

# ARD Updates

ASSOCIATION OF 1890 RESEARCH DIRECTORS

January 2018, Vol. 9, Issue 1



Dr. Moses Kairo

## Message from the Chair

Dr. Moses Kairo

Every January is often a time of thoughtful reflection. When I reflect back on 2017, I cannot help but think of how our commitment to task, hard work and focus on critical major initiatives allowed us to accomplish much.

This time of the year is also when we look forward to the future. It is with a sense of hopeful optimism that I think about all the students and clientele whose life quality have been improved because

of the cutting-edge work done by you and your research scientists and professional staff. And yes, in 2018, we need to do a better job communicating the great work that we do. We will need to work more closely with our communications units to tell the 1890 land-grant story and our major projects through writing and publicizing our impacts (see Page 2 for the article about the 1890 land-grant communications summit).

But, we need to stay mindful, especially at this time of the year, of all of the students and underserved persons in the 1890 region and beyond whom we are providing an exceptional education and helping to ensure a safe and affordable food supply, good jobs and a strong economy and the preservation of our natural resources for the next generation. We need to continue to ask ourselves every day how ARD can support innovative science to address the food and agriculture challenges. We know we cannot do it alone. We need to partner strategically both within and outside the 1890 system to help us tackle the challenges vital to the future of food and agriculture. Only together can we inspire the current and next generations working to ensure national and global food security.

Your collaborative and visionary leadership has allowed the research and education enterprises in the

See Kairo on Page 3

## McMeans gets bug namesake



Dr. Orlando F. McMeans, vice president for research and public service at West Virginia State University (WVSU), has been immortalized as an insect. A newly discovered species of beetle has been named in his honor.

The beetle, named *Pachybrachis mcmeansi* Barney, was discovered by Dr. Robert J. Barney, professor emeritus at WVSU. Barney served in a variety of administrative roles at WVSU before retiring in 2015, including interim assistant vice president for research and public service and associate dean and associate director of WVSU's Agricultural and Environmental Research Station

"I wanted to name this beetle in honor of Dr. McMeans' unwavering support of my research and professional advancement," said Barney, who has named 20 new species of beetles throughout his career.

McMeans was notified of the discovery this month when he received an official plaque in the mail signifying the naming.

"When I opened up the package and saw '*mcmeansi*,' I was a little bit overwhelmed," McMeans said. "It's exciting as a research scientist and a professional to sort of live on forever in name."

McMeans joked that his family didn't believe him when he told them about the beetle. "My aunt looked up the name online," he said. "She thought I was pulling her leg."

The discovery was made during Barney's comprehensive study of the beetles in genus *Pachybrachis*. It is black and yellow in color, reminiscent of WVSU's school colors, and has been found in scattered distribution from Maine to Arkansas.

Upon realizing the species was unnamed, Barney's process included thoroughly describing the new species, submitting to a journal for peer review and publication, and submitting a single specimen to an established museum for future reference. The *Pachybrachis mcmeansi* Barney will be in the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard University.



Dr. Orlando McMeans



## Communicators discuss value of impacts during 1890 summit

In November, NIFA served as host to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual 1890's Communications Summit in Washington, DC. The two-day event covered a variety of topics including best practices for content collection, how to maximize limited resources and how to build collaborative relationships with 1862 counterparts. Attendees included representatives from Alcorn State University, Fort Valley State University, Kentucky State University, Langston University, Prairie View A&M University, the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff and West Virginia State University.

The resounding sentiment was the value of telling the 1890 land-grant story through impact writing. Guest presenters, Virginia Bueno, NIFA communications director, Josh Stull and Terri Bauman, emphasized their need to receive university impacts so they can share them with elected officials and other stakeholders.

The Association of Research Directors (ARD) upheld the value communicators bring to the research community as Dr. Alton Thompson, ARD executive director, spoke words of experience from North Carolina A&T State University and his abiding support for the mission. The Deputy Director of NIFA's Office of Grants and Financial Management, Cynthia Montgomery, followed suit by joining the group with three of her staff. The panel gave an in-depth discussion and Q&A on how they personally use the impact publications in their promotion of the 1890 institutions. Moreover, they emphasized their future use of the impacts to develop reports for the 1890 Facilities Grant Program.

Steve Miller, past president of the Association of Communications Excellence, encouraged many 1890 communicators to get involved and pursue leadership roles in the national organization.

Bueno expressed her pride in the efforts of all the 1890 universities, explaining her comments in a letter sent to university administrators.

"As Dr. Sonny Ramaswamy frequently espouses, it is imperative that our land-grant universities bring science out of the darkness," she wrote. "Farmers and producers, industry, communities across the nation, state legislatures, Congress, the news media, stakeholders and more, need to know that agricultural and food science, education, and Extension projects undertaken by your institutions and funded by NIFA and other sources, are making significant and positive impacts on our nation and abroad. The progress, milestones, outcomes and impacts of your projects must be told for so many important reasons such as continued funding, to combat misinformation, and to communicate the public value."

