



2022 ANNUAL REPORT



Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development

*Enhancing the capacity of Land Grant Universities
to foster regional prosperity and rural development*

50 YEARS **RRDC**
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Contents

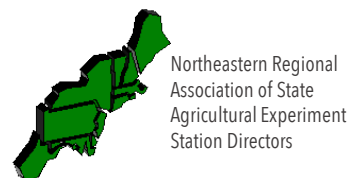
Message from the Director	1
NERCRD Funding Snapshot	2
Economic Development, Innovation, and Resilience Activities	7
Food Systems and Agriculture Activities	15
Extension and Outreach Activities	19
Staff Announcements	23
Presentations and Publications	25



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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

2022 marked an important milestone in that the four Regional Rural Development Centers celebrated the passage of half a century since the signing of the Rural Development Act, which authorized the establishment of the Centers. The Centers were charged with bringing science to bear on the problems facing rural communities, while also helping develop the future workforce in this subject area. The regional missions of the Centers included eliminating duplication of research efforts, ensuring that the best and most effective Extension programs were widely available for adoption and linking their regions to evolving federal rural development programs and investments, and vice versa.

Much has changed, of course, over the last 50 years in rural U.S. areas, from technological change and globalization to a major pandemic, among many other factors. Ongoing depopulation in many rural areas has created many problems, including reduced capacity to access federal programs. The four Centers have likewise evolved and adapted over time and, in addition to providing leading edge research, which appears in top-ranked journals, have shared and developed train-the-trainer and community development related resources.

Another highlight are the national listening sessions led by then-Associate Director Jason Entsminger, and a major survey



Stephan J. Goetz

resulting in a joint RRDC publication on rural recovery from Covid-19. This led to new partnerships with the Council on Food, Agriculture, and Resource Economics (C-FARE), Andrew Dumont of the Federal Reserve Board of Governors, and the Brookings Institution.

We were also pleased that the edited book, *Building Rural Community Resilience through Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, by Charlie French of the University of New Hampshire – whose work was made possible through sabbatical support from NERCRD – was recognized with a NACDEP award.

We continued our work on Covid-19, both in terms of its impact and recovery in rural areas. For example, our research showed how different counties were impacted by the virus and covid policies, effects on mental health, the critical role of food pantries in mitigating food insecurity, and how Tweets can be used to predict food insecurity, using artificial intelligence.

Our work would not be possible without the dedicated faculty, educators, and administrative leaders within the Northeast land grant university system. My sincere gratitude goes to each of the individuals with whom we have interacted in the last year.

Stephan J. Goetz,
Director and Professor,
January 2023



bit.ly/nercrdnews



nercrd.psu.edu



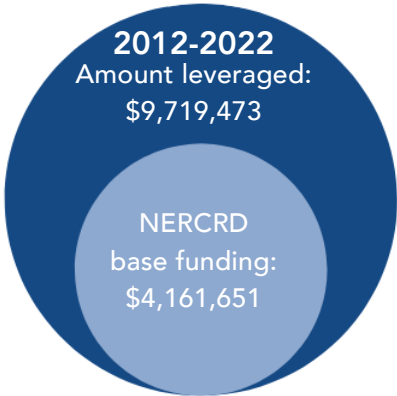
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NERCRD Funding Snapshot

Over the last decade, the NERCRD generated \$2.34 in external grants each year for every \$1.00 in base funding.



The core federal investment in NERCRD allows us to build strong collaborative networks in the Northeast and across regions. Through this network, the NERCRD is able to work across federal, state, and private agencies to secure funding with our partners to address the nation’s pressing rural development issues.

Title	Sponsor	Start Date	End Date	Amount
The Role of Innovation in Rural Firm Emergence and Vitality	USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)	05/01/2018	04/30/2023	\$499,993
The Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development - FY2020	USDA NIFA	09/01/2020	08/31/2023	\$474,880
The Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development - FY2021	USDA NIFA	09/01/2021	08/31/2023	\$494,027
The Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development - FY2022	USDA NIFA	09/01/2022	08/31/2023	\$599,100
Creating an Effective Support System for Small and Medium-Sized Farm Operators to Succeed in Agritourism	USDA NIFA	07/01/2020	06/30/2023	\$133,628*
New Technologies for Agriculture Extension Accelerator Program: National Extension Tourism Network	Extension Foundation-USDA-NIFA-NTAE	09/01/2021	02/28/2023	\$85,000
New Technologies for Agriculture Extension Accelerator Program: Northeast Listening Sessions on Rural Development	Extension Foundation-USDA-NIFA-NTAE	09/01/2021	08/31/2022	\$40,000
New Technologies for Agriculture Extension Accelerator Program: National Listening Sessions on Rural Development	Extension Foundation-USDA-NIFA-NTAE	09/01/2021	06/15/2022	\$50,000
Rural Community Well-Being: Using Tourism Indicators to Identify, Understand and Address COVID-19 Pandemic Impacts and Strategies for Resiliency.	USDA NIFA via West Virginia University	09/01/2022	12/31/2025	\$200,301*
Minority- and Women-Owned Businesses, Food Security, Innovation, and Access to Credit in Rural America	USDA Economic Research Service	09/01/2022	8/31/2024	\$349,986*

* NERCRD portion



Celebrating **50** years of *rural development*

The year 2022 marked the 50th anniversary of the passage of the Rural Development Act. Among its many outcomes, the Act led to the creation of the nation's four Regional Rural Development Centers (RRDCs), which have since played a critical role in elevating Rural America through research, Extension education, and outreach.

The RRDCs commemorated the anniversary throughout the year with special events, publications, and engagement opportunities. To kick-off the year-long celebration, the RRDCs were joined by two key partner organizations, who each took actions formally recognizing the Centers' significant contributions over the past 50 years and anticipating their leadership role in the continued vibrancy of rural America.

The Board on Agriculture Assembly (BAA) Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP) and Experiment Station Committee on Organization and Policy (ESCOP), which provide leadership and governance to the Cooperative Extension System and the State Agricultural Experiment Stations, respectively, each voted on the recognition at meetings in January. (ECOP's resolution and ESCOP's proclamation can be found online at bit.ly/3HsuFCd.)



Credit: Dan Mall via Unsplash

“The impacts of RRDCs over the past half century of our nation’s post-industrial age is extraordinary. This includes the recent work to equip teams of Extension educators state-by-state to facilitate community-based civil dialogue around race relations. The small communities who sought to establish new trusting alliances to revitalize their local economy and health are benefitting from the Coming Together for Racial Understand training program. This is only one example of many positive transformations taking place in communities that can be traced back to the unique and innovative service of RRDCs. There is so much more to come.”

