



2014 General Meeting Research & Development Team Breakout Session (Jan 28)

CAAFI® Research & Development Team aims to expand Critical Challenges white papers, Feedstock Readiness Level (FSRL) and communication efforts.

The CAAFI Research & Development (R&D) Team led a productive breakout session on Day 1 of the 2014 CAAFI General Meeting. During the 3-hour session, the R&D Team leaders gave a summary of previous and ongoing team activities, and moderated discussions about the R&D topics highlighted in the Critical Challenges white papers, team communications and the Feedstock Readiness Level (FSRL). Dialogue among team members resulted in a concrete set of working items for the year ahead.

Session Highlights:

The session began with opening remarks from R&D Team Tri-Chair Mike Epstein detailing the team objectives and activities since the last General Meeting. These included the team workshop in 2012, the Critical Challenges white papers, the modified team mission statement, and the series of Seminars on Alternatives to Petroleum – Jet (SOAP-Jet) webinars. It was noted that the major activity of the past two years was the publishing of the Critical Challenges white papers that summarized the research and development in the alternative aviation fuels sector and identified areas where added focus is needed. Discussion at this breakout session considered the current content of the white papers, relevant updates, and potential modifications.

In the second half of the session, the R&D team leaders outlined the recent communication efforts. The team had been using CAAFI.org, emails, internal SharePoint communications, and webinars to disseminate materials, and hoped to collect team thoughts on communication strategies moving forward.

At the end of the session, CAAFI Head Research and Technical Advisor Kristin Lewis reviewed and sought feedback on the Feedstock Readiness Level (FSRL)—a communication tool that describes feedstock development and assists feedstock producers in commercializing their product through a 9-level progression.

Outcomes:

The discussion on the Critical Challenges white papers was lively and represented the diversity of the break-out session, with participants from government, academia, and industry. The

attendees identified updates that should be made to the existing papers, as well as potential authors to contribute to white papers still in progress. The team decided that instead of using the term “Priority” to describe the challenges as done previously, the challenges should be categorized as immediate, near-term, mid- and far term “Opportunities.”

The overview of the FSRL and general communications highlighted the need for a strategy to improve dissemination and usage of the FSRL and other team materials. It was agreed that the FSRL helps the USDA and producers rank projects and that establishing a niche for the FSRL could achieve the desired result. Attendees voiced interest in establishing an online discussion forum to continue the conversation, share resources, and expand team activities.

Next Steps:

With regard to the white papers, the team will modify and expand the existing papers as applicable and complete the two yet to be published—*Flexible economic and engineering models to evaluate proposed alternative fuel facilities and supply chains* and *Development and streamlining of crosscutting technologies*. Experts recommended during the group discussion will be engaged as appropriate.

Drawing from the communications conversation, the R&D team will establish an online discussion forum as a platform for R&D-related discussion and information sharing. Such a forum will enable team members to more actively contribute to white paper and webinar activities.

Additionally, the team will continue to search to improve the communication and usage of FSRL, pursuing an idea presented during the breakout session that the FSRL could serve as required reporting for the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) Coordinated Agricultural Project (CAP) grants.

CAAFI sponsors are the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration, Airlines for America (A4A), Aerospace Industries Association (AIA) and Airports Council International-North America (ACI-NA). Additional information on CAAFI can be found at our website: <http://www.caafi.org>.