

January 3, 2008  
Bloomington, IL

# ILLINOIS Ag Legislative Roundtable

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## *Brief Comments about College of ACES by Dennis R. Campion*

Thank you ...introducer...

First, greetings from Dean Easter. He regrets that he cannot attend today's Roundtable. He did ask me, however, to be sure to convey his regards.

As Dean Easter and I reflected back on 2007, we realized that the college had much to be thankful for. For example, many of you in this room, directly, or through your organizations, contributed immensely to the ability of ACES to address high priority issues of agriculture, youth, families and communities.

In sharing with you the names of Associations and Agencies who were among those who contributed, I preface by stating that this is an incomplete list of those who provided support to ACES programs in 2007. My apologies for unintended omissions.

Alphabetically:

- 1) IL Department of Agriculture
- 2) IL Equine Industry Research & Promotion Board
- 3) IL Farm Bureau
  - a) County Extension Programs
  - b) Support to Extension Partners
  - c) IAITC
- 4) IL Fertilizer and Chemical Association
- 5) IL Grape Growers and Vinters Association
- 6) IL Pork Producers Association
- 7) IL Soybean Association

These organizations contributed over \$7.7 M in grant funds to ACES. THANK YOU.

Want to also recognize Extension Partners: Orion Samuelson, President Mike Brokaw, Jeanne Harland, Legislative Chair and the rest of the Board have given yeoman effort in working with the General

Assembly to provide funding for Extension programs. Thanks also to Lowell Lenchow and IFB for their support of the Extension Partners efforts.

I'm going to switch gears now and focus for the remaining minutes on the area of energy, particularly bioenergy. Furthermore, I'm going to take a little different tact in addressing this important subject by reporting on three entities engaged in shaping the future of bioenergy. The initiation of these three entities happened over a very brief time line...from December 2006 to April 2007. They set the stage for recognition of ACES as the energy center for University of Illinois, the region and a strong foothold at the national level as well.

- 1) CABER or Center for Advanced Bioenergy Research, December, 2006. Dr. Hans Blaschek is the director of CABER. Collaborators include faculty at Northwestern University, University of Chicago and Argonne National Laboratory. In addition, researchers focus on other biofuels as well as ethanol. To date research is funded largely through program and individual investigator grants. Ted Funk is an Extension Specialist responsible leading the outreach efforts of the Center which is also a notable difference when compared to EBI which has no formal outreach mission.
  
- 2) BP Grant, February, 2007 in cooperation with UC Berkley and Berkley National Laboratories...\$500 M over 10 years with \$100 M to UIUC. The first round of grants have been released and if distribution of awards is any indication, UIUC will receive more than the originally indicted \$100M... Dr. Steve Long, Crop Sciences leads this program under the umbrella name Energy Biosciences Institute.... Steve recently published a model to measure the photosynthesis process which will be very helpful to adapting plants to trends of global warming.... The research program has 5 components. UI will particulary focus on production of feedstock for biofuels production. Researchers will explore the potential of using corn crop residues, miscanthis, and other herbaceous perennials as fuel sources. We need to learn how adequate supplies of high energy plant biomass can be sustainably produced and utilized in facilities that convert biomass to fuels.
  
- 3) NCBC North Central Bioeconomy Consortium. Unique consortium of state Ag Directors (Hartke), Directors of Extension and Directors of Ag Experiment Stations and our respective counter parts in the 12 north central states. Core funding is from the 36 offices represented and a grant from the Energy Foundation in California...Ag Director Ron Nelsesteun, WI is chair, Forrest Chumley, AES, KS is vice-chair and I serve as secretary...NCBC was launched in April, 2007.
  - 1) While very new, we were successful in providing direct input in the MGA Energy last fall that led to signing of commitment by state governors to goals related to bioenergy using the biomass and other sources of energy available in the north central states. (Reach consensus on regional goals and policies)

- 2) Discussions with leaders of MLC (Midwest Legislative Council) that have led to MLC request to provide input to MLC discussion of bioenergy issues at their summer meeting.
- 3) Provided response to Undersecretary at USDA regarding their proposed (bio)energy plan.
- 4) Provide input to several aspects of energy section of farm bill.
- 5) Support NC506...Is a rapid response project directed at issues of the day: 1.) net production of energy from corn relative to use of petro fuels, based on case studies of 8-10 NC ethanol plants 2.) what is the impact diverting corn to ethanol production on price on commodity prices, byproducts, land use, water, etc 3.) a phase II is planned.