The Southern Agricultural Research Center Advisory Committee Chairman, Terral Balzer, called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. Dr. Kephart, Superintendent introduced the five SARC staff and guests, Mr. John Pulasky, weathercaster for Northern Broadcasting, Mr. Bill Kennedy, Yellowstone County Commissioner; and Dr. Sharron Quisenberry, Dean/Director College of Agriculture/MAES. Twelve members of the advisory committee were present: Kim Nile, Tony Zinne, Mike Greytak, Walt Hudyma, Mike Bernhardt, Carter Miklovich, Greg Lackman, Terral Balzer, Rodney Jabs, Glen Leonhardt, David Kelsey, and Dennis Newton. Bill Bergin, Jr., and Mikol Hjelvik were absent from the meeting. Three county agents were present: Paul Dixon, Todd Yeager, and Lee Schmelzer.

Secretary, Mike Bernhardt read the minutes of the December 7, 1999 advisory committee meeting. Kim Nile made a motion to accept minutes, seconded by Rodney Jabs; motion carried.

John Pulasky gave an overhead presentation on the precipitation situation in the Western United States and specifically Montana. He talked about the sub-soil moisture situation in Montana and the Palmer-drought survey. He campaigned the effort for hiring a climatologist. A request was made by Walt Hudyma that information be assimilated and made available to the public on the moisture situation.

In Dr. David Bryant’s absence, Dr. Kephart reported on the Montana State University Extension Service proposal for staffing of positions at the research centers. Members of the committee will write letters to Dr. Bryant voicing their concern of the importance of a marketing specialist at SARC. Kim Nile moved to have the secretary draft a letter to Dr. Bryant, seconded by David Kelsey, motion carried.

Chairman Terral Balzer introduced Dr. Sharron Quisenberry, Dean and Director of the Montana Experiment Stations and College of Agriculture. She reported on MAES funding statistics, MAES University Recharge assessment, MAES building, renovation, and equipment needs. Dr. Quisenberry reported that about 1/3 of the legislature is new to the “house” and will need input on the AES needs. It was reported that House Representative Monica Lindeen has stated that she would be putting a bill through for 1.5 million for SARC needs. Commissioner Bill Kennedy talked about the importance of making ourselves (SARC Advisory) visible to the Montana legislature. It was reported that the legislative session would begin on or around January 5. The dates will be forthcoming via email to all members of the committee so that they can make plans to attend.

It was discussed that the new University President, Dr. Geoff Gamble, will begin his work on or around January 5, 2001.

Rodney Jabs questioned what the policy on station tours is. Ken Kephart responded by saying that we welcome the tours, and just ask that SARC be given some notice so that we can prepare for such tours.

Superintendent’s Report: A report was given on July, 2000 field day. It was well attended with approximately 150 people. Ken Kephart mentioned that his plan on upcoming field days would be to have one every other year, and in between do smaller personal tours.

Terral Balzer reported that Neil Fehringer was presented with a plaque during Field Day for his many years of dedicated work and service to the Advisory Committee.

Dr. Kephart reported on the external review of the Research Center Department that was done in October. The information that was gathered is important in reviewing strengths, and weaknesses in our system, and how we can improve in some areas, and strengthen the areas that we are strong in, and will also be useful in the legislative process.
A copy of the SARC General Operating Budget summary year-to-date was handed out, explained, and discussed.

Dr. Kephart reported that Peggy Lamb is now renting the farmhouse previously rented by former employee, Alan Balzer, who has moved out of the area. A new furnace was put into the house. The SARC land is leased to Jim Hein on a two year/renewable up to a six-year basis. The underground fuel tank and testing well situation was discussed.

It was reported that the shop and machine shed have been painted. The weeds lab has had minor renovation, and the cereal lab has been cleaned up and has been computerized for data collection. A short discussion was held regarding the old dairy barn and its safety issues.

Dr. Kephart went over the MAES Equipment List Justification for the Governor’s Budget, and specifically needed for SARC. He also discussed the 2000 Foundation Seed production and that four different seed stocks were used. Mike Greytak discussed the JD 750 no till drill seeder.

Terral Balzer reported that himself, Ken Kephart, Dave Kelsey, and Bill Kennedy attended the 6:40 a.m. information legislative meeting at MSU-B this morning. The MAES funding fact information, equipment request list, and building facility reports were handed out to the 15 area legislative representatives.

Dr. Kephart and Research Associate Peggy Lamb reported on the 66 field trials done in 2000, which includes Winter Wheat, Triticale, Spelt, Winter Annuals, Spring Wheat, Durum, Barley, Oats, Safflower, Alfalfa, Sugar Beets, Grain Corn, Soybeans, Canola, Pulse Crops, and Alternative Forages. Copies of the trial descriptions were handed out. Peggy Lamb has been on staff at the station now for almost two years.

A question was raised by Dave Kelsey regarding summer internships from the campus, and the possibility of recruiting any of these people to help with data collection at SARC.

Dr. Mickelson and Research Associate Mike Particka reported on the 32 weed science field trials done in 2000, which includes wild oats, Canada thistle, milkweed, and Kochia in Sugar Beets, Barley, Wheat, Corn, Dry Beans, Alfalfa, Potato, Non Crop, Weed Seed Decay, and Herbicide Carryover. Mick noted that there could be a possibility of getting two graduate students on station next year. Copies of the trial descriptions were handed out. Mick discussed that the herbicide marketers have been beneficial in responding to funding of research trials. Results will be available on SARC’s website and at various meetings in the future. Dr. Mickelson has been on station now for just over one year, and Mike Particka has been on staff since May 2000.

Mike Bernhardt commended the staff of SARC on their research activities, explaining that it has been helpful and useful. Dave Kelsey did the same.

A discussion was held on the 2001 Research Review meeting. We will try to schedule a date in the later part of February 2001 and invite the public, in addition to the advisory committee and county agents. A four hour session is planned, perhaps from 1:00-4:00 p.m.

Mike Greytak, Kim Nile, and Terral Balzer reported on the State Advisory Committee meetings held in Bozeman on November 8, 2000 and in Sidney in June 2000. The main agenda item that prevails at these meetings is the budget shortfall.

A discussion was then held regarding the Constitution and Bylaws. It was moved by Mike Greytak, seconded by Kim Nile to accept the changes to the Constitution and Bylaws as written. Motion carried.

SARC Advisory Committee officers were introduced and re-elected unanimously in the motion made by Tony Zinne and seconded by Mike Greytak.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.