least 1 year and is not serving in an interim role at their institution, and the ED. All EC position terms, with the exception of the member-at-large who serves a three-year term, are for one year and follow the federal fiscal year for a start date of 10/1. EC voting will be by simple majority of all EC members. The EC, through the chair, executes the programs of the agNC and guides the activities of the ED, AD, and other agNC Office staff. The EC is also empowered to handle the immediate affairs of the agNC between business meetings.

ARTICLE VII - COMMITTEES AND DESIGNEES

agInnovation North Central committee descriptions, membership, and roles are provided in the Appendix. Nominations for agNC committee members are approved by a simple majority of an agNC quorum (7 of the 12 agNC member institutions). Member terms and term limits are provided in the Appendix.

Committees can be established, and multistate project administrative advisors (AA) and other designees named by the agNC directors, with the agreement of the designee. The AA volunteer pool can include anyone from the region's SAES membership who has an administrative leadership role or others (i.e., experienced department head, senior professor), as approved by their SAES director. For NCACs, it is preferred that AAs are above department head level. Multistate committee members may include those who are willing to serve and approved by their SAES Director. A list of committees and designees for the coming year is prepared by the agNC AD and circulated to the membership as a part of the minutes of the agNC summer meeting.

Continuing (permanent) committees and committee assignments include the agInnovation Experiment Station Committee on Organization and Policy (ESCOP) Committee: agNC has three representatives on the agInnovation national ESCOP Committee. They are the agNC chair-elect, chair, and immediate past chair. agInnovation North Central's immediate past chair also represents agNC on the agInnovation ESCOP Executive Committee. The agNC ED serves as a permanent alternate. agInnovation has several standing, technical, and ad hoc subcommittees to which members of agNC are nominated. For details, consult the current agInnovation membership and committee list at:

<http://escop.info/committees/>

ARTICLE VIII - ANNUAL BUDGET DEVELOPMENT, OVERSIGHT, AND REPORTING PROCESS

Annual Budget Development Process:

Under the guidance of the agNC Chair and Executive Committee, the Executive Director (ED) and Assistant Director (AD) are responsible for developing a draft of the agNC annual budget for the upcoming fiscal year (FY). The agNC fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30. Key components of the budget include:

- **Support for the ED and AD offices**, including salary, travel, training, and office expenses (institution-related fees, equipment, and supplies).

- Projections for Cost-of-Living Adjustments (COLA) for the ED and AD are based on information provided by the host institutions. If no such information is available before the Spring Meeting, a standard 2% COLA increase is assumed.
- **Reserve funds**, covering three months of salary and fringe benefits for the ED and AD. These funds are held by the host institutions.
- **Specific regional efforts and priorities**, as identified by the agNC.
- **Annual State Assessment** (see explanation below).
- **Discretionary funds of \$5000**, will be used for small overages or projects at the discretion of agNC leadership, providing flexibility for unforeseen expenses and opportunities. This ensures timely responses to minor budget fluctuations or small initiatives that may arise throughout the fiscal year.
- **General operating carryover funds equal to or greater than 5% of the total annual operating budget.**

The draft budget is evaluated based on the total agNC assessments collected from each member institution. If the proposed budget exceeds the current funding available through these assessments, the ED and AD will develop alternative budget options for the agNC directors to review during the annual agNC Spring Meeting. These options may include reducing projected expenditures or proposing an increase in the agNC assessment. Every 3 years or sooner if carry-over funds are less than 5% of the total annual budget, the proposed agNC budget will include at least a 5% assessment increase for discussion and decision by association directors. The proposed operating annual budget is discussed, modified, and approved by agNC directors during the annual agNC Spring Meeting.

Calculation and Collection of the agNC Assessment:

Each state's annual agNC assessment is based upon the total assessment amount approved by agNC directors during the spring meeting. To determine each member institution's share of the agNC assessment, 60% of the amount is divided equally (1/12th) PLUS 40% proportional to the state's share of rolling 3-year Multistate Research Fund award. Award amounts are determined using [data available on the NIFA website](#). NRSP and regional trust funds received by states are excluded from these calculations.

Following budget approval during the Spring Meeting, assessment invoices for each agNC member institution are prepared and sent to the appropriate directors and budget officers. agNC office assessments are due August 31.

Oversight and Reporting of the Annual Budget:

The agNC ED and AD are responsible for overseeing the agNC annual budget, with guidance and approval from the agNC Executive Committee (EC). Monthly year-to-date expense reports are collected from the accounting systems of the ED and AD host institutions and entered into the working budget for the current fiscal year.

The office budget is reviewed by the EC at least quarterly, or as requested by the EC or the broader agNC membership. Final budget values are entered at the fiscal year close-out after June 30. At least quarterly and for transparency and accessibility, updated budget spreadsheets are uploaded to the designated "agInnovation North Central Budget Sheets" folder on agNC's MS Teams.

If any ED or AD budgeted expense lines are anticipated to exceed their allocations, the EC must be notified at least 30 days in advance of the expected overage. The EC may then request corrective action or approve the overage, as deemed appropriate.

ARTICLE IX - QUORUM

For purposes of doing agNC business, a quorum will consist of a minimum of seven (7) agNC SAES voting members present and voting at any duly called meeting where written notice and agenda are sent out at least one week in advance of the meeting. A simple majority resolves all issues except amendment of the Rules of Operation which will require a two-thirds majority. For electronic voting, at least seven (7) voting members must respond.

