

MEMORANDUM

To: Neal Van Alfen nkvanalfen@ucdavis.edu, Dean, College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences

Cc: INFAS Executive Committee, Prof. Tom Tomich, Joanna Friesner

From: INFAS Executive Committee, Bruce T. Milne, Chair

Date: August 17, 2012

Re: Annual Evaluation of INFAS Fiscal year 2012

We are pleased to file this first annual evaluation of INFAS, the Inter-institutional Network for Food, Agriculture and Sustainability, led by Prof. Tom Tomich.

In brief, INFAS has goals pursuant to agriculture and food systems:

1. Constitute a corps of individuals to address challenges
2. Articulate stronger, broader consensus on priorities for research, education, and outreach
3. Science-based evidence in support of food system sustainability
4. Increase media attention
5. Inform policy makers

Prof. Tomich hired INFAS Coordinator Joanna Friesner, a superb assistant with skill and creativity to address logistical and organizational tasks. Joanna consistently demonstrates mastery of the goals and needs of the participants and maintains an atmosphere of professionalism, competence, and dedication to the goals. She was an excellent hire and is making a real difference.

Together, Tom and Joanna coordinated INFAS members to meet in association with the W.K. Kellogg Food and Community conferences. These meetings have increased the frequency and quality of interactions among members (Goal 1), thereby making it possible to complete an ambitious pre-proposal to the National Science Foundation in fall 2011 entitled, *Resilience, Resistance, and Risk in the U.S. Food System*. That exercise enabled members to reach working consensus on priorities for research and education (Goals 2, 3) and to design a region-based approach to involve researchers and students from around the nation as a true network. Indeed, Tom's patience and dedication to building relationships among INFAS members is creating a solid foundation for the network. Tom readily enlists expertise where needed, as he did recently by including an organizational consultant to critique ways of achieving our goals and creating an effective network.

Tom and Joanna selected members of the Executive Committee which is finalizing a brief set of operating rules for self-governance. The EC met May 24, 2012 in Asheville, NC. We were tasked with this evaluation and asked Tom and Joanna to write a 12-month

work plan so that future evaluations are made against a priori goals and milestones. A detailed work plan has been made and we look forward to working with them over the next year primarily to address goals 3 and 4. Thus, Tom and Joanna developed a strategy for pursuing research grants and publishing a national food sustainability research agenda.

In short, Tom and Joanna are diligent, responsive, facilitative of the network, and gracious at every turn.