

Oregon Sweet Cherry Commission
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REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Mid-Columbia Agriculture Research & Extension Center Meeting Room
3009 Experiment Station Dr., Hood River, OR 97031
Tuesday, April 7, 2015, 10:00 A.M.

Call to Order/Introductions

Megan Thompson, Chairwoman, called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. the following Commissioners consisting of a quorum, including Megan, were present: Steve Sandau, Stacey Cooper, Jim Markman, Leonard Aubert, Ryan Bond, Dan Crouse, Les Stephens, Tim Ramsey, Andrea Galloway. Tom Brateng joined the meeting at 10:15 a.m..

Kris Anderson, Commodity Commission program Manager for Oregon Department of Ag, Ilea Bouse, Mid-Columbia Ag Research and Experiment Center (MCAREC), Eric Shrum, Western Ag, Geoff Horning, Agri-Business Council of Oregon and Dana Branson, OSCC Administrators were also present. Josh Hinerfeld, from Oregon Tilth joined the meeting in progress.

The minutes of the regular meeting held on February 4, 2015 were emailed in advance and available at the meeting. *Leonard Aubert moved and Dan Crouse seconded to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion carried unanimously.*

The financial statements for February and March were emailed in advance and available at the meeting. There were no questions. *Leonard Aubert moved and Andrea Galloway seconded to accept the financial reports for February and March as submitted. The motion carried unanimously.*

There was a question about the follow up collections letters discussed last meeting. Dana did not send out the Department of Justice (DOJ) collections letter to the remaining fruit stands due to her personal circumstances. After discussion the consensus is that we'll be sending out letters and assessment forms again soon for the 2015 season. Dana will draft a 'nice' letter to send this spring explaining that paying assessments is the law and penalties can be imposed as a way to remind small sellers that they need to keep track.

Adopt-a-Farmer Program – Geoff Horning Agri-Bus Council(ABC)

Geoff went over the history of the Agri-Business Council and the information in the documents he brought. Research has shown that

making producers the face of agriculture is the most effective at influencing public opinion. Public trust of farmers is high. The Adopt-a-Farmer campaign creates a connection with kids. Middle school kids are beginning to break from parents and develop their own opinions. It is an opportune time to reach them. It gives producers and kids a chance to discuss the job of being a farmer, pesticide use, GMO's, food safety. This year 4,000 students from 38 schools participated. ABC does a lot of the legwork to limit the time commitment for the producer. Geoff is here today to ask for a \$2,500 commitment from the OSCC to help support the program. There is a cherry producer in the Willamette Valley participating and next year there will be one in The Dalles. The focus is more on building connections between urban and rural than on science.

Oregon Tilth Overview – Josh Hinerfeld

Josh Hinerfeld went through material regarding the steps for transitioning to organic production, where to get help, financial assistance and possible reasons why a producer would want to transition. There was a question about how many certified organic cherry growers there are in Oregon – 50. When does inspection occur? About 12 weeks before the farm is qualified so if the farm is subject to a 3-year transition rule, the first inspection occurs in year 3. What sources of nitrogen are used for organic tree fruit? They use a cover crop, such as legumes, pelleted manure, fish by-products, feather meal.

ODA – Kris Aderson

Kris went through the commissioners whose terms are expiring and those eligible for re-appointment. She mentioned that OSCC could revise their Administrative Rules to change or eliminate term limits. Bruce Pokarney is going to write an article about public members.

She went through some of the legislation currently being considered in the state legislature. HB2722 to create a program similar to Brand Oregon, but now called Certified Oregon. HB2721 to authorize \$5.6 million for the Farm-to-School program. \$1 million would be available for education that non-profits and commodity commission could access through grants.

She's been working on the master agreement with the Ag Research Foundation to resolve ownership of work, travel allowances and Department of Justice review questions. The last meeting was in March and the agreement is close to being finished.

