

Oregon Sweet Cherry Commission
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REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Columbia Gorge Community College, Boardroom, Bldg 1
400 E. Scenic Dr., The Dalles, OR 97058
Wednesday, August 13, 2014, 10:00 A.M.

Call to Order/Introductions

Megan Thompson, Chairwoman, called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m. the following Commissioners consisting of a quorum, including Megan, were present: Dan Crouse, Stacey Cooper, Andrea Galloway, Leonard Aubert, Ryan Bond, and Jeff Heater.

Brian Tuck, Mid-Columbia Ag Research and Experiment Center (MCAREC), Sue Root, Oregon Cherry Growers and Dana Branson, OSCC Administrator were also present. Kris Anderson, Commodity Commission Program Manager, joined the meeting in progress.

The minutes of the regular meeting and budget hearing held on June 5, 2014 were emailed in advance and available at the meeting. *Jeff Heater moved and Leonard Aubert seconded to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion carried unanimously.*

The financial statements for June and July were emailed in advance and available at the meeting. There were no questions. *Dan Crouse moved and Jeff Heater seconded to accept the financial reports for June and July as submitted. The motion carried unanimously.*

There was a discussion regarding the option that is available to adjust the fiscal year to a calendar year. June is a busy time getting geared up for harvest and the promotion campaign is already underway. **Dana will talk with Kris Anderson to get the details and bring a proposal to the next meeting if it looks like this would be helpful.**

Kris Anderson joined the meeting.

Administrator's Activity Report

Dana reminded everyone about the Cherry Research Review dates, November 13 and 14, to be held in Hood River this year. She said that Hood River Inn contacted her about a possible conflict with availability. There were suggestions about alternatives, such as the Armory building in The Dalles and the new hotel associated with Cousin's. **As of Thursday**

8/14/14 HR Inn has confirmed the meeting rooms are booked for the Review and the rates are not significantly higher than they were in previous years.

A crop and cash estimate for 2014 was handed out. It included input from all the largest handlers. Dana went through the assumptions for each item of revenue and expense. If the estimates reported are the actual paid there will be over 58,000 tons of cherries (fresh, brined, canned & frozen) with assessments. Oregon does not report or pay on culls and some fruit was left on the trees so this doesn't represent the entire crop. This could be the largest number of tons reported and paid on since the Commission began in 1989. The next closest amount was 56,497 tons in 2012.

During the discussion of the cash estimate Dana reported that the Washington Tree Fruit Research Commission (WTFRC) forgot to bill for our portion of the meeting expenses for the Cherry Research Review in Wenatchee last November. She checked email and the check register for the billing and payment, but did not find one. This is an out-of-period payment and Dana will work with Kris Anderson to record it properly.

Dana handed out a copy of the letter mailed to various fruit stands and growers that are selling directly from their farms, either in fruit stands, u-pick or bulk. This was to make Commissioners aware of it in case a grower contacts them. Kris shared the results of work the Wheat Commission asked the Department of Justice (DOJ) to do regarding a similar letter for them. Dana (with input from Kris and Megan) used some of the language from the DOJ letter, but tried to make it softer and non-adversarial. There was discussion about writing an article for the newsletter that might allow for more explanation of who should pay.

The annual Agri-Business Council (ABC) membership is up for renewal. There were a few comments about what the organization does and the benefits to individual members. *Jeff Heater moved and Stacey Cooper seconded to renew membership at the \$500 level this year. The motion carried unanimously.*

Dana received a request again this year for a contribution to support the Summer Ag Institute put on by OSU. This is a continuing education program for teachers that gives them insight and knowledge about farming and agriculture that they can pass on to their young students. There was no motion to take action at this time.

ODA Report

Kris Anderson said that Katy Coba has approved all the open positions on the Sweet Cherry Commission and the oaths of office for Ryan Bond and Leonard Aubert have been received. Dana will email Tim and see about getting his oath sent in.

Kris went over a brief explanation of the fee paid to the Department of Agriculture by the Commissions and the approval process of the OSCC budget for the benefit of the new commissioners. She explained that a Policy and Procedure Manual for Commissioners is in the works to help everyone understand what being appointed involves. One example she gave was that notes taken during meetings can be included if there is a public records request.

Kris also explained her role in communicating the Marketing Division's activities and events regarding inbound and outbound trade missions for commodities that might have an interest or tie-in with a commodity. Lately she's been helping to proof the agricultural magazine, Grow Oregon. She brought a draft copy for the commission to look at and comment on.

