



College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences
Department of Crop and Soil Sciences

**2016 WSSA NIFA Fellow report—submitted by Donn Shilling
January 19, 2017**

I am beginning my second full year as the WSSA NIFA Fellow. My host (Mike Fitzner) and I have continued to work to enhance the view of Weed Science within NIFA, increase participation by Weed Scientists in NIFA grant programs and as a result provide more sustained funding to our discipline. We are also hopeful that our success in meeting these objectives could result in NIFA hiring a Weed Scientists dedicated to all Weed Science related grant programs. Presently, NIFA has several Weed Scientists serving as NPLs; however, they all have broad responsibilities for programs that include Weed Science initiatives (no NPL has exclusive responsibilities for all aspects of Weed Science). As a result, Weed Science tends to be subservient to other pest disciplines.

I have and will continue to visit NIFA for about one week each month. Although, in 2016 I did not travel to DC as much due to increased workload associated with my full time job as Department Head of Crop and Soil Sciences at the University of Georgia. My primary focus in 2016 was to develop and plan a symposium on NIFA funding for the 2017 WSSA meetings (see attachments). The planning process was effectively handled via phone, emails and video conferencing which required less travel. I also participated in the development of the NIFA Weed Science webpage (see attachment) and enhancing NIFA funding awareness. My normal trips to DC will resume in April 2017 and will be once a month for about a week. I should point out that my trips to DC have two functions:

1. As chair of the WSSA Science Policy Committee I work with Lee Van Wychen, Director of WSSA Science Policy, in DC on many projects and
2. WSSA NIFA fellow projects.

I have developed a 5-part action plan. I will focus on objectives 1, 2 and 4 in 2017.

1. Networking-Specific groups where relationships with NIFA/Weed Science could be helpful:
 - i. AHIPS
 - ii. ARS
 - iii. Office of Pest Management Policy
 - iv. NSF/NIFA partnerships-I met with Paul Tanger (AAAS Fellow) to discuss his role in developing these relationships. I also meet with Dr. Ann Lichens-Park to discuss how the NIFA/NSF Plant-Biotic research initiative was developed (see attachment)

- v. Pollinators-met with Dr. Mary Purcell Miranontes to discuss the potential role of Weed Science in the pollinator initiative (see attachment)
 - vi. Area-wide management
 - vii. EPA
 - viii. NRCS
 - ix. Ficminew
 - x. Attended the UK-US Plant Health Workshop at the British Embassy
2. RFA process-how things work
 - i. Enhancing participation
 1. WS/NIFA webpage
 2. WSSA workshop
 3. NIFA announcements
 - ii. Stakeholder input process
 - iii. Engage in process
 - iv. Portfolio process
 1. planning
 - v. Impact assessments
 3. Enhancing NIFA Weed Science funding
 - i. Helped with the development NIFA Weed Science webpage: <https://nifa.usda.gov/program/weed-science>. I have been working with Andrew Clark to help establish a NIFA webpage to help enhance the weed science community understanding of NIFA grant opportunities. We have been working with WSSA Web contact-Muthukumar Bagavathiannan to optimize communication and awareness for WSSA members: <https://wssa.net/society/funding-and.grants/>
 - ii. Helped develop a WSSA Symposium (“Navigating the new landscape of federal funding for weed science research”) for the 2017 WSSA meeting. Our proposal was submitted and we (Mike Fitzner, James Westwood and Donn Shilling) planned the workshop.
 4. Study USDA Weed Science funding history
 - i. Topics
 - ii. Impacts
 - iii. Amounts
 - iv. Number of applications and success rates
 5. Help justify NIFA hiring a Weed Scientist that has responsibilities for all Weed Science related initiatives and issues.

Goal

I/we hope the WSSA NIFA Fellow will help enhance NIFA’s perception of Weed Science resulting in future positions and more sustainable Weed Science funding. Enhancing relationships between Weed Scientists and scientists in the USDA and other agencies and organizations, helping NIFA to “target” RFA’s to Weed Science, enhancing awareness of

NIFA funding opportunities and analyzing past and present NIFA Weed Science funding should all have a positive impact on Weed Science and Agriculture.

On-going:

1. Organizing a 2017 WSSA NIFA funding Workshop. I worked with Mike Fitzner (NIFA) and Jim Westwood (WSSA Research committee chair) to host workshop. We hope this will be another mechanism to improve the responsiveness of Weed Scientist to NIFA RFA's and ultimately funding successes.
2. Networking.

Future projects:

1. Develop plan to create NIFA/NSF cooperative grant program to enhance opportunities to fund more fundamental Weed Science projects.
2. Funding history-assessing what is presently/has been funded programs (RFA's) for Weed Science including impacts and recommendations for future research/actions
3. Learning more about the RFA/funding process
4. NIFA Weed Science position

Past projects:

1. Submitted Weed Science research priorities to NIFA. This information was used by NIFA internally to help develop focus grants on Weed Science.
2. Reviewed 5 grant programs for relevance to Weed Science. This helped NIFA assess the relevance of present grant programs toward Weed Science.
3. Enhancing awareness of NIFA grant opportunities in Weed Science-worked with the NIFA Web master (Andrew Clark) on the development of NIFA Weed Science web page. Also worked with WSSA to improve communicating NIFA funding opportunities.
4. Networking.

Other activities:

1. Determine the process for gathering stakeholder input and other sources of information that will become the basis for the development of RFA's.
2. Develop a justification for a NIFA Weed Science NPL.
3. Work closely with NPLs and program specialists to enhance weed science participation and funding.
4. Represent NIFA at major stakeholder group meetings to strengthen partnership and collaboration with stakeholders.

5. Review applications for capacity funding (Hatch, Smith-Lever, and McIntire Stennis) and help provide liaison to Hatch Multi-state Committees in the area of weedy and invasive plants and provide scholarly input to applicants/committees.
6. Provide NIFA liaison to extension communities of practice that have a substantial weed or invasive species component including Climate, Forest and Woodlands, Invasive Species, and Rangelands.