The next summit is scheduled for November 2018 and will be hosted by Virginia State University. During this meeting, representatives from the 1890 community will review their efforts to raise awareness about the value of strategic communications with their university leadership.

In the spirit of collaboration and dialogue, it is imperative that communicators come together and propose innovative ideas to support each other and the critical work of impact produced by research and extension in communities across the region, said Thompson.



## 2017 Ag Census mailed; encourage farmers to participate



In his keynote address at the recent Virginia State University Small Farm Family Conference, NASS Administrator Herbert Hamer, Jr. focused on the importance of participating in the USDA's Agricultural Census. Conducted once every five years, the 2017 Census of Agriculture was mailed out to every farmer in the United States last month and is to be completed and returned on or before Feb. 5. Farmers can also participate online at [www.agcounts.usda.gov](http://www.agcounts.usda.gov).

The census is a complete count of U.S. farms and the people who

operate them. The census is the only source of uniform, comprehensive and impartial agricultural data for every county in the nation. These data are used by all those who serve farmers and rural communities from federal, state and local governments to agribusinesses, trade associations, educational institutions, researchers and so forth. It's urgent that each of you take the time to appeal to the farmers in your service area to fill out the census form, either at the kitchen table or on the computer. The "voice" of our farmers needs to be heard.

# Call for Nominations opens for Experiment Station Awards

## EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP

This award recognizes those who have served the Regional Associations, ESCOP—ESS and/or the national land-grant system with exemplary distinction.

### ELIGIBILITY

Individuals eligible for this award are former or current State Agricultural Experiment/Research Station (SAES or ARD) leaders who have provided service as assistant director, associate director, director, administrator or as chief operating officers with equivalent, but variant titles (e.g. vice chancellor, associate vice chancellor, associate vice president, dean for research) and/or as a regional executive director. This award is distinctive in its expectations and not necessarily coincident with retirement, election to a specific office or any other specific professional benchmark.

### SUBMISSION AND REVIEW

Nominations for the recognition in the 1890 region should be submitted to Dr. Alton Thompson by Feb. 1, 2018. The ARD Executive Committee will review the nominations and email to the ARD members in good standing to select the winner. The nominee with the most votes will be submitted to the ESS chair and the executive vice-chair and the executive vice-chair of the Science the Technology Committee.

[Click here to view the call for nominations.](#)

## EXCELLENCE IN MULTISTATE RESEARCH

The purpose of this award program is to annually recognize those station scientists who are conducting exemplary multistate activities and enhance the visibility of the multistate program. A recipient multistate project will be selected from the pool of nominees submitted by the five regional research associations and judged by the ESCOP Science and Technology Committee to exhibit sustained, meritorious and exceptional multistate research activities. The ESCOP Executive Committee will provide final approval.

### ELIGIBILITY

Any current multistate project (research, ERA, CC) listed in NIMSS ([www.nimss.org](http://www.nimss.org)) is eligible for considera-

tion. The nomination is predominantly based upon the five-year project period. The multistate research authority allows other non-SAES partners to join in these project-based collaborations. Thus, many multistate projects include Extension specialists and ARS or Forest Service research scientists. Many projects have private sector and non-land-grant participants and a majority of multistate projects have participants from more than a single region.

### BASIS FOR NOMINATION

Each of the five regions may nominate one multistate project. An individual project should document collaborative activities. Nominations shall be made to the chair of the respective regional Multistate Research Committee (MRC) or Multistate Activities Committee (MAC) via the regional executive director's office. Nominations are due in the Office in the Executive Directors on or before Feb. 28, 2018. [Click here to view the call for nominations.](#)



## Appropriations Update

NIFA is currently operating under a fiscal year (FY) 2018 temporary Continuing Resolution (CR) that provides funds for our discretionary programs through Jan. 19.

This CR prevents any across-the-board sequestration cuts to mandatory and discretionary programs.

Discussions are ongoing on possible increases in discretionary spending for FY 2018, which would allow the completion of an omnibus appropriations bill. It is possible that another CR will be necessary after Jan. 19 to allow for completion of action on the final package. Cornerstone will issue

an alert relative to further developments.



## Kairo ... (Continued from Page 1)

1890 region to rise to the highest level in the country. We will continue to develop new programs and products in providing solutions to the food, agriculture, natural resources, health, economic and environmental challenges facing our communities in a diverse and rapidly changing world. Indeed, your commitment makes all the difference.

By now, you should have completed your arrangements for the 2018 Joint Meeting of AEA and ARD that will be held on Jan. 29-Feb. 1, at the Westin Georgetown Hotel, 2350 M St., NW, Washington, DC. The agenda (forthcoming) will provide an

opportunity for AEA, ARD, and the deans to meet jointly, to have separate business meetings, and to hold joint meetings with representatives from NIFA, other federal agencies and invited presenters to discuss funding and program opportunities, the farm bill, the federal budget, international collaborations and related issues.