*— ECOP Chair Dr. Wendy Powers
(University of California), January 2022*

“I am particularly pleased that the Executive Committee for the Experiment Station Committee on Organization and Policy adopted a proclamation recognizing the 50-year anniversary of RRDCs. As a member of the Board for the Western Rural Development Center, I can personally attest to the great work the RRDCs have accomplished. The support the RRDCs provide to rural communities throughout the country is remarkable. Congratulations to RRDCs for 50 years of success and best of luck on providing critical connections for rural communities in the next 50 years!”

*— ESCOP Chair Dr. Chris Pritsos
(University of Nevada, Reno),
January 2022*



▲ President Richard Nixon signed the Rural Development Act on August 30, 1972. Photo courtesy of the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development (NCRCD).



▲ Don Albrecht (left), Director of the WRDC, and John Green, Director of SRDC, representing the Centers at the RRDC sponsorship booth at the National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals (NACDEP) conference in Indianapolis, IN. Photo credit: Shelly Surber, NCRCD.

The RRDC Directors leveraged the 50th anniversary to convene two special panel discussions:

- Fostering Development in Rural America in the next 50 years (NACDEP)
- Regional Rural Development Centers 50th Anniversary: The Past, Present, and Future of Building Rural Communities Through Collaboration (AAEA)



◀ RRDC communications staff met monthly since mid-2021 to develop an anniversary logo, Zoom backgrounds, social media and presentation templates, news releases, and more. ▼



Economic Development, Innovation, and Resilience Activities

We pursued several lines of inquiry related to economic resilience and innovation, with an emphasis on identifying pathways for rural recovery from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Activities at a Glance:

- National Listening Sessions inform investment priorities for rural capacity
- National collaboration explores “Building the Capacity to Invest in Rural Prosperity”
- New project to explore access to credit as it relates to minority- and women-owned businesses, food security, and innovation in rural America
- Two new projects examining tourism and resilience
- Economic impacts of COVID-19 on communities
- New book explores “Building Rural Community Resilience Through Innovation and Entrepreneurship”

Impacts at a Glance:

Rural priorities:

Through an intensive stakeholder-engagement process, the RRDCs have identified the investments seen as the most critical for U.S. rural communities to build capacity and improve quality of life (pp.8-10).

Rural capacity:

Through a national collaboration, researchers, practitioners, financiers, and others have strengthened their understanding of community-driven, evidence-based policies and investments to strengthen rural prosperity (pp.11-12).

Community resilience:

Through two new multi-state projects, participants are enhancing their capacity to assist communities with managing and planning for tourism growth and resilience (p.14).

National Listening Sessions inform investment priorities for rural capacity

Beginning in fall 2021, the four RRDCs collaborated to carry out a year-long national listening sessions initiative aimed at identifying key priorities and critical investments for rural communities' post-COVID recovery and growth.

The initiative launched with a national survey, which received more than 600 responses. RRDC staff conducted an initial analysis of the survey data, and shared their survey findings widely through presentations, reports, and data tools, which are available online at: bit.ly/3XZ10q9.

The survey was followed by a series of facilitated listening sessions with invited stakeholders aimed at digging deeper into survey findings and identifying long-range strategies on key priorities. Each of the four RRDCs hosted one session with a national scope and focused on a specific topic (see p.9), as well as one session for regional participants to explore regionally important topics and priorities.

More than 20 facilitators from the national Extension system contributed to the initiative, helping to develop the process agenda that guided the structure of the dialogues and to facilitate each listening session. Many facilitators also participated in rapid debriefs delivered to staff at USDA NIFA following each national session.

This work was supported in part by funding under the New Technologies for Agricultural Extension Program, led by the Extension Foundation. The NERCRD was awarded additional funding to coordinate this effort among the four RRDCs under the leadership of NERCRD Associate Director, Jason Entsminger.

Learn more about how the project unfolded and how findings are being shared on the following pages.



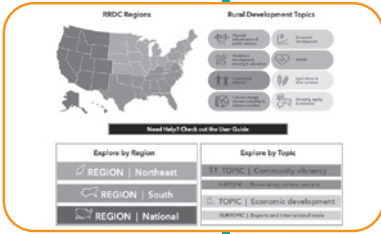
National Listening Sessions: Timeline and Key Milestones

January 2022: Survey findings released



- Findings from the Fall 2021 national survey are published and shared widely via a report, “Investing in Rural Recovery.”
- Listening Session national topics are identified
- Recruitment of facilitators for Listening Sessions is underway

February - March 2022: Planning and engagement



- Data dashboards from national survey findings are published, allowing stakeholders to view and explore data at a more granular level.
- Listening sessions are scheduled and process agendas are developed in collaboration with facilitators.
- Listening Session registration is launched and publicized.

March - April 2022: Listening sessions held



National topic-specific listening sessions	Host	Date
Broadband and the Digital Divide	SRDC	23 March
Rural Innovation and Entrepreneurship	NERCRD	29 March
Workforce Development, Training & Education	NCRCD	19 April
Community Planning, Leadership & Governance	WRDC	26 April

May - August 2022: Preliminary data analysis & sharing



- The Listening Session data analysis team distilled the most central and critical priorities identified through this effort, and began incorporating these findings into their own plans of work.
- The team also shared key findings with a range of stakeholder groups through meetings, webinars, and conference presentations (see opposite page).

August 2022 - Present: Final analysis and writing



The team distilled the findings into a comprehensive report that will be released in early 2023. To receive a copy, scan the QR code and follow the prompts, or visit bit.ly/3XTR9Bt.

National Listening Sessions: Sharing actionable insights with stakeholders

The RRDC team distilled the most central and critical priorities identified by stakeholders and began sharing these findings immediately. As a result, rural stakeholders, decision makers, and federal partners have already gained actionable insights into where investments can be made in rural recovery post-COVID.



From L-R: Maria Marshall (NCRCRD), Jason Entsminger (NERCRD), Don Albrecht (WRDC) and John Green (SRDC) presented findings during a panel discussion at the NACDEP conference in Indianapolis, IN. Photo credit: Mary Breidenbach, NCRCRD.

