

PERSPECTIVES ON THE DEVELOPING COMMON EXPERIMENT ACROSS THE 18 SITES WITHIN THE LONG TERM AGROECOSYSTEM RESEARCH NETWORK

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The USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) established a Long Term Agroecosystem Research Network (LTAR) across 10 of its research locations, including some of its large watershed facilities, in 2012 and expanded that network to 18 locations in 2014. The LTAR is now designing a common experiment across all 18 locations, which includes 3 non-ARS sites, to be implemented in 2016. Though these 18 sites represent a very diverse array of agricultural systems, from small grains to beef cattle, and a diverse array of production scales, from intensely managed farm fields to extensively managed expansive rangelands, all sites share research objectives and hypotheses. The research plan is now being developed through 2015 for peer review early in 2016. In itself, the development of a common experiment across 18 diverse locations could be viewed as an experiment in coalescing science and scientists. Perspectives on this process, its goals, objectives and hypotheses will be shared by one participant in this ambitious effort.

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