

BOARD FOR INTERNATIONAL FOOD & AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (BIFAD)

Summary, Proceedings of 136TH MEETING

1307 New York Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C.
Monday, January 6, 2003

BOARD MEMBERS attending:

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|------------------------------|-----------------|
| M. PETER McPHERSON, Chairman | MICHAEL DEEGAN |
| WILLIAM DeLAUDER | STEWART IVERSON |
| ANTHONY G. LAOS | CAROL LEWIS |
| SHARRON QUISENBERRY | |

CALL TO ORDER: CHAIRMAN McPHERSON: Introduction of Stewart Iverson, Iowa State Senate Majority Leader, and an active farmer

Agenda Items

1. Presentation and a discussion about the “humanitarian carve-out,” dealing with patent issues in developing countries.
2. Follow-on to the last BIFAD meeting’s discussion of training, circulation of papers, etc, and the focus on three launch countries.
3. Reports about activities in Egypt and Afghanistan.

Annexes to this Summary (not attached, instead please refer to www.usaid.gov)

1. The full intellectual property presentation and discussion
2. The IP slide presentation
3. The expanded IP Initiative description
4. The Training Paper draft (dated January 6, 2003)
5. The Training Presentation and Discussion
6. The Egypt and Afghanistan slides
7. The Egypt and Afghanistan presentation and discussion

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF A NEW PUBLIC SECTOR INITIATIVE FOR MANAGEMENT OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

- DEBORAH DELMER, ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION (RF)

Summary:

Universities, sometimes with USDA, hold about 25 percent of biotechnology patents. How they are licensed to industry determines or constrains their availability to other researchers. Constraints are sometimes gratuitous, conferring no advantage to the license-holder but inhibiting use of the technology.

These constraints negatively affect research on, and developments in, crops of interest in Africa, though and often nowhere else. The Initiative calls for a common approach to licensing patents, in order to preserve technologies' availability to researchers in problems affecting development countries.

Patents, licenses, related contracts and regulations involve intricate and complicated issues. The RF, *inter alia*, is trying to sort these out. Current problems in the acceptability of food aid show the timeliness of these, as well as larger public awareness and information issues.

The Chairman commented that BIFAD wanted to provide a forum for this topic. The next step is to send the minutes out. The presenters ought to think about what they would like university extension, agricultural research center people and presidents learn from this discussion. He asked whether they would put together a summary of the presentation and discussion, for BIFAD to distribute. The offer was cheerfully accepted.

[Break]

The Chairman introduced Bob Evenson, Yale University Professor of Economics and Chairman of BIFAD's committee for Strategic Partnership for Agricultural Research & Education (SPARE).

Dr. Evenson described SPARE's work to date (the committee formed in 2000) as primarily reviewing CRSP proposals for renewals, and CRSP programs, including CRSP transaction costs and the relationship with the international centers and the U.S. land grant universities.

He noted that SPARE has begun three subsector reviews, convening external panels in the fields of sustainable agriculture, integrated pest management, and aquaculture and fisheries. A report on these activities will be made to BIFAD at the June meeting.

The Chairman affirmed the importance of SPARE's work and directed L. Paulson to ensure that members are informed of SPARE's structure and activities.

**PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF BIFAD PROPOSAL: RENEWING USAID INVESTMENT IN
GLOBAL LONG TERM TRAINING IN AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**
THOMAS HOBGOOD, USAID; HOWARD GOBSTEIN, MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Summary:

USAID Office of Agriculture Director Tom Hobgood introduced this topic by noting the growing shortage of agricultural scientists in development countries, and particularly in Africa, as the impact of HIV/AIDS is felt. There is an imperative to "rebuild the pipeline."

Howard Gobstein, MSU, described the paper (see Annex 4), drawing attention to findings that will inform programs and options and issues that need to be worked through, and then to the proposed program launch in three countries followed by a "competitive academic partnership."

