**AC21 Working groups—Status Update 11-10-11**

At its August 30-31, 2011 meeting, AC21 members decided to establish four working groups to help frame relevant issues for the Committee. The four working groups are:

1. Size and scope of risks
2. Potential compensation mechanisms
3. Tools and standards to verify eligibility and losses
4. Who pays?

The Committee decided that the first two working groups could begin their work prior to the second plenary session in December, 2011.

In forming the working groups, USDA chose to appoint both AC21 members and non-members in order to broaden representation or provide additional expertise on particular issues.  Working group members who are not members of the AC21 will participate in discussions just as AC21 members on those working groups will. Working groups are not tasked with making decisions for the AC21:  rather, their role is to simply help frame information for the full committee to consider.

The Size and Scope of Risks working group will have the following members:

Lynn Clarkson               AC21 member

Michael Funk                            AC21 member

Latresia Wilson                         AC21 member

Josette Lewis                              AC21 member

Isaura Andaluz                            AC21 member

*Keith Coble*                                 Economist, Mississippi State University

*Adrienne Massey*                        Biotechnology Industry Organization

*Don Cameron*                         CA farmer (biotech, organic, and conventional)

*Douglas Gurian-Sherman*         Union of Concerned Scientists

*Chester Boruff*                         CEO, Association of Official Seed Certifying Agencies

The Compensation Mechanisms working group will have the following members:

Douglas Goehring                     AC21 member

Marty Matlock                           AC21 member

Barry Bushue                             AC21 member

Laura Batcha                              AC21 member

Jerry Slocum                              AC21 member

*Brian Endres*                              Legal expert, University Of Illinois

*Jessica Adelman*                         Syngenta Corporation

*Michael Sligh*                           Rural Advancement Foundation International.

We will also have an economist, Dr. Kent Lanclos from the Risk Management Agency, USDA, as a resource person with the Compensation Mechanisms working group.

Membership on working groups 3 and 4 is still under discussion.

Plan of Work for Size and Scope of Risks Working Group:

1. What types of data are available and what do they say?
2. How might different types of data be used/presented to the committee?
3. How, if at all, might additional information be obtained in a timely manner?
4. What is the level of confidence about the accuracy, broader applicability, and impact of each type of data?
5. Consideration of potential outline of an approach for the AC21 to consider this question
   1. What types of data are available or might be gotten in a timely manner?
   2. What is the level of confidence about the accuracy, general applicability, and impact of each type of data?
   3. What does the data tell the committee about the need for compensation mechanism(s)?
   4. How might the committee address data gaps/project for future economic risks in evaluating the need for a compensation mechanism(s)?

Plan of Work for Potential Compensation Mechanisms Working Group

1. What types of mechanisms can be envisioned?
2. What type and scale of risk would the mechanism be most appropriate to address?
3. Who would be responsible for implementing each mechanism?
4. Is there any existing authority for instituting each mechanism?
5. Are there examples of other activities employing similar mechanisms? If so, how well do they work?
6. What are the pluses and minuses, in terms of avoided conflict, costs/benefits to consumers, costs/benefits to developers, costs/benefits to farmers, potential impacts on litigation and potential litigants, incentives for development of upstream technologies to prevent risk, impacts on trade relations, and rate of technology development and use?