

**Plant Science Research Greenhouse Facility  
Faculty Oversight Committee Meeting  
August 25, 2020 1:00 PM**

Present: Chrislyn Particka, Director; Erik Runkle, (HORT), Co Chair; Thomas D. Sharkey (PRL and BMB), CoChair; David Lowry (PLB); Eric Olson (PSM)

Absent: David Smitley (ENT); Michael Walters (FOR)

Dr. Particka provided a comprehensive update on activities in the greenhouses. Included were these major purchases:

- LED installation in ranges 21 and 22 is complete – this freed up high-pressure sodium (HPS) fixtures which will be used to replace fixtures that fail in other houses. Once all extra HPS fixtures are used, additional houses will be switched to LED lighting.
- A LiftPod (JLG) was purchased to more safely reach high areas, such as ridge vents.
- Metal benches are being installed in the Horticulture Teaching and Research Center to replace plastic benches that were breaking and unsafe due to age.
- A Ford F-150 truck was purchased to replace a vehicle that was transferred to Plant Biology when their teaching greenhouses were separated from the research greenhouses. This purchase turned out to be critical for providing service in the COVID 19 era and related vehicle occupancy limits.

Other issues discussed:

Greenhouse controls. The facility was planning on a major upgrade through a state appropriation, but now expects that will not happen in the foreseeable future. This has brought forward concerns about environmental control, as most greenhouses do not have adequate control systems. The greenhouse staff evaluated options and will install new control systems in three houses to test over the next several months, with the intent of purchasing several more if they perform as anticipated. There was discussion about the optimal balance of staff involvement in building some components of the systems versus purchasing everything pre-built; the committee recommended purchasing all components.

Cooling pads. It was reported to the committee that the cooling pad systems have been neglected for some time. Deep cleaning has been undertaken but replacement of critical parts will also be required.

The Director reported favorably on new staff. Larry Thayer, Greenhouse Engineer (licensed electrician), Trevor Hardwick, Greenhouse Coordinator.

A wall in the South Headhouse basement collapsed and the building was razed. Infrastructure problems still plague the North Headhouse. IPF has been very helpful in working on the issue. IPF has also made great progress in replacing the fin tubes needed for heating in the west range.

A new service was announced for disposal of genetically engineered plant material. Instructions for knocking off soil and appropriate preparation for incineration have been posted.

A new steamer for disposing of non-transgenic material is on order.

Overdue replacement of poly covers on some greenhouses is scheduled.

The committee expressed strong support for the improvements being instituted and approved of the decisions made to optimize the service improvements in light of long-deferred maintenance issues, needs to improve control capabilities, and COVID-19.

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 PM