

California Walnut Board

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CALIFORNIA WALNUT BOARD

RESEARCH COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES June 3, 2009

The CWB Research Committee met on Wednesday, June 3, 2009, at the California Farm Bureau Federation. Chairperson Earl Lindauer called the meeting to order at 9:20 a.m. Ms. Steindorf called the roll and a quorum was established. All committee members were present:

Earl Lindauer, Chair
Jerry Moore, Vice-Chair
Karen Klonsky

Donald Norene
Michael Petz
Jerry Siebert
Bill Tos

Others in attendance included: David Ramos, CWB Research Director; Bruce Lampinen, Extension Pomologist UC Davis; Duane Lindsay, CWC Technical Support; PRAC Working Group Chairs Steve Welter, Dan Kluepfel, Janine Hasey and Joe Grant; and CWB staff members Dennis Balint and Dana Steindorf.

The first agenda item was the approval of the minutes from the March 11, 2009 meeting. Mr. Tos made a motion to approve the minutes, Mr. Petz seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

The next agenda item was Strategic Planning. Mr. Balint introduced the meeting facilitators Dr. Greg Baker and Ms. Louise Baker. Ms. Baker started by explaining the workshop purpose: understanding and agreeing on recent and ongoing successes of the Committee; brainstorming and prioritizing research ideas as input to the strategic planning for the industry; and begin action planning with supporting measurement systems as the next steps in the strategic planning process.

Ms. Baker went around the room and surveyed the members on their expectations for the meeting. The member expectations included: integrated vision/future looking; clear direction for PRAC; common objectives for Committee and PRAC; keep grower perspective in regard to profitability; efficiency of research spending; developing long-term, focused goals; action planning; streamlining the number of projects and dollars per project; accessibility of research proposal process; and improve crop and quality through research.

Mr. Baker then presented the Committee with the results of the survey that members were asked to complete prior to the meeting outlining what they consider to be the top five research successes, recent and ongoing. The results indicate that the top research successes are the breeding program/genetic improvement, specifically in cultivar and rootstock improvement and genomics research; pest and disease control, specifically in mating disruption for codling moth, blight control and walnut aphid control; pistillate flower abortion; identification of the cause of blackline disease; irrigation management; and canopy management/architecture.

Ms. Baker then asked the Committee how they choose research projects on which to spend industry funds and what attributes contribute to a successful research project. The Committee agreed that a project must target a major problem or offer an opportunity such as yield increase, quality, harvest timing, later leafing. Other attributes of a successful research project include access to talented researchers; a sense of urgency in the problem targeted; high probability of success; and alignment with industry vision and goals.

Ms. Baker recapped the results of the Committee's strategic planning process so far. She stated that they have reviewed the successes and have created a general list of the elements or attributes of a project that make it successful. In the strategic planning process, the general procedure is to talk about the current state (successes) and then the next step is to talk about priorities for the future. The group then discussed the future direction and long term goals of the Committee.

The Committee agreed that global competitiveness, increased profitability and maintaining or improving quality are important long-term goals for the industry. The Committee then developed a vision statement that would create the "ideal orchard" for increased profitability. The goals for an ideal orchard include producing a smaller statured tree that is water efficient, and disease and insect resistant. It would also produce increased tons per acre on an early harvest while using less pesticide and fertilizer with increased nut quality.

The group took a lunch break at this time. After the break, Mr. Baker reported on some conversations he had during the break that would possibly help clarify the direction he thinks the strategic planning is going. He stated that the process of communication between the two groups (Research Committee and PRAC) needs some improvement. One thing he heard was that developing an understanding of the priorities of the Research Committee is something that would be helpful to not only the Committee, but to those conducting the research. Another thing that would be helpful would be to create a matrix that would show what the current research projects are with the intended results, what the time frame is for those results, and what the project costs.

The group then discussed the short and long term goals of research and how to integrate the Research Committee's goals with the PRAC priorities. They agreed that the long-term strategy and integration process needs a more formal structure.

Dr. Klonsky made a motion to include the PRAC work group chairpersons at the full Strategic Planning Retreat. Mr. Norene seconded the motion. After discussion, the motion failed unanimously.

The Committee then prioritized the research goals for the future. They narrowed the list in order of importance to improving pest and disease management, altering the fatty acid composition in walnuts, creating a smaller statured tree to reduce growing costs and improve pest control, increasing yield profitably, decreasing water and fertilizer usage, developing earlier varieties, and increasing edible yield with a higher percentage of kernel halves.

Mr. Norene made a motion to approve a research list of priorities to submit to PRAC to guide them and also to submit it to the Board for the Strategic Planning Retreat. Mr. Moore seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Tos made a motion to charge the PRAC working groups with mapping the research activities to the priority list and report back to the Committee prior to the Strategic Planning Retreat. Dr. Siebert seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

After further discussion, the group agreed that the next steps for integration with PRAC and the Research Committee should include: two members from each working group coming together to discuss priorities; add one integrated workshop meeting to PRAC; and create an ongoing reporting/prioritization process.

The time and place of the next meeting will be at the discretion of staff and the Committee chair. Hearing no further business, Chairperson Lindauer adjourned the meeting at 3:55 p.m.

California Walnut Industry

Production Research Committee
Strategic Planning Workshop Results
Facilitators: Greg Baker & Louise Baker
Sacramento, CA
June 3, 2009



Meeting Expectations

- Integrated vision / future looking
- Clear direction for PRAC, specifically GE rootstock
- Common objectives for Committee & PRAC
- Keep grower perspective – profitability
- Efficiency of research spending – no duplication
- Long-term, focused goals
- Action planning
- # of projects & dollars per project
- Accessibility of research proposal process
- Improve crop & quality through research



Top Research Successes

- Breeding Program / Genetic Improvement
 - Cultivar improvement
 - Rootstock improvement
 - Genomics research
- Pest & Disease Control
 - Mating disruption for Codling Moth
 - Blight control
 - Walnut Aphid Control (IPM) (old)
- Pistillate Flower Abortion (PFA)
- ID cause of Blackline Disease (old)
- Irrigation management
- Canopy management / Architecture



Attributes of Successful Research Projects

- Targets a major problem or opportunity
 - e.g. yield increases, quality, harvest timing, later leafing
- Access to talented researchers (capability)
- Sense of urgency
- High probability of success
- Alignment with industry vision/goals



Production Research Vision Statement

- Create the “ideal orchard” for increased profitability
 - Smaller stature
 - Water efficient
 - Disease control
 - Insect resistant
 - Increase tons/acre
 - Less pesticides
 - Early harvest
 - Increase nut quality (shelf life, meat yield, taste, nutritional value, etc.)
 - Less fertilizer

Prioritized Research Goals

- 1) Improved pest and disease management
 - Reduced pest and disease incidence
 - Reduced pesticides
 - Reduced costs
- 2) Alter fatty acid composition
 - Reduce No. 6 fatty acids
 - Increase No. 3 fatty acids
 - Convert No. 6 fatty acids to mono
- 3) Smaller stature trees to reduce growing costs and improve pest control
- 4) Profitably increase yield
- 5) Decrease water use (less per acre & per pound)
- 6) Earlier harvest
- 7) Increase edible yield
- 8) Decrease fertilizer use (less per acre & per pound)
- 9) Increase percentage of kernel halves



Next Steps

- PRAC Integration
 - 2 people from each working group come together
 - Add one integrated workgroup meeting to PRAC
 - Create ongoing reporting / prioritization process