

## California Walnut Board

101 Parkshore Drive, Suite 250  
Folsom, CA 95630-4726  
(916) 932-7070  
(916) 932-7071 Fax  
info@walnuts.org  
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# CALIFORNIA WALNUT BOARD

## RESEARCH COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES November 21, 2013

The CWB Research Committee held a meeting on Thursday, November 21, 2013 at the California Farm Bureau Federation in Sacramento, CA. Chairperson Jerry Moore called the meeting to order at 2:20 p.m. Ms. Hull called the roll and a quorum was established. The following committee members were present:

Jerry Moore, Chairperson  
Bob Driver, Vice-Chairperson  
Bert Crane  
David Keyawa  
Todd Ramos  
Bill Tos

Committee members Mat Conant and Lynn Morgan were absent. Also present were Dr. David Ramos, CWB Research Director; David Neale, Bruce Lampinen, Chuck Leslie, Dan Kluepfel and Joe Grant of UC Davis; and CWB staff members Dennis Balint and Dana Hull.

The first order of business was the approval of the meeting minutes from March 22, 2013. Mr. Crane made a motion to approve the minutes as mailed. Mr. Tos seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Chairperson Moore moved to item E on the agenda. Mr. Balint introduced Mr. Joel Kimmelshue of Land I.Q. who will present ways that the walnut industry can improve on our acreage survey. Mr. Kimmelshue stated that his firm is made up of about 18 people; the main office is in Sacramento with small offices in Chico and in Los Angeles. Their main focus is on spatial data – map-type products – that are based on images and high-resolution photos. They are often asked to provide large data sets to do things such as modeling or land-use coverages for ground water or surface water modeling. Mr. Kimmelshue explained that for the service to be successful, it has to be highly accurate; he stated that their accuracy is in excess of 95%. He then presented some slides on how they use remotely sensed crop mapping to locate and quantify nut crop acreage and orchard age. The Committee asked Mr. Kimmelshue questions about the process for identifying orchards.

Mr. Kimmelshue stated that Land I.Q. is going to apply for a Specialty Crop Block Grant through CDFG, but is also recruiting for funding from three tree crops; the Almond Board is on board already, the pistachio group is very interested and he is hoping that the Walnut Board will be able to provide some modest supplemental funding to do state-wide mapping of walnuts, almonds, and pistachios. They are hoping that the block grant from CDFG will cover at least half, if not more, of the project total which will be about \$500,000.

Chairperson Moore moved back to agenda item D, Five-Year Strategic Plan and Road Map for Walnut Breeding, leaving the agenda item E open for further discussion later in the meeting. Dr. Ramos introduced Dr. David Neale who has come on board as the academic leader for the walnut breeding program. The strategic plan was presented to the Committee last March and now Dr. Neale is providing a proposal for the first year of the project (Application of Marker Breeding in the Walnut Improvement Program) which needs to be approved before the normal funding meeting the Committee will hold in March 2014. Dr. Neale gave a brief overview of the project and what it will entail. One of the first goals is to characterize the genetic variations that can be brought to marker-based breeding. Dr. Ramos mentioned that Mr. Leslie has an evolving "wish list" of the traits that are important to walnuts; some of the top priorities are lateral bearing and harvest date.

Dr. Ramos stated that the proposal presented by Dr. Neale is for \$400,000 for year one which would come out of the current funding cycle – the \$1.5 million budget approved last March for 2013/2014. Mr. Driver made a motion to approve the \$400,000 proposal; Mr. Tos seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Dr. Ramos then talked about the PRAC and research priorities. He indicated that PRAC was very supportive of the project that the Committee just approved. The Committee then discussed prioritizing the traits for which the phenotyping work will be conducted. Mr. Grant stated that PRAC's concerns include what the phenotyping, the breeding targets, should be for the benefit of the industry and the timeline and cost for the research. The Committee agreed that they should form a list of traits that are priority for the industry. Mr. Leslie stated that they went through the process of creating a list at crack out a couple of years ago and that list was presented to PRAC. Mr. Grant stated that he is anticipating PRAC's discussion about the list; however, he does not expect that PRAC will come up with a substantially different list than the Research Committee would. He has asked Mr. Leslie and Mr. Neale to attend the PRAC meeting on December 17<sup>th</sup> in order to answer some questions about how long, from a scientific point, is it going to take to get a phenotype for a specific trait, and how much will that effort cost.

Mr. Tos made a motion to engage PRAC in the process of creating a prioritized trait/timeline/cost list to be presented to the Committee at their next meeting. Mr. Crane seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

The Committee then revisited the discussion about Land I.Q. and the potential cost to the CWB. Mr. Kimmelshue stated that the range would be somewhere between a \$70,000 to \$85,000 contribution from the CWB. Mr. Todd Ramos asked what the timeframe is for any of the three commodities that they are targeting to get bearing versus non-bearing acreage data and age of trees. Mr. Kimmelshue stated that the delivery of the data is projected to be November; the imagery is done during the growing season. He indicated that the proposal due date for the Specialty Crop Block Grant is December 6<sup>th</sup> and all he would like to have from the CWB prior to that due date is a verbal confirmation that the project is of interest to the industry and would likely support it if the block grant is approved. Mr. Balint stated that he will need to determine where the funding will come from.

Mr. Tos made a motion to support the concept of the Land I.Q. acreage survey contingent upon the funding from the Specialty Crop Block Grant. Mr. Keyawa seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Under other business, Mr. Keyawa stated that he has been contacted by the Tehama County ag commissioner regarding a product called Basamid which is for treating tree hole sites for replant. They are looking for letters of support from commodities. Mr. Balint stated that it would need full Board approval for a letter of support from the CWB. The Committee would like more information on the product and Dr. Ramos commented that it might be something that Mike McKenry can look into.

Chairperson Moore commented that for the next funding cycle we may see some research proposals on Thousand Cankers and Paradox cankers. These two diseases are becoming serious issues in the South.

The time and place of the next meeting will be at the discretion of the Chairperson and staff. An executive session was not necessary. Hearing no further business, Chairperson Moore adjourned the meeting at 4:25 p.m.