

SAP 4.3: The Effects of Climate Change on Agriculture, Land Resources, Water Resources, and Biodiversity

Stakeholder Meeting

Summary

Date: February 8, 2007

Venue: Fourth USDA Greenhouse Gas Conference, Baltimore, MD

Presentations by Authors:

Report Overview: Tony Janetos, Joint Global Change Research Institute PNNL/UMD

Agriculture: Jerry Hatfield, USDA Agricultural Research Service

Land Resources: Mike Ryan, U.S. Forest Service

Water Resources: Dennis Lettenmaier, University of Washington

Biodiversity: Tony Janetos, Joint Global Change Research Institute

Invited Speakers:

Naomi Peña, Pew Center on Global Climate Change

Eric Vance, National Council for Air and Stream Improvement

Carol Whitman, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

Carol Werner, Environmental and Energy Study Group

Public:

Participation exceeded 125 individuals, and interactions between speakers and those in attendance was actively pursued through the course of the session.

Stakeholder Comments:

- General Support for the approach, structure, and contents of SAP 4.3 was expressed, including agreeing with the emphasis on variability, uncertainty and indirect effects, interannual and interdecadal variability rather than mean temperature or precipitation considerations. The request was made to include consideration of extreme weather events. A discussion of tipping points, extreme responses to small cumulative changes, was also suggested.
- The report should use language which is accessible to a lay audience, particularly in the executive summary, introductory segments, and conclusions sections.
- The report's conclusions should be concise and placed first in each chapter/section. The focus should be on conclusions which could potentially make a practical contribution to decision making.
- The contributions of climate change on changes to ecosystems and ecosystem services relative to other factors (e.g., land use change) should be addressed.
- Feedbacks through social, political, and economic mechanisms, and how they are perceived, may have a greater impact on ecosystems and ecosystem function than the direct climate change effects. Although the focus of this report is on the climate change effects, some discussion of this should be presented.

- It was suggested that the report include an analysis of the adequacy of the current water supply system for meeting future shifts in demand and climate-related pressures.
- Crosscutting issues such as diseases, pests, and invasive species will draw on currently available examples in the literature and will be presented through case studies. Care should be taken to ensure that cases of extreme impact are not extrapolated beyond their applicable boundaries.
- Thorough geographical coverage of the U.S. is necessary, as significant local concerns may not be shared in other regions or reflected within a larger view.
- Care should be taken to be certain that there are not inconsistencies between sections containing interrelated subject matter.
- Inclusion of marine systems, arctic systems, soil microbes, and wetlands was suggested.

Next Steps:

This interactive stakeholder meeting was held early in the drafting process so that stakeholder priorities and concerns can be taken into consideration by the report's authors. Working drafts of the outlines were distributed, as was contact information for further comment on the report. Drafting will continue, and suggestions will be included as appropriate and made possible by the available literature.