Thank you so much for everything you do.

I wish each of you peace, prosperity and a breakthrough for ARD in the New Year.

## ARD OFFICERS

**Moses Kairo**  
(Chair)

University of Maryland Eastern Shore  
Email: [mkairo@umes.edu](mailto:mkairo@umes.edu)

**Vernon Jones**  
(Chair Elect)

Langston University  
Email: [vjones@langston.edu](mailto:vjones@langston.edu)

**Andra Johnson**  
(Secretary)

Southern University and A&M College  
Email: [andrea\\_johnson@suagcenter.com](mailto:andrea_johnson@suagcenter.com)

**Conrad K. Bonsi (Treasurer)**

Tuskegee University  
Email: [cbonsi@tuskegee.edu](mailto:cbonsi@tuskegee.edu)

**Shirley Hymon-Parker**  
(Member-at-Large)

N.C. A&T State University  
Email: [shymonp@ncat.edu](mailto:shymonp@ncat.edu)

**Govind Kannan**  
(Immediate Past-Chair)

Fort Valley State University  
Email: [govindak@fvsu.edu](mailto:govindak@fvsu.edu)

**Non-Elected**

**Alton Thompson**  
(Exec. Director)

Email: [athompson1@ncat.edu](mailto:athompson1@ncat.edu)

### 1890 Land Grant Universities

[Alabama A&M University](#)

[Alcorn State University](#)

[Central State University](#)

[Delaware State University](#)

[Florida A&M University](#)

[Fort Valley State University](#)

[Kentucky State University](#)

[Langston University](#)

[Lincoln University](#)

[North Carolina A&T State University](#)

[Prairie View A&M University](#)

[South Carolina State University](#)

[Southern University and A&M College](#)

[Tennessee State University](#)

[Tuskegee University](#)

[University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff](#)

[University of Maryland Eastern Shore](#)

[Virginia State University](#)

[West Virginia State University](#)

*ARD Updates is published monthly by the Association of Research Directors. To suggest articles, contact Dr. Alton Thompson at [athompson1@ncat.edu](mailto:athompson1@ncat.edu)*

## In Memory: Dr. Parshotam S. Benepal

We are all saddened by the passing of Dr. Parshotam S. Benepal on Friday, Dec. 1, 2017.

Dr. Benepal joined Virginia State University (VSU) in 1967 and served as a faculty member until 1972. He then became chair of Department of Life Sciences (predecessor of Department of Biology) from 1972 to 1977 and later served as a director of the Agricultural Research Station from 1980 to 1990. At VSU, he was a principal investigator of many plant science projects and also played a major role in the design and construction of the M.T. Carter Building that currently houses agricultural research.

He later joined USDA-NIFA where he served as director of 1890 Programs until his retirement on Sept. 30, 2014, after 52 years of loyal service to agriculture and the land-grant community, Kansas State University and Virginia State University.

Dr. Benepal was devoted to the building of the research capacity of the 1890 Institutions. He was the second person to serve as the NIFA director of 1890 Programs and accomplished several milestones under his leadership. During his tenure, NIFA saw the growth in funding for the 1890 base programs – 1890 Facilities Program, the Evans-Allen Research Program, and the 1890 Extension Program. These programs helped the 1890 land-grant institutions to become leaders in human capital development, in relevant and cutting-edge research and service to diverse populations, particularly under-served and limited resource communities nationwide.

Dr. Benepal was also one of the recipients of the ARD's highest award, the Morrison-Evans Outstanding Scientist Award.

Dr. Benepal will be missed by all who knew and interacted with him.



Dr. P.S. Benepal

## ARD CALENDAR

### 2018 JOINT AEA/ARD BUSINESS MEETING

Jan. 29 – Feb. 1, 2018, Westin Georgetown Hotel, 2350 M. Street NW, Washington, DC 20037

### 2018 JOINT CARET/AHS MEETING

“Connecting Our World Through Agricultural Research, Extension and Teaching”  
Mar 4 – Mar 7, 2018 Hilton Crystal City at Washington Reagan National Airport, 2399 Jefferson Davis Highway, Arlington, VA 22202

USDA's  
94th  
Annual  
Agricultural  
Outlook Forum

THE ROOTS  
OF PROSPERITY

February 22-23, 2018  
Crystal Gateway Marriott Hotel, Arlington, Virginia

### USDA 94TH ANNUAL AGRICULTURAL OUTLOOK FORUM

Feb. 22-23, Crystal Gateway Marriott Hotel, Arlington, VA

This year's theme is “Roots of Prosperity.” Opportunity for all interested parties to discuss rural America. To learn more, [watch this video.](#)