Chairman's Report

Each Commissioner and grower representative gave an overview of the 2014 cherry season they experienced during the Roundtable discussion. Weather is always a big factor and with the extended cherry season it's almost a given that there will be at least one rain event. Eastern Oregon had their largest harvest ever. There was some trouble with sizing on Bings and Rainiers. Rain was not a big factor, but they did see some green cherries split, which is unusual. The largest issue was lack of labor. Next season they will have to experiment with some strategies to encourage pickers to stay through the end of the season. The Dalles & Dufur areas reported generally a larger than average crop although some areas didn't set as well as others. Quality was very good for the most part; orders were steady through most of the season. The Reginas were softer than in past years, but did not split. A substantial amount of fruit after the second rain went to freezers. There was no extra labor around this year and next year may be more challenging. Parkdale Bings were split in the first rain and some were diverted to freeze, Rainiers fared better and were OK. Lapins were good quality and didn't split in the second rain, but Skeenas did split. Willamette Valley had an average crop. There were good, bad and in-between blocks. There was some winter damage and a spring frost that contributed to the uneven yield.

An evaluation form to give feedback on the Administrators was emailed out to all the Commissioners for the past fiscal year. Please complete one and send it to Megan Thompson, Chairwoman.

Megan said that B.J. Thurlby came down and rode around with Gip Redman to see the orchards and talk to growers a little, but his trip was cut short due to a food safety issue in peaches that he needed to address.

Megan, Stacey Cooper and Dana went to The Bite in Portland. The OSCC and NW Cherries contributed a sponsorship to be included in the Chef's Table portion of the event. They tasted the two recipes developed and served by the local celebrity chefs using frozen cherries as a stand-in for fresh cherries and three flavors of maraschino cherries. The reason frozen cherries were used is that the chef wanted them to be pitted and halved for ease of use. Hood River Cherry Company donated four boxes of fresh Lapins that were used as garnish on the taste plates. Bob Bailey, Orchard View Farms, participated in the chef demonstrations of one cherry menu item along with Dairy and Onion representatives. He was also interviewed on KATU Friday morning. The demonstration was not as well done as we would have liked. The chef presenting the cherry recipe didn't act like the person who developed it and wasn't very enthusiastic. That feedback will be shared with event coordinator. However, for the most part we believe it was worthwhile for OSCC to participate and they made it easy to do so.

The meeting recessed at 11:55 for lunch and reconvened at 12:20.

Research Committee Report

Dana handed out the Oregon and Washington results of the cherry priority worksheet. There will be an adjustment to the combined priority issues because one evaluation was turned in late and it has to be recalculated. The top three broad categories of concern matched up pretty well between the two states. They are powdery mildew, soil health and SWD. Dana will send out the final combined ranking and the Oregon only ranking as soon as it's revised to the commissioners, the committee members and MCAREC researchers. The Washington Research Committee Chair will get with the Oregon co-Chairs to work out the priorities to be put on the Research RFP.

There was discussion about the test trees planted in The Dalles. Megan said they appear to be susceptible to mildew, which is a disappointment since mildew resistance was a trait this variety was supposed to have. The condition of the same variety planted at other test locations is not known at this time, but will be checked. There was a question about whether a Breeding Program Advisory Committee (BPAC) meeting is

scheduled for the near future. Dana will check with Eric Shrum and WTFRC to find out.

OSU Research & Extension Report

Brian Tuck reported that the annual MCAREC Field Day went well. The cherry harvest at the station went well with good quality cherries and minimum damage and cracking from the rain. They are currently picking pears. The next project they will be focusing on is to improve irrigation efficiency by standardizing the systems used. Eric Shrum has been helping by consulting on orchard management. Having a Farm Manager in place and personnel that can focus their efforts has really helped in the operations. Brian feels that they are really making progress and getting a handle on things.

Old Business

Next meeting we hope to have a draft of the Policy and Procedure Manual to review.

New Business

The OSCC discussed the retirement of Debbie Carter from the NW Horticultural Council. The retirement recognition event was Friday, August 8 and most commissioners weren't aware of it. Dana called and expressed her regrets that she could not attend because of the prior commitment for The Bite. The Commissioners agreed that Debbie has been an excellent resource and will be missed. We wish her all the best.

Next Meeting

The next regular meeting will be October 9, 2014 in Portland at the Food Innovation Center Focus Room, 1207 NW Naito Pkwy starting at 10:00 a.m.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 12:49 p.m.