Timing:

We believe we should get rid of the on-year, off-year awards suggestion. We should develop one set of awards, and give them out regularly, whether every year or every other year. Tying them to a meeting that may or may not be held doesn’t seem like a good plan any more. We believe we should have one set of awards, with one set of submission criteria, is the best way to get consistent participation.

Criteria for Nominations:

I think we need some pretty well defined criteria for nominations. One suggestion is tweaking the description in flexibility and responsiveness. Sustained work history doesn’t mesh with the goal of recognizing specific work accomplishments within the last year. Maybe this gets pulled out and put into the special categories award. Longevity in and of itself doesn’t get you an award, but a high level of service over time may.

Under Improvement and management, I suggest removing or editing language here so that more traps doesn’t immediately translate into a good thing. Focus more on the efficiency and effectiveness of the program, and not the volume. Maybe add criteria dealing with proactive steps taken or efforts made; showing of initiative that translated into a significant improvement in effectiveness or efficiency. Other ideas for this bullet or other bullets include: an improvement in a standard practice, particularly one that can be replicated across programs or surveys. Development of or significant improvement to a survey or education/outreach tool; Maybe an improvement to an existing cooperative/collaborative relationship, or the creation of a new one, that was initiated by the nominee. Bonus points for showing how any of these things potentially have benefits beyond the origin state or program.

We should add language that not every award will be given out every year. We may have some years where, for example, no SPRO was nominated, or the nominations were really weak. We should have the flexibility not to award. Lack of substantive nominations shouldn’t be the defining criteria for determining a winner. On that same vein, we keep the special recognition award(s) vague enough that anything might qualify. Something really innovative may come along that doesn’t fit the established criteria well, but deserves recognition. That could fit here.

Another thought is to tie these awards into the existing PPQ national awards, specifically the Promising Practices, Safeguarding or Outstanding Achievements awards. When appropriate, award winners could be nominated by the CAPS committee for recognition under one of these particular awards. We could use our CAPS awards as a spring board for recognition at a higher level. Again, not every nominee would necessarily fit into one of those categories, but if one did, we could make it a goal to forward it on for consideration by the broader USDA.

Another options is we could rework our award categories, or add to them, so that we are intentionally creating categories that translate into the national awards. I believe any person or group can forward nominees to Paula Henstridge for consideration. If necessary, we can look more into this.

The CAPS award nomination should be short enough that people are willing to spend the time to complete and submit them, and long enough to include the necessary level of detail in the information so that the review committee can make a decision, and be able to justify it. Plus, adding a little length helps weed out weaker nominations before they even get submitted. More than two, 3-5 sentence paragraphs, but less than 2 pages.

Here are our suggestions at this point. Where do we go from here?