

California Walnut Board

101 Parkshore Drive, Suite 250
Folsom, CA 95630-4726
(916) 932-7070
(916) 932-7071 Fax
info@walnuts.org
An Equal Opportunity Employer and Provider



GRADES & STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

September 12, 2013

The California Walnut Board Grades & Standards Committee met on Thursday, September 12, 2013, at the Marriott Hotel in Rancho Cordova, CA. Committee Chairperson Bill Carriere called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m. Ms. Dana Steindorf called the roll and established a quorum. The following Committee members were present:

Bill Carriere, Chairperson
Chuck Crain
Sam Keiper (non-voting)
Frank Guerra
Gus Mariani
Pete Turner

Committee member Steve Lindsay was absent. Others in attendance were Jeremiah Szabo, Jon Kimble and Tom Jones of DFA; Andrea Ricci of USDA/AMS; and CWB staff members Dennis Balint, Carl Eidsath, Abhi Kulkarni, Heather Donoho and Dana Steindorf.

The first order of business was the approval of the minutes from the May 2, 2013, Grades & Standards meeting. Mr. Guerra made a motion to approve the minutes, Mr. Turner seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Chairperson Carriere asked Mr. Eidsath to present the next agenda item, Review and approve Food Safety Research Projects 2013/14. Mr. Eidsath stated that he will cover the food safety projects and then the fumigation projects. He introduced Gordon Davidson, who is Linda Harris' post-doc student. Mr. Eidsath commented that if approved, this will be the third and final year of the anti-microbial wash study. The results of the study so far indicate that equipment sanitation is the biggest benefit to the wash; this year the strength and the focus of the project will be on a lower PPM with a longer exposure. Dr. Davidson stated that another objective of the study is the PAA sensory work; there has been some concern about PAA and its oxidative effects on kernels.

The next project Mr. Eidsath discussed was the third year of the annual Salmonella prevalence survey as proposed by Dr. Linda Harris. The data we collect will help with our risk assessment with FDA. Mr. Carriere asked if the third year would be the last year and Mr. Eidsath confirmed that Dr. Harris expects it to be the last year.

Mr. Eidsath then mentioned the statewide pesticide residue survey by DFA that is an on-going monitoring project that we have conducted for many years. He also talked about the

direct buyer compliance officer, Don Henry, who will continue to be out in the field for 2013/14 if the Committee approves the project. Mr. Henry mentioned some of the issues in the field that he has encountered, including the ever increasing problem of walnut thefts and cash buyers.

Chairperson Carriere mentioned the next project, the huller GMP inspection program, that has continued for two years. He commented that we extended the program after the first year in order to get as many of the hullers to participate as possible. He asked Mr. Keiper how the participation went. Mr. Keiper stated that there were three regional meetings held over the summer. Jeremiah Szabo of DFA explained that the total attendance was about 100, many were new and several attended as a follow up review. Out of that group, 19 huller audits have been scheduled with only a few repeats. The Committee discussed whether the huller GMP program is something they want to continue to fund; the consensus was that we have reached as many of the hullers who are interested at this time. Once FSMA passes, there may be more opportunity to reach additional hullers.

Mr. Turner made a motion to approve five of the new and continuing projects: hazard analysis, sensory project, pesticide survey, *salmonella* and *e. coli* survey, and direct buyer compliance officers, for a total of \$294,200. Mr. Crain seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Mr. Eidsath then presented the next agenda item, Review and approve two ARS/Spencer projects. The organic disinfestation for walnuts, year two, was the first one presented. After the first year of the project, there were some concerns about water loss during the process. Some monitoring will be included in year two to address that issue. The next project was the PPO residue off gassing for CODEX MRL. This project is an off-shoot from the PPO validation study – the registrant needs the PPO residue data to get on the CODEX MRL.

Mr. Crain made a motion to approve both of Dr. Walse's projects – the organic disinfestations for \$15,000 and the PPO residue for CODEX MRL at \$23,000. Mr. Guerra seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Chairperson Carriere asked Tom Jones of DFA to present the next agenda item, Review progress of Risk Assessment data collection. Dr. Jones stated that the FDA has asked for data on tree nuts to prepare a risk assessment. He has received data from three of the four handlers that he has contacted, combined with the data that DFA already had on hand, we are looking at about 11,000 to 12,000 data points. He is waiting for more data from handlers which he will compile together with the existing data.

Moving on to the next agenda item, Review of FSMA's CWC public comment letter status and timing, Mr. Eidsath stated that at the last Committee meeting, staff had a list of talking points that was about 10 or 11 pages. He has since reduced it down to about three pages; Mr. Kulkarni is leading the effort to create the comment letters for the CWC and would like to hear back from any industry members no later than October 11th.

Mr. Eidsath presented the next agenda item, review 8-month NFL report on long-term sensory project. He stated that the project used fresh light halves and pieces packaged three different ways – a 25 lb. case with folded liners, a two-pound cello pack, and a less than 3% oxygen barrier film pack. Those were put in a 12-14 month shelf-life at 70 degrees ambient storage and at 38 degrees. The control was frozen, so every 6-8 weeks NFL has been running the products through their sensory panel. The last update indicated that at the eight-month period, the bulk case and the cello held at 70 degrees were rancid. Everything held at 38 degrees is doing fine. The barrier film pack at 70 degrees is also fine and showing no signs of deterioration.

Mr. Kulkarni presented the next agenda item, status of Mancozeb. He stated that after 20 years of a Section 18, it appears that EPA has approved a Section 3 and issued MRL tolerances which have been passed to California DPR for their review. The process for the review is normally six months, but we have been assured that it is fast-tracked and we should hear something in two to three months.

The next item on the agenda was a discussion about the possibility of another food safety workshop at the February 2014 Winter Meeting. The Committee agreed that it would be best to table the workshop until 2015 in order to be able to report on FSMA if it publishes by then.

Under other business, Mr. Balint discussed our work with Carolyn Pickel and others at UC on the issue of sustainability. What we have basically proven, is that the industry has been moving towards sustainability because of its stewardship and the projects that it approves in Grades & Standards and Production Research. We are going into two or three new activities in the food service area and the dietary guidance project with USDA Health & Human Services in of which sustainability is part. Also, Harvard University and the Culinary Institute of America are putting together a new food service program called Menus of Change and they have devoted a large section of it to sustainability.

The time and place of the next meeting will be at the discretion of the chair. There was no need for an Executive Session. Hearing no further business, Chairperson Carriere adjourned the meeting at 3:03 p.m.