How findings have been shared by RRDC staff and faculty

- Collaborated with Council on Food, Agricultural and Resource Economics (C-FARE) and colleague from Federal Reserve Board on three-part webinar series (see p.11).
- USDA NIFA rapid briefings following each of the four national topic sessions as well as one on findings as they relate to food supply chains:
- Presentations to:
 - National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals (NACDEP)
 - Agricultural & Applied Economics Association (AAEA)
 - Northeast Family and Consumer Sciences and 4-H Program Leaders
 - Association of 1890 Research Directors
 - 2022 Mini Land Grant Conference
 - NERCRD Technical Advisory Committee

Building the Capacity to Invest in Rural Prosperity: National collaboration initiates new dialogue

Marking the dual occasions of the 50th anniversary of the Rural Development Act and the RRDC Listening Sessions Initiative, the Council on Food, Agricultural and Resource Economics (C-FARE) and the Regional Rural Development Centers (RRDCs), in conjunction with Andrew Dumont of the Federal Reserve Board of Governors, collaborated to convene stakeholders key to building rural prosperity in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Their objective was to identify community-driven, evidence-based policies and investments to strengthen rural prosperity over the next 50 years and to initiate dialogue on how to build capacity to achieve them. Originally planned as an in-person summit, the event was restructured as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and was instead held as a series of online panel discussions.



The series engaged panelists from academic institutions, private research foundations, community development and financing organizations, tribal governments, and more. Together, they explored ways to synergistically leverage Federal resources, to inform ongoing conversations around federal policy, and to identify strategies for resource deployment and accessibility to cost-effectively support rural economic and community development programming.

The online series launched with a conversation integrating the insights from the RRDCs’ Listening Session initiative and from a book published by the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis in collaboration with the Federal Reserve Board of Governors, *Investing in Rural Prosperity*:

- Building the Capacity to Invest in Rural Prosperity (May 27). Panelists included Andrew Dumont, Jason Entsminger, Karen Diver, and Corianne Payton Scally, with NERCARD Director Stephan J. Goetz moderating.



Scan for key takeaways from this event!

Subsequent events in the series included:

- Building the Capacity to Invest in Rural Prosperity Part II: Diving Deeper into the Development of Rural Capacity and Connectivity (June 16). Panelists included Chris Estes, Kelly Pohl, and Paige Kelly, with NERCARD Director Maria Marshall moderating.
- Building the Capacity to Invest in Rural Prosperity through Cross-sector Collaboration (October 6). Panelists included John Green (SRDC Director), Tony Pipa, Holly Frindell, and Ivy Allen, with University of Vermont’s Jane Kolodinsky moderating.

NERCARD’s Stephan J. Goetz and Jason Entsminger helped coordinate the series, along with Dumont and Gal Hochman (Rutgers University), who led the effort with input from a wider advisory board. NERCARD’s Kim Boonie provided support to the series, along with C-FARE staff member Lisa Nguyen.

New book explores “Building Rural Community Resilience Through Innovation and Entrepreneurship”

With funding provided by NERCRD, 26 leading community development scholars and practitioners from around the country—including more than a dozen collaborators in the Northeast region—teamed up to publish a new book that explores how innovation manifests itself in rural places and ultimately contributes to entrepreneurial development and community resilience.

The book was edited by Charlie French, program leader and Extension associate professor of community and economic development at the University of New Hampshire. Collaborators from the Northeast include Charlie French, Stephan Goetz, Ted Alter, Devon Meadowcroft, Yicheol Han, Doug Arbogast, Daniel Eades, Sarah Rocker, Shannon Rogers, Molly Donovan, Casey Porter, Jared Reynolds, and Geoff Sewake.

Much attention has been placed on how metropolitan areas innovate, but relatively little work has been done to explore innovation in rural places. That is because the common measures of innovation—the number of startups, patents, and R&D activity; access to venture capital; density of technology firms; and the number of

stem degree holders—are biased towards more urban places with high concentrations of businesses, institutions, and capital. The book’s authors set out to demonstrate that rural places do innovate, although what rural innovation looks like may differ significantly from innovation in more metropolitan areas. Innovation in rural places may be the result of new forms of collaboration; programs that leverage rural assets to address critical service gaps; novel strategies for accessing financial capital; or the infusion of arts into aspects of community life.

More information about the book can be found online at bit.ly/3I6HobK.

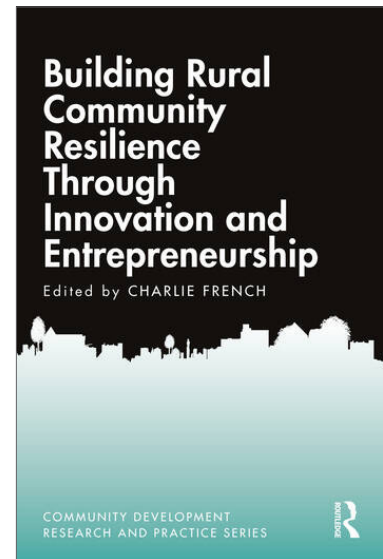


Image: Routledge



French and his collaborators were recognized by NACDEP for their effort with the Northeast Regional Award for Excellence in Educational Materials and also were runners up for the national award in the same category!

Congratulations to all!

New project to explore access to credit as it relates to minority- and women-owned businesses, food security, and innovation in rural America

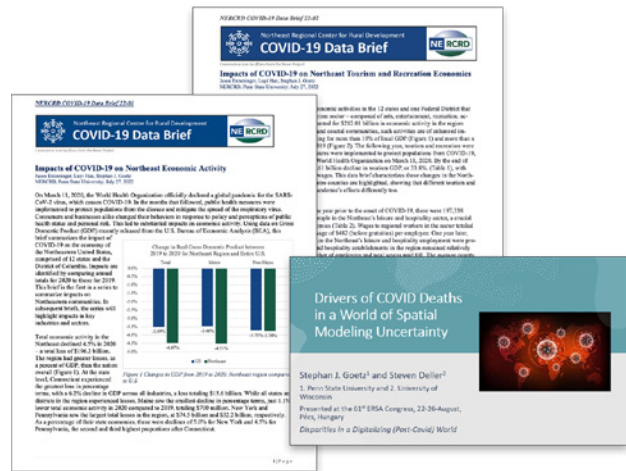
The objective of this two-year, \$350,000 cooperative agreement with the USDA Economic Research Service (ERS) is to address several critical research questions related to access to credit in rural areas that encompass issues of racial, gender and social equity, food security, and innovation. NERCRD and ERS researchers will investigate:

- the incidence and distribution of small business credit and the nexus between access to credit, minority- and women-owned businesses (MWOEs), innovation, and food access;
- the extent to which Rural Business Cooperative Service programming impacts business outcomes related to MWOEs, innovation, food entrepreneurship;
- food security and the food retailers, wholesalers and food entrepreneurs that serve underserved consumers, and in particular SNAP recipients;
- the extent of credit constraints for local food entrepreneurs, and entrepreneurship in community supported agriculture and small food retailers that source locally.

