



## **WSWS Officer and Committee Report (Pre-Conference Meeting, Spokane 2011)**

**Office or Committee Name:** CAST Representative

**Officer or Chairperson Name and Committee Members:** Phil Stahlman / Phil Westra

**Date of Preparation (include year):** 26 February 2011

**Activities during the Year:** The restructuring of CAST is nearly complete, the balance sheet is improving, non-profit group and corporate membership is increasing after a period of decline, and CAST's visibility and influence in Washington D.C. remains strong. Still, there are challenges, one being the proposed elimination of Congressional earmarks. CAST receives federal funds (~14% of total budget) as part of the annual House and Senate Farm Bill mark up of designated spending. Depending on Congressional action, those funds may be reduced or eliminated.

A result of the restructuring of CAST is that I was elected to the new CAST Board of Directors as representative of all member scientific societies. This required the WSWS Board to replace me as WSWS representative on the CAST Board of Representatives. Dr. Phil Westra, Colorado State University, is the new CAST Representative for the WSWS. Thus, this report is my last official act as your representative to CAST.

CAST issue paper, **Agricultural Productivity Strategies for the Future: Addressing U.S. and Global Challenges**, published in 2010 was extremely well received and influential in Washington D.C. The success of that publication was inspiration for a follow-up issue paper, **Investing in a Better Future through Public Agricultural Research**, to be released and presented at three venues in Washington D.C. next Monday, March 14, 2011. This publication will be available for download from the CAST website on that day. As the title suggests, this paper defends and presents a strong case for continued public investment in agricultural research. Release of this publication is strategically timed prior to writing of the new federal farm bill. I served as the Liaison between authors and CAST for this publication. Proposals for two other papers of particular interest to weed science are being developed within Work Groups but have not yet been submitted to the Board for consideration. One of the proposals would examine the benefits of pesticides and the other would examine the public's role in crop protection research and funding priorities. Impetuous for the second proposal is the fact that the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) 2010 Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) competitive grants program included little or no opportunity for Weed Science research, extension or education funding. Fortunately, a Foundational Grant Program for "Controlling Weedy and Invasive Plants" is included in 2011 AFRI RFA, stating that "*Areas believed to have been under-represented in the FY 2010 RFAs, such as conventional plant and animal breeding, weed science, and food technology are more clearly offered in this FY 2011 RFA*". Activities regarding this issue likely will be addressed in the WSSA Representatives report. Another timely

and likely high profile issue paper in preparation thought to generate considerable interest will address **The Science and Regulation of Food and Genetically Engineered Animals.**

At the fall 2010 CAST Board Meeting, the Board of Trustees, Board of Directors, and Board of Representatives met in Sacramento CA. The Work Groups discussed and refined new proposals and all of the Boards participated in tours of the Robert Mondavi Institute for Food and Wine on the University of California-Davis campus, Capital One Public Radio, the Sacramento River Delta, and Ironstone Vineyard. Several prominent individuals connected with California agriculture addressed the Boards including Dr. Neal Van Alfen, Dean of the UC-Davis College of Agriculture and Environmental Science, Mr. A. G. Kawamura, Secretary of Agriculture for the State of California, administrators of the California Farm Bureau Federation, and UC-Davis faculty experts on water issues in California, wine, and food.

The 2011 meeting of the Board of Trustees and Board of Directors is in Washington D.C. next week, March 14-16, 2011.

**Recommendations for Board Action:**

- 1) Continue membership in CAST.

**Budget Needs:** Reasonable travel costs to annual Fall Board Meeting upon request with appropriate receipt.

**Suggestions for the Future: Suggested Changes in Operating Guide:** None

**Name of Person Preparing This Report:** Phil Stahlman