

**California Walnut Board /
California Walnut Commission**

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**CALIFORNIA WALNUT BOARD / CALIFORNIA WALNUT COMMISSION
DIVERSITY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday, June 21, 2010
Folsom, CA**

A meeting of the California Walnut Board and California Walnut Commission Diversity Committee was held on Monday, June 21, 2010, at the CWB/CWC offices in Folsom, CA. The meeting was called to order at 10:13 a.m. by Committee Chairperson Earl Lindauer. Ms. Steindorf called the roll and the following Committee members were present:

Earl Lindauer, Chairperson
Matthew Conant
Bert Crane
Kathy Kelley Anderson

Committee members Kiran Black and Nacho Martin were absent. Ms. Steindorf informed Chairperson Lindauer that a quorum was present. Also in attendance were Jeff Smutny of USDA/AMS and CWB/CWC staff members Dennis Balint and Dana Steindorf.

The first order of business was a discussion of the ways and means of expanding diversity on the Board and Commission, as well as Committees. Mr. Balint mentioned that this is a joint committee because there is a lot of duplication between the Board and Commission, in staff and members/alternates. He also explained some of the election/nomination procedures for the Board and Commission. In the event of an open seat on the Commission, the members are able to appoint someone to fill a vacancy; however, on the Board a vacant seat must be filled by special election. In the past, the Board has elected to leave seats open until the next scheduled election rather than run a special election at a substantial cost.

Mr. Balint then explained some of the difficulties the Board and Commission have encountered in finding qualified individuals to run for positions including time commitments; fear of legal liability; the completion of a Statement of Economic Interest (Form 700) required by the state; and a general lack of interest. The Board and Commission are always trying to find ways of encouraging interest in the industry for membership which will in turn lead to expansion of diversity.

Mr. Smutny stated that USDA would like to see the Board's membership mirror that of the census, including female and ethnically diverse growers, disabled individuals, and organic growers/handlers. Mr. Balint explained about the recent difficulty the Board had having a public member alternate appointment not approved by the Deputy Secretary at USDA. He stated that

a female public member alternate on the Board was not reappointed for the current term and was replaced by the appointment of Dr. Steve Welter. Dr. Welter's appointment to the Board was not approved by the Deputy Secretary. Dr. Welter has subsequently been replaced by Ms. Lynn Morgan who was appointed at the June 11th Board meeting. We are anticipating that Ms. Morgan's appointment will be approved by the Deputy Secretary. Mr. Balint stated that public member and public member alternate positions are appointed by the elected members of the Board rather than selected by general election. This affords the Board more opportunity to select candidates that meet the desires of USDA in terms of diversity.

Mr. Balint is interested in having more people involved in the industry; the concern is how to get them involved. Ms. Kelley-Anderson asked what has been done in the past to encourage industry participation. Mr. Balint stated that the Board and Commission have put out newsletters and press releases, talked about participation at grower meetings, held private dinner groups, published newspaper articles and included information about diversity and industry participation in election mailings to all growers. Ms. Kelley-Anderson asked what motivates individuals to want to become members. Mr. Conant stated that participation on the Board or Commission keeps the industry healthy and strong and allows members to interact with other industry members on issues that interest them, such as research. Mr. Smutny commented that it appears the Board and Commission are going about outreach in a manner far above what the Department would like commodity boards to do.

The Committee discussed what steps to take to satisfy USDA's effort to reach out to under-represented groups of growers and handlers. The Committee agreed that, for all their efforts, the nomination process is conducted through an open election; there are no guarantees that a woman, minority or disabled candidate will win a seat in an election.

Ms. Kelley-Anderson suggested personal outreach to organizations such as the California Women in Agriculture and others. Mr. Smutny will provide the Committee with a list of diverse organizations that could be contacted as part of an outreach program. Ms. Kelley-Anderson asked Mr. Smutny if he knows of any other tactics or strategies for outreach that have proven successful for other commodities. Mr. Smutny commented that all of the boards seem to be struggling with this issue.

The Committee discussed the language to use in outreach materials and agreed to leave it to the discretion of staff with consideration to the USDA's statement from spokesperson Michael Jarvis which Mr. Smutny read: "...the boards should reflect that diversity in the size of operations, experience of members, methods of production and distribution, marketing strategies, and other distinguishing factors that will bring different perspectives and ideas to the table." The Committee also discussed using multi-media to highlight growers working in the industry during the grower meeting presentation that Mr. Balint presents. Ms. Kelley-Anderson will ask the other farm advisors if they have any photos they can share with the Board.

Mr. Balint asked Mr. Smutny if there is a possibility of having a joint meeting with other commodity boards and USDA/AMS. Mr. Smutny stated he would ask his supervisor if there is an opportunity to do something like that.

The time and place of the next meeting of the CWB/CWC Diversity Committee will be in the summer, prior to the September Board meeting. Mr. Balint stated that the meeting could be conducted via teleconference.

Hearing no further business to come before the Committee, Chairperson Lindauer adjourned the meeting at 12:28 p.m.