



AREERA State Plans of Work

This Plan of Work (POW) newsletter takes a look at the upcoming release of the 2007 Annual Report software, the planned CSREES Reporting Web Conference Series, and an update on the CSREES One Solution initiative.

2007 Annual Report Software Release

The 2007 Annual Report on-line software has been in development over the past few months. It has undergone rigorous internal testing and initial beta testing with the following eight state partner universities:

- Alabama Extension System
- University of Florida
- Cornell University
- University of Tennessee
- Alcorn State University
- Purdue University
- University of New Hampshire
- University of California

Based on this initial beta testing, both content and process changes and fixes were completed and we are currently in our second phase of testing. We anticipate opening the test software (sandbox) for general use in the near future and release of the official production software by the end of September. Look for the announcements of these releases via e-mail.

Focus on Outcomes

The focus of the Annual Reports should be on Outcomes and Impact Statements, not Outputs. The emphasis should be on change in learning, change in action or behavior, and change in condition outcomes. However, reporting milestones on the way to condition and behavior change is also an excellent way to show progress toward these changes if these outcome changes have not yet occurred.

If available, we prefer reporting outcomes with quantitative measures, however, we recognize the importance and value of qualitative outcome statements. Thus, you may submit qualitative outcome statements as an alternative to or in addition to the quantitative outcome measure.

Plus, a new feature of the software provides for additional qualitative outcome/impact statements that cut across two or more outcomes at the Planned Program level.

What is the CSREES Reporting Web Conference Series?

CSREES is pleased to announce the commencement of a bi-monthly CSREES Reporting Web Conference Series in partnership with Texas A&M University. Requests for further information from material presented during this Spring's CSREES Planning and Accountability Mini-Conference and

Administrative Officers Conference in Seattle led to creation of this series.

Topics for this series will include the Agricultural Research Education and Extension Reform Act of 1998 (AREERA) Plans of Work and Annual Report, One Solution, Current Research information System (CRIS) (soon to become CIS), and outcome reporting and will cover guidance on what the agency is looking for in these reports as well as the software tools and requirements for them. Each bi-monthly Web conference will cover two, 1-hour topics, usually 1 hour on software or report formats and 1 hour on content quality guidance. Half of each session will be reserved for answering questions.

The topics for the first Web conference will be *Transitioning the CRIS Progress Report to the Office of Science Technology and Policy (OSTP) Standard Progress Report* and *Information and Guidance for the New AREERA Annual Reports*. Topics for future sessions, to be selected with input from the audience, may include best POW/Annual Report practices from other states; One Solution updates; best practices for impact and outcome reporting; how CSREES uses your reporting; outcomes and indicators; and logic model development. A reporting Web conference e-mail distribution list will notify interested parties on news, schedules, and other issues relating to the series; interested parties are invited to subscribe by sending an e-mail to lyris@lyris.csrees.usda.gov with the subject "subscribe reportingwc". Be sure you receive an e-mail to confirm your subscription. CSREES expects the series to begin in early fall, after the final logistics are worked out, and will announce further details when they are finalized.

CSREES thanks Texas A&M University for their generous offer to host this series.

One Solution Initiative Update

Many things have happened behind the scenes at CSREES. Earlier this spring, an IT project team conducted a Pilot/Prototype effort to develop a **National Program Leadership Management Dashboard**, or more commonly referred to as the "NPL Dashboard." Since that time, a lot of hard work and effort has occurred among all those involved in this undertaking. Many requirements for this dashboard have been identified, prioritized, refined, and implemented and the first release of this powerful software tool was released in July. No doubt, this powerful tool will positively affect our agency staff.

The dashboard is a visual display of the most important information needed—in summary format (with drilldown capability to detail)—so that users can monitor important and critical information at a glance. Just as an automobile's dashboard provides all the critical information needed to operate the vehicle at a glimpse, an NPL dashboard serves a similar purpose: to make strategic decisions, run the daily operations of a team, or perform individual tasks. The dashboard will improve the availability of information from state reporting so that it is at the fingertips of NPLs every day.

AREERA Plan of Work Dates

2007 Annual Report due by April 1, 2008

2009 - 2013 Plan of Work Update due by April 1, 2008.

For more information on the Plan of Work, e-mail the [Plan of Work staff](#) or call Bart Hewitt at 202-720-0747.