

California Walnut Board

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CALIFORNIA WALNUT BOARD

RESEARCH COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES August 6, 2008

The CWB Research Committee conducted a teleconference meeting on Wednesday, August 6, 2008. Chairperson Earl Lindauer called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. Ms. Steindorf called the roll and a quorum was established. The following committee members participated via teleconference:

Earl Lindauer, Chair	Michael Petz
Jerry Moore, Vice-Chair	Bill Tos
Karen Klonsky	

Committee members Donald Norene and Jerry Siebert were absent. Others in attendance included: David Ramos, CWB Research Director and CWB staff members Heather Donoho and Dana Steindorf.

The first agenda item was the approval of the minutes from the March 20, 2008 meeting. Mr. Moore made a motion to approve the minutes, Mr. Petz seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Chairperson Lindauer asked Dr. Ramos to present the next agenda item, Proposals for Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI) Grant Program. Dr. Ramos explained that the SCRI was passed through the Farm Bill. This year over \$28 million is available for research on specialty crops, including all of the fruits, nuts, vegetables, and flowers grown throughout the U.S. The money must be committed before the end of USDA's fiscal year which is September 30. The odds of the California Walnut Board getting one of these grants is probably not high due to competition from other specialty crops. Also, the fact that walnuts are a single-state commodity reduces our chances against country-wide crops. Dr. Ramos thinks that we have two good proposals, and it is worth applying even if we do not succeed for this funding cycle because there will another opportunity next year.

The first proposal Dr. Ramos discussed was the Development of Disease Resistant Walnut Rootstocks: Integration of Traditional and Genomic Approaches. He stated that the CWB already has five projects that fall under rootstock research: Two from Dan Kluepfel on crown gall; one from Greg Browne on phytophthora; one from Mike McKenry on nematodes; and the clonal propagation from Wes Hackett and Gale McGranahan. The USDA says that every dollar applied for must be matched with an industry or U.C. dollar. The U.C. dollars are put up through "in kind" contributions which is the researchers' time they will be committing to the project. A dollar value is placed on that time based on salary and benefits, and that counts as part of the match. There are 13 researchers and farm advisors involved in this project who have committed percentages of their time.

Dr. Ramos stated that he is asking the Committee, should they want to support the rootstock projects, to allocate \$135,000 today (rather than waiting until February) to these five projects collectively from the 2008/09 budget which has already been approved by the Board for \$725,000. The spreadsheet that Dr. Ramos presented stated a total of \$125,000, however, he is asking for an additional \$10,000 to be added to Gale McGranahan's project, bringing her total to \$65,500. Dr. Ramos stated that if we qualify for the grant, USDA will provide \$1 million (\$250,000 annually for four years). The proposal to SCRI that is due on

Friday August 8, 2008, would indicate that the California Walnut Board Research Committee approved the matching funds of \$135,000. Dr. Ramos commented that he and Mr. Balint have put together a letter that must go with the proposal showing that the Committee has approved the match. The Board can only commit funds for one year which is indicated in the letter.

Chairperson Lindauer stated that the amount that the Committee would presumably allocate to the rootstock projects is the same amount they would have allocated in February if they were so inclined. Dr. Ramos confirmed that the researchers will not be asking for additional money from the Committee in February for the five rootstock projects. They would get their money from this specialty crops grant and the project would then be called the Specialty Crops Initiative Walnut Rootstock Project. It would be handled as a single project with one budget rather than five separate projects. Chairperson Lindauer asked if the Committee would be able to review those five projects in February should we not receive the SCRI grant. Dr. Ramos stated, in that case, it would revert to the same process as usual with individual project review in February. Mr. Engeler asked if allocation of funds from the Committee today would be contingent upon the grant being approved? Dr. Ramos stated that is correct.

Mr. Tos stated that currently we are spending about \$109,000 on the rootstock projects and asked what the justification is for moving to \$135,000. Dr. Ramos stated that the \$109,000 was based on the total propagation project by Hackett and McGranahan from last year that called for a 50/50 split between the CWB and the IAB (nursery funding group). The CWB came up with \$40,000 and IAB was supposed to come up with \$40,000, but they did not. IAB allocated \$15,000 for that project which left the researchers, \$25,000 short of what was needed. Dr. Ramos believes that IAB cannot be depended on for their contribution, so he took the amount that should have come from IAB and added to the \$109,000 that we allocated last March. He indicated that the sheet he provided is a tentative budget, subject to change between now and when the proposal is actually submitted.

Mr. Tos made a motion to allocate \$135,000 of the 2008/09 Research budget to the Rootstock program contingent upon the approval of the SCRI grant application. Dr. Klonsky seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Dr. Ramos presented the next proposal for the SCRI Grant Program, Enhancing Biological Control to Stabilize Western Orchard IPM Systems from Nick Mills. This project specifically looks at biological control and secondary pests such as aphids and mites that develop as a result of the changes we are making in the materials used for codling moth. Dr. Mills was funded last March by the Committee at \$20,521 for a project to look at the aphid problem and to look at the effect of the new soft chemicals on parasites and predators that attack aphids and mites.

Dr. Ramos explained that Dr. Mills would like to participate in the SCRI grant that is being developed in conjunction with other commodity groups in the northwest. The PRAC Entomology Work Group chaired by Steve Welter ranks this project as very high priority. The match that Dr. Mills is asking for from the Committee is \$20,931.

Mr. Tos made a motion to allocate \$20,931 of the 2008/09 Research budget to the project from Nick Mills, "Enhancing biological control to stabilize western orchard IPM systems," contingent upon the approval of the SCRI grant application. Mr. Petz seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

A discussion ensued regarding the letters that Mr. Balint will be sending to U.C. Davis supporting the rootstock project and to Dr. Mills supporting his project. The Committee agreed that the letters can indicate support for the current year, however, cannot guarantee support for future years as the Board can only enter into contracts for one year periods.

Dr. Klonsky made a motion to authorize Mr. Balint on behalf of the California Walnut Board to send the letters to U.C. Davis and Dr. Mills indicating the Research Committee's support of the respective projects from the 2008/09 Research budget. Mr. Moore seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

The time and place of the next meeting will be left to the discretion of the Chair. Dr. Ramos mentioned that the Walnut Conference in Bodega Bay will be January 21-23, 2009. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:13 a.m.