LIAISON REPORT TO THE BOARD on HUMAN SCIENCES
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Submitted by
Caroline E. Crocoll, USDA NIFA National Science Liaison

USDA NIFA
The USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) provides leadership and funding for programs that advance food, agriculture, natural resources and human sciences. NIFA applies an integrated approach to ensure that groundbreaking discoveries in agriculture-related sciences and technologies reach people who can put them into practice.

NIFA Relocation Update
On September 30, 2019, NIFA relocated to Kansas City, MO and currently is located at USDA’s Beacon Building at 6501 Beacon Drive, Kansas City, MO 64133. On October 31, 2019, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced that USDA signed a lease for permanent office space at 805 Pennsylvania Avenue, Kansas City, Missouri to serve as the new home for USDA’s NIFA and the Economic Research Service (ERS). The building is currently being prepared for NIFA and ERS staff.

NIFA-General Questions
Should you have questions or need assistance from NIFA program staff or Office of Grants and Financial Management (OGFM) staff, please feel free to reach out to Caroline Crocoll, Brent Elrod, or to respective offices: Family & Consumer Sciences; 4-H; ASAP Inquires; reimbursable agreements; Capacity programs and administrative questions relating to the completion of the grants.gov forms; Competitive programs, post-award requests and reports; and REEport forms and submissions. We are committed to providing you the best customer service.

NIFA Employment Opportunities
We continue to hire at NIFA. Please remember to check out our Career Opportunities webpage, where there is a direct link to all open NIFA positions on the USAJOBS.gov website. Additionally, you may find our updated organization chart helpful. It will be updated on a continual basis.
NIFA’s National Science Liaisons

NIFA’s program portfolio and contact with our stakeholders, partners, and collaborators will continue, uninterrupted, in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. This will be led by six science professionals, National Science Liaisons (NSLs), who will support the agency’s national research, education, and extension portfolio; advance NIFA programs; and serve as expert resources. Biographies and contact links are below:

Caroline E. Crocoll, Ph.D., CFCS
Prior to her National Science Liaison position, Dr. Caroline Crocoll served as the Director of the USDA NIFA Division of Family & Consumer Sciences since 2010, and Acting Director of the Division of Youth & 4-H overseeing strategic leadership of both Divisions in their respective research, education, and extension portfolios in partnership with the Land-Grant University system across the nation. Oversight of programs included the Smith-Lever Special Needs Grants Program; Farm Safety and Youth Farm Safety; eXtension; Children, Youth and Families at Risk; Rural Health and Safety Education; Farmer Stress Assistance Network; Ag Risk Management Education; Farm Business Management and Benchmarking; Regional Rural Development Centers; the Extension Disaster Education Network Grants Program; Youth and Family Military Support Programs; and hundreds of active research and extension capacity programs. She has a strong background in agricultural extension and is dedicated to creating and facilitating a national and unified theme for human sciences and 4-H youth development programs that promote quality of life and community prosperity. She is certified in Family & Consumer Sciences through the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences and has been awarded the NIFA A.J. Dye Diversity Award, Phi Upsilon Omicron National Honorary Member Award, and National Friend of NEAFCS Award. Dr. Crocoll is a past Chair of the Alliance for Family & Consumer Sciences, past Foreign Agricultural Service and State Department Embassy Science Fellow, Corporation for National and Community Service National Service Fellow, BoHS Public Service Award recipient, and is a graduate of the Federal Executive Institute focusing on Leadership in a Democratic Society. Dr. Crocoll will represent NIFA primarily in the areas of human sciences and 4-H.

Mark Mirando, Ph.D.
Before taking on his new role as National Science Liaison with NIFA, Dr. Mark Mirando was National Program Leader of Animal Nutrition, Growth and Reproduction at NIFA where he provided leadership for competitive grant and capacity programs in animal reproduction. During his time at NIFA, he has led or co-led 9 different competitive grant programs and was instrumental in creating 4 of those programs, including an interagency program with the National Institutes of Health titled “Dual Purpose with Dual Benefit: Research in Biomedicine and Agriculture Using Agriculturally Important Domestic Animal Species.” Dr. Mirando also continues to serve as NIFA’s Science Coordinator for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI), providing overarching coordination of scientific and peer-review integrity for the USDA’s largest competitive grant program. Before joining NIFA, Mark served on the faculty of the Department of Animal Sciences at Washington State University from 1990 to 2000. During his tenure at Washington State University, his research on cell signaling in the uterus of domestic ungulates attained international recognition and was
supported by competitive grants from the USDA National Research Initiative and the National Institutes of Health. He obtained a BS degree in Dairy Science from Tennessee Tech University before pursuing graduate studies in the physiology, endocrinology and biochemistry of reproduction at the University of Connecticut, receiving the MS degree in 1982 and Ph.D. in 1987. He then went on to perform postdoctoral studies in uterine biology at the University of Florida from 1988 to 1990. Dr. Mirando will represent NIFA primarily in the areas of animal health and production as well as in the matters related to AFRI.