Economic impacts of COVID-19 on communities

Since 2020, NERCRD has issued a series of briefs in response to the COVID-19 crisis, designed to provide information quickly or to stimulate discussion. This work continued in 2022 with a focus on the economic impacts of the pandemic on communities, resulting in two new briefs and a presentation:

- Entsminger, J.S., Han, L., and Goetz, S.J. (2022) *Impacts of COVID-19 on Northeast Economic Activity*. University Park, PA: Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development. COVID-19 Data Brief 22-01.
- Entsminger, J.S., Han, L., and Goetz, S.J. (2022) *Impacts of COVID-19 on Northeast Tourism and Recreation Economies*. University Park, PA: Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development. COVID-19 Data Brief 22-02.
- Goetz, S.J., & Deller, S. (2022, August 22). *Drivers of COVID Deaths in a World of Spatial Modeling Uncertainty*. Presented at 61st European Regional Science Association (ERSA) Congress, Pécs, Hungary.



Access all the briefs in the series at bit.ly/2A4Qmbj

Two new projects examining tourism and resilience

As reported in the NERCRD 2021 Annual Report, NERCRD has partnered on a new multi-state Hatch project and a new USDA NIFA funded project, both led by Doug Arbogast (West Virginia University Extension and NERCRD TAC member). Each project will examine tourism and resiliency through the lens of the COVID-19 pandemic. These projects integrate Extension and research and will enhance participants' capacity to assist communities with managing and planning for tourism growth.



The USDA NIFA-funded project launched in July 2022 and engages members from New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and West Virginia. It will develop tourism indicators for use in identifying, understanding, and addressing the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and strategies for resilience.

The multistate Hatch project (NE2251) grew out of a \$7,000 planning grant awarded in 2021 by the Northeastern Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors (NERA) to support team members' efforts to develop a larger grant proposal. The resulting multistate Hatch project formally began on October 1, 2022 and kicked off with an informational webinar for potential participants, attended by 45 people.

With co-authors at WVU, NERCRD researchers also published several tourism-related research papers:

- Goetz, S.J., Han, L., Eades, D., Entsminger, J., & Arbogast, D. (2022, September 23). The U.S. Recreation Economy: Data, COVID-19, and Implications for Extension. [National Extension Tourism 2021 Conference Proceedings](#).
- Han, L., Goetz, S.J., Eades, D., Entsminger, J., & Arbogast, D. (2022). [An early assessment of COVID-19's impact on tourism in U.S. counties](#). *Tourism Economics*.
- Entsminger, J., Han, L., & Goetz, S.J. (2022). [Impacts of COVID-19 on Northeast Tourism and Recreation Economies](#) (No. 22-02; NERCRD COVID-19 Data Brief). NERCRD.

Food Systems and Agriculture Activities

NERCRD researchers apply the tools of regional economic analysis to understand various dimensions of how the food system is changing over time and is affected by external disruptions such as a pandemic.



Activities at a Glance:

- Using tweets to predict real-time food shortages
- Advisory support to the Northeast U.S. Ecosystem Services project
- Agritourism research support continues
- The AgriCluster Resilience and Expansion (ACRE) project
- Research examining how many craft-beverage operations a community can support
- Five-year project examining industry clusters and the location of agriculture concludes
- Processing plant/hub location modeling

Impacts at a Glance:

Early warning system:

NERCRD research showed that the sentiments and emotions expressed on social media can be used in real time to assess where supply-chain disruptions may lead to food shortages (p.16).

Craft-beverage limits:

Statistical models developed by NERCRD researchers and collaborators can help assess how many craft-beverage operations a community can support (p.18).

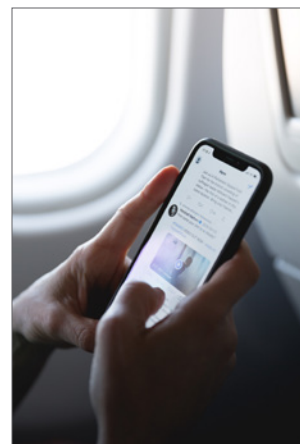
Value-chain training:

With NERCRD support, a strategic business-planning curriculum for farmer groups was piloted and awarded additional funding to expand the curriculum development and its reach (p.17).

Using tweets to predict real-time food shortages

NERCRD research published in *Applied Economics Perspective and Policy* showed that the sentiments and emotions expressed in tweets on Twitter can be used in real time to assess where supply chain disruptions due to a pandemic, war or natural disaster may lead to food shortages.

The research team, which included colleagues from Penn State's College of Information Sciences and Technology and Hamad Bin Khalifa University in Qatar, found that food security-related tweets that expressed anger, disgust or fear were strongly correlated with actual food insufficiency in certain U.S. states early in the COVID-19 pandemic. These findings can potentially be used to develop a low-cost early warning system for identifying where food-security interventions are most needed, according to the researchers.



Read the full Penn State news release, or download the paper at bit.ly/3KyHHgo.

Advisory support to the Northeast U.S. Ecosystem Services project

A new report documents results from an assessment of over 1,300 ecosystem service provisioning programs and policies across the U.S. Northeast. The assessment describes the programs' institutional arrangements, their incentive structures, and the ecosystem services they provide. This resource was created for the Association of Northeast Extension Directors and the Northeastern Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors with advisory support from the NERCRD. The report, which was authored by Alicia F. Coleman and Mario R. Machado and published by the Extension Foundation, is available at bit.ly/3XNy8Au. Building on the report, organizers held listening sessions in October to engage a broad audience in discussions regarding the prospect of using ecosystem services and incentive programs to bolster working lands in the Northeast.

Processing plant/hub location modeling

While NERCRD's signature food system project, Enhancing Food Security in the Northeast (EFSNE), formally closed several years ago, it continues to inform the ongoing NERCRD research program in food supply chains. For example, with two postdocs that were trained at NERCRD as part of the EFSNE project, NERCRD researchers recently examined the issue of how to optimize the locations of supply-chain facilities for fresh produce supplies in the U.S. and put forth a mathematical model that improves the effectiveness of facility location solutions. The model, which was published in the *International Journal of Production Economics*, expands possibilities for new research on assessing the reliability of facility location in various scenarios, for example, climate-change induced shifts in production locations.

