WSWS Officer and Committee Report
March 2024

Office or Committee Name: CAST Representative
Officer or Chairperson Name: Gregory Dahl
Date of Preparation (include year): February 22, 2024

Activities during the year:

Represented the WSWS on the CAST Plant Working Group. Participated in most of the monthly CAST Plant Working Group ZOOM meetings. Discussed and prioritized projects and publications that are in development and identified new topics to be evaluated as projects.

Met regularly with Jill Schroeder, CAST Representative for WSSA, and other Regional Weed Society CAST Representatives John Hinz, CAST Representative for NCWSS, Anthony Witcher, CAST Representative for NEWSS, Lyn Gettys CAST Representative for APMS, and Sharon Clay, CAST Representative for ASA. This has been helpful to us in coordinating and completing our CAST Representative Efforts. Encouraged the Southern Weed Science Society to join CAST as a member society. Participated with the WSSA and Regional Weed Science Societies to put a CAST Poster at the NCWSS, NEWSS the WSSA/SWSS meetings. I will be presenting the CAST Poster at the 2024 WSWS meeting.

Worked with Dr. Jill Schroeder, who is the CAST Plant Working Group Liaison for creating a CAST publication about Invasive Species. I helped Jill and scientists representing WSSA and the North American Invasive Species Management Association (NAISMA). A CAST publication, titled “Preventing the next invasive plant: Opportunities and Challenges” was just completed and a Webinar is scheduled for Thursday, February 29, 2024. The Webinar is free, but you need to register to attend. Congratulations to Jill for completing this.

Worked as CAST Liaison towards a CAST Issue Paper on “Integrated Management of FireAdapted Invasive Plants Responsible for Changing Wildfire Regimes.” This was developed based on the WSWS workshop on fire and invasives at the 2022 annual meeting organized by Matt Baur, WIPM Center Director). CAST approved the proposal to be developed into a publication. Matt Baur is the project leader. Several members of the WSWS Invasive Species Committee have volunteered to help write sections for the publication. I am serving as CAST

Liaison on this project. Most authors have written their sections. We are working to get the remaining sections completed for the publication.

CAST Announced Dr. Chris Boomsma as EVP/CEO. There was a Welcome reception for him at the CAST Office in Ames, IA on August 3, 2023. He started in August 2023. Keith Schescke retired in August 2023. I welcomed Dr. Boomsma to the CAST organization. I thanked Keith Schescke for all his leadership, achievements, and efforts.

Participated in the CAST Annual Meeting and Associated Meetings at Texas A&M Hotel and Conference Center, College Station, TX on November 6 – 9, 2023. Dr. David D. Baltensperger, Department Head of Soil & Crop Sciences, Texas A & M, and Past President of CAST hosted the representatives at the CAST Meeting. He also let a Plant Working Group Tour on the first day, I participated in this great tour. There was also a tour for the Animal Science Working Group and the Food Science Working Group. The Plant Science tour included visiting Faculty, Staff and Students in Soil & Crop Sciences at Texas A&M. We were shown field and lab research on cotton breeding, production, precision agriculture, plant phenotyping, genomics, drone research and using robotic monitoring of livestock. We met with the USDA – ARS leaders and researchers at their facility on the Texas A&M campus. It was great for me to visit as they have a program specializing in spray application research and testing. We had great meetings and a reception at the Borlaug Institute on the Texas A&M campus. Several previous CAST EVP/CEO's made presentations about their times at CAST. Keith Scheske was recognized for his leadership and service to CAST. Chris Boomsa laid out his plan for CAST going forward. President Sally Flis, Nutrien Ag Solutions transferred the office of CAST President to J. Alex Thomasson, Department Head Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering, Mississippi State University. The information, technology and history at this meeting was rich. Thank you for the opportunity to represent the WSWS at this meeting.

Other items of interest that can be found at the CAST Web Site:

CAST Put out a FIFRA/ESA Webinar Series and CAST Issue Publications. Webinars dates were or will be:

November 28, 2023
Title: FIFRA and the Endangered Species Act: Finding a Balance Between Agricultural Efficiency, Environmental Sustainability, and Regulatory Stability
Focus: This webinar will cover the history and challenges of FIFRA and the ESA.
December 19, 2023
Title: A Legal Discussion of the FIFRA/ESA Consultation Process Over Time
Focus: It will cover the legal aspects of both the ESA and FIFRA and the process that EPA has used to meet those obligations in the past with a look at how that differs from its current proposal.
January 9, 2024
Title: Improving the Science Behind the Process: Implementing Better Data and Tools to Streamline the FIFRA/ESA Process
Focus: This webinar will cover the threat of pesticides on species listed on the ESA, how science

can better inform FIFRA and ESA assessments, and how the FIFRA/ESA process can be streamlined.

January 30, 2024

Title: Developing and Adopting Economically Effective Mitigation Strategies: Critical to the Survival of Agriculture and Endangered Species

Focus: This webinar will cover the intersection of pesticide registration and mitigation measures, the role of conservation programs in mitigation pesticide movement, as well as best practices for land management.

February 20, 2024

Title: FIFRA, ESA, and Pesticide Consultation: Understanding and Addressing the Complexities

Focus: This webinar will cover the complexities and issues of pesticide use labeling, such as use in different geographies, what is practical for pesticide appliers, and lack of harmonization. Possible solutions to address these complexes will also be discussed.

March 12, 2024

Focus: This essay will examine the relevant provisions of both the ESA and FIFRA, provide an overview of EPA's past attempts to meet its ESA responsibilities, and finally take a look at EPA's most recent policy proposals while comparing them to previous efforts.

CAST Issue Publication RNA Interference in Agriculture: Methods, Applications, and Governance, January 2024.

CAST and IFT Collaborate on Traceability Issue Paper to Help Improve Food Safety and Security in the Food and Agricultural Community, September 2023.

Brandon Neuschafer Selected as 2023-2024 CAST President-Elect, August 2, 2023

Alison Bentley Announced as 2023 Borlaug CAST Communication Award Recipient, May 10, 2023.

Presented CAST Representative Report at the 2023 WSWS Annual Meeting. Distributed CAST Hand out publications at the WSWS Annual Meeting.

The Western Society of Weed Science has paid the invoice for its CAST Membership for 2024. Thank you!

Recommendations for Board Action:

Thank you to the Western Society of Weed Science for supporting and working with CAST. Please keep our support for CAST strong. Thank you for the opportunity to serve WSWS and CAST.

Budget Needs:

No additional needs at this time.

Name of Person Preparing This Report: Gregory Dahl