ARTICLE X - PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

The emphasis in all meetings will be on orderly, agreed upon, collegial process to achieve an objective decision by those present and voting. Should there be a parliamentary challenge, however, it will be answered by reference to Robert's Rules of Order.

ARTICLE XI - AMENDMENT OF RULES OF OPERATION

These Rules of Operation may be amended at any business meeting of the agNC or voted on by electronic ballot provided the proposed amendment has been mailed to all members three weeks in advance of that meeting and is passed by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present at the meeting.

APPENDIX

agInnovation North Central Committee Descriptions

Executive Committee (EC):

Membership: The EC is comprised of the chair, chair-elect, past chair; chair of the Multistate Research Committee (MRC), agNC member who has been in their SAES role for at least 1 year and is not serving in an interim role at their institution, and the Executive Director (ED).

Role of the EC: The EC, through the Chair, executes the programs of the agNC and provides managerial direction to the Association's ED and Assistant Director (AD). The EC is empowered to handle the immediate affairs of the agNC between business meetings. A review of the annual performance of the ED and AD is led by the EC, following the evaluation of documentation provided by the ED and AD, and based on input from the Association's members. This performance review meeting is to be held in January each year on a date that allows the majority of agNC members to participate. Following this meeting, the agNC Chair drafts annual performance review and rating with input from full agNC membership and provides the report to the ED, AD, and their university supervisors by mid-February.

Multistate Research Committee (MRC):

Membership: The MRC consists of five members, each serving a three-year term. At least one member is elected each year to succeed the member whose term expires. The members elect their own chair for a one-year term. The ED serves as an ex-officio nonvoting member.

Role of the MRC: The MRC is responsible for recommending to the membership the proper disposition of Multistate Activity Project proposals and Multistate Coordinating Committees in accordance with national and regional priorities. This is done through the commissioning of external reviews, the evaluation of projects and committees, the monitoring of research progress and, as appropriate, establishing multistate priorities via broad-based issues identification and strategic planning. The MRC is also responsible for reviewing annual regional nominations to the ESS' Excellence in Multistate Research Award and making recommendations to the agNC membership on the winner. Finally, the MRC serves as the review panel for proposals received in response to any agNC funding opportunities.

Nominations and Awards Committee (NAC):

Membership: The NAC consists of 3 members, each serving a three-year term. To ensure continuity as well as committee turn-over, in the first year of this committee's operation, the three members draw straws for 1, 2, and 3-year terms. The committee selects their chair who remains in this role for at least 2 years to provide continuity. The agNC ED and AD serve *ex-officio* as Executive Vice-chair and Assistant Vice-chair, respectively (making full committee membership 5), and assist with facilitation of the committee's work, including the AA and award selection processes. If a conflict of interest arises, the committee will replace the conflicted committee member with external ad hoc reviewer, such as a previous award winner or another objective individual associated with the agNC.

Role of NAC: The NAC works with the agNC ED/AD to solicit and identify AAs to NC multistate projects. This committee also identifies regional and national level award opportunities, solicits nominations for and recommends the agInnovation NC winner of the agInnovation Excellence in Leadership Award, the agInnovation

Agricultural Research Innovation Award of Excellence, and other regional or national award programs of interest to the agNC.

Resolutions Committee (RC):

Membership: At least one agNC member is selected for a three-year term that is renewable.

Role of RC: The RC works with the agNC ED/AD and agNC directors to collect information and create formal written Resolutions of Appreciations for agNC directors leaving the organization. The RC may create additional Resolutions to celebrate exceptional service to the agNC or other applicable activities as identified by agNC members. Resolutions are read at an agNC meeting, provided to the director receiving the resolution, and noted in the official meeting minutes.

Roles and Expectations of agNC Members Serving on Other NCR Committees and Boards

North Central Regional Center for Rural Development (NCRCRD) Board:

Membership: One agNC member serves as a voting member of the NCRCRD Board for a four-year term that is renewable.

Role of NCRCRD Board: The Board reviews and approves the Center's budget, provides guidance and recommendations on Center activities, and provides final approval on grant awards. The Board meets twice a year (May and December), and the Center provides email updates for the other two quarters.

North Central Regional Aquaculture Center (NCRAC) Board:

Membership: The agInnovation North Central ED and the agInnovation North Central Director who hosts the NCRAC serve as voting members on the NCRAC Board. Board members serve a 4-year term that is renewable.

Role of NCRAC Board: The NCRAC Board is responsible for overall administration and management of the regional center program; establishes overall regional aquacultural research, development, and extension goals, and allocates fiscal resources to ensure that the center develops strong programs both in research and in extension; and establishes priorities for regional aquacultural research and extension education activities based on inputs from the Industry Advisory Council and Technical Committee and guidance from the National Aquaculture Development Plan. Board members attend one in-person annual meeting each year (typically February) and participate in virtual meetings as needed.

North Central Integrated Pest Management Center (NCIPMC) Steering Committee:

Membership: The agNC ED serves continuously and one agNC Director serves for a 3-year term that is renewable (up to 2 terms).

Role of NCIPMC Steering Committee: The NCIPMC Steering Committee provides the general direction of center activities, advises center staff on timely and effective Center management and use of funds, goals, priorities, strategic planning, and partnerships, and contributes to the overall Center vision for IPM in the north central region. Steering committee members attend quarterly virtual meetings and in-person meetings as needed.