- Ge, H., Goetz, S.J., Cleary, R., Yi, J., & Gómez, M. I. (2022). Facility locations in the fresh produce supply chain: An integration of optimization and empirical methods. *International Journal of Production Economics*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijpe.2022.108534>

Agritourism research support continues

As partners on a separately funded USDA NIFA agritourism project led by Claudia Schmidt, assistant professor of marketing and local/regional food systems at Penn State and NERCRD faculty affiliate, NERCRD continued to provide research support on this effort. Most recently, this was aimed at examining the extent to which agritourism and direct sales activities are clustered geographically, and whether these activities detract from or reinforce one another, both within counties and across county lines.

Findings suggest that they do reinforce each other within the same county, but results are mixed when looking at spillover effects across counties. In addition, a higher share of principal female operators in a county will contribute to more farms with agritourism but lead to fewer farms with direct sales. Schmidt presented these findings at the 2022 meeting of the Applied Agricultural Economics Association, and the paper is forthcoming in *Agricultural and Resource Economics Review* (ARER).

The AgriCluster Resilience and Expansion (ACRE) project

The ACRE project, led by the Lyson Center for Civic Agriculture and Food Systems, provides training in strategic business planning tools and processes that engage all stakeholders in a value chain to work collectively in carving out and defending a market niche. NERCRD invested in this project with the approval of its Board of Directors in 2020.

Despite pandemic-related challenges, the project team successfully piloted their program with a group of New York onion growers. The pilot phase ended in June 2022. Team members report that their work with the onion growers was highly influential in developing the ACRE curriculum and process.

The initial NERCRD seed funding of roughly \$23,000 leveraged an additional \$144,000 in a three-year grant from the Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (NESARE) professional development program to further this project.



This support is allowing the team to build out the infrastructure for the ACRE Program, including:

- An 18-unit self-paced Moodle course on eXtension Campus on launching an ACRE Project.
- An ACRE Facilitator's toolkit complete with instructions, worksheets, and a case study to illustrate the ACRE process.
- An ACRE community of practice to expand the use of the ACRE approach to agriculture development professionals in the Northeast and elsewhere.

Learn more about the project at: bit.ly/3RjB062.

Research examines how many craft-beverage operations a community can support

As part of an ongoing effort, NERCRD researchers are studying population threshold numbers needed to support different numbers of breweries, distilleries, and wineries. This information is helpful for local planners both in terms of identifying opportunities for expansion and for knowing when additional establishments start to cut into sales of existing businesses. They also are studying the growing roles of agritourism-related and direct sales of food by farmers to consumers in shortening agricultural supply chains, as demand for such direct sales has expanded during the covid pandemic. Preliminary findings were presented at the European Association of Wine Economists earlier this year:



- Goetz, S.J., Cleary, R., Schmidt, C., and Pan, Y. (2022, May 19). Population Threshold Models for Local Alcoholic Beverage Manufacturing. Presented at the European Association of Wine Economists, Portugal.

Project examining industry clusters and the location of agriculture concludes

Economists have long studied the causes and consequences of industry clustering, which occurs when multiple businesses in the same industry locate near one another. However, production agriculture has largely been excluded from the scope of cluster theory. The goals of this five-year USDA NIFA-funded project led by Paul Gottlieb (Rutgers University) were to provide proof of principle for clustering behavior in production agriculture; to test the hypothesis that certain known drivers of transactional clustering behavior are also active in agriculture; to characterize the types of clusters occurring within the agriculture sector; and, to develop systematic recommendations on regional economic development practices for agriculture that are based on cluster theory. The project resulted in three peer-reviewed research articles, eight conference papers/presentations, and five book chapters, including one in progress:

- Hira, Andy, Paul Gottlieb, Neil Reid, Stephan Goetz and Elizabeth Dobis (in progress). "Understanding Clusters as a Source of Industrial Competitiveness," in Kipping and Kurosawa (eds.) *Handbook on Industry Dynamics* (Oxford Press).

Extension and Outreach Activities

NERCRD serves as a regional hub for our land-grant partners, linking research and Extension faculty across state lines to facilitate collaborative knowledge- and program-sharing networks and partnerships. As a result, participants can work more effectively to foster regional prosperity and rural development.



Activities at a Glance:

- National Extension Tourism Network (NET) achieves several key milestones in partnership with NERCRD
- International Workshop on Agritourism draws visitors from around the world to the Northeast
- National Extension Energy Summit and National Sustainability Summit
- NERCRD small-grant program continues to make an impact
- Development of new NERCRD website underway

Pictured at left is Xinyi Qian, Director of University of Minnesota Tourism Center and NET Vice Chair, representing NET at an event (see pp.20-21).

Impacts at a Glance:

NET gains:

With support from NERCRD and Extension Foundation, the National Extension Tourism Network (NET) achieved greater organizational stability, expanded its reach, and elevated the visibility of Extension and Sea Grant tourism programming (p.20).

Increasing accessibility of conference content:

NERCRD is supporting the production of the first proceedings of the International Workshop on Agritourism, allowing more people to access the knowledge and resources shared at the 2022 event (p.21).

Sharing knowledge on engaging communities:

A new guide on engaging communities through issues forums offers a replicable approach modeled after an award-winning effort that emerged, in part, from a NERCRD-funded project (p.22).

National Extension Tourism Network achieves several key milestones in partnership with NERCRD

As reported in the NERCRD 2021 Annual Report, the NERCRD and the National Extension Tourism (NET) Design Team were selected to participate in the 2021-22 New Technologies for Agricultural Extension (NTAE) project accelerator program, made possible by funding from USDA NIFA through a partnership with Oklahoma State University and the Extension Foundation. Launched late in 2021 and continuing through February 2023, the project has provided intensive support to NET’s pursuit of organizational growth, stability, and expanded reach.

Lisa Chase of University of Vermont Extension is the project’s Fellow. Scott Reed, emeritus vice provost for University Outreach and Engagement at Oregon State University, provided mentorship and guidance and connecting team members to the Extension Foundation’s expertise. NERCRD Associate Director Jason Entsminger provided leadership to the initiative and NERCRD staff members Kim Boonie and Kristen Devlin continue to provide administrative and communications support. Together, the team has supported NET’s achievement of several key milestones, including:

- NET’s first conference proceedings
- Formation of a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access committee chaired by Wisconsin Sea Grant’s Natalie Chin with support from North Central Regional Center for Rural Development
- A publication series aimed at raising awareness of the role of tourism programming in Extension.
- An outreach program, which sent six ambassadors to several national conferences to raise NET’s visibility.



- Development of a magazine-style publication profiling several tourism programs from around the U.S.
- New logo and display materials developed for NET marketing efforts
- Drafting of an organizational growth plan.