**Mervalin Morant, Ph.D.**

Prior to her National Science Liaison appointment, [Dr. Mervalin Morant](#) served as a National Program Leader (NPL) in the NIFA’s Institute of Food Safety and Nutrition, from 2012 to 2019, and a Soil Ecology NPL in Natural Resources and Environment from 2003 to 2012. Dr. Morant provides leadership in research, education, and extension programs related to food science and food safety issues. Drawing on her applied and basic plant pathology, and plant and soil science knowledge, she applies a multi-disciplinary, systems approach to address disease-related challenges in the food and agricultural sciences, from farm-to-fork. Before joining USDA, Dr. Morant last served as the Interim Chair of the Department of Agriculture at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. She received her Ph.D. in Botany and Plant Pathology from Purdue University and her BS and MS degrees in Plant and Soil Science from Tuskegee Institute. Dr. Morant was also a Post-Doctoral Research Associate at the University of Illinois in the Department of Plant Pathology, where she focused on understanding host-microbe interactions at the molecular level. Dr. Morant will represent NIFA regarding topics on food safety, nutrition and minority serving institutions.

**Mathieu (Mat) Ngouajio, Ph.D.**

[Dr. Mathieu Ngouajio](#) is the National Science Liaison for Crop Production Systems. Prior to his National Science Liaison position, Dr. Ngouajio served as a National Program Leader from 2013 to 2019 in the Institute of Food Production and Sustainability, where he administered competitive grant programs including the Organic Transitions, the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative and the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative. Prior to joining NIFA, Dr. Ngouajio was Professor in the Department of Horticulture at Michigan State University with a research and extension appointment. He received a BS in Agronomy and plant protection from Dschang University (Cameroon), a MS in Weed Science and Plant Physiology from Virginia Tech and a Ph.D. in Weed Science and Plant Biology from Laval University (Canada). He completed a two-year Post-Doctoral Research at the University of California (Riverside) in Cropping Systems research. Dr. Ngouajio is a Fellow of the American Society for Horticultural Science (ASHS) and past Vice-President of ASHS. Dr. Ngouajio will represent NIFA primarily regarding programs related to plant production and protection as well as organic farming.
Eric Norland, Ph.D.

Dr. Eric Norland is the National Science Liaison for NIFA’s Environmental and Natural Resources Science portfolio. He is responsible for creating partnerships and connections with agencies and stakeholders focused on environmental systems, forests, water, air, range and grasslands, and climate change. Dr. Norland focuses on the sustainable management of the Nation's working lands (agricultural, range, and forest lands) and their resilience to changing climate conditions. He is the NIFA liaison to the U.S. Global Change Research Program, National Association of University Forest Resources Programs, National Science Foundation’s programs in environmental systems, National Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and several Hatch-funded multi-state committees. Dr. Norland is a Certified Forester with the Society of American Foresters (SAF), an elected Fellow of SAF, and past Chair of the National Capital SAF. Prior to his appointment as a NIFA National Science Liaison he provided leadership for the Renewable Resources Extension Act program and co-leadership for the McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Research program. He has a master's degree in Natural Resources and a Ph.D. in Environmental Biology from the Ohio State University. Dr. Norland will represent NIFA primarily in the areas of natural resources and environment.

Bradley K. Rein P.E.

Prior to his National Science Liaison position, Mr. Bradley Rein served as acting Deputy Director for the Institute of Food and Agriculture. He recently served as Division Director of Agricultural Systems with responsibility for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative foundation programs in Agricultural Systems and Technology and Agricultural Economics and Rural Communities; the Beginning Farmer and Rancher, Sustainable Agricultural Research and Education, AgrAbility and Youth Farm Safety programs. Mr. Rein has served as a United Nations recruited technical advisor to the Peoples Republic of China on biofuels research and an Embassy Science Fellow to Jamaica on development of their National Biofuels Policy. Prior to joining USDA in 1989 as a National Program Leader Mr. Rein held a faculty position as the Extension Specialist in Engineering at the University of Arizona. He is a registered professional engineer, a 40-year active member of the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineering and a past president of the International Society of Agricultural Safety and Health. Mr. Rein will be primarily responsible for topics related to sustainable agricultural systems, technology, economics and social sciences.

Submitted by Caroline Crocoll, NIFA National Science Liaison to BoHS ccrocoll@usda.gov