



April 30, 2013

The Honorable Hugh Leatherman
SC Senate
PO Box 142
Columbia, SC 29202

Dear Senator Leatherman:

I have heard you say on several occasions, "It is the Pee Dee's time". I agree and also believe, "It is agriculture's time". In recent discussions with you requesting the inclusion of the funding request from Clemson PSA for the Advanced Plant Technology (APT) program at the Pee Dee Research and Education Center, you asked several questions of which I have researched and provide the following additional information:

1. What is the status of the \$4 million they received last year?

An architect/Engineering committee was formed and a firm was selected for contract negotiations on March 27, 2013. Clemson anticipates the A/E work to be completed within the year and for renovation to be completed by the end of 2014. The additional \$3 million requested will be used to complete the new laboratories and update the facilities.

2. How does Clemson know they will be able to hire good scientists? Will they come?

Clemson has a record of attracting good scientists when the facilities have the capacity to allow them to conduct rigorous research using current technology (eg. Campbell Graduate Engineering Center). The Pee Dee REC renovation will provide the level of facilities and infrastructure that is necessary to conduct current and relevant research and will provide space that meets protocol requirements for research grants and contracts.

In addition, the recurring funds for APT will allow Clemson to offer competitive and attractive salaries for top scientists. Just recently Clemson announced that Ben Fallen, an outstanding researcher will be joining Clemson at the Pee Dee REC on May 1. Dr. Fallen comes to Clemson as a soybean breeding and genetics specialist having previously been at University of Tennessee Knoxville and Virginia Tech. Dr. Steve Kresovich has agreed to join the APT program as the Coker Endowed Chair in Genetics. Dr. Kresovich is a world-renown geneticist with background in animal and plant genetics. He will provide oversight to the APT program and will conduct his own plant improvement program for sorghum.

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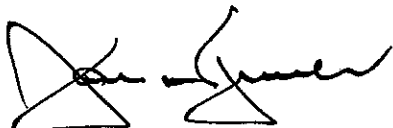
3. How will the Advanced Plant Technology (APT) program attract industry?

The APT program is set up in the same format as CU-ICAR and CURI. The Pee Dee REC is the ideal facility for the program because of its location in a highly productive agriculture area, the proximity of the REC to excellent transportation systems (including I-95 and I-20) and an excellent business climate in the Pee Dee region. As the APT program becomes known and produces high quality science and viable agricultural products, the grants and contract work with industry will grow and reach a point where it is advantageous for the industry to locate in the Pee Dee region to further the collaborative efforts. This model of developing economic clusters has been proven with Clemson's work in Greenville, Anderson, and North Charleston and with our neighbors such as the Research Triangle in NC. The Advanced Plant Technology program will be an agricultural analog to these programs given adequate support for infrastructure and for competitive salaries for the scientists and the support staff.

We appreciate your consideration of this request. For your information, as previously sent, I am also attaching a copy of the letter from Commissioner Hugh Weathers acknowledging support of this funding request by the SC Department of Agriculture.

Thank you for your leadership and continued support of South Carolina's agribusiness industry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jack W. Shuler", written over a faint, large, stylized outline of the number "1".

Jack W. Shuler
President

Attachment

/sb