Learn more about NET at extensiontourism.net.

International Workshop on Agritourism draws visitors from around the world to the Northeast

More than 500 people from 56 countries gathered in-person and virtually for the International Workshop on Agritourism (IWA), hosted by University of Vermont Extension in Burlington, VT, August 30-September 1.

“One participant called it the largest agritourism gathering in the world,” said IWA 2022 Chair Lisa Chase, UVM Extension Professor and Director of the Vermont Tourism Research Center. “I don’t know if that is true, but I do believe that it was the most diverse when you consider the geographies represented and the mix of farmers, researchers, tourism professionals, agricultural service providers, policymakers, non-profits, entrepreneurs, and others working with agritourism.”



Photos by Bear Cieri, courtesy of Hello Burlington

NERCRD was well-represented at the event:

- Jason Enstminger participated in a panel, “Understanding and Enhancing Diversity in Agritourism,” including offering remarks on the state of knowledge about LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs in agritourism;
- Claudia Schmidt presented or co-authored four presentations on her agritourism research and outreach;
 - Agritourism Critical Success Factors for Farms and Ranches in the United States
 - Agritourism Support Systems in the United States
 - Entrepreneurial Motivations of Agritourism Farmers: An Analysis of USA Farms and Ranches
 - International Research Network for Agritourism - Country Level Agritourism Surveys
- Kristen Devlin attended in support of the National Extension Tourism Network (NET), which participated as an event sponsor and also was well-represented by numerous network members in attendance.

NET’s sponsorship was a significant milestone for the organization and was its first opportunity to debut several marketing and communication pieces they have developed during their participation in the New Technologies for Agricultural Extension accelerator program. Attendance at the event by members of NET’s Executive Committee was also supported by the NTAE funds (see p.20), so that the leaders could communicate with attendees about NET activities and engage in planning for NET’s future.

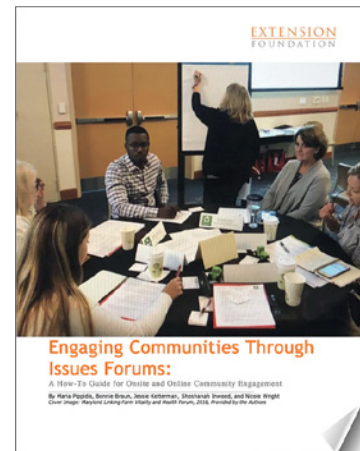
In addition to attending the event, NERCRD will be supporting the development of an IWA Proceedings, to be published in 2023. For more information about IWA, including access to recordings of several virtual knowledge-sharing meetings that led up to the Burlington event, visit: <https://www.agritourismworkshop.com>.

NERCRD small-grant program impacts add up

Several members of a team funded by NERCRD's small-grant program in 2017-2018 published a guide this year that builds on their NERCRD-funded project and explores the use of forums as a community engagement tool in Extension work. The comprehensive how-to guide is designed to help Cooperative Extension professionals develop issues forums in both onsite and online settings.

The publication is the culmination of several years of the authors' work engaging the public in responding to health and health insurance issues impacting the farming population, including the work conducted in their NERCRD-funded project, "Developing a Coordinated Community Risk Management Approach to Health and Health Insurance among Farm Enterprises." This new publication adds to [an impressive list](#) of outcomes and impacts stemming from this project. The team also was recognized for their community forums work with the Priester Award for Community Development, awarded at the National Health Outreach Conference on May 3.

The guidebook, titled "Engaging Communities Through Issues Forums: A How-To Guide for Onsite and Online Community Engagement," was written by Maria Pippidis, University of Maryland Extension; Bonnie Braun, University of Delaware Cooperative Extension; Jessie Ketterman, University of Maryland Extension; and Shoshanah Inwood and Nicole Wright, both of The Ohio State University. It was published by the Extension Foundation and is available at bit.ly/3j2xMHu.



Marketing Hometown America gets an award-winning curriculum update

Several members of a team funded in the 2019-2020 small-grant program to bring the Marketing Hometown America curriculum to the Northeast recently participated in a larger seven-state effort to update the curriculum. Their team was recognized by NACDEP as the 2022 runner-up for the national "Excellence in Teamwork" award. Members of the NERCRD-funded team included on the award are Michael Dougherty and Daniel Eades (West Virginia University Extension), and John Turack and Peter Wulfhorst (Penn State Extension). See the complete list of NACDEP awardees at: bit.ly/3wy7kbl

National Extension Energy Summit and National Sustainability Summit

NERCRD staff continued to attend monthly planning meetings and maintain the event website of this joint summit, which took place May 15-18, 2022, and provided Extension professionals and others working in sustainability and energy education and research a venue for learning and sharing the latest in sustainability and energy research and innovative Extension programs.

Development of new NERCRD website underway

The NERCRD has engaged a web development firm to create a new website that will better serve its audiences. It is expected to launch in mid-2023.

Staff Announcements

Farewell to NERCRD Associate Director Dr. Jason Entsminger



Congratulations to NERCRD Associate Director Dr. Jason Entsminger, who accepted a new tenure-track position at the University of Maine. His time at NERCRD ended in September. In his new roles as

Assistant Professor of Entrepreneurship and Innovation and Assistant Extension Professor and Small Business Specialist, Jason will teach courses in entrepreneurship and innovation and contribute to statewide efforts aimed at facilitating entrepreneurial networks and supporting rural innovation. This new position is held jointly between the Maine Business School and University of Maine Cooperative Extension.

As NERCRD Associate Director, a position he held since February 2021, Jason led the national listening-sessions process described on p.3, and the program aimed at helping the National Extension Tourism Network scale-up and expand its capacity, described on p.10.

During his time at the NERCRD, Entsminger also helped regional partners respond to funding opportunities that will build multi-state collaborations on key topics in rural community and economic development. Through briefings, facilitated conversations, and webinars, he expanded the NERCRD's reach to national and regional partners. He also contributed to several research projects, and co-authored numerous publications and presentations, helping to further the Center's research mission.

Goetz ranked among leading scientists in economics and finance

[Research.com](https://www.research.com), an organization that ranks universities and researchers on a number of metrics, has identified Stephan J. Goetz, Professor of Agricultural and Regional Economics and Director of the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development, among prominent scientists in the area of Economics and Finance. The ranking is

based on data from the Microsoft Academic Graph, which uses "a heterogeneous graph containing scientific publication records, citation relationships between those publications, as well as authors, institutions, journals, conferences, and fields of study." (Source: bit.ly/3HyLjjw)

Schmidt recognized for research on women farmers in the United States

Claudia Schmidt, assistant professor of marketing and local/regional food systems Penn State’s College of Agricultural Sciences and NERCRD faculty affiliate, is the recipient of the college’s 2022 Roy C. Buck Faculty Award, which recognizes the best article accepted or published by a refereed scholarly journal in the social sciences within the past two years.

