

Consolidating Resources to Deal with Budget Reductions

Issue: Budgets at The Ohio State University have been reduced 6-10% over the past 8 years, These budget reductions are the result of fewer state funds, as well as, pay increases for faculty and staff without corresponding increases in state and federal funding. As a result, academic departments reduce the number of technical and business staff to preserve faculty positions. Such reductions are now impacting the ability of academic departments to continue to operate departmental farms for land-based research. Thus, academic departments have asked the administration to consider consolidation of resources to support the ability to continue land-based research.

What has been done: Current progress on this issue to date includes:

- Steering committee composed of administration and Associate Chairs of Departments held three meetings to discuss the issue. A larger OARDC Farm Reorganization Committee was formed to conduct a survey of users of the research farms and to determine what types and level of service was necessary for land based research projects. This committee also held an open town meeting with faculty and farm staff to receive ideas and input on how to proceed.
- Wooster Farm Reorganization Committee is composed of the Associate Chairs of each academic department, one faculty member from each department, a farm manager from each departmental farm, the head of Research Operations and the Associate Director.
- Wooster Farm Reorganization Committee decided to develop a model for consolidation of all departmental research farms.
- Currently the committee has two working subcommittees: a Land Management Committee and a Personnel, Resources and Governance Committee.
- Timeline is to have a report and recommendations to the Director by December 2010.

Impacts: Impacts will not be known until the process begins in 2011. Anticipated positive impacts include: less duplication of farm personnel and equipment, pooling of resources, better land management, elimination of silos and control of certain land parcels, pooling of personnel into one managed unit, potential for operating budget revenue from excess research crops and increased efficiency and services to faculty. Negative impacts include: faculty fear loss of control, more formal paperwork associated with consolidated farms, fewer personnel over time, loss of certain farm expertise, and inability to sufficiently govern the larger consolidated farm department.

Funding Sources, Cooperators, Partners, Mentors etc.: State funds will continue to be the main source of revenue for the reorganized farm department. Faculty will be required to pay for some services. Cooperators include USDA-ARS and OSU Extension. Committee has reviewed reorganization exercises at Cornell, Rutgers, Michigan State and Iowa State University. Mentors assisting myself in this process include Steve Slack, Director of OARDC and L.H. Newcomb, Interim Chair, Department of Human Community Resource Development.

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