

CAPIT Working Group Progress Report

March 2005	The CAPIT final report was issued.
March 2005	A CAPIT working group was established for the purpose of implementing the recommendations issued in the CAPIT Final Report.
March 22, 2005	The CAPIT working group begins drafting a work plan for the implementation process. The work plan will be group by the recommendations listed in the Final Report.
April 4, 2005	Draft work plans by objectives are submitted. Objectives will be consolidated into final work plan. The work plan will be posted on the CAPIT web site for comments by the cooperators. Cooperators will be given a three week comment period.
April 12, 2005	Working group was given a presentation of Eworks. Eworks is a business process automation solution currently employed by APHIS. The team responsible for the IT solutions is creating a pros and cons list. The team will be investigating many potential IT solutions.
April 26, 2005	<p>Draft plan is complete. Group discussed minor changes. All changes are due by C.O.B. Thursday April 28. Plan will be posted on the CAPIT web site Friday April 29. The plan will be posted for three weeks. During this period CAPIT requests that comments be sent to capit@aphis.usda.gov. Preliminary discussion took place on the development of performance measures for the cooperative agreement process. This will enable the agency to identify both successes and failures early. Failures can be addressed immediately and successes can be incorporated to ensure best practices. Teams are beginning the preliminary work in most of the goal areas. While this work is prior to the finalization of the implementation plan, it will assist the teams in achieving the goals in a timely fashion.</p> <p>Web site is up: aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/capit. A bulletin board has been created. Information on the bulletin board can be found on the CAPIT web site.</p>

<p>May 17, 2005</p>	<p>A presentation is being developed for the June Program Leadership Group meeting. The presentation will provide an overview of the finalized implementation plan.</p> <p>A draft policy for cooperative agreements to universities for research and methods development. The policy defines the period of funding availability.</p> <p>Further discussions on IT solutions continues. More information is needed relating to the outlook of Grants.gov and non-competitive cooperative agreements.</p> <p>A comprehensive list of agency authorities is being compiled. This will provide the foundation for the development of policies on cooperative agreements that are generated from the CAPIT working group.</p> <p>A meeting of the agreement specialists is being planned. An agenda is being formed and the meeting date is being considered. The meeting will define a process that will provide a uniform method of cooperative agreement processing and oversight.</p> <p>Vet Services Animal Health Monitoring System program has volunteered to be used as a work platform for developing policies and procedures for umbrella agreements. AHMS provides funding to cooperators for multiple animal health monitoring activities.</p>
<p>May 31, 2005</p>	<p>A draft policy for research and method development agreements and grants is complete. The draft has been approved by the agency administration. The Agreement Service Center will process the draft and implement the policy. The policy will provide cooperators involved in research and method development the ability to use single year appropriations over a period of four years, with the ability to do a single one year no-cost extension providing a maximum of five years for an agreement and associated funding.</p> <p>CAPIT is looking at the 3rd or 4th week of July to the meeting of the agreement specialist. The meeting will determine a uniform method of agreement processing and oversight.</p> <p>A draft strategy and instruction is being developed for the AHMS umbrella agreement. The strategy and instructions will be presented to the VS management team for consideration and approval. If approved the umbrella agreements would</p>

	<p>commence in FY 2006.</p>
<p>June 24, 2005</p>	<p>July Meeting with Agreement Specialists has been scheduled for July 19th through July 21. The meeting will be used to determine the best business process for APHIS cooperative agreements. The process will become the standard for all APHIS divisions.</p> <p>Draft communication plan is being developed. Plan will be finalized after the July meeting with the Agreement Specialists.</p> <p>CAPIT members attended a session related to web based training. This appears to be an effective and efficient means of providing some of the agreements training to both APHIS staff and the Agency's cooperators.</p> <p>CAPIT is working with the AHMS program to develop comprehensive agreements for the program. This approach will incorporate a State's multiple agreements into a single agreement.</p>
<p>July 12, 2005</p>	<p>Draft policy for Veterinary Service cooperative agreements moving from a fiscal year cycle to a calendar year cycle created.</p> <p>Draft policy for Veterinary Services comprehensive farmed animal health and disease cooperative agreements being reviewed. This policy will group all disease surveillance activities into a single agreement by cooperator. Further discussion on the policy will occur at next weeks meeting of the Agreement Specialists in Riverdale.</p> <p>Draft policy for simplified agreements nearing completion. This policy will significantly reduce the requirements for cooperators to apply for cooperative funding for agreements less than \$10,000.</p>
<p>August 1, 2005</p>	<p>A meeting of Agreement Specialist, Administrative Officers, and others involved in the processing of cooperative agreements was held. One of the main purposes of the meeting was to define a single business process for cooperative agreements. The group accomplished this task. The CAPIT working group must now work with a selected group of ADODRs to discuss the process and its potential impact on how they do business.</p> <p>The roles and responsibilities of each person in the process was discussed. Further work needs to take place in order to ensure that roles and responsibilities reflect the business process, and vice versa.</p>