Schmidt’s paper, titled “Female farmers in the United States: Research needs and policy questions,” examines the importance and unique characteristics of U.S. female farmers, and also draws attention to the lack of economic research into women farmers in the United States and the need for more related economic and policy analysis. The article, published in *Food Policy*, was co-authored with NERCRD Director Stephan Goetz and NERCRD Postdoctoral Scholar Zheng Tian.

Using data from the U.S. Census of Agriculture from 2002-2017, Schmidt and her NERCRD colleagues developed a statistical model to examine the relationship between a county’s share of female-operated farms and the conditions in the county. Their goal was to shed light on aspects of the local economic and agricultural ecosystems that are most strongly associated with female-owned farms. More information about the the study can be found online at bit.ly/3uFq5b8.



Reflecting on the Impact of NERCRD Research

The table below shows impact factors of journals in which NERCRD research was recently published. For definitions of terms, visit: bit.ly/3wDNlml. Compiled by Yuxuan Pan.

Journal Name	Google Scholar H-5 index	Journal Impact Factor	5-year Impact Factor	Immediacy Index	Citable Items	% Articles in Citable Items
<i>Food Policy</i>	62	6.08	7.74	2.27	168	100
<i>Journal of Extension</i>	12	N/A	N/A	N/A	62	98
<i>Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics</i>	18	1.826	1.98	0.53	30	97
<i>International Journal of Production Economics</i>	111	11.25	10.5	3.53	327	99
<i>Agricultural and Resource Economics Review</i>	15	N/A	N/A	N/A	23	96
<i>Applied Economic Perspectives and Policy</i>	38	4.89	4.44	2.04	96	100
<i>Tourism Economics</i>	37	4.58	3.53	0.924	132	96

Presentations and Publications

Peer-reviewed Publications

- Arbogast, D., Eades, D., Goetz, S., & Pan, Y. (2022). [Extension and Tourism: Previous Efforts, Current Trends, and the Future](#). *Journal of Extension*, 60(2).
- Ge, H., Goetz, S.J., Cleary, R., Yi, J., & Gómez, M. I. (2022). [Facility locations in the fresh produce supply chain: An integration of optimization and empirical methods](#). *International Journal of Production Economics*.
- Goetz, S.J., Han, L., Eades, D., Entsminger, J., & Arbogast, D. (2022, September 27). The U.S. Recreation Economy: Data, COVID-19, and Implications for Extension. [National Extension Tourism 2021 Conference Proceedings](#).
- Goetz, S.J., Heaton, C., Imran, M., Pan, Y., Tian, Z., Schmidt, C., Qazi, U., Ofli, F., & Mitra, P. (2022). [Food insufficiency and Twitter emotions during a pandemic](#). *Applied Economic Perspectives and Policy*, aepp.13258.
- Han, L., Goetz, S.J., Eades, D., Entsminger, J., & Arbogast, D. (2022). [An early assessment of COVID-19's impact on tourism in U.S. counties](#). *Tourism Economics*.
- Schmidt, C., Chase, L., Barbieri, C., Laherty-Rilla, E., Singh-Knights, D., Thilmany, D., Tomas, S., Dickes, L., Cornelisse, S., Lamie, D., Callahan, R., George, H., & Leff, P. (2022). [Linking Research and Practice: The Role of Extension on Agritourism Development in the US](#). *Applied Economics Teaching Resources*.
- Tian, Z., Schmidt, C., & Goetz, S.J. (2022). [The Role of Community Food Services in Reducing U.S. Food Insufficiency in the COVID-19 Pandemic](#). *Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics*.
- Tian, Z., Wojan, T.R., Goetz, S.J. (2022). An Examination of the Informational Value of Self-Reported Innovation Questions. Working Papers 22-46, Center for Economic Studies, U.S. Census Bureau.

Technical Publications

- Entsminger, J., Han, L., & Goetz, S.J. (2022a). [Impacts of COVID-19 on Northeast Economic Activity](#) (No. 22-01; NERCRD COVID-19 Data Brief). Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development.
- Entsminger, J., Han, L., & Goetz, S.J. (2022b). [Impacts of COVID-19 on Northeast Tourism and Recreation Economies](#) (No. 22-02; NERCRD COVID-19 Data Brief). NERCRD.
- Entsminger, J., Brandt, S., and Weibe, A. (2022). [Data Dashboard: Stakeholder Survey on Priorities and Capacities for Rural Community, Economic, and Workforce Development](#). Regional Rural Development Centers.

Book chapters

- Goetz, S.J., Meadowcroft, D., & Han, Y. (2022). The Geography of Rural Innovation and Entrepreneurship in the United States. In [Building Rural Community Resilience Through Innovation and Entrepreneurship](#), Edited by Charlie French. Routledge: Taylor & Francis Group.
- Plakias, Z., & Entsminger, J. S. (2023). Consumer Cooperatives: Purpose and Possibilities. In M. Elliott & M. Boland (Eds.), [Handbook of Research on Cooperatives and Mutuals](#). [Accepted for Publication; scheduled for release February 2023]

(Continued on next page.)

News Releases and Non-Technical Publications

- Chase, L., and Entsminger, J. (2022). [Agritourism Fact Sheet](#). National Extension Tourism Network.
- Devlin, K. (2022). [About the National Extension Tourism Network](#). National Extension Tourism Network.
- Devlin, K. (2022, April 11). [Using tweets to predict real-time food shortages](#). Penn State News.
- Devlin, K. (2022, June 17). [Tourism activity collapse during COVID-19 benefited rural hospitality employment](#). Penn State News.
- Devlin, K., Chin, N., Tomas, S., Turner, A., Whitman, P., Northrop, C.A. (2022). [National Extension Tourism Newsletter: Inaugural Issue](#).
- Regional Rural Development Centers (2022, January 24). [RRDCs Release Findings from Stakeholder Survey on Priorities and Capacities for Rural Community, Economic, and Workforce Development](#).
- Regional Rural Development Centers (2022, January 26). [RRDCs Kick Off Year-long 50th Anniversary Celebration With Formal Recognition From Key Partners](#).

