Information and Guidelines for Participation in Regional Research Projects

1. In Georgia, as in all other states, a portion of our Hatch funds is designated as Regional Research Funds (RRF) or Multi-State Research Funds (MRF) and can be used only for formal regional research undertakings.

2. Participation in a regional research project does not imply or assure that the participant will receive additional new funds for the regional research undertaking. In almost all instances, RRF that are placed in the appropriate department for support of regional projects replace regular Hatch or State funds, so that total fund support for the departmental research program remains the same. The regional research undertaking is, in effect, a substitution for other research work, or is complementary to ongoing projects. Although it is desirable from the GAES viewpoint to have designated RRF in participating departmental budgets, there is no absolute requirement for this. Regional research project participation can be, and often is, funded with only regular Hatch and/or State funds and sponsored funds.

3. The procedures for developing a Regional Research Project and the role of individual researchers in this process need to be clarified. All formal procedures are documented in the Manual for Cooperative Regional Research, CSREES-OD-1082, 1997. The following points are amplifications of the manual.

   A. Ideas for areas of research that are appropriate for regional undertakings come from research workers, individually or jointly (as through conferences or work groups) and from administrative groups. These ideas are usually presented to the Southern Regional Research Committee (SRRC) by a sponsoring director.

   B. SRRC, a committee of the Southern Agricultural Experiment Station Directors Association considers such proposals. Appropriate proposals are recommended to the Association for action. If approved, an Area of Work is established with an appointed Director’s Representative. It should be noted that an Area of Work is distinct from a formally designated Work Group in that the former is approved for the purpose of developing a Regional Research Project, but the latter has no such primary purpose.

   C. The Director’s Representative is responsible for assembling a group of research persons from interested states to consider the need for a regional project and to proceed with the development of a formal project statement, if the need is confirmed and agreed upon.

   To assemble the research group the Director’s Representative is asked to contact the Director of each SAES in the Region and to advertise the proposed meeting through CSREES. Individual researchers may also be contacted by colleagues.

   In Georgia, the ultimate decision to send a representative to an initial Area of Work meeting rests with the Dean and Director or his delegated representative. A designated Georgia representative to the Area of Work meetings is expected to transmit his judgments of the prospective value of the developing regional project to the Dean and Director through his departmental administrative system so that tentative administrative judgment of the proposed project can be made. Regional projects, like all other projects, ultimately require an administrative commitment of resources. Experience has shown that states that send representatives to project
development meetings usually are written into the project before a final, or even tentative, judgment can be made as to the value of the proposed research to Georgia. For these reasons, Georgia representatives are not authorized to make formal commitments of participation in regional projects without specific administrative approval.

D. The completed draft of the regional project is circulated to the Directors and other administrative levels of each state which proposes a contribution. The Director of each participating state makes a formal commitment to the project by indicating the SY assignment from his state. Projects then go to SRRC for approval and/or suggested improvements. SRRC recommends the project to the Association. When approved by the Association, who names an Administrative Advisor for the project (usually the same person who served as the Director’s Representative), the project is sent to the Committee of Nine for review and recommendation. Projects recommended for approval by the Committee of Nine then go to CSREES for final approval. Subsequently, the technical committee, composed of project participants, meets annually to coordinate research and report on research accomplishments.

4. **Upon final approval** of a new regional project, each participating state submits project information to NIFA. The regional project document is, itself, the controlling project document. No other documentation for state purposes is necessary unless the objectives of the Georgia research are broader than and go beyond objectives of the regional project. In the case where additional objectives are involved, a Georgia Hatch project should be written and attributed to the regional project. Similarly, an ongoing Georgia project can be used to indicate a contribution to a regional project.

5. Late comers to regional projects must petition the technical committee via the Administrative Advisor for approval to participate. Prior to such official contact, Georgia’s proposed participation must be approved by the Dean and Director. If approval is given, the joining GAES must submit an [Appendix E Form](#) to the regional project outline. When approved by CSREES, project information is submitted to NIFA.

6. Participation in regional projects is not limited to projects originating in the region where the researcher is working. Many projects are, in fact, multi regional, even though they are designated as originating in a single region.

7. GAES participation in any regional project or technical committee meeting or more than one year must be based on bona fide documented contribution, approved by the Dean and Director, the project technical committee, and CSREES.