



Director's Update April 2013

Springing into Action

REACCH is preparing for another field season of research, Extension and education. We are moving forward informed and energized by the view we have of the breadth and depth of the project that was on display during our second annual meeting, in Portland this February. That meeting included 70 talks and posters from students, guests and faculty presented the growing scope of the project on all of its fronts and dimensions. The 2 1/2 days were as much like a full-scale professional conference as a project meeting. In addition to the talks, we had important discussions about how to integrate the diverse kinds of science ongoing in REACCH. We heard from a panel of experts on the need and potential to establish a network of regional long-term agricultural projects in the USA. That panel included our NIFA National Program Leader, Michael Bowers, Phil Robertson, Director of the [Kellogg Biological Station](#) and representing [NSFLTER](#), and Mark Walbridge, [ARS](#) National Program Leader Water Quality & Watershed Management, and the ARS LTAR network. These individuals, project stakeholders and scientific advisors helped us see our strengths as a project and where we need improvement.

What were our strong points? We are producing a great deal of good science on agronomy, hydrology, soil processes, earthworms and insects, sociology, economics, atmospheric monitoring and climate science, all geared to improving adaptation of cereal cropping systems to changing climates and reducing agriculture's contribution to green house gases in the atmosphere. Novel efforts at synthesis among our modeling framework are taking shape. We continue to work phenomenally well as a team of teams. Our students are gaining a broad perspective working as they do a broad synthetic collaborative environment. We are beginning to have an impact on farmers. Our data management system is up, receiving data and is ready to support the novel data synthesis we are committed to achieve.

Where can we improve? Our advisors had many good suggestions, but a prominent one was that all of us need to keep in view the Big Picture, the conceptual framework that links the diverse efforts ongoing in REACCH. We have tried to respond to this challenge graphically. PIs and students can improve their understanding of how their work contributes to the overall effort that is REACCH by referring to this graphic model. If you are a stakeholder, can you see where your needs are being addressed? If you are a participant, can you find your work and see its relevance? How can we improve on this or complement it with other kinds of synoptic representations of the work? If you have an idea or comment, please let me know with an email to reacch@uidaho.edu and I'll make sure it gets consideration.

Meanwhile, please keep the big picture in mind as you continue your important work for REACCH. Whether you are a REACCH participant, stakeholder or a visitor to our website, we wish you a productive springtime.

Sanford Eigenbrode, REACCH Project Director