Kris went through the projected Commodity Commission management costs for the 2015-16 year. The maximum oversight fee was capped at \$38,000 and the minimum is \$750. Kris was able to negotiate a reduction

in rent and some overheads, but the total costs are approaching the \$300,000 cap for oversight costs so this will mean another round of discussion on how to cover the costs.

She also mentioned that the Blueberry Commission uses the DOJ letter right at the start of collections.

Administrator's Activity Report

The Bite of Oregon organizers contacted OSCC again to participate. Dana told them it was doubtful because of the prospects for an early, short supply season. The organizers responded with the option to opt for a half-sponsorship for \$1,500. Dana will verify that equates to one menu item at The Chef's Table instead of two and the same logo exposure. *Ryan Bond moved and Dan Crouse seconded to authorize a one-half sponsorship for \$1500 with the verification of the benefits as listed above. The motion carried with Les Stephens voting opposed.*

Ryan Bond moved and Leonard Aubert seconded to fund the Adopt-a-Farmer campaign through sponsorship for the Denim and Diamonds Dinner. The motion carried unanimously.

Dana handed out a draft of the 2015-16 budget to begin discussion. The assumptions she used were discussed and some changes were made. There was discussion of the Administrator Services contract. *Leonard Aubert moved and Les Stephens seconded to increase the contract by 15%. The motion had a majority yes votes with an opposed vote from Tim Ramsey and abstentions from Tom Brateng, Stacey Cooper and Ryan Bond. After discussion Tim Ramsey amended the motion to base an increase on a review and comparison of other commission's pay rates to make sure that OSCC is fair and equitable. Stacey Cooper seconded. The motion carried unanimously with amendment.* Kris will provide that information at or for the next meeting.

The meeting recessed at noon for lunch and reconvened at 12:40 p.m.

Chairwoman's Report

Megan talked to a California grower and he said 1500 acres of cherries were taken out last year with more to come out. They are expecting 30-40% of a normal crop and harvest is projected to start around June 1st.

Dan Crouse was the NW Horticultural Council Trustee for OSCC last year. He is willing to serve again. *Tom Brateng moved and Jim Markman seconded to appoint Dan for the next fiscal year. The motion carried unanimously.*

Washington has a nice crop projected; they did have some cold temperatures last week. The estimate is a harvest start date of May 25th. There is a question about some frost damage around The Dalles. The Willamette Valley has had a long, uneven bloom.

Research Committee Report

Dan Crouse and Eric Shrum went to a meeting in Prosser regarding the breeding program. An inventory of the current tree crosses in the ground, what they are and where has been requested. Dena Ybarra agreed to come go to Prosser once a week to help the farm manager and make sure the trees are cared for. The goal is to make sure the work that's been done is maintained. No more crosses will be done this year. Some trees maybe removed and others brought from the greenhouse planted. Washington has approved \$150,000 in total for the breeding program this year. *Ryan Bond moved and Tom Brateng seconded to approve \$37,500 or 25% for the breeding program. The motion carried with Steve Sandau voting opposed.*

There was a discussion about how the breeding program might be accomplished in the private sector rather than through the university system. Would we have more control and improved oversight? There are successful examples under both methods. Other commissions use an RFP process. Some possible processes and partners were discussed, possible advantages and disadvantages. There was a comment about not wanting to walk away from the crosses already developed and the money already invested to this point.

Northwest Horticultural Council (NHC)

Dan participated in a Science Advisory Committee conference call and there is a Food Safety Meeting scheduled for April 21. There was discussion of GMO issues and lysteria on apples.

OSU Research & Extension Report

Ilea Bouse reported that the new Associate Dean came to MCAREC to meet with the Advisory Committee.

Old Business

There was no old business.

New Business

There was no new business.

Next Meeting

The next regular meeting and the Budget Hearing for 2015-16 will probably be May 21, 2015 in The Dalles, OR at 2:00 P.M. following the pre-harvest tour. A meeting room has not been determined yet.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 1:36 p.m. and the Commissioners went to tour the cherry blocks at MCAREC.