	<p>The streamlining work group is working through the forms requirements. Also CAPIT is reviewing the possibility of working with OMB to seek approval on waiving some form requirements based upon a proposed agreement which would mirror contracts that use a base year and option years for extending a contract for up to a total period of five years.</p> <p>CAPIT has set up an internal bulletin board to be used by agreements staff to communicate ideas, questions, answers and thoughts related to the agreements process.</p>
August through September	<p>A meeting of Agreement Specialists was held in Riverdale. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss roles and responsibilities of the specialists in the cooperative agreements specialists and the business process(es) used. A single business process was identified and agreed to in the meeting. Roles and responsibilities were discussed, and the issue of responsibilities of ADODRs was discussed. CAPIT will work with ADODRs to determine the best set of responsibilities for them in order to achieve the greatest returns on their efforts while ensuring Agency policy and intent of agreements are fulfilled.</p> <p>CAPIT has been working with the AHMS program to develop a plan for comprehensive agreements. There will be a policy regarding AHMS agreements issued in the near future. This approach will reduce the number of agreements that cooperators and APHIS will have to produce to accomplish joint goals and objectives.</p> <p>CAPIT is drafting a policy addressing a multi-year agreement approach to recurring work undertaken by APHIS and our cooperators. The approach will attempt to parallel multi-year contracts, with a single base year and four optional years. CAPIT will turn the draft over to the ASC, who will in turn work with the Office of the General Counsel to determine its sufficiency. Due to the amount of work we see will be needed in this concept CAPIT is projecting the tool to be used in FY 2007 if it is deemed to be a legal tool for use.</p>

**October 13,
2005**

CAPIT met with the Agency Management Team (AMT) to discuss several items. The first item discussed was a uniform business process for the processing of cooperative agreements. CAPIT presented the business process developed during the Agreements Specialist meeting held in Riverdale. A single uniform business process was created and agreed to during the meeting. CAPIT used this model and incorporated email to further streamline the process. The AMT voted to pursue the email version of the process. CAPIT and the ASC will be creating policy and instruction on the use of this business process. The information will be made available for all APHIS personnel and cooperators when completed. This email process will be used until such time that a E-solution has been created. Currently the CAPIT IT working group is working to determine how long it will be before Grants.gov will be ready to process non-competitive cooperative agreements. If it will be greater than 3 to 5 years CAPIT is will look at Ework, a IT solution already being used for automating business processes in APHIS.

CAPIT presented the AMT with two options regarding the reporting, accountability, and management of agreement specialists (see the AMT presentation posted on this web site). The AMT voted to put an accountability chain in place to ensure that Agency policy on cooperative agreements is followed. The AMT has given the ASC oversight authority for all cooperative agreement operations.

The email solution and accountability chain will begin on January 1, 2007.

The VS eastern region has created an agreement tracking database. The database was discussed at the AS meeting. All participants in the meeting agreed that the database structure could be used by each program. VS is migrating the database to an Oracle platform. Once this has been completed and tested the CAPIT IT working group will work with the Agency IT group to set the database up for national use. The AMT agreed that this solution is appropriate in light of the potential for Ework as a mid to long term solution for automating the business process.

CAPIT will be working with the programs and the PEM staff on identifying a sample group of ADODRs that will work to establish appropriate roles and responsibilities of the ADODR in the cooperative agreement process.

October 17,
2005

Below is from Dr. Dehaven to the AMT regarding decisions made by the AMT at the October meeting.

CAPIT

Representatives from the working group presented a progress report on CAPIT. The working group has streamlined the business process to implement cooperative agreements and suggested a modified version using e-mail to further expedite the process. Accountability remains a significant issue. Discussion focused on competing priorities for field staff, as well as defining who is accountable for timely development of agreements that are consistent, meet programmatic goals and are legally defensible. Furthermore, issues have arisen when the agreements are not properly managed and if necessary, enforced.

DECISIONS AND ACTIONS: The AMT agreed to the modified business process based in e-mail. For the implementation of agreements, the AMT decided to formalize an accountability chain within APHIS programs and allow specialists to remain in programs. A training position has been established in ASC – agreement specialists will be provided with updated guidance and training. Furthermore, the role of the ADODR will be reviewed. Bill Hudnall will work with Paul Eggert, with input from John Clifford, to develop a proposal for the November meeting regarding “audit standards” –a high dollar amount or some other defined set of triggers that will generate a regular audit of an agreement – as well as a system for the audits.