Presentations

- Chase, L., Schmidt, C., Powell, J., Entsminger, J., & Hollas, Chadley. (2022, September 15). [Agritourism: Resource Roundup and Networking](#). National Extension Tourism webinar series.
 - An interactive ArcGIS map that allows agritourism support providers to network with one another resulted from this webinar and is available at: <https://bit.ly/3VBz4rr>
- Curtis, K., Entsminger, J., Slocum, S., and Gill-Arroyo, C. (2022, August 30). [Understanding and Enhancing Diversity in Agritourism: Innovative research and outreach in entrepreneurship, marketing, and networking](#). International Workshop on Agritourism. Burlington, VT.
- Entsminger, J. (2022, June 6). [Fostering Development in Rural America in the next 50 years](#). Presentation made as part of panel discussion at the National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals, Indianapolis, IN.
- Entsminger, J. (2022, August 2). [Regional Rural Development Centers 50th Anniversary: The Past, Present, and Future of Building Rural Communities Through Collaborations](#). Panel discussion presented at Agricultural & Applied Economics Association annual meeting.
- Goetz, S.J. (2022, May 19). [Population Threshold Models for Local Alcoholic Beverage Manufacturing](#). Presented at European Association of Wine Economists, Portugal.*
- Goetz, S.J., & Deller, S. (2022, August 22). [Drivers of COVID Deaths in a World of Spatial Modeling Uncertainty](#). 61st European Regional Science Association (ERSA) Congress, Pécs, Hungary.*
- Goetz, S.J., Entsminger, J., Dumont, A., Diver, K., & Scally, C. P. (2022, May 27). [Building the Capacity to Invest in Rural Prosperity](#). C-FARE Panel Discussion, online.
- Han, L., Goetz, S.J., & Entsminger, J. (2022, April 8). [Shortages and Surpluses of Building Contractors –Evidence from the US Counties](#). 61st Annual Meetings of Southern Regional Science Association, Austin, TX.
- Han, L., Wojan, T.R., and Goetz, S.J. (2022, October 12). [Experimenting in the Cloud: The Digital Divide’s Impact on Innovation](#), NSF, National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, online.
- Han, L., Goetz, S.J., and Wojan, T. R. (2022, November 9). [Experimenting in the Cloud: The Digital Divide’s Impact on Innovation](#). North American Regional Science Council Meetings, Montreal, Canada.*

*International travel supported by non-federal funds.

(Continued on next page.)

Presentations (continued)

- Han, L., Tian, Z., Goetz, S.J., Rupasingha, A., and Wojan, T.R. (2022, November 10). Is User Entrepreneurship more Inclusive Entrepreneurship? Evidence from Two Micro Datasets. North American Regional Science Council, Montreal, Canada.
- Han, L., Tian, Z., Wojan, T.R., and Goetz, S.J. (2022, October 18). Are Some Innovation Self-Reports in the Annual Business Survey Biased? A Regression Discontinuity Test, NSF, National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics and Center for Economic Studies, online.
- Pan, Y., Fan, L., and Goetz, S.J., (2022, August 2). Food Insufficiency and Mental Health during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Agricultural and Applied Economics Association Annual Meeting, Anaheim, CA.
- Schmidt, C. (July 14, 2022). "Neolocalism exemplified in PA's craft beer industry," Cultivating Homegrown Economies Webinar Series. Session 1: Economic Sustainability, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, Online, 56 in attendance, Invited. Regional.
- Schmidt, C. & Hollas, C. (August 30, 2022). "Agritourism Support Systems in The United States," International Workshop on Agritourism, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT.
- Schmidt, C., Tian, Z., Goetz, S.J., Chase, L., & Hollas, Chadley. (2022, August 12). Agritourism and Direct Sales Clusters in the United States. Agricultural & Applied Economics Association annual meeting, online.
- Tian, Z., Goetz, S.J., and Entsminger, J. (2022, April 8). Rural-Urban Housing Price Changes During the Pandemic. 61st Annual Meetings of Southern Regional Science Association, Austin, TX.
- Wojan, T.R., Tian, Z., Han, L., and Goetz, S.J. (2022, November 9). SAIRE sans Satire? The Promise and Perils of Small Area Innovation Rate Estimation. North American Regional Science Council Meetings, Montreal, Canada.

NET Webinars

- Arbogast, D., Goetz, S.J., Mueller, A., Rucker, S., & Wilson, M. (2022, October 20). New Hatch project on Tourism Resilience and Community Sustainability. Registered: 119; Attended: 45.
- Arbogast, D., Lindblom, J., Phillips, M., Rucker, S., and Powell, J. (2022, November 17). Outdoor Recreation and Extension - Resources Roundup and National Networking. Registered: 54; Attended: 27.
- Chase, L., Schmidt, C., Powell, J., Entsminger, J., & Hollas, Chadley. (2022, September 15). Agritourism: Resource Roundup and Networking. Registered: 89; Attended: 36.
- Reid, N., Schmidt, C., Donovan, M., Chambers, M., Wiskerchen, K., Gil Arroyo, C., Eades, D., & Arbogast, D. (2022, March 17). Craft Beer and Extension. Registered: 78; Attended: 44.
- Van Wyngarden, D., Phillips, M., Burkhart-Kniesel, C., & Suess-Raeisinafchi, C. (2022, May 17). Hospitality and Customer Service Training. Registered: 85; Attended: 37.

C-FARE webinars

- Estes, C., Pohl, K., Kelly, P., & Marshall, M. (2022, June 16). [Building the Capacity to Invest in Rural Prosperity Part II: Diving Deeper into the Development of Rural Capacity and Connectivity](#). C-FARE Panel Discussion, online.
- Goetz, S.J., Entsminger, J., Dumont, A., Diver, K., & Scally, C. P. (2022, May 27). [Building the Capacity to Invest in Rural Prosperity](#). C-FARE Panel Discussion, online.
- Green, J., Pipa, T., Frindell, H., Allen, I. L., & Kolodinsky, J. (2022, October 6). [Building the Capacity to Invest in Rural Prosperity through Cross-sector Collaboration](#). C-FARE Panel Discussion, online.

NET 2021 Conference Proceedings

The National Extension Tourism 2021 Conference Proceedings – published by the Extension Foundation with support from the NERCRD – features eight peer-reviewed papers that were presented at the conference in November 2021 in Savannah, GA. The publication was edited by Lisa Chase, University of Vermont; Natalie Chin, University of Wisconsin Sea Grant; and Xinyi Qian, University of Minnesota Tourism Center. Administrative support was provided by NERCRD employees Kim Boonie, Kristen Devlin, and Jason Entsminger. Download it at: bit.ly/3D7P64v



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