Considerable discussion covered a variety of issues including: recent training initiatives and experiences from a variety of institutions, the cost and quality of U.S. vs. other training possibilities, the virtues of a quick-start program vs. a firmly grounded one, “brain drain” vs. “brain flow,” the need for and difficulty of getting host country ownership and participation, dimensions of institution-building and what trained persons end up doing, accessing private capital, and will there be a budget to support this initiative?

The chairman commented that management probably should be included in curricula development and implementation. He added that USAID needs to re-enter human resource development across a range of disciplines including but not limited to agriculture. He noted that the discussion has advanced since the last meeting from broad concepts to fairly precise quantification of the drop-off in training, in Africa particularly, and the need to change the approach, for greater relevancy as well as lower cost.

He suggested that the several interesting ideas put forth be sent in a revised document, incorporating this discussion, broadly to the U.S. university community, asking for comment. Next, USAID will send the same paper to the missions involved asking for their engagement in discussions with other donors, with governments. The plan is to figure out partnerships so that this program is driven by what local interest in identified countries. This issue will be reviewed in the March meeting. There is a general belief here that this cooperative approach is the right track.

DESCRIPTION OF AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS AND UNIVERSITY INVOLVEMENT IN EGYPT AND AFGHANISTAN

JOHN WILSON, ASIA AND NEAR EAST BUREAU, USAID

Summary:

John Wilson described the conflict, drought, insecurity and devastation in Afghanistan, and the relief and rehabilitation programs begun to date. Themes include agriculture and irrigation, education, health, private market support. Emphasis is on providing emergency food and on cash-for-work programs, and on agricultural inputs to restore productivity.

He described agricultural programming in Egypt as the best-funded in USAID history, resulting in productivity increases that have improved Egypt's food security. Recent programs have focused on export competitiveness, and raising rural incomes. The mission expects to announce competition for new grants and contracts shortly.

Discussion focused on university involvement in the Afghan program and attendant difficulties, as well as possibilities for the future. Also at issue is the size of the Egypt program and the need to monitor it.

The chairman asked whether the new program in Egypt included a Title XII set-aside (*note: it does not but universities are expected to participate in the program.*).

Members' Comments

MR. IVERSON: Training and follow-up are important. I found this a very interesting learning experience and I look forward to more discussion.

MR. LAOS: I don't have anything that I haven't really spoken out on already, so I think it's been a very good morning, a lot said. Like I said, if we can condense it down and look at it very quickly.

MS. QUISENBERRY: The training program, and particularly the sandwich concept, is quite relevant, and relating training to country issues and solutions. A key will linkages between U.S. universities and developing country institutions; that strengthens research capabilities worldwide including our own.

MR. DeLAUDER: These have good discussions; we need to bring focus and relevancy, and be sure not to impose our solutions on other countries. Capacity-building is extremely important.

MS. LEWIS: Agrees with the importance of stability and sustainability of LTT programs, and the need to adequately plan to an activity. An important issue will be truly partnering with selected countries.

The IP issue is going to become more and more important, not only just in countries outside the U.S., but in the U.S. as well.

MR. DEEGAN: Intellectual property issues are going to be with us for a long time. We're not going to solve them, but working on them is extremely important.

About the training proposal, we have got to start looking at the partnerships. USAID is going to get hammered relative to the resources in the next two or three years and we've really got to be pushing partnerships, with the agribusinesses as well as the universities. Universities have partnerships already, and these need to be built into long-term training activity.

On another area, I've been asked by the Food Aid Coalition how BIFAD will relate to the Food Security Advisory Committee.

CHAIRMAN McPHERSON: Why don't we talk about it next time.

Chairman's concluding remarks

Items to put on the BIFAD agenda:

1. The question of availability of publications in developing countries. How to sustain

the relevance of training, specifically how to keep trainees current in their fields.

There is a need to get, not just Africa, but developing countries as whole, continuing access to publications. There has been some progress along these lines in medicine. Cornell is doing some very interesting work in agriculture.

2. There are questions concerning how universities relate to AID. (The relationship should be reviewed at intervals anyway.)

There are some major differences between how universities relate to AID. There are complaints on both sides to air and, if we can, to resolve. Some thought will be required about how to accomplish this.

The meeting adjourned.